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# PREPOROD

**BOŠNJAČKA ZAJEDNICA KULTURE**  
Institut za bošnjačke studije

# PREPOROD

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Institute for Bosniak Studies

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Being on the *Volcano of Civilization* \*\*: Ulrich  
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Bauman on Ontological (In)security

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\*\* The metaphor of the “*volcano of civilization*” is borrowed from Ulrich Beck’s book *Risk Society* and can be considered the leading metaphor in this paper. See: Beck, Ulrich (2001). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Filip Višnjić, Belgrade. In the first chapter, we explain the actual meaning of this metaphor.

## Summary

*In this paper I emphasize the problem of ontological (in)security in the context of the global events related to the sudden expansion of COVID-19 virus. The emphasis is on the tradition of reflexive sociology and the concept of methodological pluralism. The question of ontological (in)security is analysed from three sociological optics: 1) Ulrich Bech's thesis on "risk society"; 2. Anthony Giddens's thesis on "radicalized consequences of modernity"; 3. Zygmunt Bauman's theory of the "liquid modernity". The paper indicates that all three sociological theories treat ontological (in)security as a central concept, and implies that there is necessary correlation between ontological insecurity and the question of modernity and its character.*

*Key words: ontological (in)security, risk society, modernity, liquid modernity.*

### 1.0 Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 outbreak a pandemic. States, citizens, human rights, and various freedoms went into quarantine, and once again, a "state of emergency" took the centre stage in history. If we initially disregard and eliminate "conspiracy theories" about the origin of the virus and approach it purely scientifically, we arrive at the conclusion that this event significantly transformed the nature of the world and that the "future" will look drastically different. The aim of this article is to examine this sociological phenomenon outside the populist discourse of "cheap" journalism and to contextualize it within previously existing sociological "warnings" that a similar "event" could occur in the near future.

Three key authors who have constructed most of their philosophical and sociological positions by considering *ontological insecurity* as a central issue of the late 20th and early 21st centuries are, without any doubt, Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Zygmunt Bauman. Despite the fact that these authors' theoretical positions may be divergent at their core, they, when viewed *ex ante*, share a common denominator: sociological thinking and the interpretation of *risks* and their consequences in the era of "high modernity." In this article, we will attempt to illuminate the dimensions of ontological (in)security as perceived by these sociologists.

In the first chapter, we will discuss the *prophetic* character of Ulrich Beck's sociology, specifically from the perspective of his key study, entitled *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. We will attempt to approach this text heuristically and descriptively, highlighting its undeniable "current" relevance. In relation to Ulrich Beck's thesis, we will try to "interpret," if such a thing is even possible, something that could be recognized as the general significance of the current need

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for and importance of the humanities and social sciences. We argue that the humanities and social sciences, much like Ulrich Beck's sociology, should function as a "corrective" potential for both local and global society, which is in a state of "constant change."

In the second chapter, we will analyse Anthony Giddens's thesis on the "radicalized consequences of modernity" from the perspective of "ontological insecurity" as a key social value. We will demonstrate the limits of "expert systems" concept, as something in which trust in the social system must be built. Additionally, we will highlight the significance of the metaphor of the "Moloch of modernity," a force we, as a civilization, have created but over which we no longer have any control. With Giddens, we will explore the "philosophical and sociological potential" of risk becoming a means of perpetuating the legitimacy of the state of emergency.

In the third chapter, we will address the issues central to Zygmunt Bauman's sociology, particularly within the context of the "*unholy trinity*" of insecurity, uncertainty, and vulnerability. We will illustrate why, today more than ever, it is essential to adopt Bauman's call for a "revision" of the key concepts of modernity, and that the alternative lies in the "continuity of modernity itself," which, in essence, has never ceased its natural developmental/dialectical path. In the "background" of our reading of Bauman, the problem of "liquid values" will undoubtedly dominate as an omnipresent issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

As can be seen from an essentialist perspective, the foundation of the entire narrative on ontological insecurity and the "potential" of the risks that we, as a civilization and culture, create to destroy the world lies in the hermeneutic topography and interpretative logic of the *modernity project*. In other words, it is difficult to fully understand and interpret "risks" without considering the thesis that *modernity* is their birthplace. *Genetic phenomenology* (Bernhard Waldenfels) and Max Weber's method of "conceptual history" could confirm this argument in an instant. In this sense, the sociological theories that will be the focus here are essentially different ways of understanding modernity, which, strictly speaking, resist Jean-Francois Lyotard's formulation of the "postmodern" diagnosis of the epoch. If we were to determine the general "sociological position/zero point" of the authors we intend to discuss in this work, we must highlight the following common denominators:

1. In all three theoretical positions, the focus is on the "reflective character" of modernity, science, and humanity in the broadest sense of the word. Reflexivity and self-reflexivity, as the ability to position "everything" in relation to "itself," are key methodological and epistemological assumptions of these theories. Thus, we can say that the journey from *reflexivity* to *self-reflexivity* can be considered the central aspect of a segment of

“contemporary sociology.” Accordingly, the authors we engage with in this essay belong to the tradition of “contemporary reflexive sociology.”

2. The positions of “reflexive sociology” are positions “without methodological guarantees”<sup>1</sup>. This means that the scientific frameworks for identifying and elaborating the “social world in transformation” are realized through amalgamations of humanistic-scientific methodologies, ranging from philosophical hermeneutics, ethnomethodology, classical philosophy, to anthropology, ethnology, nanoscience, and classical sociology. Anthony Giddens, in his study *The Constitution of Society*, views this developmental path of the humanities and social sciences as the only possible one. The reflexivity of sociology, therefore, is reflected in its “multidimensional” (Pierre Bourdieu) methodological and methodical character.
3. Reflexive sociology inherits the “thinking” on *modernity* as the central problem in which the key to understanding and its own identity lies. In defining *modernity*, sociologists distinguish (each in their own way, which we will later explicate) between *classical modernity*, characterized by the industrial transformation of society and the position of a “safe harbour” of subject-centeredness with “freedom” and “well-established security”<sup>2</sup> as central values. On the other hand, there exists something that is the result of a “century-long mutation” of modernity, in some of its forms for which we still lack a reliable name and clear contours of its identity. The central characteristic of this, still controversial and indeterminate form of modernity, is the dominance of “*ontological insecurity*” through the pervasive actuality of various “lurking risks,” both on a global scale (e.g., nuclear disasters, lethal *viruses*) and in the sphere of individual/personal histories of actors in the social world (e.g., the dominance of the precariat, fundamental insecurity about remaining alive when stepping outside one’s own home). This paper is intended to be read through the “*connectionist principle*” located within the humanities, which is based on categories such as networking integration and the projection of “consortia of methodologies” to define a justified scientific, humanistic, and social problem. In this regard, it implicitly relies on the ideas of Nijaz Ibrulj, as presented in the study *Stoljeće rearanžiranja*.

## 2.0 The *Pythian* Character of Ulrich Beck’s Sociology

Pythian oracles from Apollo’s temple in Delphi are typically *mysterious*, and the tragic hero only grasps their essence through *self-discovery* and the revelation of his own undeniably *tragic* fate. However, from the moment of the prophecy to the

1 Beck, Ulrich (2001). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Filip Višnjić, Belgrade, p. 18.

2 Ibid., page number?

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“moment of recognition” (Walter Benjamin), it can sometimes take “long” years before the tragic hero even suspects the true nature of the prophecy, despite the “oracle’s” warnings and the signs that indicate and hint at the looming danger all around him.

Ulrich Beck’s sociology, viewed objectively, can be interpreted as an exception to the frequent “misinterpretations” of *sociology for futurism*, that is, the belief that sociology should predict the “future of society.” Among all reflexive sociologies oriented towards reflection on ontological (in)security, Beck’s ideas seem to return to us from the “depths of time” (Blumenberg), returning to us in 2020 — the year when COVID-19 shattered the contours of the contemporary world — as the realization of his prophecy, which is over thirty years old. It seems as though Beck is “mocking” us and the global “natural science” community, saying: *you did not listen to the humanists—now face the consequences*. But what is the *Pythian* aspect of Ulrich Beck’s sociology that “mockingly” emerges from the “depths of *forgotten time*”? The answer to this question is sought in the insights and perspectives presented in the text *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, published in 1986.

The study in *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* begins with a critique of the “post” prefix in contemporary sociological theory, suggesting that this *prefix* reflects the inability of modern sociology to explain the transformations occurring in social reality at the start of the new millennium. Beck views the “post” prefix as the “*key word for helplessness entangled in fashion*”<sup>3</sup>. In other words, terms based on the logic of “post” in philosophical and sociological theory represent a synonym for the overall inadequacy of contemporary sociological theory and its uninspired nature, which involves reducing all relevant concepts and problems of modern theoretical sociology to the logical framework of “post.” According to Beck, the “post” prefix thus becomes a matter of *trend* and a form of sociological *fashion* that is unable to address the central social issues on the “threshold” of the new millennium.

According to Ulrich Beck, the question of *modernity* cannot be reduced to François Lyotard’s concept of “*postmodernity*”, which is interpreted as a defining characteristic of the era. Many reflexive sociologists argue that the term “postmodernity” is inadequate for describing the forthcoming epoch and should be replaced with a more fitting neologism. The critique largely stems from the clumsiness of the “postmodernity” concept and the fact that, at first glance, its meaning denotes “an era after modernity,” which contemporary sociology and philosophy cannot accept as an “obvious truth.” Beck thus proposes alternatives, reflecting another common denominator of contemporary sociology: although civilization has “broken away” from traditional forms of industrial life, the coming era should not be defined in a linear, arrogant, or “final” manner. The central task of contemporary sociology, in Beck’s view, is to understand our current period as *moder-*

3 Ibid., p. 17.

nity in transformation, akin to Robert K. Merton's concept of "unintended latent consequences."

Beck, therefore, visionary and prophetic, proposes that instead of the term "*post-modernity*", the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century should be defined as the "*risk society*" where a new model of sociology will dominate. This model is based on "*projective social theory*"<sup>4</sup>, a theory without "methodological guarantees," which consists of connectionism, amalgamation, and syncretism of achievements in the humanistic/social and historically factual reservoir of knowledge on these topics.

In the theoretical discourse of "projective social theory," the criterion of "evidence" is thus reduced to a reliable source: *risks* and their exponentially progressive proliferation in the future. In other words, the more *modern* we become, the more intense, widespread, and multiplied the risks are. As such, no one can prevent them. At the civilizational/cultural level, this means that we are witnessing a "rupture" within the process of modernity, the causes and consequences of which need to be examined and analysed by sociology positioned within a "new" methodological horizon. To clarify the *controversy* within modernity itself, Beck introduces the concepts of *first* and *second modernity*. The essence of this differentiation, from an external perspective, is quite clear: Beck encompasses traditional industrial society and its organization under the concept of *first modernity*. On the other hand, *second modernity* refers to the mutation of industrial society into a new type of society, which we define and encompass within the concept of "risk society." Risk society represents a counterpoint to the "traditional society of first modernity," where the notion of risk no longer encompasses personal risks but global dangers to humanity as a whole, such as those arising from nuclear fission or the storage of radioactive waste.<sup>5</sup>

The risks that underpin the "second modernity" are based on the logic of the "boomerang effect," i.e., the fact that once scientists (primarily natural scientists) produce risks, they are not immune to the consequences of their effects. This "premise" can be considered the foundation of the thesis on *ontological (in)security* as a central theme in contemporary sociology.

In this context, the metaphor of the "volcano of civilization"<sup>6</sup> is particularly fitting as it embodies the logic of "timed dangers." In other words, a volcano can erupt at any moment, causing damage of unimaginable scale, or it can lie dormant for centuries, giving the illusion of false security. Once a catastrophe occurs, it leads to an irreversible transformation of human social life.

4 Beck, (2001). *Risk Society*. p. 18. (I've written this in this format assuming that there will be another reference added in between the two on this page, ie one for Merton).

5 Ibid., p. 34.

6 Ibid., p. 29.

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To adequately explain the concept of “risk society,” Ulrich Beck differentiates five argumentative frameworks that serve as a matrix for understanding “second modernity.” He states:

1. When I think about risks, I primarily think of radioactivity, which completely escapes human perceptual capabilities...
2. The distribution and emergence of risks create social positions of vulnerability... Risks of modernization eventually affect even those who produce or profit from them. They have a boomerang effect; even the rich and powerful are not exempt
3. Risks of modernization become ‘big business.’
4. We can own goods, but risks can only affect us; they are essentially assigned to us by civilization and the construction of knowledge about risks.
5. Socially recognized risks contain what was previously considered apolitical becoming political - the removal of ‘causes’ in the very process of industrialization.<sup>7</sup>

The argumentative chain, viewed analytically/sociologically, reveals the concept of *insecurity* as the key modality in which the future society will exist. This concept implies that a risk society *reproduces* a high degree of *uncertainty*—citizens in such a society have no guarantees of success in their own lives because this society emerges from “concrete” dangers that can suddenly disrupt everything we thought we “knew” about a situation and way of life.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 undeniably confirmed this argument, showing that dangers are no longer “somewhere else,” outside of our reach, but that once danger “materializes,” it is literally “beyond the threshold of our own home.” Risks, therefore, are very difficult to put “under control.” Their structure resists the possibility of being controlled. Risk control is no longer tied to immediate risks but has been transposed to the domain of “political decision-making,” which, by its structure and real perspective, lacks the capacity to adequately respond to the demands of potential crises when they occur. Ultimately, it turns out that the *scientific knowledge (Andrej Ule)*<sup>8</sup> we have about potential risks is insufficient to adequately address crisis situations.

Ulrich Beck thus arrives at a startling realization about:

*“the political potential of risks, and a risk society that represents a state of catastrophe in which the state of emergency threatens to become the normal.”<sup>9</sup>*

The global risk posed by the COVID-19 virus demonstrated the truth and prophetic dimension of Ulrich Beck’s sociological views. If we approach this phe-

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37

<sup>8</sup> Ule, Andrej (2011). *Mind in Nature: From Science to Philosophy*, Nova Science Publishers

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

nomenon as a case study, we will see that on the global political stage, the response to COVID-19 was uniformly characterized by: the declaration of a state of emergency, repressive measures, and the suspension of democratic social order. It turned out that global positions of vulnerability prompted a uniform reaction from world public policies, and that only “not eating, not drinking, and not breathing could provide effective protection.”<sup>10</sup>

A kind of game between the rational and the irrational, in the context of a risk society and the proliferation of risks, quickly reveals its consequences in the domain of social policy: 1. enormous *pauperization* based on mass layoffs in the private sector, with a focus on service industries, and 2. the transformation in the nature of social labour, which now becomes *acceptable* as *online* work or so-called “working from home.” Certainly, a greater challenge lies with “pauperization as a form of political theory of knowledge in a risk society.”<sup>11</sup>

In the thesis about pauperization as a civilizational consequence of the progressive proliferation of risks, there is an additional danger. This danger lies in the fact that *the relation to fear*, as the prevailing form in which ontological insecurity manifests, will become a fundamental instance in understanding the entire world of life. Consequently, contemporary humans may no longer be able to imagine any form of life - even the most elementary one - outside the *epistemological position of fear*—.

### 2.1 *Individualization and Countermodernity*

The aforementioned themes (risk, pauperization, transformation of the nature of work), become, according to Ulrich Beck, acute in the positions of “individualization of social inequality”<sup>12</sup> and in the concept of *countermodernity*. Under the concept of “*individualization*” Ulrich Beck sees a form of natural organization of the social world according to new principles. This is approached by viewing the issue of “individuality” through the sociological determination of “*the end of large social groups*” including class-based groups, and reducing it to the biographical creativity of actors in *the second modernity*.

For Ulrich Beck, the issue of *individualization* is historically and inextricably linked to the issue of the risk society, and its ultimate “epochal” meaning can only be understood through it. Individualization is not something that can be reduced to the question of “alienation and atomization” of actors participating in the social world. Beck’s views on this drastically diverge from classical critical theory and other successors of Marxist thought. Thus, for Beck, the question of individualization borders on Erving Goffman’s symbolic interactionism, in the

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

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sense that individuals in the contemporary state are discussed from the perspective of “*biography through the other*.” In *Finding the Political: Contributions to the Theory of Reflexive Modernization*, individualization is seen as a tendency in which the impetus to “dissolve and replace industrial society with different forms where individuals must create, stage, and shape their biographies on their own” is taken to the extreme.<sup>13</sup>

The individual’s reliance on their own biography *in development*, as a phenomenon concerning a *particular actor* in the social state who is in *intrasubjective* and *intersubjective* relations, assumes that the individual is capable of *affirming* their authenticity and ontological positioning through their choices within the contingency of “networks of life world” (Waldenfels). This allows the actor to emerge from the depths of their own biographical particular history. This issue of “biographical topology” is linked to the concept of “*ontological unrealisation*” that is, the fortunate (or unfortunate!) circumstance which consists in the thesis that for sociology, a person is always realized in relation to the social state as the only possible instance for verifying their historical actualization. According to Ulrich Beck, if we were consistent, “*ontological unrealisation*” as a form of potentiality is hypostatized and transposed into “social ontological realization,” which should be understood as a present state with no historically known alternative.

The “risk society,” therefore, represents a form of social reality that places concrete human (individual) biographies in a position of vulnerability, from which the entirety of ontological insecurity emerges in the era of the “crisis” of high modernity. The “*I am afraid*” characteristic becomes a central determinant of the world of the second modernity, thus replacing the “*I am not safe*” characteristic of the first modernity. The concept of fear in this sense is linked to what is essential for a human being as an individual who must bear the consequences of their life choices, making it an existential category that is more complex than the category of “security” for an entire class of people. Considering the concept of *individualization*, it can be said that in the era of the second modernity, the figure of *insecurity* arises from the figure of *fear* as the most fundamental ontological basis of existence.

A careful reader of Beck’s writings will not be surprised to find that the concept of *countermodernity/protomodernity* emerges as a *co-constituting* term of all *modernity*. In the era of the risk society and the dominance of ontological insecurity, the term *countermodernity* does not denote a process that is opposed to the authentic logic of modernity. Countermodernity, at the very least, guarantees the sustainability of the modernization process, with an emphasis on its second phase as a way to “attempt to address the disruptive side of modern society.” According to Beck:

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

*“As the term itself indicates, it arose as a counter-term to the concept of modernity. This negation would not be surprising if that contradiction and connection were not considered within modernity as an integral principle of modernity itself. Modernity means questioning, decision-making, calculability; countermodernity means unquestionability, indecisiveness, incalculability, and an attempt to force that indecisiveness into a decision against all modernity within modernity.”<sup>14</sup>*

Countermodernity, then, is modernity that looks at itself in the mirror and, as such, converges with what is the “regulatory principle of modernity itself.” Countermodernity represents the internal demand of modernity for “self-limitation,” in a way that curbs its “absolutist” tendencies, inherited from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the dimension of *the risk society* and the theme of *ontological insecurity*, the entire sociological capacity of “countermodernity” reveals itself in the logic of “militarily halved democracy”<sup>15</sup>, a somewhat controversial thesis about “halved” democracy, which consists in the fact that peace in modern societies is maintained only due to the massive nuclear armament of leading global political and economic powers. Thus, peace is present, according to the old Marcusean formulation, only due to the continuous threat of war with the potential for mass destruction of humanity.

The theoretical position of Ulrich Beck, in its various forms, as correctly noted by Srđan Vrcan following the Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti, tends to reflect on phenomena ranging from the “crisis of (modern) society” to “sociology as a science of crisis” in the era of omnipresent and omnipotent risks threatening global society. In this sense, this chapter concludes with Vrcan’s words that:

*“Beck’s understanding of sociology represents only one typical position in contemporary considerations of sociology, experienced primarily as a truly crisis-ridden science.”<sup>16</sup>*

*The prophetic* capacity of Beck’s sociology can be understood etiologically in the character of “*sociology as a science of crisis*” which naturally reveals the risk society as both an inevitability and a “destiny,” increasingly and dramatically recognizing its contours in the new form of the “*global risky society*” and the new position in contemporary sociology, known as “methodological cosmopolitanism.” In this paper, we will not delve further into the significance of “methodological cosmopolitanism,” but will simply highlight that it represents an additional radicalization of the thesis on globalization and “networking,” given the global consequences that “risks of the future” may produce.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>16</sup> Vrcan, Srđan (2005). *Suvremeni prijepori oko sociologije: Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman i Ernest Gellner*. [Contemporary Controversies About Sociology: Ulrich Beck, Zygmunt Bauman i Ernest Gellner] *Revija za Sociologiju*. Vol. 36 No. 3-4, p. 162.

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### 3.0 The Moloch of Modernity - Anthony Giddens on Ontological (In) security

Sociology, from the perspective Anthony Giddens adopts, makes sense only when viewed from the horizon of “philosophical depth.” This methodological and methodological concept should be considered when discussing issues in sociology that are situated within the epistemology of “reflexivity,” and particularly in relation to the question of “diagnosis of the (modern) epoch” (Helmut Dubiel)<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, viewed historically and eidetically, Giddens defines sociology as one of many links in the complex mechanism of amalgamated “social sciences.” In this sense, in Giddens’s key manuscript *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, we read:

“Social theory’ is not a term that possesses a high degree of precision, but as such, it holds its significance. As I demonstrate, ‘social theory’ involves the analysis of issues that overflow into philosophy, but which are primarily not within the domain of philosophical research. Social sciences are lost if they are not directly connected to philosophical problems by those who practice them. (...) Social theory is tasked with providing us with concepts about the nature of human social activity and the human actor that can be applied in empirical work.”<sup>18</sup>

The draft for the theory of structuration, as a paradigmatic theory within reflexive sociology, acquires its authentic dimension within the framework of its application to the “theory of modernity,” further affirming the thesis that every ‘theoretical sociology’ is complete only through the ‘autogenesis’ of a theory of modernity. In other words, transformation in *modernity* implies a transformation in *sociological theory*, which, by its very nature, is always one step behind the process of modernization. In this ‘terminological misunderstanding,’ Frege’s logical principle of *salva veritate et salva congruentia* cannot be applied.

Giddens’s definition of modernity, from the draft of the theory of structuration, focuses on the *consequences of modernity*, encompassing the ways in which the social world is organized and manifested. These consequences are based on a break with ‘traditional’ modes of social organization in the context of ‘proliferation and domination of risks.’ Like Ulrich Beck, Giddens agrees with the need for a drastic rejection of Lyotard’s imperative for a theory of *postmodernity*, primarily emphasizing the importance and necessity of ‘institutional analysis of modernity’ compared to the ‘cultural/epistemological’ potential of Lyotard’s theory. When examined thoroughly, disagreements with Lyotard’s understanding of modernity, have according to Giddens, actually more complex implications than might be apparent at first glance. Fundamentally, it is a return to some form of *nominalism* a problem that according to Giddens’s reading of Lyotard, after the theory of

<sup>17</sup> Helmut Dubiel (2009). *Deep Within the Brain*, Europa Editions

<sup>18</sup> Giddens, Anthony (1984): *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, (Cambridge, Polity Press), p. 17.

*postmodernity*, key issues in sociology have shifted towards questions oriented towards *naming the epoch and its related type of society*. The basic argument of this thesis is once again reduced to the prefix “post,” implying that one type of society has ceased to exist and has consequently been substituted by a new type of society with its own “personal” data. Examples of these concepts include neologisms such as: knowledge society, information society, consumer society, etc.

Giddens’s understanding of modernity starts from the belief that the contemporary world, as it is, is fundamentally as modern as previous forms of modernity. What has changed is that we are modern in a ‘different way’ compared to our predecessors, which has led us to the “radicalized and universalized consequences of modernity”<sup>19</sup>, which are clearer than ever before, both in the realm of social systems and in the realm of the concrete lifeworld, which consists of human daily life. Let us now examine what the consequences of modernity are, as discussed by Giddens, while keeping in mind the idea of ontological (in)security as an inherent constant of “*discontinuity*” in the logic of modernity itself.

The triangulation of *trust, risk, and expert systems* forms the core for determining the concept of *ontological security* in the era of radicalized and intensified *consequences* of modernity. Giddens, formally speaking, is among the authors who explicitly define the concept of ontological security, considering it a leading concept within contemporary sociology. According to Giddens:

“*Ontological security is one, but very important, form of feeling secure in a broad sense. Security in terms of the constancy of social and material surroundings, which is connected with being, i.e., ‘being in the world,’ and which is primarily an emotional, and then a cognitive, phenomenon.*”<sup>20</sup>

According to Giddens, ontological security belongs to the category of existential phenomena, whose essence is fundamentally philosophical and is drawn from its core meanings in relation to Heidegger’s existential analysis of being. It is important to note this because, according to Giddens, the philosophical depth of the concept of ontological security is as a result of a range of contemporary existentially oriented philosophers. This again highlights the connectionist/praxeological model of reflexive sociology, which is oriented towards methodological pluralism.

Accordingly, the feeling of *insecurity* that arises from the structure of being itself and manifests in concrete *individuals*, is a fundamental determinant of *modernity* in its radicalized phase. Although Giddens does not consider the exactness of Heidegger’s *ontological difference*, he still supports the claim that “every being in the contemporary world faces the experience of *the void* of meaning of the World.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

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Circumstances situated in relation to the “fundamentality and originality” of life compared to real existence are extrapolated from the context of “tachogenic life” (Odo Marquard)—the accelerated life of the contemporary person, filled with uncertainty and a high degree of insecurity—and can be analysed from the previously mentioned *triangulation*.

According to Giddens, the concept of *trust* is connected to the fact that, in contemporary personal and collective life circumstances, if we wish to maintain some form of equilibrium, or something structurally close to it, it is linked to the idea of “expert systems.” In the face of the challenges of the modern world, the numerous dangers and troubles surrounding us, people can only place their trust in expert systems. These systems, as abstract mechanisms, underpin all dimensions of the contemporary social world. *Trust in expert systems* as abstract entities can be illustrated through various examples that shed light on what is essentially at stake in this case.

As an example, consider a flight from point A to point B. As passengers, all we can do is trust a series of abstract expert systems that underpin our flight, which involve numerous aerodynamics engineers, physicists, architects, pilot training systems, and so on. We do not know specific details about these expert system’s aspects: we are not sure who the pilot is, which engineers built the runway, the airport, etc. We are only certain that this abstract expert system provides some guarantees that we will survive the flight and reach our destination. Giddens argues:

*“Abstract systems have managed to provide us with a high degree of security in everyday life, which was absent in pre-modern societies. (...) Trust in abstract systems is a condition of temporal-spatial distantiation and a large number of spheres of security in everyday life that modern institutions offer compared to the traditional world. Routines integrated with abstract systems are central to ontological security under conditions of modernity.”*<sup>21</sup>

In conditions of “high modernity,” abstract systems become key figures in understanding ontological security within the boundaries of modernity itself. The concept of *trust* emerges here as an existential determinant, where all the instability to which humans are exposed in the contemporary world is hidden; they are left with nothing but sheer trust in something abstract. Thus, the figure of *trust*, as a sociological category, is not opposed by the figure of *distrust* but is instead a fundamental existential trait, echoing Heidegger’s philosophy of anxiety. According to Giddens, anxiety, as the *counterconcept* to trust, arises from humanity’s *confrontation* with uncertainty, unpredictability, and the impossibility of maintaining stable ‘*care*’ over one’s own life.

21 Ibid. pp. 112-113.

Based on the aforementioned claims, an analysis of the “*risk* profile in modernity” is developed. Giddens’ understanding of risk is rooted in the consequences of the four-dimensional institutional differentiation of modernity (surveillance, capitalism, military power, industrialism) and is articulated through the logic of globalization and the proliferation of risks in the framework of the connectionist standard in contemporary societies. In this regard, Giddens highlights seven key sociological features for understanding risk in the context of ontological security, which are:

1. Globalization of Risk in Terms of Intensity: Nuclear war threatens the survival of humanity.
2. Globalization of Risk in Terms of the Spread of Random Events
3. Risk Arising from Created or Socially Constructed Environments
4. The development of institutional environments of risk that affect the life chances of millions of people.
5. Awareness of Risk as Such
6. Well-Distributed Awareness of Risk: Public awareness of potential dangers is widespread.
7. Awareness of the Limits of Expertise.<sup>22</sup>

Giddens’s understanding of “risk” is related to the ‘logic of risk proliferation,’ i.e., the fact that risks are continuously multiplying, and like Ulrich Beck, they are viewed from a global perspective. Once a risk is “launched,” it becomes a matter of general life danger, before which even expert systems show their limitations. The emergence, expansion, and multiple sociological consequences of the COVID-19 virus support the affirmation of this thesis, highlighting human life in all its fragility.

The COVID-19 virus also dramatically affirms Giddens’s thesis on so-called *spatial/temporal distancing*, as a form of spatial and temporal organization in modern societies, compared to pre-modern societies. This idea implies that the entire world is spatially and temporally interconnected, altering ideas and knowledge about space and time. When the COVID-19 virus first appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, it took only three months to reach every corner of the world and change the course of everyday life. The pattern is almost the same as with neoliberal capitalist economies—when Tim Cook promotes a new iPhone at the September Apple annual conference in Cupertino, California, it takes only a few days for it to be available for purchase anywhere in the world. *The dark side of modernity* (Jeffrey C. Alexander)<sup>23</sup> begins when the processes typical of modernity (rationalization, technologization, “cognitive mobilization” as discussed by

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-125.

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander (2013)., *The dark side of modernity* , John Wiley & Sons.

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Ronald Inglehart)<sup>24</sup> and its capacities that we have produced at the civilizational level turn and direct against their creators.

Speaking in relation to *pre-modern* societies, Giddens's vision of *ontological security*, which is associated with *the absence of risk*, can be systematized into the following four patterns, each of which has been seriously and fundamentally endangered in the era of high modernity. These are:

1. Trust in kinship systems,
2. Localized relationships (community before spatial-temporal distancing and globalization),
3. Religious cosmology,
4. Trust in tradition itself.<sup>25</sup>

The concept of *kinship systems*, in an anthropological sense, is fundamental for a concise understanding of classical modernity; it functioned as a system in which premodern citizens *a priori* and unquestioningly believed. Thus, the break with tradition in high modernity primarily meant a break with the traditional understanding of kinship affiliation. From this, as a kind of natural sociological flow, arises the trust in the concept of *community*, which, as a 'primordial aggregation of sociality' (Simmel)<sup>26</sup>, was the foundation of premodern societies. According to Giddens, the community gradually transforms into *the national state*, and thus contemporary societies are societies only because they are localized within it. Through further processes of the 'intensification' of modernity, the nation-state is correlated with other nation-states, leading to the emergence of global societies dominated by the technological rationality of transnational capital. This transformation essentially creates new forms of social labour, which become irreversible social figurations. Consequently, there is also a change in cosmology in the sense of creating new patterns of world legitimation. *The religious order* in which premodern people blindly believed turns into and dissolves into *a secular order* based on the plurality of social choices within the confines of everyday human life. The process of secularization further results in highlighting the role of *the individual*, who is increasingly left to himself. Individualization, therefore, gradually changes collective patterns from which social reality is legitimized. Ultimately, this leads to 'trust in tradition itself,' which, as an ontological pattern, determines the meaningfulness of the *premodern* person, resulting in a sense of overall *security* characteristic of these societies.

The era of 'radicalized consequences of modernity,' from the perspective of ontological security narratives, draws its 'legitimacy' (Blumenberg) from entirely

24 Inglehart, Ronald, (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton University Press

25 Ibid., pp. 103-104.

26 Simmel, Georg (1972). *On Individuality and Social Forms*

contrary characteristics compared to those typical of premodern cultures. Ontological security becomes *ontological insecurity*, which in a broad sociological sense can be expressed through the metaphor, '*Moloch of modernity*.'

According to Giddens, when discussing modernity, we can identify three key images. The first *image of the world*—using Martin Heidegger's stylization—is the one we owe to Max Weber. This involves a sociological figuration based on the concept of rationalisation through the dimension of differentiation and social fragmentation of sectors of social reality. Within the being of modernity itself, the thesis of expert systems is latently "embedded." Knowledge, from an epistemological perspective, that is considered *acceptable* is specific, clearly differentiated, and unique, placed within the 'iron cage of bureaucratic rationalization.'

The second image of modernity, which sociology inherits from Karl Marx, is based on a "picture that views modernity as a monstrosity"<sup>27</sup>, where capitalist production with its powerful *irrational* potential for legitimizing the new world dominates. In this image of *modernity*, sociological problems such as alienation, primitive accumulation of capital, mass impoverishment of the proletariat, and the need for radical secularization of the spheres of social life are predominant.

According to Giddens, in the pursuit of understanding ontological security in the contemporary world, the two aforementioned images are no longer acceptable as lenses through which to comprehend what is currently happening within modernity itself. Therefore, Giddens proposes a *third image* of modernity, which is reflected in the figure and metaphorology of *Moloch*. This image of modernity corresponds to what can and should be understood as *ontological insecurity*. Under *the Moloch of modernity*, we refer to:

*"A running machine of exceptional power, which as humans we can collectively manage, but which can at any moment break free from control and fall to its own will. The term comes from Hindi as Jagannath 'lord of the world' and as a title for Krishna. Moloch crushes those who oppose it and often follows paths that cannot be predicted. (...) Moloch represents an ambivalent image of modernity, i.e., ontological security and anxiety that must coexist."*<sup>28</sup>

Sociological determination of modernity as *Moloch* implies an entire social epistemology, i.e., the fact that Moloch is the result of multidimensional, often divergent currents within modernity itself, which as a construct can only be reached through some form of '*unified political economy of practice*'<sup>29</sup> thus, a model of *praxeological knowledge* that transcends the boundaries of sociology itself. *Moloch of modernity*, according to our understanding, should be interpreted more

27 Ibid., p. 138.

28 Ibid., p 139

29 Bourdieu, Pierre & Wacqount, Loic, J.D (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Polity Press. Chicago.

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as an *epistemological and cultural category*, rather than exclusively than the *institutional* category that Giddens continuously emphasizes as the most important.

The issue of *Moloch of modernity*, therefore, corresponds to Beck's demand for 'self-confrontation of humanity with the consequences of the risk society' in the sense that Moloch is the result of humanity's intervention in *nature* through technology and science, according to the Descartes/Bacon imperative embedded in the essence of the Modern Age. The key characteristic of *Moloch of modernity* is hidden in the second part of the previously cited definition. It concerns the fact that *Moloch*, at a certain historical moment, can become *an intelligent being* that humanity will no longer be able to control, and whose consequences for humanity will be apocalyptic. The scenarios from the cult film series *Terminator* seem to be an adequate indicator of what could realistically happen.

Giddens' formulation of *Moloch of modernity*, as he articulated it, can be considered somewhat limited. In our view, while the metaphor of *Moloch of modernity* is not only adequate and acceptable, but needs to be further *radicalized*. The situation produced globally by the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 illustrates the true direction in which sociology needs to deepen this depiction of modernity. Once even the smallest part of *Moloch*, due to various circumstances, turns against humanity, the consequences become difficult to control, and predicting 'what could be a new danger in the future' becomes almost impossible. The dominance of *the Moloch* metaphor signifies the dominance of the *ontology of insecurity*, where fear becomes paranoid and drives 'irrational actions' in situations with their ultimate rational sources. However, objectively speaking, Giddens addresses the issue of *Moloch* in a rather softened manner, considering his own thesis about trust in expert scientific systems, which are not supposed to allow for apocalyptic-scale disasters.

#### 4.0 *Liquid Modernity* by Zygmunt Bauman in the Context of *Ontological (In)Security*

In the lecture *Liquid Modernity: Revisited*<sup>30</sup>, held at the prestigious Aarhus University in Denmark, Zygmunt Bauman identifies two key problems with Lyotard's concept of "*postmodernity*" relating it to its own sustainability. On the one hand, the term "*postmodernity*" in Lyotard's study is defined *ex negativo* — meaning that Lyotard continuously tells us what *postmodernity is not*, and thus fails to provide sufficient positive understanding of what it actually is. On the other hand, the concept of *postmodernity* implies that *modernity* is an idea that has negated itself in the dialectical path of 'the authentic manifestation of spirit in the historical World' (to use a Hegelian allusion), suggesting that we live in an epoch that *follows* modernity. Like Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman

30 Bauman, Zygmunt (2015). *Liquid Modernity Revisited*, Aarhus Lectures in Sociology. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QVSisK440w>. Accessed on 14.4.2020 at 11:10.

does not accept ‘postmodernity’ as a ‘measuring device’ (Nietzsche) to assess the state of modernity and determine the ‘diagnosis of the epoch’ (Dubiel).

Bauman sees the solution to this ‘nominalistic problem’ of reflexive sociology in a new terminological coinage that, unlike Lyotard’s, is somewhat broader and more open to the porous and fragile understandings of the modern world, from a limited philosophical and sociological perspective. The term *liquid modernity* in this context, naturally ‘reacts’ to the question of ‘*ontological (in)security*’ as an issue that unquestionably figures as the key question to which all modern thought can be reduced. *Liquid modernity*, strictly speaking, can be read through two *key* lenses. The first key is in the context of a ‘new position in theoretical sociology,’ oriented towards the praexological overcoming of the stereotypes of classical sociology. This parallels Ulrich Beck’s work and situates itself within the narrative of the ‘scientific *crisis* of sociology.’ The second key is oriented towards a systemic understanding of ‘*ontological (in)security*’ through the lens of *fear* as a central category of the modern world. In the study *Liquid Fear*, from his *Liquid series*, Bauman writes:

*“We have all heard stories of cowards who become fearless fighters when faced with ‘real danger,’ when they finally encounter the trouble they have been anticipating day after day, unsuccessfully trying to imagine it. Fear is most terrifying when it is diffuse, scattered, unclear, unanchored, in free movement, without a clear target or cause, when it haunts us without visible meaning or purpose, when the threat we should be afraid of can be sensed everywhere but seen nowhere. ‘Fear’ is the name we give to uncertainty: our ignorance of the threat and what to do —what we can and cannot do—to stop it in its tracks - to defend ourselves if we cannot stop it.”*<sup>31</sup>

Ontological (in)security, thus, emerges from the depths of historical time as a central theme of ‘liquid modernity’ and presents itself as a *conditio sine qua non* for its understanding. Essentially, the concept of ‘liquid modernity’ from the perspective of ‘ontological insecurity’ is tied to the concept of *precariat* as a trend of insecurity expressed in the categories of transformed and newly accommodated conditions of social labour. However, before analysing this proposition, let us highlight the ‘general sociological potential’ of *Liquid Modernity*.

Liquid Modernity is an alternative to the concept of *postmodernity*, in which “fluidity is positioned as the leading metaphor of the current stage of the modern world.”<sup>32</sup> Logically, the metaphor of *fluidity* corresponds to its opposite expressed in the metaphor of *solidity*. According to Zygmunt Bauman, when we talk about ‘classic industrial modernity,’ we refer to what can be terminologically encompassed by the term “*solid modernity*”. The sociological characteristics of the transformation from *solid to liquid phases of modernity* are articulated in *five* key

31 Bauman, Zygmunt (2010). *Tekući stah* [Liquid Fear], (Novi Sad, Mediterran Publishing), p. 10.

32 Bauman, Zygmunt (2011). *Tekuća modernost* [Liquid Modernity], (Zagreb, Pelago), p. 9.

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concepts within the domain of ‘social science,’ specifically in the areas of: emancipation, individuality, time/space, work, and community.

When discussing the sociological ‘portrait’ of solid modernity, we are referring to a stage of modernity based on a culture of inherent *trust* both in the social system and in *other* people. Solid modernity is characterized by precise and clear contours within which the ‘interpretation’ of the world is clearly ‘represented’ before individuals. Thus, its position is firmly based on the process of producing *social solidarity*, which emanates from *social differentiation* through technological rationalization and the dominance of the discourse of ‘scientific knowledge’ (Lyotard). Culture, understood in a broad socio-anthropological sense, and the symbolic reproduction of social values within the framework of solid modernity, are central sources of social solidarity. An inattentive reader might easily draw the incorrect conclusion that, according to Bauman, the contours of solid modernity consistently realize Durkheim’s dream of “solidarity through diversity.”

*Fluid modernity* erodes all the reliable values of the traditional world, openly projecting and propagating a diabolical plan for the “enslavement of society by the individual.” In fluid modernity, society is enslaved by the individual, but this does not mean that hypostatization and radical reification—ultimately surrendering to Moloch—are completed within this process. According to Bauman, there is no doubt that Norbert Elias’s concept of a *society of individuals*<sup>33</sup> is the only meaningful formulation for the sociology of the future. However, is there genuine freedom in the act of this enslavement, and should Herbert Marcuse’s question be read in reverse: *how can society be liberated from the individual?*<sup>34</sup>

Marcuse’s “cry” echoes through the abysses of solid modernity—what has irretrievably been left in the past. This “drama of individuality” transcends the individual as a completed subject, positioning him in a moment of *incompleteness*, as described in Goffman’s biographical sketches, which do not accept a final identity. Ultimately, this leads to the “crisis” of the nation-state and its transformation into a global community bound by the vertical axis of spatial-temporal distancing. Zygmunt Bauman, following Cornelius Castoriadis, agrees with the premises that the “diabolical” nature of contemporary society, with its absolute dominance of *ontological insecurity*, correlates with the “lack of capacity for self-criticism within contemporary society itself.”<sup>35</sup> In contrast to the individual, fluid modernity society, in pursuit of some kind of *background ontology*, views itself as completed, without the need for self-examination and self-criticism.

Thus, solid modernity, as if within itself, hid the “guarantees” of its own historical “self-sustainability” and significance, as if it knew it would one day be the

33 Norbert, Elias et al. (2003). *The Society of Individuals*

34 Marcuse, Herbert. *The Individual in The ‘Great Society’*

35 Zygmunt Bauman. *Individual and society in the liquid modernity*

subject of sociological investigation into the transformation of epochs, and that in the form of five “icons”<sup>36</sup> of its own residuality: 1. the Fordist factory, 2. bureaucracy, 3. the Panopticon, 4. Big Brother, 5. concentration camps. Here, “solid modernity” stands out with its own “dark side”: *a tendency towards totalitarianism*. In this sense, Bauman finds the insights of classical critical theory of society particularly important. He writes:

*“That modernity was a sworn enemy of contingency, diversity, ambiguity, stubbornness, and individual uniqueness, and against all such ‘anomalies’ declared a holy war to the point of extermination; and according to general expectation, as the first victims of this crusade, freedom and autonomy of the individual were to fall.”*<sup>37</sup>

The glory of the “solid” world thus ended in a war that led to self-extinction. In this act, the superior dominance of society over the individual was completed, and a new era of the modern world was opened. Unlike solid modernity, where the enemy was clearly identified and dangers were well-known, *fluid modernity* is dominated by *informational rationality*, the individual’s “fears” are confined within the contours of individuality and left to what, as Gaston Bachelard would say, lies “beyond the doorstep where *the world beats*”. The Fordist factory, as a paradigm of the “secure workplace,” has been replaced by a new type of social *labour*, characteristic of the transnational global world—a type of work *behind the laptop* that can be done from home, characterized by the absence of fundamental existential security, with even minimal guarantees of job preservation.

In fluid modernity, the “*unholy trinity*”<sup>38</sup> of insecurity, uncertainty, and vulnerability reigns. This more detailed quote from Baumann elaborates on the form of ontological insecurity in question:

*“The title of the lecture given in December 1997 by one of the most insightful analysts of our time, Pierre Bourdieu, was ‘Le précarité est aujourd’hui partout’ [‘Insecurity is Everywhere Today’]. The title said it all: instability, instability, and vulnerability are the most widespread characteristics of today’s living conditions (and the ones we feel most acutely). French theorists speak of précarité, German scholars use Unsicherheit and Risikogesellschaft, Italian theorists refer to incertezzi, and English speakers use insecurity — but they all refer to the same aspect of human position, experienced in different forms and under different names around the world, though it is particularly irritating and depressing in the highly developed and wealthy parts of the planet — because it is new and in many ways unprecedented. The phenomenon that all these terms attempt to understand and formulate is a blend of experiencing insecurity (regarding position, rights, and income), uncertainty (concerning their future existence and stability), and*

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

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*vulnerability (of one's body, self, and their extensions: property, neighbourhood, community).*"<sup>39</sup>

What we recognize as Zygmunt Bauman's concept of *ontological insecurity* operates differently, as a heuristic capacity of understanding that we need to possess regarding this phenomenon. On one hand, it might appear that Bauman's definition of the term is somewhat *narrower* compared to, for instance, those found in the works of Giddens and Ulrich Beck. On the other hand, we can argue that it represents *the broadest* definition of ontological insecurity. In the life of contemporary individuals, everything gradually becomes *fluid*, and connections and bonds that once made sense are transformed into *risks* arising from the everydayness of human life. Simply put, risks are no longer "somewhere out there," "in the other," and far from us; they can no longer be identified or recognized, making contemporary life a mere "walk through a minefield." This is a metaphor Bauman has used in several public appearances to explain to a broader audience the conditions of life in liquid modernity. Its meaning is that we know we are facing a minefield (a life full of risks), but we do not have a map indicating where the mines (risks) are located, so we can never be sure when we will activate a mine (risk).

*Ontological (in)security* thus dominates as an emotionalist concept ingrained in every individual, with the aim of proliferating awareness of potential fears and risks that, once activated, can have apocalyptic proportions. The crisis in the contemporary world, caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic (regardless of its origin), is one of the indicators that Zygmunt Bauman correctly reasoned about the processes shaping modernity in its current phase. On a global scale, the key consequence of this crisis, beyond the health system, will affect the world economy. The rich will become richer, and the poor even poorer. These consequences will be worse than the effects of the virus itself, and unlike the virus, no living being on Earth will be spared. Liquid modernity will become even more fluid, losing even the grain of "viscosity" that made it, at least at times, somewhat meaningful.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The issue of *ontological (in)security*, given the sociological ramifications of the COVID-19 virus, will undoubtedly become a central question in 21<sup>st</sup> century sociology. At some point, considering the development within the humanities and social sciences, it seemed that questions such as security, uncertainty, pauperization, and precarity were slowly but surely becoming things of the past, as if we had already addressed them thoroughly. In this sense, there was an absolute relinquishment of the "scientific helm" to *natural scientists*, from whom we expected to get answers when problems emerged. However, due to the impact of

<sup>39</sup> Bauman Zygmunt (2011): *Tekuća modernost* [Liquid Modernity], (Zagreb, Pelago), p. 156.

the COVID-19 virus, trust in the “expert systems” of natural sciences has failed entirely, redirecting the global scientific community towards modes of understanding *ontological (in)security* through the perspective of idiographic sciences.

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate that: 1) It is important to highlight that leading figures in the humanities and social sciences have addressed the problem of *ontological (in)security*. Sociologists and philosophers in the era of ‘high modernity’ were not “asleep” and ignoring this phenomenon but actively engaged in thinking about and understanding ontological (in)security as a key issue of the present, and something we will have to confront in the near future. 2) We aimed to point out that ‘risks’ in the contemporary world always and necessarily become *global* and highly mobile. Thus, we emphasized that no one is spared from the apocalyptic consequences of risks once they are activated, and it should not surprise us that the key metaphor for understanding risks in the contemporary world is *the boomerang* metaphor. The concepts of *reflexivity* and *self-reflexivity* thus dominate as key concepts within contemporary sociology. 3) We aimed to show that global risks can only be scientifically understood through the lens of methodological pluralism based on the transdisciplinary nature of contemporary humanities and social sciences. Closing oneself off from ‘disciplinary exclusivism’ in relation to the phenomenon of ontological (in)security can be interpreted exclusively as an arrogant and ignorant stance towards the very essence of the humanities and social sciences, given their status in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the above we also aimed to show that the issue of ontological (in)security, in the broadest sense, is inextricably linked with the problem of *modernity*. The authors we used as a reference framework (Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Zygmunt Bauman) have confirmed this fact very clearly. Understanding ontological (in)security is possible only through correctly perceiving the nature of the definition of modernity. In this sense, modernity is a comprehensive term from which modalities of understanding *reality* emerge, thereby opening the possibility for the development of ‘new methodological positions.’

In this regard, one limitation of this paper that we are fully aware of, is that it can be interpreted as the overly concise analysis of the mentioned authors. However, the tendency was to highlight only those aspects of the philosophical and sociological thinking of these authors that correlate with the phenomenon of ontological (in)security. A broader analysis of the scientific positions mentioned should be reserved for another study, which would need to be objectified in the form of a book. Therefore, the ideas presented here should be understood as a draft for more extensive and deeper reflections on the posed problems.

Despite the differences among the three *frameworks for sociology* focused on understanding ontological (in)security discussed here, we aimed to show that within sociology of the 20th century, there was a continuity in reflection on this

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important issue. Each of the highlighted authors has indicated, in their own way, the direction in which fundamental questions of social reality construction should be considered. The conclusion is unanimous: any contemporary sociological theory that does not incorporate the questions of *ontological (in)security* at some point in its development is incomplete, and all “theoretical” constructions resulting from “sociological imagination” are ultimately in vain. Here, one might use the criticism that social anthropologists once directed at Claude Lévi-Strauss,<sup>40</sup> which was that Lévi-Strauss often indulged in the charms and elegance of “formal logic” in the process of constructing structural anthropology, leading to the negation and misinterpretation of some given *reality*.

Contemporary sociologists must avoid falling into *the trap of sociological imagination* and the allure of speculative “logic” about the nature of societies; they must necessarily address the “fateful” question of *ontological (in)security*. This does not mean turning towards “folk sociology.” On the contrary, any understanding of “ontological (in)security” that is reduced to “folk sociology”, as some (particularly Balkan) sociologists tend to do, can be at best merely *destructive*. Sociology, like other humanistic and social sciences, must maintain its theoretical *credo—its own intellectual nature*. In this sense, sociologists have the right and luxury to be linguistically complex in their theoretical gymnastics, even if their vernacular languages render them obscure.

The theme of *ontological (in)security*, given all that has been discussed, can be best expressed through Beck’s metaphor of the “*volcano of civilization*”, which ultimately encompasses and summarizes all relevant categories for understanding this phenomenon in concrete human life. Dominant among these is the concept of ‘uncertainty’ and the fear of encountering the unknown, which is inevitable. The events related to the exponential progression of the COVID-19 virus on a global scale have affirmed the thesis of *ontological (in)security* and compelled the global scientific community to refocus on fundamental questions relevant to human life. As it has turned out, these questions cannot be fully understood without the role that humanistic and social sciences must play, given the diverse complexity of the issues.

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<sup>40</sup> Pace, David, *AN EXERCISE IN STRUCTURAL HISTORY: An Analysis of the Social Criticism of Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Penn State University Press

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The Skill of Understanding  
Reality in Today's 'Technical'  
and 'New Technology' World

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## Summary

*One of the most current topics today is the topic of technique, and the progress of new technologies and their relationship to man and the world in which he builds life and reality. In this thematic framework, based on the philosophy of technique and technology, the text analyses and questions the meaning of the concept of technique, which originated in the Greek term *Techné*, and man's position in the new age. In this way, we need to get to know and deal with this term, which gives meaning to today's term 'technique'. There exists also an obligation to understand them properly, which stems from the inadmissible use of the terms *techné*, *technique* and *technology* as synonyms. Examining the meaning of the subject of technique and new technologies is necessarily connected to the issues of man, knowledge, and reality. In the process of examining the meaning of the above, the text recognizes, reveals, and defines the understanding of *techné* as a departure point for understanding the phenomenon of technology, from which the question of truth and knowledge is determined as being a determinant of the entire human reality. An integral part of the reality of modern man, first of all, is technique and technical achievements in which technology transforms fields that concern every segment of man and society. Techniques, new technologies, the world and human reality and the very relationship of man to that world cannot be ignored, so dealing with these issues is an opinion that necessarily applies to us.*

*Keywords: reality, *techné*, technique, technology, knowledge*

## Introduction

The necessity and importance of contemplating the issue of modern technology and technical achievements in the modern age is evident in the fact that today's person can hardly imagine their life without technology. The questions surrounding technology and its achievements cannot be neglected or avoided. So, how is it possible not to think about what influences our perception of reality? The development of technology and the accelerated progress in the modern, technical world leave little room or choice not to be part of the technical world. In this world, we must consider what technology can do to individuals and society as a whole. We must ask ourselves and others: what are the positive and negative aspects of technology? We must always be challenged to critically reflect on the issue of technology, and think in terms of critically observing the issue of technology. The only way to achieve this is through contemplating the concept to which today's notion of technology owes its meaning. Therefore, we speak of the Greek concept of *techné*<sup>1</sup>, whose meaning must be distinguished from today's concept

1 "Typically, *Techné* is translated as art, a term that encompasses multiple meanings. It refers not only to the fine arts but to any technical skill where the perfection of the activity does not primarily lie in the activity itself but in the work. On the other hand, technology, as it is generally

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of technology. It should be noted that in the modern, technical age, the synonymous use of the Greek term *techne* and the term technology, as we understand it today is absolutely unfounded, inadmissible, and, in a certain sense, dangerous.

Working to clarify the misuse of the terms *techne* and technology means returning to the meaning of the term *techne* as it was used and understood by the Greeks. We then need to work on how to correctly understand, positively use, and address the challenges we face in the world of technology, while creating conditions for promising development and useful application of technical means. We are certainly aware (though perhaps not to what extent) that the development of technology and technological achievements undoubtedly shape and transform our world—the “world into which we are thrown.” The most reliable, and I believe the only possible way for accurate, clear, and articulate interpretation of the phenomenon of technology to which we are forcibly exposed is to understand the meaning of the term *techne* and to define its meaning in the thought of Martin Heidegger, who returns to the original meaning of this term, that is, the meaning that *techne* had in ancient Greece. Therefore, it is important to note that Heidegger, in elucidating the meaning of the term *techne*, shows that it does not mean anything technical. This is where the essential importance of referring to the meaning of the term *techne* lies, as well as the necessary understanding of this meaning, regardless of the perspective from which we reflect on and view technological progress, the modern world, the development and dominance of technology, the transformations it has brought, as well as the scientific fields and human position in the real world. That *place*, so to speak, can only be the relationship between thought and knowledge in the world of modern technic and technology.

The Greek usage of the word *techne* is based on understanding this concept as knowledge. Therefore, as Heidegger has shown, unlike *techne*, technology can conceptually, only involve that which is making and using what has already been made. According to this understanding of the meanings of *techne* and technology, we must also understand the modern world of technic and technology if we do not want (and consciously do not want) to fall into the trap of technic and technology ruling over thought and the fundamental determination of humanity, evident in production rather than in the use of the produced. The validity of these guidelines is certainly demonstrated in what we call reality, the life-world. This is where it can be clearly seen that the question of technology, as well as humanity’s

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used today, is the name given to any specific artifacts that result from the use of these technical skills. Furthermore, the concept of technology as a whole carries the connotation of continuous improvement of the products of technical skill, development, and progress. In contemporary usage, the term often specifically refers to those products that emerged from the industrial revolution, i.e., modern technology, products that run on electric power. Therefore, if we understand *techne* to mean art in a broader sense, it seems that it does not exclude this contemporary general meaning of technology.” in Kempe, Brian. “*Techne, Physis, and Technology: Aristotle and Heidegger.*”

relationship to technic and technology, is not tied to any specific time or just to any particular individual. On the contrary, the question of technology is a question that concerns each time, individual, and society. Furthermore, the question of technology and advanced technologies concerns everyone on the planet today. In this context, technology cannot be considered a neutral force, but rather one that participates in shaping the meaning of our world. We are also therefore justified in addressing the possibility of *understanding globalization, on which the fate of our planet depends*. Thus, since we are dealing with the fundamental questions concerning the world we live in, addressing these issues is the task of philosophy, specifically the questions of the world and humanity and their relationship. This also defines the task of metaphysics, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. Therefore, understanding what technic and technology have evolved from, namely the Greek concept of *techne*, must be posed as the first question in contemplating technic and advanced technologies of today. Parallel to these definitions is the role of the *philosopher of technology, or techno-science*.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Is the philosophy of technique and technology one of the major philosophical problems or is it not a topic of philosophy at all?

According to the fact that philosophy's interest in the philosophy of technique and technology did not arise at the same time as the philosophy of technology itself, the question arises as to whether and to what extent the issue of technique and technology is a philosophical problem at all. This question highlights how issues concerning the philosophy of technique and technology have always been an integral part of the essential questions that philosophy addresses. The philosophy of technology as we know it today is linked to the ancient period, specifically to the Sophistic, Socratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian meanings and uses of the term *techne*. Questions of essence, knowledge, the world, humanity, action, truth, goodness, experience, spirit, being, art, etc., are questions that predominantly dominate philosophy's questions and its possible answers. This demonstrates how and to what extent philosophy has always included the question of the meaning and use of the term *techne*, which provides meaning to today's concept of technology. Therefore, it is particularly important to note that philosophy, as is evident, does not approach the question of technic and technology from the position of an observer, but from the position of a participant, from the very beginning of thought, in which there is a possibility for the foundation and development of these questions: "Without this participant observation, the philosopher would never have been able to engage with the developmental stages of technologies, which he asserts are equally, if not more important than the stages

<sup>2</sup> Ihde, Don (2004): *Philosophy of technology*, Netherlands: Springer, pp. 91-108.

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of responses that deal with existing technologies and their effects.”<sup>3</sup> Just as the question of humanity and the world is undoubtedly a philosophical problem, so it is clear that the philosophy of technique and technology, i.e., the philosophy that reflects on humanity’s relationship and its place in the world of technology and advanced technologies, is, if not the greatest, then one of the major problems of philosophical thought. And this indeed arises from the grounded and logical structure of questions that originally belong to philosophy, meaning there is nothing absurdly strange about it. What is strange, on the other hand, is why the question of technic and technology is not quite obvious as a philosophical problem requiring precise metaphysical intervention. Indeed, the philosophy of technology and the philosophy of new technological achievements have always, in a certain way, been, although clearly not under this name, an integral part of the “big” philosophical problems and questions of metaphysics. It is undisputed that philosophy addresses both humanity and the world, as well as the relationship between them. How, then, is it possible to question philosophy’s crucial role in addressing humanity’s contemporary world of technology and science? It is quite clear that technologies are not neutral and that, as means to achieve certain goals, they themselves have goals, and these goals, for technologies as entities that have significance for our formation of our images of the world, cannot be *the same for all technology*. This is shown by both the emergence and the development of technology and modern technologies.

“Subject-specific studies that highlight certain sub-divisions of philosophy, usually discipline-oriented, began to appear with G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831). The first explicit title using the term philosophy of technology comes from Ernest Kapp’s (1808-1896) book *Grundlinien der Philosophie der Technik (Foundations of the Philosophy of Technology)* from 1877. Kapp was one of the ‘left Hegelians,’ as was Karl Marx (1818-1883), who also stands at the beginning of what was to become the philosophy of technology as a thematic, sub-disciplinary area within philosophy. This does not mean that previous history of philosophy had not paid attention to technologies; Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who is often cited as the pioneer of the philosophy of technology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has the tendency to include the classical Greek interest in *techne* as part of this history. It is interesting to note that the period in ancient times that most closely approaches what was later identified as the birth of modern science (in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), remains largely neglected even by major narrative philosophers – this is the period of ‘techno-science’ of the later ancient, Hellenistic, or Alexandrian period of the second and first centuries BCE.”<sup>4</sup> In line with the above, a major challenge faced by those engaged in the philosophy of technique and technology lies in the broad field of research within this young domain, as well as in the ongoing *struggle*

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

to justify the already well-established, philosophical engagement with technology. For this, one needs knowledge and skill, understanding and critical engagement with the new questions that define one's world. "Regarding philosophy, the philosophy of technology is a relatively young field. The main branches of philosophy date back more than 2200 years. The philosophy of science was, in fact, addressed, if not by name, by most early modern philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the mid-nineteenth century, several physicists and philosophers had produced works that focused exclusively on the philosophy of science. Only occasionally were there major philosophers who had much to say about technology, such as Bacon around 1600 and Marx in the mid-nineteenth century. Most 'great philosophers' of this period, although they had much to say about science, said little about technology. Assuming that technology is simply the application of science and that technology is good, most philosophers felt there was not much interest there. The romantic tradition of the late eighteenth century was pessimistic about science and technology."<sup>5</sup>

Understanding, interpretation, and participation are determinants of the skill of explaining the meaning of specific content, experience, or the way in which a person *exists* and *knows* in the world. More precisely, this involves understanding the *human being in the world*, existence, survival, and mortality. This determinant is extremely important, as it can be said to reveal the meaning of beginnings. "... there is another, far more hidden predecessor, something that existed before any written transmission, before epic literature, as well as before the pre-Socratics, namely the language spoken by the Greeks. Language is one of the greatest enigmas in the history of humanity."<sup>6</sup> The mentioned determinant is important because it may be the closest to what we can name as revealing the truth about human beings, —beings of production and construction that lead toward knowledge. For understanding, interpretation, production, and human participation in the world, the Greek concept of *techne* is originally linked, to the modern concept of technology, which owes its meaning through all its changes and developments. The unity in which existence occurs, where human *to be* is situated, is in the unity of space and time, as demonstrated in the meaning of reality. According to Casey,<sup>7</sup> the modern world is, in all likelihood, technological or has reached the point where we must accept as fact that: the concept of technology permeates modern thought and that technology is simply applied science and, as such, is covered by the philosophy of science. So, can we frame it this way: *metaphysics is not only in our heads* but also consists of actual technical aspects? Furthermore, in the context of the meaning of *techne*, where the Greeks took *techne* as a

5 Dusek, Val, (2006): *Philosophy of technology: An introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1.

6 Gadamer, Hans-Georg, (2000): *Početak filozofije*, Zagreb: Biblioteka Scopus, pp. 13.

7 Casey, Timothy Kevin (1986). *Technology And the Rise of Technique, Techne, Modern, Plato, Karl Marx, Heidegger*, (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University).

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*model of being in theory, we have transformed beings technically into practice.*<sup>8</sup> The process of movement, then space and time, are what constitute reality. Understanding this reality defines the beginning of the meaning of knowledge itself. “The first form in which truth exists can only be its scientific system. Collaborate on bringing philosophy closer to the form of science—the goal is for it to shed its name as the love of knowledge and become real knowledge... The internal necessity for knowledge to be science lies in its nature, and the only satisfactory explanation of this is a presentation of philosophy itself.”<sup>9</sup>

All that has been discussed in this section of the research now allows us to address the possible answer to the question: Is the philosophy of technique and technology one of the major philosophical problems or is it not a topic of philosophy at all? In the sense that the philosophy of technology is not at all a topic of philosophy absolutely, it is unfounded to assert so, based on the established points. As literature has shown, the issues that can be identified as belonging to the research field we now call the philosophy of technology and the world of advanced technologies, which have historically engaged the thoughts of philosophers (albeit not under this name), it is reasonable to accept, therefore, the fact that the philosophy of technology is one of the major philosophical problems. It is also reasonable to accept then that the questions arising from this field are fundamental to the philosophies of existence, hermeneutics, phenomenology, ethics, and politics. Different philosophical approaches from various perspectives on the philosophy of technology (e.g., phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethics, existentialism, political philosophy, pragmatism, postmodernism, etc.) continually raise questions in which the possibility of recognizing technology as an issue that is originally and inseparably tied to philosophy itself arises.

## 2. Production vs. Use of Existing Knowledge

The 20th century’s philosophical schools have contributed to defining the framework and content of the philosophy of technology. Through various approaches and perspectives to the issues of the philosophy of technology and the modern technological world, certain aspects of M. Heidegger’s philosophy have been highlighted, which involve new readings and interpretations of his 1953 essay *The Question Concerning Technology*. Thus, referencing Heidegger is essential when thinking about the field of the philosophy of technic and technology. However, it is equally important to note that certain segments of Heidegger’s overall thought and work are necessary when we contemplate a field as broad as the philosophy of technology, with the focus, in accordance with the research theme,

<sup>8</sup> More details in: Feenberg, Andrew (2009). *What is philosophy of technology?* Brill. In International handbook of research and development in technology education, pp. 159-166.

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friederich (1986): *Fenomenologija duha*, Beograd: BIGZ, pp. 5.-6.

on emphasizing the return to the meaning of the Greek concept *techne*, compared to today's concept of technology. In short, this is making the distinction between production originally tied to the meaning and use of the concept for the Greeks vs. the use of ready-made tools, which characterizes today's concept of technology. Why is this a fundamental issue in the realm of questions concerning the philosophy of technology and advanced technologies today? Because in a world that is increasingly technical and moving towards planetary technological dominance, and where we deal with the question of man and his relation to the world of reality, there is a danger that threatens the erasure of human essence, which is manifested in production rather than in the use of something already made.

In understanding the meaning of the concept of *techne*, Heidegger revisits and adopts its Greek meaning and usage. Additionally, the negative connotation associated with the concept of the technical and technology is neither a result of nor a legacy of Heidegger's thought; that is, returning to his philosophy and emphasizing its significance does not imply any opposition to technique and technological achievements. The undeniable significance of Heidegger's thought in the field of the philosophy of technology is reflected in his approach to and understanding of the concept of *techne*, and its differentiation from and inappropriate synonymous use with today's concept of technology. The field from which technology emerges is the field of *techne*. This means that Heidegger's thought is related to the meaning of *techne* as a skill in production and the ability to create something new. Such an exploration of the meaning of *techne* points to its original association with the concepts of *episteme* and *poiesis*, and thus means to be adept or knowledgeable in something, to produce according to specific rules and regulations. The concept of today's technology owes its meaning precisely to the concept of *techne*, which not only signifies the work of a craftsman or artist but originally pertains to what is *poiesis*.

“Technique is not the same as the essence of technique. If we seek the essence of a tree, we must notice that what permeates every tree as a tree is not just a tree among other trees. Similarly, the essence of technology is absolutely not anything technical. Thus, we never test our relationship to the essence of technology as long as we only present and engage with the technical and only that, as long as we are satisfied with it or avoid it. We are everywhere unfreely bound to technology, whether we passionately affirm it or deny it.”<sup>10</sup>

Heidegger's discourse on technology refers to the fate of human history and the instance of the movement of thought. For the transformation of technology, which is possible, the human being is always required, as technology itself cannot achieve this. In this sense, the significance of *techne* is that it represents the

10 Heidegger, Martin (1972): *Uvod u Heideggera: Pitanje o tehnici*. Zagreb: Centar za društvenu djelatnost omladine, p. 91.

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quality of thought, while technology is merely a form in which that thought occasionally appears. Thus, technology itself is an expression of thought, but *it does not think*. In contrast, *techne* is any skill of creation according to rules. This clarifies Heidegger's intention to separate the first meaning of technology from the essence of technology and then to reveal its meaning from the only possible horizon of revelation—the horizon of *techne*, which then becomes a method of disclosure.

“According to the old teaching, essence is what something is. We ask about technology when we ask what it is. What technology is includes the completion and use of tools, equipment, and machines, encompassing only what is completed and used, as well as the needs and purposes it serves. The totality of these devices is technology. It itself is some device. Our instrumental determination of technology thus still does not reveal its essence. To reach it, or at least approach it, we must seek the true through the right path. We must ask: What is this purely instrumental?”<sup>11</sup> Thus, what enables the understanding of the essence of technology is precisely Heidegger's determination of technology from the meaning of *techne*. The revelation of the essence of technology aims to show what constitutes the determination of technology, which means the use of tools (instruments) for specific purposes. In these terms, it is clear that *techne* does not correspond to the meaning of making or using, i.e., the meaning that technology corresponds to. The fundamental determination of *techne* always refers to its original connection to knowledge, and this specific knowledge helps us navigate concrete situations, rather than the knowledge that technology refers to. The meaning of knowledge to which technology points is merely the adoption of already produced knowledge as finished, i.e., such knowledge is exclusively the use of means to achieve a goal. The key determination of technology is that it refers to the adoption of already produced and finished knowledge, thus, knowledge produced by *techne*. Production occurs exclusively in *techne*, never adoption, which is always a method of producing knowledge. At the same time, it must always be kept in mind that *techne* did not arise in the sphere of technology and cannot be interpreted as such, but it arose rather in the sphere of knowledge. Technology neither produces nor reveals knowledge; it merely adopts it. Heidegger's original understanding of technology and the questioning of its essence based on the meaning of the term *techne* identifies him as a pioneer in this field within the history of philosophy.

“When we speak of technology in the Greek sense of the word *techne*, technology is: the knowledge of what is presented. *Techne* signifies a certain kind of knowledge. To present means: something that was not previously presented as obvious, available, and present. This presentation, i.e., the uniqueness of technology, extends in a unique way within the history of Western Europe through the

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp 92.–93.

development of modern mathematical and natural sciences. Their characteristic is technical, which primarily comes to expression through modern physics in its new and real form.”<sup>12</sup>

The essence of technology in Heidegger’s thought is explored through a return to the meaning of the term *techne*, with the emphasis that technology is not viewed in terms of technological achievements. What technology is, as a means-to-an-end, and as a human creation, cannot be the determination of its essence. Therefore, Heidegger returns to pondering the essence, seeking the truth. The instrumental character of technology is shown to be one that does not lead to the essence of technology, although this character is not denied.

“We ask about technology when we ask what it is. Each of us knows both statements that answer our question. One says: technology is a means to an end. The other says: technology is a human creation. Both of these determinations of technology go together. For, setting purposes, acquiring means for them, and using them is a human act.”<sup>13</sup>

The instrumental character of technology determines only the extent that we speak of it as a means to human goals. Therefore, addressing what drives the questioning of the essence of technology, i.e., what is instrumental, is contrary to the intention of thinking in terms of the significance of technological achievements.

“Man’s triple relationship to life is: first, his relation to the world and things; second, his relation to other people, both individuals and groups; third, his relation to the mystery of being, which, though it shines through all this, also infinitely transcends it, which the philosopher calls the absolute and the believer calls God, but which cannot be excluded from his situation by even one who rejects both of these designations.”<sup>14</sup>

The intention of the research conducted here is, among other things, to highlight the significance and need for interpretation. A prime example of this is Arnold Gehlen’s work *Man*, where he understands the focus of his book in the following way:

“It is possible to develop an understanding of the essence of man using – technically speaking – very specific terms that are suitable only for this subject. This research direction is freed when the question is determined: what exactly does the need for interpretation mean? This would be immediately understood if man were a being that finds within himself or with himself *a question* that he must make

12 Heidegger, Martin (2006): *Identitäten und Differenze*, Frankfurt am Mein: Vittorio Klostermann, p. 156.

13 Heidegger, M., “*Pitanje o tehničari*”, *ibid*, p.92.

14 Buber, Martin (1979). *Rani Hajdeger, Recepcija i Kritika Bivstva i vremena: Ostvarenje čoveka*. Beograd: Vuk Karadžić, p. 52.

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understandable or ‘interpret’ in his solitary contemplation. The issue is whether it is possible to develop this perspective in scientific, i.e., empirical analysis of man. Man is not just a being that necessarily, for any, though very particular human reasons, *takes positions*, but is also, in a certain way, ‘unfinished’, i.e., a being confronted with tasks that are given by mere existence but not yet resolved... This writing is both philosophical and scientific. It carefully adheres to the circle of experience, analysis of facts or events that are accessible to everyone or that anyone can confirm again... In any case, it has turned out that the facts described here are viewed only under the assumption of a, if you will, technical restraint from metaphysics. Man is a field of research on which an indefinite number of unseen and unnamed phenomena can still be established today.”<sup>15</sup>

By referencing Gehlen’s determination of man, essential questions of philosophy that we identified at the beginning are pointed out, namely questions about man and the world, and the relationship between them. This reference demonstrates the indispensable need to address not only questions about man and the world but also the contemporary world, dominated by technological advancement. Therefore, addressing questions about man and his world, in which he participates and questions himself and other existences he encounters, falls within the same sphere of questions concerning today’s dominance of information technology, technique, and technological development. These efforts, whose interpretations and understandings play a crucial role here, are shown as the purpose of the research in this work. Addressing the question of man and his position and relationship to the world is the task of philosophy, and our reality presents man in an increasingly technical world, faced with many technological challenges. Hence, the question of man is inseparable from the question of technique, as the world of today’s human life.

Thus, it is now clearer than ever, and hopefully not too late, to refer to the hypothetical title of this research and, based on the demonstrated content, affirming that the problem of technique is not only a topic that undoubtedly belongs to the field of philosophy but also that its problem and questions are one of the major philosophical issues, grounded in the fact that philosophy is concerned with man and his world, and thus the philosophy of technique deals with man and his contemporary *technical world*.

### *Instead of a Conclusion*

Without delay, we must address, critically reflect on, and emphasize the importance of questions concerning the determinants of technique and new technologies as issues that affect everyone on the planet today. Despite extensive research in this field, the ‘question of man’ always remains open and unfinished, and it

<sup>15</sup> Gehlen, Arnold (1990): *Čovjek*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, pp. 8-9.

seems that the situation is the same regarding the question of technique and technological development. Similarly, a significant portion of “philosophy of technology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was done without considering or incorporating it into the philosophy of science.”<sup>16</sup>

Globally, ways of considering our relationship to nature and the world are simultaneously ways of reflecting on human life-relationships with the entirety of reality. This means that in acting and producing, man builds the world in which he necessarily exists and that through his lived relationships with the world and other beings, he reveals his fundamental determination, as well as reality as a whole.

Understanding and interpreting the present, the reality of experience, which is essentially thought, necessarily points to a *hermeneutics of techne*, i.e., the art of interpretation and explanation of meaning. “The term hermeneutics, like many words of Greek origin that have entered our scientific language, covers very different levels of reflection. Hermeneutics primarily refers to the practice involving skill. This hints at the term *techne*. The skill in question is the art of interpretation, explanation, and exposition, and of course, includes the skill of understanding what underlies it and is necessary wherever the meaning of something is not obvious and is ambiguous.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, understanding and interpreting the present and reality certainly requires skill, namely, the continuous return to the meaning of words that originate from Greek, as we seek explanations to understand reality. Understanding as participation in what is a real experience, points to understanding meaning. For Heidegger, particularly for beings, man understands himself and discovers meaning through his existential determination—*care*. The search for and understanding of the world and oneself in the world is the path that leads man to truth and knowledge. This shows that philosophy sees its task in assisting man to understand reality and relate to it interpretively, then in interpreting and analyzing reality with an emphasis on *human dignity*, the development of knowledge and progress of humanity, and the values that contribute to it.

Today, when modern technology and science are among the most serious issues occupying the human mind, it is almost impossible to imagine life and reality without the use of technical means in daily life and business tasks. In this context, the meaning of technology is reflected in the entirety of using devices, where technology itself is also a device, and modern technology and science are methods of revealing the field of making, or using already-produced knowledge. Everything that is already produced knowledge, which technology uses, was produced by *techne*.

16 Dusek, Val (2006): *Philosophy of Technology: an introduction*, ibid. p. 6.

17 Gadamer, Hans-Georg (2002): *Čitanka*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, p. 49.

\*DŽANA RAHIMIĆ RAMIĆ

The Skill of Understanding Reality in Today’s ‘Technical’  
and ‘New Technology’ World

The question of the fundamental relationship between the concept of *techne* as understood and used by the Greeks and *techne* as understood by Heidegger forms a common basis for understanding the essential issues of today, in the world of technology and technical matters. In today's modern and digital world, in the era of information dominance, in understanding the world of technology and new technologies, as well as the human position within that world, perhaps more than ever before, a metaphysical intervention is needed—a salvific intervention, and guidance in understanding the world and identifying ways to navigate the new challenges of technological advancement and technical mastery. The intention here is to shed light on the meaning of the phenomenon of technology and to highlight its foundation in the concept of *techne*, but not to move in a direction that could be understood as being in opposition to technological achievements. Understanding this would result, as Heidegger pointed out, in the crucial preparation of a free relationship with technology, in which the distinction between technology and its essence becomes evident. Therefore, technology, as one of the phenomena of the modern world, along with science, is a fundamental characteristic of the new era.

Engaging with the phenomenon of technology, which is unavoidable in our digitalised world, proves to be one of the fundamental themes and core issues when we are analyzing the essential determinations of human existence and relationships with the world, human life, and reality. This is because *ignoring* technology is not an option. Thus, addressing this subject is a matter of necessity, as Gadamer pointed out, with '*understanding being the intrinsic character of human life itself.*'

With this in mind, the central aim of the research conducted here is to understand the meaning of the metaphysical foundation of modern technology and the significance of knowledge and reality. For such research, the starting point is the meaning of the Greek term *techne* as the origin from which it is only possible to understand the phenomenon of technology that permeates all aspects of modern human life and activity. Our encounter with the issues of technology and new technologies is inevitable, making the study of these topics essential. There is almost no field that technology does not touch and continuously transform, so the metaphysical intervention concerning the topic of technology and new technologies pertains to every segment of modern human life and society as a whole. This clearly demonstrates the significance of understanding the concept that imparts meaning to the notion of technique.

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BOSNIA  N  
S STUDIES  
SARAJEVO

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The Question of Guilt and Forgiveness  
in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Context  
versus the Obscurity of National-Messianic  
Narratives and Mythology

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## Summary

*Humankind, as well as society in its totality, faces various forms of evil and ideological delusions that imprison the mind and bring societies, communities and individuals, into a state of obscurity. This phenomenon stems from the inability or incapacity to find meaning in one's own and others' existence. The previous attitude to Bosnia and Herzegovina thus far, and everything Bosnian, including genocide and aggression, emphasizes the importance of understanding the alienation of man and his tendency to evil. Programs of evil must be recognized as political-ideological constructs, and their moral and critical demystification is necessary, especially in the context of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian reality/present, but also for its future. The Bosnian identity encompasses ideas of goodness, respect, and syncretism. Anti-Bosnian programs of evil, if not adequately interpreted and assessed, can threaten the Bosnia and Herzegovina's long-standing autonomy. It is crucial to analyze and reconstruct the doctrine of national messianism within a broader spiritual-historical context, which includes the transformation of Christian-theological values into secularized political theory. The issue of forgiveness and confronting past injustices is a moral challenge. We must strive to consider the moral importance of facing the truth, regardless of the cost, and ensure that the future is not placed above the past in a way that would diminish the importance of true justice. Theoretically, it is essential to emphasize the rights of the weakest, the arrogance of the powerful, collective evil, and true justice.*

*Keywords: programs of evil, ideology of national messianism, imprisoned mind, radical evil, forgiveness-guilt.*

## Introduction

Human society and humanity in general, are subject to various forms of evil, mental delusions, and ideological captivities. These states arise from the failure or inability to discover the meaning of one's own existence and the value of others. The centuries-old relationship towards Bosnia and all things Bosnian, as well as the past genocide and aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, offer significant insights into understanding human alienation and the tendency towards evil. Programs of evil should be viewed as political-ideological constructs. We must remain consistent and relentless in the moral and critical demystification of all forms of evil, especially regarding the Bosnian-Herzegovinian reality and its surroundings, as well as the anti-Bosnian programs of evil. For these programs to survive, they must accuse others of their immense evil, mental obscuration, and passionate blindness. Without such accusations, they lose their essence and power. The Bosnian identity includes valuable ideas of goodness, respect, and syncretism. If anti-Bosnian programs of evil are not properly interpreted

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ed and assessed, they can significantly threaten the essential content of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and the future of all its citizens. It is crucial to analyze and reconstruct the conceptual determinants of the doctrine of national messianism, placing them in a broader spiritual-historical context, which includes the transformation of Christian theological axiology into secularized political theory. It is also important to address questions regarding the possibility of undoing the evil that has been done, and the morality of forgiveness. We must consider whether injustice and crimes should be left in the past, and who would that benefit? How should we deal with established opinions that attempt to moralize what cannot be adequately expressed? How can we balance the rights of victims with the “rights” of perpetrators? Who today is interested in the truth, regardless of its cost? The question of moral importance, necessity, and indispensability must not be suppressed by the biological aspects of the context. Following the thoughts and assertions of Johan Arne Vetlesen, it should be clearly emphasized that the claim that the future is unconditionally more important than the past is a great untruth and an immorality. Therefore, it is necessary to strive, and to highlight true morality, the rights of the weakest, the arrogance of the powerful, collective evil, the triumph of slave morality, and finally, justice in its full meaning.

When Theodor Adorno emphasized the validity of asking the terrifying question of how it is possible to live after Auschwitz, few could have anticipated that we would be posing similar questions again in the context of new forms of radical evil and its dominance in the world. Evil, deeply rooted in the past and visible in the present, manifests its persistent presence in countless ways, whilst we simultaneously worry about the future and the mimetic forms it may take. Professor Esad Zgodić has written about the experience of evil and absolute crime as a powerful impetus for relentless deconstruction of stereotypical understandings of the world. This includes the deconstruction of national-messianic narratives and myths about missions to liberate one people from another. It is necessary to constantly question how evil, crime, and human suffering and pain continually take on worse and ever more severe forms throughout history. The answer lies in the fact that discourse about peace, the future, and the burden of the past is often conducted without thorough deconstruction of human moral decline and humanity’s ideological delusions. This includes the demystification of ideologies of chosenness and mission, as well as national-messianic conceits, and the deconstruction of war-expansionist narratives.

Today’s narratives often focus on “conflict management,” neglecting the need for a deeper understanding of the rootedness of evil in social substance and its mimetic forms. We are aware that humans are rational beings but also susceptible to ideological delusions. To achieve good or moral integrity through speech, cognition, and action, it is necessary, as Rasim Muminović wrote, to use the resources of language, thought, and practice to reach the essence of things. In this context,

our intellectual effort should be directed towards presenting views on the phenomenology of guilt and forgiveness, and contributing to the deconstruction of the arrogance of national messianic power as a mimetic form of evil.

## The Hermeneutics of the Enslaved Mind: Preventing New Mythical-Maniacal Campaigns

In striving to adequately and ambitiously address and analyze in depth the phenomenon of evil, horrific deeds, crimes, and other forms of inflicted evil, those who dare to reflect on evil are constantly exposed to a certain state of a shock in their efforts. Starting from the question of what evil is and the reasons why people inflict evil upon each other and even upon themselves, we are examining the problem from various angles. Thus, we can speak about the philosophical, legal, sociological, psychological, historical perspectives of the phenomenon of evil itself. Indeed, the banality, fatality, and destructiveness that evil contains, repeatedly leaves the thinker in a state that is simplest to describe as shock.

As we work, we can invoke categorical-conceptual constructs such as the ideologies of nationalism, messianism, sadism, radical evil, the banality of evil, and other constructs that might alleviate the state of shock and bewilderment, or at least partially open the path towards an adequate understanding and explanation of both collective and individual evil.

Very significant are reflections of Immanuel Kant, who wrote essays on the problem of evil<sup>1</sup>, attempting to provide a coherent argument/response to the question of how evil is even possible, and whether good can be achieved despite the reality of evil. This means we necessarily must ask about the origins of the evil committed, about the origins of one's orientation, or as per Kant, one's *inclination towards evil*<sup>2</sup>. Almost without exception, alongside the question of committed evil, there is also the question of the other, most often the victim of that evil. It is important to note that we inevitably encounter symbolic exchanges expressed in forms such as "*chosen group*" "*impure other*"<sup>3</sup>, and other similar constructions. It is extremely important to pay attention to the detail that in "modern" forms of mass crimes. Mechanisms are introduced that emphasize and amplify the distance (all kinds of distance) between the perpetrator and the victim, especially during the commission of the crime, as we saw during both Stanley Milgram's<sup>4</sup>

1 Kant, Immanuel (1990), *Religija unutar granica čistog uma*, BIGZ, Beograd

2 Ibidem

3 Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo, p. 14.

4 Milgram, Stanley (1974), *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, Tavistock Publications Ltd, London

and Philip Zimbardo's<sup>5</sup> research. We wish to highlight a fact that is connected to the thesis that mechanisms, the context of space and time, which create distance between the perpetrator and the victim, can significantly contribute to a higher level of cruelty when crimes are being committed. This is because, in the case of certain crimes, we observe a tremendous intensity of evil, such as in Auschwitz, Bosnia and Herzegovina,<sup>6</sup> Rwanda, Syria, Myanmar (Burma). All of these relates to the thesis that contradicts the view that the distance between the perpetrator and the victim contributes to an increased level of crime and savagery, given the horrifying murders, rapes, abuse of victims, drawing symbols on their bodies, killing unborn babies in their mothers' wombs, severing body parts, burning, and other forms of madness, insanity, fanaticism, rage, and savagery.

Rasim Muminović significantly warns: *“Therefore, as long as the enslaved mind is not illuminated and its protagonists are not stopped in their mythical-maniacal campaign, and while the consciousness of the ‘people’ does not recognize the dangers posed by this, there will be repetitions of genocide”*<sup>7</sup>.

Were the evils and atrocities almost inexpressible by our existing terms possible, without the culmination of perverted consciousness amidst an enormous percentage of a certain population and without the militaristic techniques available to the perpetrators and the victims left at the mercy of their executioners? Undoubtedly, an ideologically possessed, frenzied, and depraved (un)consciousness could carry out its campaign by combining the fanaticism of the majority with the instrumentalization of available techniques of power and evil, as well as the helplessness of the victims. In the context of what has been said, it is possible to reflect upon and highlight the phenomenon of the decisive moment of the third party, the indifference of ordinary people towards committing evil or their adequate response as a decisive moment to prevent evil, and to adequately react to and respond to the evil being committed. Protagonists of the enslaved mind always and everywhere count on the resource of indifference.

Edgar Morin points to a phenomenon related to the naive neglect of the seriousness, sensitivity, and dangers of disregarding the onset of ideological alienation and delusion: *“While official sociology believed it was working on solid ground, I increasingly observed cyclonal depressions forming in the shadows. All those*

5 Zimbardo, Philip (2007), *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, Random House, New York.

6 Čekić, Smail et al. (1999), *Zločini nad Bošnjacima u Srebrenici za vrijeme agresije na Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu 1991-1995., Dokumenti i svjedočenja I*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo; Čekić, Smail (2016), *Dejtonski (mirovni) sporazum – Legalizacija genocida u Republici Bosni i Hercegovini*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo; Kadrić, Jusuf (1998), *Brčko: genocid i svjedočenja*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo

7 Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Zarobljeni um*, Harfo-graf, Tuzla, p. 11.

*phenomena that were dismissed as bizarre and laughable epiphenomena became for me deviations from which new aspirations arise. Where others saw a straw fire, I saw eruptions revealing the disintegration of the structure into the depths of the cultural nucleus of our societies*".<sup>8</sup> Through questioning the essence/context of phenomena, human beings strive to heed the precautionary principle, to avoid falling to "ideological delusions"<sup>9</sup>, and to utilize the potential illuminated by their mind. According to Morin's trail, when pointing to the necessity of deep imagination in relation to the variability of life's complexity, one is on the path to finding a place within the overall fluidity of life's polyphony. Thus, ideological alienation, fanaticism, moral unconsciousness, and messianic delusion, viewed from our perspective, are forms of radical evil or origins of extreme crime. Muminović considers all those who succumb to impulses and negative passions that deny humanity, diversity, and openness to the other and the different, are slaves of negative ideology, characterized by what we call ignorance. But this is aggressive *ignorance* manifested through the rejection of otherness. The moment when the fictions of the enslaved mind combine with the potential of political action, we have a "mythomaniacal arsenal of fictions," "anthropological degeneration," and "collective chaoticness"<sup>10</sup> in which subjects lose all sense of human dignity, which, in the Bosnian context/experience, served as a basis and justification for horrific forms of evil and absolute crime.

The pathological characteristics of the enslaved mind primarily includes egocentrism (predatory behavior) and pronounced mystification (mythomania), which point to a form of immaturity or, as Muminović puts it, "the historical juvenility of its bearers".<sup>11</sup> To what extent does the absence of any sense of human dignity go? How pronounced can the total chaos be? The degree of *atavistic* hatred accompanied by pathological forms of self-delusion are illustrated by examples of the most horrifying forms of radical evil and absolute crime, expressed in terms such as "ethnic cleansing" or "seizing the land of neighbors"<sup>12</sup>, slaughter, humiliation, strangulation, rape, burning, destruction, with the crucial note that this "is not done by nature but by man – a slave to mythomania".<sup>13</sup> The very thought of such a degree of savagery, destruction, crime, and hatred is terrifying. Muminović wonders whether such a person becomes a scarecrow that is almost impossible to place among people. This kind of chaos and amount of evil produces in the slaves of mythomania, such a level of indifference that the most horrendous crimes are viewed, explained, or experienced as a result or consequence of *natural disasters*.

8 Moren, Edgar (1979), *Duh vremena: I Neuroza*, translated from French by Nadežda Vinaver, Beogradski-izdavački zavod, Beograd, p. 6.

9 Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Zarobljeni um...*, p. 5.

10 Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Zarobljeni um...* pp 8-9.

11 Ibidem., p. 9.

12 Ibidem.

13 Ibidem.

If we disregard, if nothing else, the attempt to understand the “unknown evil”<sup>14</sup>, and if we retreat in the face of pseudo-criticism regarding accusations of enslavement to the past, and if we yield to the murmurs of *careerists* and *cowards*, then new barbarians are once again welcomed in a manner in which they were received by those who, powerless, innocent, and being unaware, ended up in mass graves. As if the evils and atrocities almost inexpressible in existing terminology, were possible without the culmination of *pervverted consciousness* in an enormous percentage of a particular population, without the militaristic techniques wielded by the perpetrators and the victims left at the mercy of their executioners? Being inferior to evil is unacceptable in every sense; such inferiority can be equated with acquiescing to it. It is not a question of the path of least resistance; rather, it is a path of the absence of any resistance, consciousness, and self-awareness. Hence, “reconciliation with evil is almost identical to its acceptance”.<sup>15</sup> In processes where the discourse on peace-building is emphasized, the narrative of confronting a conflictual past, when narratives about peace are stressed and promoted, and when there is an effort to cultivate the paradigm of *a culture of peace*, it is entirely incorrect, often insidious, to neglect the necessary and unavoidable confrontations with the phenomenology of the enslaved mind, the essence of evil, manic hatred, cannibalism of the spirit, megalomania, and delusions of grandeur. The primacy of social, legal, and political condemnation of evil and the necessity of deconstructing and demystifying the phenomenology of all forms of mental enslavement and confusion are prerequisites for all meaningful narratives about the future, peace policies, and sustainable visions of the future.

## Ideological Delusion of National Messianism

An appropriate way to address the state of shock when contemplating evil and attempting to understand and clarify its consequences in human society, is to focus the attention of those privileged to think on ideological delusion, the mythical-mythomaniacal narrative that perpetrators of evil use as a main strategy to justify their actions/crimes. The bloody experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the realization of the idea, doctrine, and ideology of national messianism further obliges us to elaborate on the meaning of this form of evil. We owe special gratitude for the “analysis and synthetic reconstruction of the conceptual determinants of the doctrine and ideology of national messianism”<sup>16</sup> of Esad Zgodić, who has attempted to place this phenomenon in a broader spiritual-historical context, hoping to adequately understand the true essence of the ideology of national messianism, national chosenness, and mission. We also owe thanks to Rasim

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Zgodić, Esad (1999), *Ideologija nacionalnog mesijanstva*, Vijeće kongresa bošnjačkih intelektualaca, Sarajevo, p. 16.

Muminović,<sup>17</sup> who, in his works, has pointed out the phenomenon of ideological delusion, the possibility of ideological sobering, the problem of collective chaos, human dignity, and more. When trying to better understanding the ideology of national messianism, it is significant to point out that the emergence and development of this ideology cannot be viewed exclusively through local or regional categories. Considering the character and genesis of the ideologies of national messianism, Esad Zgodić emphasizes: “Narcissistic notions of national messianism are widespread throughout the world and are ideologically produced in the cultures of a large number of peoples, regardless of their territorial or quantitative size, their actual or fictive state power, or their cultural-civilizational identity”.<sup>18</sup> He points out that Balkan programs of national messianism, particularly the Croatian and Serbian messianisms, despite their specificities and provincialisms, are “imitative, in their key definitions”<sup>19</sup>, structural features, and components, place in overall politics of national messianism.

Against the backdrop of discourses on peace policies, visions for the future, and deconstruction of stereotypical understandings of the world, we constantly encounter the phenomenon we have termed the ideology of national messianism, appearing each time in a more seductive, powerful, and attractive form for the mobilizing and manipulating of the masses, which, for human experience of pain, suffering, and absolute crime, presents a constant threat to both peace and the overall complexity of life. In our more recent historical context and environment, we witness both overt and often latent arrogance in the manifestation of the ideology of national messianism in state policies, all within an atmosphere where, as Zgodić noted, the democratic public has “become largely immunized to the perception of national messianism as one of the most dangerous political phenomena of modern times, which will, by all accounts, mark the 21st century as well”.<sup>20</sup>

Why do we consider it necessary to highlight the need for the demystification of the ideology of national messianism? Simply because understanding it is crucial for perceiving the programs of evil that are fundamentally absolutists in nature. They are the source of absolutist, elitist discourse, which results in totalitarianism of the mind, culture, and politics. The foundation of the ideology of national messianism lies in the idea of chosen nations and people, and then in the idea of “civilizing” other people and nations, following the path of absolutist thinking, knowledge, and action<sup>21</sup>. Speaking of the doctrine of national messianism, it is

17 See: Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Filozofija ideologije: Ideološko otrežnjenje*, Book 1, Ideologija i trezvenost, El-Kalem, Sarajevo; Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Zarobljeni um...*; Muminović, Rasim (2010), *Filozofija ideologije: Ideološko otrežnjenje*, Book 3, Izazovi novog milenija, El-Kalem, Sarajevo

18 Zgodić, Esad (1999), *Ideologija nacionalnog mesijanstva...* p 17.

19 Ibidem.

20 Ibidem, p. 18.

21 Muminović, Rasim (2000), *Zarobljeni um...* p. 203.

significant to note that it directly ties its origins to reinterpretations of theological dogma, particularly, as Zgodić emphasizes, Christian dogma.<sup>22</sup>

The thesis that Christian theology continued to exist in mimetic forms within modern political discourse — albeit in significantly altered forms — and that the most significant concepts of modern state science are secularized theological concepts, was presented by Carl Schmitt in his work *Political Theology*<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind when discussing the ideology of national messianism, in terms of its origins and the consequences it has had for humanity and society, requires being aware of what is now being called the re-theologization of political thought, with the caveat that it always involves reinterpretations rather than a deep dive into the meaning of the theological<sup>24</sup>. In addition to the fact that the idea, doctrine, and ultimately the ideology of national messianism owe their genesis to reinterpretations of theological dogmas, the ideology of national messianism also has a profane foundation, thereby combining both *religious* and *secular* bases in its content. In his effort to highlight the crucial assumption from which this ideology starts, Zgodić emphasizes: “In its Christian-theological and secular-historical content, the doctrine of national messianism rests on a decisive metaphysical assumption. This assumption is the inherent or explicit idea that History has Meaning.”<sup>25</sup>

The leading premise or starting point of the ideology in question is that history has its own inherent meaning, which implies that the role of humans in shaping their own history is insignificant, negligible, and entirely excluded. According to this idea, humans are left with no choice but to surrender to the Meaning that moves forward, independent of humanity, toward its predetermined and untouchable fulfillment. This represents a certain fatalism, which in its secularized form will lead—something we have already witnessed—humanity into a totalitarian mentality, an absolutist discourse, a narrative that has no regard for the other or the different. Such a totalitarian mentality grants itself the right to claim that this particular person, people, or nation, and not someone else, is the chosen and exclusive representative of what drives the overall meaning of history. Ultimately, this leads to absolute crime or radical evil. Here, any reference to God’s will and the rationality or purposefulness of history is mere manipulative invocation and pseudo-interpretation of values and axioms. The most horrific crimes, those before which human ability to think adequately and clearly—without ideological

22 “The doctrine or teaching of national messianism, as we have seen, directly originates from the tradition and current reinterpretations of Christian dogmatics.”, in Zgodić, Esad (1999), *Ideologija nacionalnog mesijanstva...* p. 223.

23 Šmit, Karl (2001), *Norma i odluka*, Politička teologija, Filip Višnjić, Beograd

24 “Anyone who would claim the right to exclusively and uniquely decipher the secrets of theological dogmatics would be on the path to a new form of ideology of chooseness, particularism, messianism, and exclusivism in the approach to truth and the essence of things, which would certainly be characterized as an absolutist narrative.”

25 Zgodić, Esad (1999), *Ideologija nacionalnog mesijanstva...* p. 223.

distortions—halts, can be attributed to the idea, doctrine, and ideology of national messianism. This ideology negates every form of natural, God-given diversity of human cultures. Therefore, Zgodić concludes: “National messianism, under whose banner the most terrifying genocidal crimes in history have been committed, remains one of the most powerful political dogmas in modern national ideologies, state policies, and philosophical-social constructs, and it is a dogma that is least exposed to critical-emancipatory discourse”.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the experience of evil, of absolute crime, the Bosnian experience (without disregarding other and different experiences with the ideology of national messianism) is significant and cautionary. The demystification of the national messianism ideology emerges as a prerequisite for any narrative about peace policies and visions of the future to succeed. The burden of the past, the politics of history, and neglect are impossible to overlook unless we consider, first and foremost, the power and allure, the addictive nature of manipulating individuals and masses for the purpose of achieving *the Great Meaning of History, the Great goals of the nation*. As the Bosnian experience has shown, this inevitably brings about absolute crime, “ethnic cleansing” — “the humane relocation of peoples,” rape, and ultimately the crime of genocide.

The prevention of future crimes, aggressions, and genocides does not lie in a narrative that denies the importance of deconstructing and demystifying ideologies that have led, or could lead, to the downfall of humanity. Prevention is not about disputing the significance of the victimological discourse, aimed at adequately responding to the horrors that have befallen Bosnian society and state, but also those horrors that have happened and continue to happen to others who are weak and different. The prevention of new dehumanizations, new downfalls, and alienation from the human essence lies in uncovering the mimetic forms of radical evil and absolute crime, among which we have rightfully included the ideologies of chosenness, the divinely sent ideas, individuals, peoples, and nations, as a certain threat to the natural polyphony of human cultures.

## Is Forgiveness Morally Wrong – Can what Has Been Done Be Undone?

Is forgiveness morally wrong—can what has been done, be undone? We begin with the question of whether forgiveness for committed evil is morally debatable, or, as Vetlesen asks, is forgiveness morally wrong? It is important to remember that both guilt and forgiveness should primarily be treated from the perspective of the act that has been committed, the degree of harm caused, and not as part of an unconscious and conformist, obscured social ritual. Immanuel Kant is credited,

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 247.

although he faced many criticisms for it, with problematizing the concept of radical evil. The concept of radical evil appears even before Kant's reflections in his work *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Referring to the testimonies of Kant's biographers, Marinko Lolić<sup>27</sup> notes that the first article in which Kant speaks of the concept of radical evil was published under the title *On Radical Evil (Vom radikalen Bösen)*. It was printed in 1792 in Berlin.

Kant also published three more essays on the phenomenon of radical evil.<sup>28</sup> In her efforts to grapple with the consequences of the fatality of evil, absurdity, and ideological distortion, Hannah Arendt<sup>29</sup> would write about radical evil as a form of crime that is almost impossible to either punish or forgive. It is necessary to point out the debate, or better said, the difference in the understanding of evil and radical evil between Kant and Arendt. Bernstein, writing about this difference, discusses the process through which Arendt went, calling it a shift "from radical evil to the banality of evil"<sup>30</sup>. Arendt problematizes the arguments of forgiveness, unforgiveness, and punishment in *The Human Condition*, where she emphasizes that what is contentious and incomprehensible about radical evil is precisely the fact that people cannot forgive what they cannot punish, and that they cannot punish what lies in the realm of the unforgivable: "*It is therefore quite significant, a structural element in the realm of human affairs, that men are unable to forget what they cannot punish and that they are unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgivable*".<sup>31</sup>

In fact, we find ourselves asking whether there are crimes, acts of evil that transcend the possibility of any human response. Are there crimes so extreme that forgiveness is no longer a morally justified reaction?<sup>32</sup> At this point, we introduce another question, which concerns the dilemma of whether, when we open the question of forgiveness, are we primarily forgiving the act that was committed or the person who committed the crime? Vetlesen offers two examples directly related to our questions. The first example concerns Traudl Junge, a German woman

27 Lolić, Marinko (2011), *Da li je Kantovo shvatanje radikalnog zla dovoljno radikalno*, Filozofija i Društvo, Volume 22, No 4 (2011), pp. 23-36.

28 *Borba principa dobra protiv principa zla za prevlast nad čovjekom (Der Kampf des guten Prinzips mit dem bösen um die Herrschaft über den Menschen); Pobjeda principa dobra nad zlom i zasnivanje Carstva božjeg na Zemlji (Sieg des guten Prinzips über das Böse und die Grundung eines Reiches Gothes auf Erden); O religiji i sveštenstvu (Über Religion und Pfaffentum)*, prema: Lolić, Marinko (2011), *Da li je Kantovo shvatanje radikalnog zla dovoljno radikalno*, Filozofija i Društvo, Volume 22, No 4 (2011), pp. 23-36.

29 Arendt, Hannah (1998), *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, London

30 Bernstin, Ričard (2000), *Odgovornost filozofa*, Circulus, Beograd, p. 384; And Bernstin, Ričard (2005), *Kant u ratu sa samim sobom*, in S. Divjak and I. Milenković, *Moderno čitanje Kanta*, Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, Beograd, pp. 195-241; Lolić, Marinko (2011), *Da li je Kantovo shvatanje radikalnog zla dovoljno radikalno*, Filozofija i Društvo, Volume 22, No 4 (2011), pp. 23-36.

31 Arendt, Hannah (1998), *The human condition*... p. 241.

32 Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu*... p. 247.

who worked as Hitler's secretary, and the second refers to Simon Wiesenthal, the author of *The Sunflower*<sup>33</sup>, and his encounter with Carl, a German SS soldier.

The first example concerns the dilemma of whether the person who committed the crime is, above all, capable of confronting themselves — whether they are able to forgive themselves.<sup>34</sup> Junge blamed herself for everything “she didn't know but should have known,” and her effort can be characterized as part of what Vetlesen calls a “continuous dialogue with oneself”.<sup>35</sup> Just as Traudl Junge saw the burden and responsibility for her complicity in evil as her own weight to bear, with which she must first and foremost grapple herself, her efforts were directed inward toward her own existence, without shifting her burden onto others, though she was aware she owed them as well. Seeing this as significant for her internal dialogue, Traudl, in the film *Im toten Winkel*, as Vetlesen suggests, said to the director André Heller shortly before her death, “I think I can now forgive myself”.<sup>36</sup>

The significance of the step Junge took is reflected in her self-criticism, without shifting the blame and responsibility for her ignorance and failures in serving Hitler onto others, her superiors, but solely onto herself.

The second example, which is also significant for the questions we have raised, concerns the encounter between Simon Wiesenthal and a German SS soldier, who, on his deathbed, asked for a Jew to be brought to him so that he, Carl, could confess his sins. Carl, as he described himself, was a “convinced Nazi”<sup>37</sup> who had voluntarily enlisted. The essence of his request was that, in his dying moments, he wanted to tell his story to someone, a Jew, so that he could feel relief, as he could not die without asking a Jew for forgiveness.

Wiesenthal “listened to what Carl was saying and did not respond. He left the room and never saw Carl<sup>38</sup> again.” Primo Levi<sup>39</sup>, one of the survivors of the horrors at Auschwitz, questions the sincerity of Carl's plea for forgiveness, seeing it as an egoism characterized by a desire/need to transfer one's own pain/responsibility onto someone else. It is crucial to consider the issue of ownership of those actions that have been committed and for which forgiveness is sought. In the case of Junge, she owns her actions and faces them alone, holding herself most responsible for her participation in the programs of evil. However, in the case of soldier

33 Wiesenthal, Simon (1969), *Solsikken*, Cappelen, Oslo according to: Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...*, p. 295.

34 Pay attention to the following statement by Vetlesen: ‘The process of forgiveness, at any cost, must begin with the perpetrator seeing themselves as a criminal through—very painfully—self-observation.’ Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...* p. 268.

35 Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...* p. 250.

36 Ibidem, p. 249.

37 Ibidem, p. 255.

38 Ibidem, p. 256.

39 Levi, Primo (1998), *The Drowned and the Saved*, Abacus, London

Carl, he also bears ownership of the atrocities in which he participated. A critical question now, to which Vetlesen specifically directs our attention, concerns the significance and meaning of apology and forgiveness, as well as the question of the role of intermediaries. Who has the right to ask for forgiveness, and who truly owns what is being forgiven?

Wiesenthal was chosen in the case of the German soldier Carl to “serve<sup>40</sup> as a substitute for the millions of victims”,<sup>41</sup> but fundamentally, Wiesenthal can never replace Carl’s direct victims. Wiesenthal does not have ownership over what was done to the three-member Jewish family in Poland, where one of Carl’s crimes was committed. As part of the intellectual backdrop of the questions we have raised, it is entirely reasonable to ask, which is also an unequivocal answer to our problematical dilemma and open questions, whether Carl’s victims would have accepted forgiveness for what was done to them? How could this even be possible when they were killed at the moment the crime was committed? Furthermore, would Carl’s victims have accepted that “he (Carl<sup>42</sup>) asks a representative (Wiesenthal) for forgiveness”<sup>43</sup>, i.e., for something that the representative does not own?

How can one undo what has been done, how can forgiveness be sought for the extent of evil and crimes that can only be described as forms of radical evil, absolute crime? In the case of collective executions, as occurred in Auschwitz, Srebrenica, Foča, Vlasenica, Bratunac, Zvornik, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Ključ, Brčko,<sup>44</sup> and all other cities that were besieged and places that were occupied in Bosnia and Herzegovina, how can one “redeem the desired forgiveness”<sup>45</sup>? To whom should one make a request for forgiveness if the victims are dead? This is the weight of collective evil committed. Thus, considering all the arguments we have presented, Vetlesen states that: “so-called ‘third-party forgiveness’, or forgiveness for injustices done to others, including victims who are no longer alive, cannot, in my opinion, be considered a complete form of forgiveness. Its meaning must instead be determined on a case-by-case basis, a task that must be delegated to phronesis, our best judgment, based on the circumstances of each individual case.”<sup>46</sup>

## Concluding Reflections

To retreat with dignity from the murmurs of careerists and cowards, to penetrate the very essence of perverted consciousness and, through thought and action, de-

40 Highlighted by the author of the paper

41 Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...* p. 266.

42 Highlighted by the author of the paper

43 Vetlesen, Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...* p. 267.

44 Kadrić, Jusuf (1998), *Brčko: genocid i svjedočenja*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo

45 Arne Johan (2017), *Studije o zlu...* p. 269.

46 Ibidem, p. 270.

construct and demystify the phenomenology of all forms of ensnarement, frenzy, and confusion of the mind, is to genuinely cultivate a narrative for building a future peace worthy of humanity. Ideological alienation, as a form of mental ensnarement expressed through mythic-maniacal delusion, pathological hatred of the other and the different, eruptions of horrific forms of evil and absolute crime, megalomania, and spiritual cannibalism, demands from us an effort to penetrate and reveal the “unknown evil.” This must be done despite concerns for the future, with latent intentions and false critiques and accusations of being enslaved by the past. With the same fervor and best intentions, we must not overlook the threat of national messianic ideologies, which emerge as forms of radical evil with absolutist and totalitarian threats to the overall complexity of the richness of living.

History has meaning, but that meaning should and can only truly enrich the individual. Preventing new crimes, aggressions, and genocides is not about denying the importance of demystifying national messianic ideologies or questioning the significance of victimological discourse as an adequate response to the horrors experienced by Bosnian society and state. Rather, effective prevention of new disillusionments, new downfalls, and alienation from human essence lies in uncovering the mimetic forms of radical evil and absolute crime, among which ideologies of grand chosen ideas, individuals, peoples, and nations are particularly prominent.

The issue of apology and forgiveness requires consideration of the character, quality, and quantity of the wrongdoing or damage inflicted. It involves a continuous dialogue and deep self-criticism, as well as dealing with the question of ownership over the acts committed and the acts for which forgiveness is sought. To annul the wrongdoing and obtain forgiveness for the most radical form of evil, in situations where the crimes exceed the total capacity for human reaction, or when people are faced with what they cannot forgive (because there is no adequate punishment or when they cannot even conceive how to punish what goes beyond the sphere of forgiveness), is complex. A complete form of apology and forgiveness should be considered only that which acknowledges conscious responsibility and self-criticism, an awareness of ownership—responsibility for the wrongdoing—and a profound understanding of the moral incorrectness of seeking apology and forgiveness from a surrogate or third party.

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BOSNIA   
STUDIES  
SARAJEVO

\*MUAMER DŽANANOVIĆ\*

Schools and Cultural Centers as De-  
tention Sites in the Territory of the  
Self-Proclaimed Republic of Srpska  
During the Aggression Against the  
Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
(1992-1995)\*\*

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## Summary

*During the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), the authorities of the self-proclaimed Republic of Srpska (RS) committed numerous crimes, including genocide against Bosniaks. In pursuit of their territorial goals, the RS political leadership established numerous camps and detention facilities, often using schools and cultural centers for this purpose. These facilities, once centers of education and culture, were transformed into sites of mass atrocities, torture, and killings of civilians.*

*This paper explores the systematic nature, scope, and mass scale of crimes committed in these facilities, with a particular focus on the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995, as well as the crimes in Prijedor and Zvornik during 1992. The paper provides an overview of schools and cultural centers as detention sites for Bosniaks and Croats in around 25 other municipalities that came under RS control in the spring and summer of 1992. Additionally, the paper highlights how the RS treats this past inadequately and how these schools and the now mostly destroyed cultural centers, often glorify the perpetrators of these crimes, rather than commemorating the victims.*

*The aim of this research is to contribute to the proper memorialization of these crimes and to raise awareness among present and future generations about the importance of confronting legally adjudicated and historically established facts.*

*Keywords: Aggression, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska, 1992-1995, camps, torture, cultural centers, schools, culture of memory*

## Introduction

The unlawful detention of Bosniaks and Croats in camps and other detention facilities during the period of 1992–1995 was a planned and deliberate act by RS' leadership, carried out as part of a broader undertaking aimed at "ethnic separation." This separation was defined as the primary strategic goal of the Greater Serbian project in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>1</sup> Unlawful detention was used as a key tool achieving the goal of permanently "removing" Bosniaks and Croats from

1 ICTY, Case No. IT-95-5/18-T, *Judgment on Appeal against Radovan Karadžić*, March 24, 2016, Volume II, para. 3465; Case against R. Karadžić, Exhibit No. P955, *Decision of the Assembly of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SrR BiH) on Strategic Goals of the Serb People in BiH*, May 12, 1992; For more details on this, as well as on the declaration of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SrR BiH) and its renaming to RS, see: Džananović, Muamer, Medić, Jasmin, Karčić, Hikmet (2023), *Nastanak Republike srpske: Od regionalizacije do strateških ciljeva 1991-1992*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law and University of Sarajevo – Institute for History, Sarajevo.

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territories designated as “Serbian” by the project.<sup>2</sup> The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) established that the crime of ‘unlawful detention’ was carried out immediately upon the RS’ takeover of municipalities, as part of the implementation of a joint plan.<sup>3</sup> Numerous schools and cultural centers were utilized for this purpose.<sup>4</sup>

In his research, Hikmet Karčić describes this system of unlawful detention as the “camp system of the Bosnian Serbs,” and emphasizes the brutality, personalization, and ceremonial nature of the executions that became known to the world following the disturbing images from the Omarska and Trnopolje camps in August 1992. This system of detention introduced a new purpose for concentration camps: collective traumatization, consisting of torture, sexual abuse, humiliation, and killings. The goal was to inflict as much pain as possible on a large number of people, including those outside the camps, to ensure that they would never return to their homes.<sup>5</sup> Many of these facilities (schools and cultural centres) were used as detention sites for Bosniak civilians during the crimes committed in 1992 and 1995, during the period when students were on summer vacation. After the crimes, the school premises were cleaned and prepared for the new school year, but this semester, only Serbian children entered the classrooms. For more than thirty years, generations of students in these schools have learned nothing about these crimes or the genocide, while in front of some cultural centers, such as Pilica in Zvornik or Trnopolje in Prijedor, monuments to fallen Serbian soldiers have been erected. This can be seen as an attempt to relativize historical facts.<sup>6</sup>

2 ICTY, First-instance verdict against R. Karadžić, Volume II, para. 3465; According to the Association of Camp Inmates in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 1992 to 1996, a total of 652 camps and other detention facilities were recorded in the territory of RS.

3 ICTY, First-instance verdict against R. Karadžić, Volume II, paras. 3465, 3507.

4 On cultural centers as places of detention in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995, see more details in: Ivančić, Viktor., Polan, Hrvoje., Stjepanović, Nemanja. (2018), *Iza sedam logora: Od zločina kulture do kulture zločina*, Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst.

5 Karčić, Hikmet (2022), *Torture, Humiliate, Kill – Inside the Bosnian Serb Camp System*, University of Michigan Press. p. 1, 5-6.

6 For an overview of war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995, see: Medić, Jasmin., Džananović, Muamer., Karčić, Hikmet. (2023), *Ratni zločini i genocid u Republici Bosni i Hercegovini 1992-1995.*, *Historija Bosne i Hercegovine VI: Bosna i Hercegovina u XX stoljeću (1945.1995)*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for History, Sarajevo. pp. 218-249.

## 1. Schools and Cultural Centers as Locations of Mass Detentions and Killings During the Genocide in and Around Srebrenica in July 1995

After the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) forces took control of the United Nations (UN) “safe zone” of Srebrenica on July 11, 1995,<sup>7</sup> at least 8,372 Bosniaks<sup>8</sup> were intentionally captured and killed in the following days. Numerous crimes were committed against civilians by the VRS, including rape and other atrocities.<sup>9</sup>

The killings of men in Potočari began immediately after their separation from other civilians. On July 12 and 13, Bosniaks were separated from their families and kept in both the “unfinished house” and the “white house”, across from the UN base in Potočari. A larger group of men from the “unfinished house” was transported by buses to detention facilities in the Bratunac municipality. Most of those detained were transferred during the evening of July 13 to the Grbavci school in Zvornik.<sup>10</sup> As the convoy passed towards Kladanj, buses were stopped, and some men who had boarded the buses were taken out and killed.<sup>11</sup> Identification documents and personal belongings taken from the Bosniaks in Potočari, as well as from those captured in the column, were confiscated and burned.<sup>12</sup> The column that set out on the “death march” was attacked with hand grenades, and ambushes were set. Many were killed in the forests, and the vast majority sur-

7 On July 11, 1995, after VRS forces had taken Srebrenica, Mladić stated to television cameras in Srebrenica: “Here we are, on July 11, 1995, in Serbian Srebrenica. On the eve of another great Serbian holiday, we dedicate this city to the Serbian people. And finally, the moment has come to take revenge on this land for the rebellion against the Dahijas by the Turks. He then ordered the VRS forces to proceed to Potočari. ICTY, Case No. IT-09-92-T, Judgment of Ratko Mladić, Vol. III, November 22, 2017, para. 2410; ICTY, Case against Karadžić, Exhibit P4201, Updated video footage shown during the trial related to Srebrenica.

8 Before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice in The Hague, as well as before national courts, the crimes committed against Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 were adjudicated as genocide. To date, more than 50 individuals have been convicted of genocide and war crimes related to Srebrenica, receiving over 700 years of imprisonment. The entire political and military leadership of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska has been adjudicated before the ICTY or the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). For a detailed review of the proceedings, see: ICTY, Cases, <https://www.icty.org/en/cases>, accessed July 12, 2024; IRMCT, Cases, <https://www.irmct.org/en/cases>, accessed July 12, 2024.

9 Translation: “For more details on these and other crimes, see: Čekić, Smail (2012), *Genocid i istina o genocidu u Bosni i Hercegovini*, University of Sarajevo and the Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law UNSA, Sarajevo, pp. 282-337.

10 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation “Krivaja 95””, pp. 49-50

11 For more details on the execution and killing of men, see: ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, paras. 5146-5154.

12 ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Mladić, Volume III, para. 2526.

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rendered to VRS forces.<sup>13</sup> By July 14, international media were already reporting on the large number of missing men from Srebrenica. The UN Security Council reported that day on human rights violations due to the forced relocation of civilians from the Srebrenica “safe zone.”<sup>14</sup>

Schools and cultural centers were key locations for the execution of the genocide in July 1995 (just as they were in 1992, when the VRS began killing across the recently self-proclaimed RS). Some detainees in the Bratunac area, such as those held in the “old school,” were kept in inhumane conditions until July 15, without food and with very little water. Individuals were taken outside the school, and gunshots were heard. These detainees were transferred to the Pilica school (Zvornik) on July 15. A large number of detainees were kept in buses and trucks because there was no space in the detention facilities. Most of these detainees were also transferred to the Grbavci school (Zvornik) on July 14.<sup>15</sup> Some of the detainees who were captured and held in the meadow in Sandići on July 13 were taken to Bratunac, where they were held in five or six buses and several trucks. The next day, they were transported to, and detained in, in the school in Petkovci, also in Zvornik.<sup>16</sup>

In the following days, in addition to the killings during the “death march,” mass executions of Bosniaks were carried out at several locations. The large number of detainees in the Bratunac area became a topic of discussion among RS security officials and high-ranking political figures. According to an intercepted conversation between Miroslav Deronjić and Radovan Karadžić, the army was supposed to organize the removal of Bosniaks from Bratunac.<sup>17</sup> Deronjić testified that he had received an order from Karadžić to transfer all those detained in Bratunac, to Zvornik.<sup>18</sup>

On the evening of July 13, 1995, buses and trucks began transporting men who had been separated from other civilians in Potočari and those captured in the column from the Bratunac area to camps within the zone of the VRS’ Zvornik Brigade (Zvbr), in Zvornik.<sup>19</sup> On July 14, a convoy of 30 to 50 buses and trucks was formed, stretching up to one and a half kilometers. Throughout the day, several thousand Bosniaks were placed in the Grbavci school in Orahovac, the Pet-

13 For more details on the column of people gathered in Šušnjari, their journey to Nežuk through the positions of Bratunac and Zvornik, the blocking of the column, ambushes, crimes, surrender of people from the column, imprisonments, transportation to camps, and ultimately the killings, see: ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Mladić, Volume III, paras. 2578-2609; 2615-2656.

14 ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Mladić, Volume III, para. 2533.

15 Ibid

16 ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Krstić, para. 177-178.

17 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95’,” p. 63.

18 ICTY, Verdict in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, para. 5312.

19 ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, para. 5313.

kovci school, the Pilica school in Kula, the Cultural Center in Pilica, and other locations.<sup>20</sup>

By the afternoon of July 14, 1995, the mass removal of men from the school in Orahovac and their nearby execution had been carried out. The mass shooting was conducted by members of the 4th ZvBr Infantry Battalion. Engineering equipment from the Engineering Company of the Zvbr was used to bury the victims in mass graves.<sup>21</sup> The ICTY concluded that at least 839 victims were taken from the school in Orahovac and summarily executed in the nearby fields.<sup>22</sup>

After the Orahovac killings were completed, Bosniaks were systematically taken from the school in Petkovci and brought to the nearby Petkovci dam, where they were shot. After the shooting was completed at dawn on July 15, machines from the ZvBr Engineering Company were again used to bury the victims.<sup>23</sup> Thus, throughout the night of July 14 to 15, Bosniaks were taken from the classroom in smaller groups. Once they arrived at the dam, the detainees were ordered to get off the trucks in groups of five to ten. The field was illuminated by headlights, and upon disembarking, they realized it was covered with the bodies of murdered Bosniaks. They were ordered to stand in line, after which soldiers with masks on their faces began shooting the detainees in the back from a distance of seven to ten meters. Those who were wounded were approached and shot in the head. Two men survived the shooting, and after wandering for several days, they reached territory under ARBiH control. From a distance, and from a burned-out village, they saw graves being dug.<sup>24</sup> Both witnesses testified that they saw earth-moving machines loading bodies onto tractors.<sup>25</sup> At least 1,000 men had been killed.<sup>26</sup>

The village of Pilica is located about 20 km north of Zvornik and Karakaj, also within the Zvornik municipality. From the testimony of a surviving witness, it is possible to trace the path of the victims who were transported from Potočari, after the separation, to the “old school” behind the “Vuk Karadžić” school in Bratunac, where they stayed for two days. After that, on July 15, 1995, they were loaded

20 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” pp. 2, 63; ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, para. 5316.

21 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” p. 3.

For more details on the operation of burying in primary and secondary mass graves, see: ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Mladić, Volume III, para. 2698-2708.

22 Ibid, para. 5354.

23 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” p. 3.

24 ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, paras. 5368-5370.

25 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” p. 72.

26 ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, para. 5355. For more details on the crime in Petkovci in July 1995, see: ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Mladić, Volume III, paras. 2767-2791.

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onto buses and transported to the school in Pilica, where they were placed in the school premises. Another witness, who also survived the shooting, was captured on July 13 during the “death march” in Nova Kasaba. After being detained on the football field in Nova Kasaba, he was loaded onto a bus with other victims and taken to Bratunac. He spent the night of July 13 in a bus in Bratunac, and on July 14, he was transferred to the sports hall of the school in Pilica, also known as the “Nikola Tesla” primary school. He remained there on July 15, 1995.<sup>27</sup>

Early in the morning on July 14, 1995, the 1st Battalion of the Zvornik Brigade received a telegram from the Brigade Command to prepare the gymnasium of the school in Kula for the arrival of men from Srebrenica.<sup>28</sup> In the afternoon, several buses full of detained Bosniaks, who had been transported from Bratunac, arrived in front of the school. Boys were among the prisoners. They were ordered to walk in a single file, with their hands behind their heads, to the gymnasium. When the gym was filled to capacity, with no more room for prisoners, some remained in the hallway and on the stairs, while others stayed in the buses parked outside the school. Later, they were taken to the classrooms of the school.

The conditions inside the school were catastrophic, and given the high outside temperature of over 30°C, a fog developed inside. An unbearable stench spread through the gym, and due to the lack of air, three prisoners died as a result of these conditions. As in other camp locations, no medical assistance was provided. The detainees were given insufficient food and water. Some prisoners were allowed to leave the gym to relieve themselves, but they were beaten with rifle butts, so most, out of fear, relieved themselves where they stood. One detainee attempted to escape when he was allowed to go fetch water, and he was shot.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the day and night, many detainees were continuously taken away. Gunshots and screams could be heard. Their bodies lay around the school. The soldiers ordered the detainees to hand over their watches, jewelry, and money, and to collect 10,000 KM or they would all be killed. The prisoners had no more money.<sup>30</sup> The detainees were taken to a nearby field at the Branjevo Military Farm. On the morning of July 16, members of the VRS’ 10th Sabotage Detachment executed them. According to the testimony of Dražen Erdemović, a war criminal and repentant witness before the ICTY,<sup>31</sup> the executions lasted from 10:00 AM to

27 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” p. 74.

28 For detailed information on the detention in the school in Pilica, the Cultural Center in Pilica, and the executions at the Military Farm Branjevo, see: Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, First Instance Judgment against F. Koš, S. Kojić, V. Golijanin, and Z. Goronje, pp. 55-106; ICTY, First Instance Judgment against R. Mladić, Volume III, paras. 2826-2863

29 Ibid, paras. 5417-5420; For details on individual killings in the school, see also: Ibid, para. 5425

30 Ibid, paras. 5423-5424

31 Dražen Erdemović admitted guilt and received a 5-year prison sentence in the appeals process. ICTY, IT-96-22-A, Appeal Judgment against Dražen Erdemović, October 7, 1997

3:00 PM. In the afternoon, other soldiers who had come from Bratunac assisted. After killing, they went to a café in Pilica.<sup>32</sup> The killings lasted for hours, and in the afternoon, a group of about ten soldiers from Bratunac arrived to replace the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Sabotage Detachment and continue the executions. A lieutenant colonel informed the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Sabotage Detachment that there had been a revolt at the Cultural Center in Pilica, where at least 500 Bosniaks were detained. He said they were trying to escape and needed to be killed.

Members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Sabotage Detachment went to a café across from the Cultural Center in Pilica and refused to carry out the task. Soldiers from Bratunac volunteered for the task.<sup>33</sup>

In the Cultural Center (CC) in Pilica, people from Zvornik were detained, tortured, and killed during 1992. The largest group of Bosniaks was detained in the CC “Pilica” from 5 to 8 July, when more than 400 of them were transported in trucks to “Gera’s Slaughterhouse” where they were executed. Only two survived. Afterward, the building was prepared for the next mass crime in July 1995. On July 16, 1995, the VRS executed hundreds of victims here, and it is not known if anyone survived this execution.<sup>34</sup> According to the testimony of Dražen Erdemović, these executions were carried out by soldiers from Bratunac, who had earlier participated in executions at the Branjevo Military Farm.<sup>35</sup> Estimates suggest that between 1,000 and 1,500 people were killed in and around the school in Pilica and at the Branjevo Military Farm, while 500 Bosniaks were killed at in CC Pilica.<sup>36</sup>

The school in Ročević is located about 7 km north of Kozluk. On July 14, men from Bratunac were brought there by buses and trucks. The detainees were guarded by members of the ZvBr Military Police, while other ZvBr members were also present. Ultimately, members of the ZvBr 2nd Battalion transported the prisoners to the execution site, 4 km from Ročević, near Kozluk, right next to the river Drina. The first group had their eyes blindfolded, and their hands and feet were tied. The prisoners were so exhausted they looked “half-dead.” When the Bosniaks were brought in, the truck reversed and approached the grave. The men were ordered to jump into the pit, and then soldiers positioned around the pit opened fire

32 Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95,’” pp. 73-74.

33 ICTY, First Instance Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, paras. 5433-5436; For information on the detention in the school in Pilica, the executions at the Economic Farm, and the concealment of remains, see also: ICTY, First Instance Judgment against R. Krstić, paras. 233-243.

34 For more details on the detention and killing of Bosniaks in the Pilica Cultural Center, see: ICTY, First Instance Judgment against R. Krstić, paras. 244-248.

35 ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95’”.

36 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, paras. 5453-5464; ICTY, R. Butler, “Testimony on Military Events in Srebrenica (Revised): Operation ‘Krivaja 95’”, p. 122.

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on them. In the meantime, other members of the VRS, including military police,<sup>37</sup> joined the soldiers. In the end, it was determined that at least 815 Bosniaks were exhumed from these five secondary mass graves, and they were victims killed after being detained at the school in Roćević. Some were killed while still detained, and the majority were executed on the banks of the Drina near Kozluk.<sup>38</sup>

Since 1996, 94 mass graves and 336 surface sites connected to the genocide in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 have been discovered. Most of the remains of genocide victims were found in multiple secondary and tertiary mass graves, which shows how important it was for the regime that conceived and carried out the genocide to hide the facts and the truth about its scale. The search continues for around 1,000 genocide victims.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Schools and Cultural Centers as Detention Sites and Camps in Zvornik in 1992

After the “Serbian Municipality of Zvornik” took power in Zvornik, the town’s Bosniak population was systematically detained. Following an established pattern, they were brought in for interrogation at the Zvornik Public Security Station (SJB) and then detained in various camps and other detention facilities. Zvornik’s Bosniaks, as well as Bosniaks from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina who crossed into Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbian territory in the post-occupation period, were also detained.<sup>40</sup>

In Zvornik, a large number of camps were established in the: Drinjača Cultural Center, Čelopek Cultural Center, Pilica Cultural Center, Karakaj Technical School Center, a school and house in Liplje, the Alhos camp in Karakaj, Standard, Karakaj Economy, the “Ciglana” forced labor camp, the “Court for Offenses,” “New Source,” “Captain Dragan Training Center,” and detention facilities in Divič. There were also smaller detention facilities such as the elementary school in Snagovo, the base of the “Simo’s Chetniks” unit in Malešići, the mosque in Đulići, the Cultural Center in Petkovci, and others. In addition to mass executions, the Zvornik camps were places where systemic and continuous torture of detainees was carried out.

37 Ibid, paras. 5392-5399.

38 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume IV, paras. 5408-5411.

39 Halilovich, Hariz., Buturović, Amila., Karčić, Hikmet., Bećirević, Edina., Mujanović, Jasmin. (2022): *Bosnian genocide reader*, Srebrenica: Srebrenica Memorial Center

40 Archive of the Fund for Humanitarian Law Serbia (AFHP), Republic of Serbia, District Court in Belgrade, First Instance Verdict against Dragana Slavković Tore, Ivana Korać Zoksa, and Siniša Filipović Lopova (Case No. K.V 5/2005), June 12, 2008, p. 131.

ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume I, para. 1340.

ICTY, Trial Judgment against M. Stanišić and S. Župljanin, Volume I, para. 1614.

The establishment of camps for the civilian population in Zvornik was directed by higher levels of leadership. The commander of the “Birač” brigade of the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Major Svetozar Andrić, ordered the Territorial Defense Staff of the “Serbian Municipality of Zvornik” to separate military-capable men during the forced expulsion and deportation of Bosniak civilians and to detain them in camps.<sup>41</sup> Two weeks later, Ratko Mladić, commander of the VRS, ordered the Eastern Bosnian Corps, which at that time included military formations from Zvornik, to establish camps for “prisoners of war” to alleviate the burden on the Zvornik Brigade.<sup>42</sup> Given that at that time, a negligible number of prisoners of war were detained in the Zvornik camps, while a large number of Bosniak civilians were imprisoned there, the order clearly pertained to the treatment of unlawfully detained civilians.

One of the camps that marks probably one of the most monstrous crimes committed during the period of aggression is the Čelopek Cultural Center camp. On May 29, 1992, the remaining 162 detainees, residents of Divič, were transported there. Until then, they had been held in the “New Source” camp. In Čelopek, other Bosniaks had already been imprisoned and abused in various facilities. The conditions in the camp were inhumane. The detainees slept on concrete in an overcrowded, suffocating room. For the first three days, they were not given any food. During their entire time in the camp, they did not receive any medical assistance, which was urgently needed.<sup>43</sup> Local armed individuals also participated in psychological torture of the detainees during those days.<sup>44</sup> Detainees were rarely allowed to go to the toilet, which was located outside of “Čelopek”.<sup>45</sup> Later, they had to relieve themselves within the camp itself, as confirmed by the camp guards.<sup>46</sup> After several days, food began to arrive more regularly, but the quantity and quality remained far below the necessary minimum.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the amounts

41 “Only children and women can be evacuated; men capable of fighting should be left in the camps for exchange purposes.” ICTY, Case against J. Stanišić and F. Simatović, Evidence No. D02143, Command of the SV “Birač” Brigade, Order (to the TP Zvornik Staff), Šekovići, May 28, 1992.

42 ICTY, Case against R. Karadžić, Evidence No. P3238, General Staff of the VRS, Order No. 02/5-33, Instruction to the Eastern Bosnia Corps, June 17, 1992.

43 AFHP, First Instance Verdict against D. Slavković, I. Korać, S. Filipović, and D. Dragičević, p. 75.

44 Tuzla Canton Archive (ATKT), Statement of Senahid Tuhčić, p. 2; Also see: Statement of Fahrudin Kuršumović, January 22, 1993, p. 3.

45 Archive of the Fund for Humanitarian Law Serbia (AFHP), First Instance Verdict against D. Slavković, I. Korać, S. Filipović, and D. Dragičević, p. 75.

46 Archive of the Tuzla Canton (ATKT), No. 22/95, Excerpt from the newspaper “Vreme,” November 14, 1994, V No. 212, “Anatomija zločina,” May 14, 1995, p. 5; See also: AFHP, First Instance Verdict against D. Slavković, I. Korać, S. Filipović, and D. Dragičević, p. 75; Archive of the Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law at the University of Sarajevo (AIIZ), Statement by Edin Čikarić, p. 1.

47 Archive of the Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law at the University of Sarajevo (AIIZ), Statement by Edin Čikarić, p. 1; Statement by Salih Pašić, November 8, 1994, p. 3.

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provided were just enough to keep the detainees alive. During the first few days, some detainees were taken out of the camp and exchanged.<sup>48</sup> Witnesses state that in the first few days, all of their documents, remaining money, watches, medicines, belts, and other personal belongings were confiscated.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to continuous killings, the violence manifested in beatings with various objects across the entire body.<sup>50</sup> The mere arrival of these criminals at the Cultural Center created immense fear among civilians, for their own lives and the lives of their close relatives and neighbors.<sup>51</sup> Through acts of mutilation, detainees had their genitals, ears, and other body parts cut off.<sup>52</sup> The criminal Dušan Vučković Repić stated that before killing the prisoners, he “organized a boxing match, giving them sticks to beat each other and to beat themselves.”<sup>53</sup>

Daily raids by groups of criminals, in addition to the aforementioned atrocities, included various other inhumane and monstrous acts that inflicted great suffering and severe physical and psychological injuries, aimed at humiliating the detainees. These included close-up killings, forcing fathers and sons or grandfathers and grandsons to engage in sexual intercourse, forcing relatives and neighbors to have intercourse, cutting off genitals, ears, fingers, and other body parts of prisoners, forcing prisoners to eat their severed body parts or parts of other prisoners’ bodies, forcing prisoners to fight each other, carving crosses and other symbols like the “four S’s” on parts of their bodies. These are just some of the monstrous methods of psychological and physical torture and abuse of detainees in the Čelopek Cultural Center. Psychological abuse, such as insults or forcing prisoners to cross themselves or sing Serbian nationalist and Chetnik songs, was also a daily occurrence.

At various times during the detention, several people from Divič were killed. In fact, the killing and wounding of prisoners in the camp was continuous, as was the removal of prisoners into the camp courtyard or taking them away. Most

48 On the second day, the following individuals were taken out and exchanged: Jakub Tuhčić, Haso Bojić, Murat Muratović, and Omer Bikić. Archive of the Tuzla Canton (ATKT), Statement by Hasan Efendić, p. 4; Statement by Sead Musić and Muharem Musić, January 7, 1993, p. 2.

49 AFHP, First-instance verdict against B. Grujić and B. Popović, p. 96; Also see: AIIZ, inventory no. 03-2-883-5, RBiH, Ministry of Defense, Security Administration, no. 01.3/21-29, Summary of findings on the Čelopek camp, Sarajevo, June 2, 1994, p. 2.

50 ATKT, Statement by Senahid Tuhčić, p. 2; Also see: AIIZ, Statement by Admir Efendić, pp. 1-2.

51 “*Nobody informed us, I hear the squeal of tires, I hear them coming in, the chain is being opened. It’s fear; people were so scared when they heard the chain, they banged their heads against the wall, running away, if they could, they would have broken through the wall.*” describes the witness. AFHP, First Instance Verdict against D. Slavković, I. Korać, S. Filipović, and D. Dragičević, p. 82.

52 AIIZ, Statement by Edin Čikarić, p. 2; Statement by Fahrudin Kuršumović, January 22, 1993, p. 3.

53 ICTY, Evidence No. 1539, Case against M. Stanišić and S. Župljanin (IT-08-91-T), Authorized Military Police Officer, Statement by Duško Vučković, August 4, 1992, p. 2.

were later found and identified in mass. Each day spent in this camp tells its own story, but two crimes stand out due to the scale of the murders and injuries, and the level of brutality and monstrosity. These were the crimes committed on June 10, 1992—the day and night before Eid—and on June 27, 1992—the day before Vidovdan.

During June 10, 1992, and the following night, the eve of Eid, several individuals entered the hall of the Čelopek Cultural Center (DKČ) and committed horrific crimes against the Bosniaks.<sup>54</sup> It has been clearly established that a group of men, including Dušan Vučković Repić, a member of the “Yellow Wasps” unit, and Darko Janković Pufta, a member of the “Pivarski” unit, entered the “Center.” Repić announced his entry with the words “You will have a bloody Eid,” and together with his accomplices began beating the detainees.<sup>55</sup> After the arrival of Repić, “parents who had sons were being separated. They were taking them aside. They ordered them to go up on the stage of the Cultural Center in Čelopek. He forced all the sons to perform oral sex with the parent (father) and vice versa.”<sup>56</sup> A large number of inmates also had their genitals cut off, as were ears and other body parts, which they were then sometimes forced to eat. They killed the inmates, carved crosses on their bodies, cut off parts of their bodies and then, after all the monstrous tortures, they ordered the inmates to take out the corpses and load them into a truck. The level of blood in some parts of the hall was 2-3 cm, and the inmates cleaned it with their clothes. Since they had no spare clothes and no place to wash them, they were forced to put on these bloody clothes again.<sup>57</sup>

After the crime against Bosniaks on the eve of Eid, criminals broke into the hall every day in the following days and committed various forms of violence against the prisoners.<sup>58</sup>

In terms of the scale of killings, another massacre that stands out is the one that occurred in the cinema hall of the Čelopek camp on June 27, 1992, the day before “Vidovdan” (St. Vitus’ Day). Around 3 PM, Dušan Vučković Repić entered the hall of the Čelopek Cultural Center, dressed in Serbian folk attire. Repić told the prisoners that they would “remember Vidovdan.” He lined them up against a wall and then began shooting, first at the ceiling and then at the prisoners. In the “Vidovdan” massacre, Repić killed at least twenty prisoners. In this mass crime,

54 ATKT, Statement by Ahmet Pezerović, Slavinovići, December 24, 1992, p. 2; Statement by Sead Musić and Muharem Musić, January 7, 1993, p. 2.

55 AFHP, First Instance Verdict against B. Grujić and B. Popović, p. 231; See also: AFHP, First Instance Verdict against G. Savić, S. Čilerdžić, and D. Janković, p. 86; AFHP, First Instance Verdict against D. Slavković, I. Korać, S. Filipović, and D. Dragićević, p. 86.

56 ATKT, Statement of Hasan Efendić, p. 6; See also: AIIZ, Statement of Edin Čikarić, p. 2; Statement of Hasan Pašić, March 10, 1993, pp. 3-4.

57 AIIZ, Statement of Idriz Softić, p. 2; ATKT, Statement of Hasan Efendić, p. 6; AIIZ, Statement of Edin Čikarić, p. 2; AIIZ, Statement of Vahid Halilović, p. 1.

58 ATKT, Statement of Senahid Tuhčić, p. 3.

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in addition to those killed, about twenty prisoners were wounded. The prisoners used “shirts to bandage the wounded,” which was essentially the only form of “medical assistance” in this camp.<sup>59</sup>

Most of the remains from the “Vidovdan massacre” were exhumed from the mass grave at Crni vrh. Some victims are still listed as missing. After the crime on the eve of Vidovdan, on June 29, 1992, the surviving prisoners, most of whom were seriously or lightly wounded and otherwise tortured, were transferred to the detention facilities of the “Court for Minor Offenses” in Zvornik. Some of them were later transferred to the Batković camp, while others were killed in Zvornik.

In the southern part of the Zvornik municipality, the Drinjača Cultural Center was used as a place for the detention of local Bosniaks from Drinjača, Kostijerevo, and surrounding villages on May 30, 1992. There, they were tortured, taken out and executed. The detainees were forced by Serbian soldiers to sing Chetnik songs, to repeat that they were in Serbia, and to cross themselves as Orthodox Christians. Those who did not know how to cross themselves were beaten.<sup>60</sup> Soldiers continuously tortured the detainees from Kostijerevo on May 30, 1992, when men and boys from other villages were brought into the building. The families of the men who were tortured and abused, held in close proximity to the Cultural Center, continuously heard the cries, sobs, moans, and screams of the detainees.<sup>61</sup>

Around 9:30 PM, a group of soldiers in cockade insignias and gray-green uniforms entered the Cultural Center, selected ten detainees, and began to beat, curse, and insult them, forcing them to bow their heads and eventually, to leave the Cultural Center.<sup>62</sup> Shortly after the ten detainees were taken out, gunfire was heard, indicating that executions were taking place.<sup>63</sup> The execution of the remaining camp inmates continued. They were taken to the schoolyard near the Cultural Center and executed by shooting.<sup>64</sup> The ICTY concluded in its proceedings against Karadžić that “on May 30, 1992, or approximately that date, Serbian forces killed 88 men in Drinjača”.<sup>65</sup>

59 ATKT, Statement of Ahmet Pezerović, p. 2; ATKT, Statement of Senahid Tuhčić, p. 3; See also: AIIZ, Statement of Idriz Softić, p. 3; ATKT, Statement of Hasan Efendić, p. 8.

60 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume I, para. 1332; Bureau for War Crimes Investigation of Zvornik Municipality, No. 01-053/94, Witness Statement with Protected Identity before ICTY, p. 2.

61 R BiH, Zvornik Municipality Assembly, Bureau for War Crimes Investigation of Zvornik Municipality, No. 01-016/92, Statement of Hadžira Sinanović, Živinice, December 6, 1992, p. 1.

62 ICTY, First instance verdict against M. Stanišić and S. Župljanin, Vol. I, para. 1613.

63 ICTY, First instance verdict against R. Karadžić, Vol. I, para. 1335.

64 ICTY, First instance verdict against M. Stanišić and S. Župljanin, Vol. I, para. 1613.

65 ICTY, First instance verdict against R. Karadžić, Vol. I, para. 1338.; ICTY, First instance verdict against M. Krajišnik, para. 369.

While the torture and killing of men were ongoing, soldiers took out girls and women and led them to a nearby barracks, the local clinic's rooms, and an apartment attached to the clinic, where they were raped, sexually abused, and otherwise tortured.<sup>66</sup> After the shooting, women and children were brought into the Cultural Center. Throughout the night, soldiers entered the hall and took women, girls, and very young girls out for rape.<sup>67</sup> This continued into the morning of May 31.<sup>68</sup>

The area where the villages of Đulići, Klisa, Kučić Kula, and numerous surrounding villages are located, from which men were captured on June 1, 1992, is near Petkovci. Before being separated from women, children, and the elderly in Bijeli Potok, they were escorted by armed guards from above Petkovci and the school in Petkovci, near to the dam in Petkovci – the location where genocide was committed in July 1995 – to the neighboring village of Bijeli Potok. There, the older boys and the able-bodied men were separated from the women, children. These men, nearly 700 of them, were taken to the school in Karakaj where they were further detained. In the following days, most of them were tortured and killed, and the remaining 400 (approximately) were taken to the Cultural Center in Pilica, where they were executed on June 8, 1992, in a building known as Gera's Slaughterhouse. As we can see, these locations and facilities became sites of repeated torture and murder during the genocide in July 1995.

After spending five days in the school in Karakaj, where at least 200 civilians were suffocated and killed, and three days in the camp in Pilica, where conditions were also horrific, on June 8, 1992, the remaining prisoners were told they were going to be exchanged in Živinice.<sup>69</sup> When they were listed in front of the camp, they were hopeful, as this led them to believe that this time they were indeed going to be exchanged.<sup>70</sup> However, the prisoners were then unloaded from the trucks, taken into separate rooms of the slaughterhouse, and told to face the wall, where they were executed.<sup>71</sup> After the last batch of prisoners was taken away, the camp at the Cultural Center in Pilica was empty. Witnesses who survived the detention and stayed at the Technical School Center in Karakaj, managed to escape

66 AIIZ, RBiH, Municipality of Zvornik Assembly, Department for the Investigation of War Crimes of the Municipality of Zvornik, No. 01-016/92, Statement by S. H. and R. H., Živinice, December 6, 1992, p. 1.

67 AIIZ, Video interview with Šaho Huseinović, min. 28:00-29:00.

68 AIIZ, Video interview with Safija Baručić, min. 09:30-12:00.

69 ATKTK, Statement of Fedahija Hasanović, June 24, 1993, p. 3.

70 ATKTK, Statement of Vejsil Hamzić, 2; See also: ATKTK, Statement of Fedahija Hasanović, June 24, 1993, p. 3.

71 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume I of IV, p. 536.

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in various ways. However, Vejsil Hamzić and Fedahija Hasanović survived the transfers from Karakaj camp to Pilica, and then to Gera's Slaughterhouse.<sup>72</sup>

### 3. Schools and Cultural Centers as Places of Detention in the Prijedor Municipality

At the end of April 1992, after the newly formed, SDS-led illegal government had established (in cooperation with the JNA) the "Serbian Municipality of Prijedor," mass crimes were committed against Bosniaks and Croats in the Prijedor municipality.<sup>73</sup> Bosniaks and Croats had their fundamental rights taken away, and were expelled from their positions in the police, administrative, and other municipal and judicial organs.<sup>74</sup> Among the detention facilities and camps that were established mainly in late May 1992 and operated throughout 1992 in the Prijedor municipality was the Miška Glava Cultural Center, alongside as the camps Trnopolje, Keraterm, Omarska, the football stadium in Ljubija, the JNA barracks in Prijedor, and the building of the SJB Prijedor.<sup>75</sup> Numerous documents presented in various proceedings before the ICTY prove that the bureaucratic apparatus of the "Serbian Municipality of Prijedor," through its Crisis Staff, devised, established, and managed the camps in Prijedor.<sup>76</sup> The conditions in the Prijedor camps were horrific. There was insufficient food, medical care was inadequate, and sanitary conditions were catastrophic. Detainees were tortured and beaten. They lost an average of 20 to 30 kg in weight during their detention.<sup>77</sup> After Edward Vulliamy and two ITN TV reporter teams, including Penny Marshall and Ian Williams, visited Omarska and Trnopolje on August 5, 1992, the camp was subsequently visited by representatives of the ICRC, who toured the entire facility.<sup>78</sup> This allowed the world to become aware of the horrors of the camps in the Prijedor area.

72 H. H., "The Uncertain Fate of 700 Detainees from the Camps in Karakaj and Pilica – Diminishing Hope," *Ratna Tribina*, January 12, 1993, Issue 3, p. 11.

73 For more details, see: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin; ICTY, Case No. IT-97-24-T, Trial Judgment against Milomir Stakić, July 31, 2003; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume II.

74 For more details: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume II, para. 1596;

75 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Volume II, paras. 1738-1740.

76 For example, the Crisis Staff of Prijedor established the Omarska camp based on a written order issued by Simo Drljača on May 31, 1992. ICTY, Case against Karadžić, Exhibit No. P2640, MUP SJB Prijedor, Reference No. 11-12-20, Report from SJB Prijedor, Prijedor, May 31, 1992.

77 For more details on the conditions and torture of Prijedor residents in the Omarska and Keraterm camps, see: ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Brđanin; ICTY, Judgment in the case against M. Stakić; ICTY, Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, paras. 1754-1853; Medić, Jasmin (2017), "Otac, čuvaj mi djecu" – Zločini u logoru Omarska 1992. godine" Prilozi, No. 46, University of Sarajevo – Institute for History, Sarajevo, pp. 243-267; Begić, Mujo, Medić, Jasmin (2024), *Korićanske stijene – kamena grobnica*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for History and Museum of Unsko-sanski Canton Bihać, Sarajevo – Bihać, pp. 23-33.

78 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, para. 1786.

The Trnopolje camp was located in the village of Trnopolje, in the southeastern part of the Prijedor municipality. This camp was under the control of the VRS and was established in the premises of an elementary school and surrounding buildings, including the gym, a store, and a former cultural center with a cinema hall.<sup>79</sup> The camp began operating around May 24, 1992, at the same time as the villages of Hambarine and Kozarac were attacked. Initially, the camp housed Bosniak and Croat women, children, and elderly individuals. However, later on, the camp was also used to detain military-aged prisoners who had survived torture in the Kera-term and Omarska camps.<sup>80</sup> Although the political and military leaders of the RS denied that Trnopolje was a camp, the ICTY established that various crimes were committed against civilians in this there.<sup>81</sup> The Prijedor Crisis Staff established the camp, and its commander was Slobodan Kuruzović.<sup>82</sup> The conditions in the camp were poor; there were no beds or blankets, so detainees had to sleep on the floor. They did not receive sufficient food. There was a shortage of water and inadequate toilet facilities. The situation was made unbearable by the fact that detainees could not bathe, and lice and scabies were common, with many prisoners also suffering from dysentery.<sup>83</sup> Although the abuse in Trnopolje was on a smaller scale compared to Omarska, camp guards still beat and insulted the detainees.

*“The camp guards would cut the detained men with knives and beat them with baseball bats, iron rods, rifle butts, and anything else they could get their hands on. Prisoners taken for interrogation would often return severely beaten and covered in blood.”*<sup>84</sup>

In addition to these atrocities, the detainees were forced to fight each other, and they were also sent out for forced labor. Many detainees were killed both in and outside the camp. From May to October 1992, numerous cases of rape were recorded in the camp.<sup>85</sup> During one of these crimes, the perpetrator told the victim: *“Muslim women must give birth to Serbian children,”* and earlier he had told her that *“Muslims are not human.”*<sup>86</sup> The camp guards allowed soldiers and other Serbs to enter the camp and rape women and girls.<sup>87</sup> Girls between the ages of 11 and 15 were also raped.<sup>88</sup>

79 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, para. 1817; For information on this camp, see also: ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against R. Mladić, Vol. II, paras. 1273-1444; Begić, Mujo, Medić, Jasmin, Korićanske stijene – kamena grobnica, pp. 26-32.

80 Ibid, para. 1818

81 Ibid, para. 1819

82 Ibid, para. 1820-1821; ICTY, Case No. IT-99-36-T, Trial Judgment in the case against Radoslav Brđanin, September 1, 2004, para. 449.

83 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume II, paras. 1822-1823.

84 Ibid, par. 1824.

85 Ibid, paras. 1830-1831.

86 Ibid, paras. 1826-1827.

87 Ibid, para. 1831.

88 Begić, Medić, Korićanske stijene – kamena grobnica, pp 30-31.

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The killings were constant, with huge massacres taking place on several occasions. One group of about ten detainees was killed on July 20, 1992, after being taken off a bus headed to Bišćani and then shot.<sup>89</sup> Another group of prisoners was taken on September 8, 1992, to a nearby fishpond where they were killed.<sup>90</sup> The largest massacre of Trnopolje detainees occurred on August 21, 1992, when around 200 Bosniak and Croat detainees from Trnopolje, some of whom had previously survived the Omarska and Keraterm camps, were taken to the Korićani Cliffs on Mount Vlašić near Skender Vakuf, and shot. These murders were committed by members of the Intervention Platoon of the Prijedor police. A total of 12 victims survived the massacre, mostly by jumping into the deep stone gorge before being shot.<sup>91</sup>

Around 23,000 Bosniak and Croat civilians passed through this camp, and after September 1992, around 3,000 civilians still remained.<sup>92</sup> When foreign journalists visited Trnopolje, the camp administration would order the removal of barbed wire fences to give an impression of freedom. Occasionally, a sign reading “*reception center*” would be put up. Conditions improved somewhat after August, following visits by foreign journalists to the Prijedor camps, but it is clear stated that they were far from ideal.<sup>93</sup>

Today, within the Trnopolje camp complex, there is a memorial room dedicated to members of the VRS, and in front of the Trnopolje premises, there is a monument to Serbian fighters, which, among other things, says that it is dedicated to: *‘The fighters who laid their lives in the foundation of Republic of Srpska.’*<sup>94</sup>

The next ‘cultural facility’ in the Prijedor municipality used to detain Bosniak civilians from July 21 to July 25, 1992, was the Miska Glava Cultural Center (formerly a community center<sup>95</sup>). Around 114 men and boys who had been captured in the forest near the village of Kalejevo, fleeing towards Bihać, were imprisoned there by Serbian soldiers. Part of the group was captured and transported to the Center. The conditions in this detention facility were disastrous. It was extremely

89 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume II, para. 1828.

90 Ibid, par. 1829.

91 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume II, paras. 1833-1847.

Begić and Medić, *Korićanske stijene – kamena grobnica*.

Medić, Jasmin (2018), “‘Ovdje mijenjamo mrtve za mrtve’: Masakr na Korićanskim stijenama,” *Pregled – časopis za društvena pitanja*, no. 2, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, pp. 113–128.

ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radoslav Brđanin, paras. 457-460.

92 Begić and Medić, *Korićanske stijene – kamena grobnica*, p. 32.

93 More details in: Vulliamy, Ed (2017), *Rat je mrtav, živio rat: Bosna - svođenje računa*, Buy-book, Sarajevo - Zagreb.

94 <https://kulturasjecanja.org/prijedor-spomen-obilježje-palim-borcima-rs-iz-trnopolja/>, accessed August 12, 2024.

95 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radoslav Brđanin, paras 858-859., ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume II, para 1854.

hot, with little to no food. They were given water only after singing nationalist songs about Greater Serbia. The methods used in other Prijedor camps and detention sites, where detainees were tortured and beaten in various ways by guards, were also used here. Before the detainees were transferred to the football stadium in Ljubija, two groups of ten and three detainees were taken out and did not return.<sup>96</sup> Even during the transport to the stadium, the bus was stopped, and members of the ‘intervention platoon of special forces’ entered and beat them.<sup>97</sup> Upon their arrival at the stadium, ‘*the soldiers beat the detainees for several hours until some of them died.*’ Afterward, several individuals were executed.<sup>98</sup> Then, the detainees were forced to load the bodies of 15-20 killed prisoners into buses, and the survivors, along with the bodies, were taken to the Kipe mine.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4. Schools and Cultural Centers as Detention Sites for Bosniaks and Croats in Other Municipalities

In addition to the camps and detention sites established in schools and cultural centers in 1992 in the areas of Zvornik and Prijedor (as well as those in connection with genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995), camps or detention facilities were set up in schools and cultural centers in most of the occupied municipalities. One such place was the ‘Vuk Karadžić’ school in Bratunac, which served as a camp from April to December 31, 1992. Hundreds of Bosniaks were detained there, held in inhumane conditions, and subjected to severe abuse and beatings. During the period from May 10 to 16, about 50 Bosniaks were killed in this school.<sup>100</sup> This was confirmed by Dutch journalists who came to Bratunac at the end of August 1992 and secretly visited the premises of this camp. They reported seeing bullet holes in the school, a recently replaced floor, and walls that had been

96 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume II, paras 1854-1862.

97 Ibid, para. 1863.

98 Ibid, para. 1867.

99 Ibid, 1868-1870; See also: ICTY, First instance verdict against Milomir Stakić.

100 For more details on the crimes in the Bratunac area, refer to: ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, paras 765-780. ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, para. 313-315. ICTY, Case No. IT-02-61-S, Judgment in the case against Miroslav Deronjić, March 30, 2004.

Mašić, Nijaz (1996), *Istina o Bratuncu: Agresija, enocide I oslobodilačke borba 1992-1995*, Općina Bratunac sa privremenim sjedištem u Tuzli, Tuzla. For information on crimes in the Bosnian Podrinje region, consult:

Bećirević, Edina (2009), *Na Drini genocid: istraživanje organiziranog zločina u istočnoj Bosni*, Buybook, Sarajevo.

Selimović, Sead (2022), *Ubijeni i protjerani: promjene u etničkoj strukturi stanovništva Bosanskog podrinja od 1991. do 2013. godine po utjecajem rata protiv Bosne i Hercegovine*, Centar za istraživanje genocida i savremene historije, Tuzla.

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freshly repainted. Nearby, there was a container full of personal identification cards with Bosniak names.<sup>101</sup>

In Foča, Serbian forces committed various forms of crimes, including torture, beatings, physical and psychological abuse, as well as mass rape. Among the numerous facilities used for the arrest and detention of Bosniaks were the premises of the high school in Foča.<sup>102</sup> This, like most other camps, became a place for the mass rape of Bosniak women.<sup>103</sup> Another detention site in the Foča area was the premises of the 'Brod na Drini' elementary school.<sup>104</sup> As in other towns in the Drina valley, these organized and systematic crimes were accompanied by looting and the complete destruction of private, cultural, and religious property in Foča.

In Rogatica, under the RS camp system, the Bosniak population was detained in several camps and detention facilities. One of these was set up in the 'Veljko Vlahović' high school.<sup>105</sup> Beatings, a lack of basic necessities, forced labor, and executions marked the prisoners' time in this camp, from June to September 1992. In addition to various forms of torture, the mass rape of women and girls stands out. Some of the victims were only seven years old. Among the rape victims was a 13-year-old boy. Over 1,000 civilians, mainly Bosniaks, were held in the school.<sup>106</sup>

In the municipality of Sokolac, Bosniaks were detained in, among other places, the premises of the 'Slaviša Vajner Čiča' elementary school. Prisoners were beaten there. One of the detainees testified before the ICTY that he stayed in that school until October 3, 1992, when they were transferred to the premises of the former elementary school in Čavarine. The conditions were harsh, with insufficient food and no proper sanitation facilities. Before being transferred to

101 Bećirević, Edina., *Na Drini genocid*, p. 192.

102 For detailed information about this and other camps and detention facilities in the Foča area, see:

ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, paras. 875-923. ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Ratko Mladić, Volume I, paras 686-690. ICTY, Case No. IT-96-23-T & IT-96-23/1-T, Trial Judgment in the case against Dragoljub Kunarac, Radomir Kovač, and Zoran Vuković, February 22, 2001, paras 28-244. ICTY, Case No. IT-97-25-T, Trial Judgment in the case against Milorad Krnojelac, March 15, 2002.

103 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, para. 916.

104 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, para 648; For more on crimes in the Foča area, see: Tafro, Preljub, Macić, Bećir (2004), *Genocid nad Bošnjacima na području Foče 1992.-1995. (Prilog utvrđivanju žrtava)*, Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo.

105 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, paras. 981-997.

106 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, paras. 990. See also: ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Ratko Mladić, Volume II, paras 1451-1455; 1477-1489; ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, paras 674-685.

the Batković camp in Bijeljina in March 1993, the detainees were continuously abused and tortured.<sup>107</sup>

In Vlasenica, Bosniaks were detained in both high and elementary school buildings, with most of them being transferred to the Sušica camp. Bosniaks from Vlasenica, as well as from Kalesija, were also detained in the school premises in Papraća, as well as in the elementary school in the village of Pelemiš, in the municipality of Kladanj, where horrific crimes were committed against the Bosniaks of Vlasenica, who were trying to reach the free territory controlled by the ARBiH. Civilians were also detained in the Cultural Centre in Milići.<sup>108</sup>

In 1992, many Bosniak civilians were detained in the ‘Miladin Radojević’ elementary school in Kalinovik. Killings were carried out, and civilians were subjected to various forms of torture, including the rape of women.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, in Bijeljina, some detainees were briefly held in the agricultural school in Bijeljina.<sup>110</sup>

In Brčko, Bosniaks were detained in the school in Lončari, as well as the ‘Partizan’ sports hall.<sup>111</sup> In Bosanski Šamac, Bosniaks and Croats were arrested and then detained from the second half of April 1992 until the end of the year. In addition to being detained here, they were also forcibly transported to, and detained in, Brčko and Bijeljina. Other (nearby) places of detention and torture included the premises of the elementary and high schools in Bosanski Šamac, as well as the Youth Center and the Cultural Center in Crkvine.<sup>112</sup> In Pelagićevo, in the Gradačac municipality, Bosniaks and Croats were detained (in inhumane

107 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Radovan Karadžić, Volume I, paras. 1070-1071. See also: ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, paras. 686-693.

108 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Ratko Mladić, Volume II, paras. 1779-1802; Omerović, Husejn (2016), *Žrtve genocida na području Vlasenice 1992.-1995.*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Genocide and International Law, Sarajevo, pp. 193, 198; ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, para. 356.

109 For detailed information on detention facilities in the Kalinovik area, see: ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Ratko Mladić, Volume I, paras. 760-773; ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, paras. 660-667; ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Dragoljub Kunarac, Radomir Kovač, and Zoran Vuković, paras. 28-244.

110 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Ratko Mladić, Volume I, para. 595; For more detailed information on crimes in the Bijeljina area, see: Trbić, Jusuf, (2007), *Majstori mraka*, „Kujundžić“, Lukavac.

111 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Krajišnik, para 335; Posavljak, Admir (2010), *Brčkom su ubijali dušu*, Author, Brčko, p. 314; For information on detention camps and other places of torture in the Brčko area, see: Muratović, Rasim, Kuka, Ermin (2015), *Genocid u Brčkom 1992-1995.*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo; Marčetić, Stjepan (2023), *Početak rata i zločina nad Hrvatima općine Brčko 1992. godine*, Croatian Documentation Center of the Homeland War in BiH, Mostar.

112 ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Blagoje Simić, Miroslav Tadić, and Simo Zarić (IT-95-9-T), October 29, 2003, paras 517, 549-561; See also: ICTY, Sentencing Judgment in the

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conditions) in the school premises.<sup>113</sup> In 1992, Bosniaks were detained, among other places, in the school in Čelinac.<sup>114</sup> Back east, in the Doboj municipality, non-Serb civilians were also detained in the high school, then in the elementary school in Stanari, and in the elementary school in Grapska.<sup>115</sup> In Donji Vakuf, Serb authorities held civilians, mostly Bosniaks, in at least ten facilities, including the elementary school in Oborci.<sup>116</sup> In Teslić, Croats and Bosniaks were detained in several facilities, including the premises of the ‘Mladost’ school.<sup>117</sup> In Čajniče, among other places, Bosniaks were detained in three facilities, one of which was a school.<sup>118</sup> In Gacko, detainees, mostly Bosniaks, were held in several facilities, including the House of Culture in Avtovac (three kilometers from Gacko).<sup>119</sup> In Bileća, detainees were held in the student dormitory and the school.<sup>120</sup> In the Višegrad municipality, the ‘Hasan Veletovac’ school, as well as the ‘Vuk Karadžić’ school and the elementary school in Orahovci, were used for the torture and killing of Bosniaks.<sup>121</sup>

In the occupied parts of Sarajevo, numerous notorious detention facilities and camps were also established, using local schools and cultural centers. For example, in the occupied part of Hadžići, Bosniaks were detained in the High School Center,<sup>122</sup> and in Ilidža, in the ‘27th July’ Elementary School and the Graphic School, as well as in the Cultural and Sports Center.<sup>123</sup> In Ilijaš, camps were formed in the elementary school, as well as in the school in Gornja Bioča, the school in Podlugovi, and the Technical School.<sup>124</sup> In the Pale region, Bosniaks from Hrenovica were detained in the gymnasium of the Cultural Center in Pale,

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case against Stevan Todorović (IT-95-9/1-S), July 31, 2001; ICTY, Sentencing Judgment in the case against Milan Simić (IT-95-9/2-S), October 17, 2002.

113 Kožar, Azem (ed.) (1993), *Ratni zločin 1992. godine na tuzlanskom okrugu*, State Commission for the Collection of Facts about War Crimes, Tuzla.

114 ICTY, Judgment in the case of M. Krajišnik, para. 434.

115 ICTY, Judgment in the case of M. Krajišnik, para. 344; On crimes in Doboj and other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, see also reports by UN Special Rapporteur Tadeusz Mazowiecki. For more details, see: Mazowiecki, Tadeusz (2007), Reports 1992-1995, University of Tuzla and IDC, Tuzla-Sarajevo.

116 Ibid, paras. 437-443.

117 Ibid, para. 539.

118 Ibid, para. 617.

119 Ibid, para. 656.

120 Ibid, para 611; Mazowiecki, T., Reports 1992-1995, p. 102.

121 For more detailed information on these and other detention camps and facilities in the Višegrad area, see: ICTY, Judgment in the case of R. Karadžić, Vol. I, paras. 1160-1213; ICTY, Case No. IT-98-32/1-T, Judgment in the case of Milan Lukić and Sredoje Lukić, July 20, 2009; ICTY, Case No. IT-98-32-T, Judgment in the case of Mitar Vasiljević, November 29, 2002; Kuka, Ermin (2019), *Genocid nad Bošnjacima u Višegradu 1992-1995*, University of Sarajevo, Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo.

122 ICTY, Judgment in the case of M. Krajišnik, para. 548

123 Ibid, para. 554.

124 Ibid, paras. 557-565.

where from May to August 1992, a large number of Bosniak civilians were killed, or died from the effects of beatings.<sup>125</sup>

One of the largest massacres was carried out at the beginning of November 1992, when 161 Bosniaks from Večići in the Kotor-Varoš municipality, who had been captured and taken to the school in Grabovica, were killed. They had been captured while trying to escape to the ARBiH-controlled territory in the direction of Travnik.<sup>126</sup> The Serb authorities also held Croatian and Bosniak civilians in detention in the elementary school premises in Maslovare, as well as in the high school.<sup>127</sup>

In the municipality of Ključ, the school in Velagići was another of the locations where Bosniaks were detained, and among other crimes, on June 1, 1992, 77 men were executed by firing squad in front of it. Their bodies were later exhumed from the Lanište II mass grave.<sup>128</sup> Additionally, in May, a camp was formed at the ‘Nikola Mačkić’ elementary school in Ključ, where several hundred Bosniaks and Croats were detained. These detainees were transferred to larger camps, primarily to Manjača in Banja Luka. One of the camps that could be considered a ‘transit camps’ was camp at the ‘Dobrića Pupiće’ elementary school in Sitnica, from detainees from the ‘Nikola Mačkić’ school were taken.<sup>129</sup>

*“In six detention centers in the municipality of Ključ, mainly in schools, many Bosniak and Croatian civilians were held in poor conditions and often severely beaten. Serb guards killed several detainees. By the end of August, almost all detainees had been transferred to the Manjača camp in the Banja Luka municipality. Most Bosniaks and Croats left the Ključ municipality in the summer of 1992 due to unbearable conditions and fear. Several murders occurred in the camp itself.”*<sup>130</sup>

125 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, paras. 2332-2347; For information on crimes against Bosniaks in the camps in Pale, see also: Crnčalo, Fuad (2008), *Stotinu dana golgote*, Udruženje demobilisanih boraca općine Pale-Prača, Prača.

126 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Mladić, Vol. I, paras. 887-919; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, paras. 432-433, 817-819; See also: Kličko, Amir, “*Stradanje i odbrana kotorvaroških Bošnjaka i Hrvata 1992. godine*”, *Historijski pogledi*, Centar za istraživanje moderne i savremene historije, Tuzla, Vol. V, No. 7, pp. 379-422.

127 See also: ICTY, Trial Judgment against M. Krajišnik, paras. 457-468.

128 See also: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, paras. 1523-1529; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Mladić, Vol. I, paras. 821-834; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, paras. 427, 810-814. For more details on this crime and other crimes in the municipality of Ključ, see: Begić, Mujo (2012), *Genocid u Ključu*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo

129 ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, paras. 805, 810-815; Begić, Mujo., *Genocid u Ključu*, pp. 350-352; Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case No. S1 1 K 003359 12 Kžk, Judgment against Boško Lukić and Marko Adamović, p. 151.

130 Begić, M., *Genocid u Ključu*, p. 208.

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One of the largest massacres of civilians committed during the entire aggression took place in Biljani on July 10, 1992, when at least 219 residents of this village were killed in front of the elementary school, the Cultural Center, and other locations.<sup>131</sup>

Before that, the residents had been captured and taken to the courtyard of the Biljani elementary school. In addition to being held in two rooms of the elementary school, Bosniaks were also detained in the premises of the Cultural Center. After that, they were all registered, and then their names were called, either individually or in small groups, taken out, and killed. The largest group was transported to the Lanište site, where they were executed. The youngest victim was four-month-old Amila Džaferagić, who was exhumed from the Lanište pit along with her mother.<sup>132</sup>

In Sanski Most, the ‘Hasan Kikić’ school was among several camps and detention facilities formed in the spring of 1992. Among the detainees were at least 1,000 Bosniaks, including about 200 men brought from Ključ.<sup>133</sup> As with many of the locations mentioned before, these detainees were beatings and tortured. Again, as with many of the other locations, the conditions in this camp were below any acceptable minimum.<sup>134</sup> Schools also served as prison camps and execution sites for Bosniaks (and Croats), including the ‘Narodni Front’ Elementary School, ‘Vuk Karadžić’ Elementary School, ‘20th October’ Elementary School, ‘Skender Kulenović’ Elementary School in Kamengrad, the elementary schools in Tomina, Podovi, Kozica, Stari Mejdan, Podvidača, and Donja Tramošnja.<sup>135</sup>

In the Bosanska Krupa area, monstrous crimes against Bosniaks and Croats were committed in several camps, many of which were schools. Among them were the ‘Dušan Košutić’ Elementary School in Jasenica, the ‘Petar Kočić’ Elementary School, and the elementary schools in Suvaja, Gorinja, and Arapuša. In these fa-

131 Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case No. S1 1 K 003359 12 Kžk, Judgment against Boško Lukić and Marko Adamović, p. 171.

132 Begić, M., *Genocid u Ključu*, pp. 152-155; See also: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, para. 462; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Mladić, Vol. I, para. 800-820; ICTY, Trial Judgment against M. Krajišnik, para. 444-456.

133 For more details on the camps in the Sanski Most area, see: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, paras. 451-452, 884-886; ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Karadžić, Vol. II, paras. 1979-2011.

134 Ibid, paras. 2008-2011.

135 For more details on the crimes in Sanski Most committed at these and other locations, see: Begić, Mujo (2017), *Genocid u Sanskom Mostu*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo; Ključanin, Zilhad, Akmadžić, Hazim (1998), *Zločin je zaboraviti zločin – Sanski Most u ratu 1992-1995*, Municipality of Sanski Most; ICTY, Trial Judgment against M. Krajišnik, paras. 508-533.

cilities, Bosniaks and Croats were killed and tortured in various ways, including being subjected to electric shocks.<sup>136</sup>

In the area of Bosanski Novi municipality, during May, JNA units forcibly relocated the entire Bosniak population from the Urije and Prekosanje settlements to the ‘Đuro Radmanović’ school, where they were detained for several days. Additionally, on June 9, 1992, Serbian soldiers detained 25 to 30 Bosniaks in the Blagaj-Japra elementary school.<sup>137</sup>

All of the above is merely an overview of a certain number of schools and cultural centers used as detention sites formed in the self-proclaimed RS during the period 1992-1995. It is important to emphasize that in all occupied areas that RS authorities took control of in 1992, including municipalities not mentioned in this work, additional dozens of camps and detention facilities were formed. In besieged towns and cities, such as Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Žepa (until July 1995), Bihać, Goražde, Maglaj, Tešanj, Mostar, etc., school buildings and cultural centers, as well as other civilian structures, were subjected to constant shelling, which resulted in the deaths of numerous civilians.<sup>138</sup>

The largest number of camps were established and operated in 1992, as seen in this work. Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced the greatest exodus in 1992, by the end of which nearly 70% of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was under the control of the VRS, from where about 500,000 Bosniaks were expelled. Similarly, Croats also underwent the greatest exodus in 1992. Around 300,000 Croats were expelled from the territories that were under the control of the VRS by the end of 1992.<sup>139</sup> The military and police structures of the RS carried out mass crimes against Bosniaks and Croats, fulfilling a large part of the ‘strategic goals’ defined at the aforementioned sixteenth session of their assembly.<sup>140</sup>

In all the schools and cultural centers across Bosnia and Herzegovina, including all those mentioned in this work, prior to the onset of the aggression, generations of students had been, and even until the summer holidays of 1992 were being

136 For more details on these and other crimes committed in the area of Bosanska Krupa, see: ICTY, Trial Judgment against R. Brđanin, paras. 461, 491-492; 536, 767-772; ICTY, Trial Judgment against M. Krajišnik, paras. 393-402; Begić, Mujo (2016), *Bosanska Krupa 1992-1995 – Porušeni grad*, University of Sarajevo – Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo.

137 Ibid, para. 406.

138 For example, in Srebrenica on April 12, 1993, over 70 civilians were killed and more than 100 were injured due to the shelling of a school playground. See: Čekić, Smail., *Genocid i istina o genocidu u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

139 Medić, Jasmin., et al. (2023), „*Ratni zločini i genocid u Republici Bosni i Hercegovini 1992-1995.*”

140 For more details on strategic objectives: Džananović, M., et al. (2023), *Nastanak Republike srpske: Od regionalizacije do strateških ciljeva 1991-1992.*

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educated and culturally developed together, regardless of their ethnic, national, or religious background. These generations were supposed to continue building the state and society. It is evident however, that the criminals had only one goal: to ‘ethnically cleanse’ ‘their’ territory, ensuring that no cultural or educational life, and no society fostering ‘shared’ living, would ever be built there again. Moreover, during the commission of crimes, often the members of the Serbian military or police were imprisoning, torturing, or killing their former friends with whom they had shared the same classroom or school, now a place of detention. There were cases where the perpetrators of the crimes were students committing atrocities against their teachers, or teachers against their students.

The monstrosity of the decision by RS’ political and military structures to establish such a large number of camps in school buildings and cultural centers is reflected not only in the horrific crimes were committed there, but also in the fact that after the crimes were committed, most of the school buildings were cleaned and prepared for the start of the new school year. The perpetrators of these crimes, along with other members of the Serbian population who were aware of, and had witnessed what had occurred in these facilities, sent their children to these same schools as if nothing significant had taken place there. During the past thirty years of education, students were never told anything about the monstrous history of the buildings where they spend most of their days. By not speaking about the painful history of these buildings, they are essentially ‘condoning through silence’ the crimes and fostering further division.

Today, in numerous schools, students are taught under a monoethnic curriculum. These schools often have memorial rooms dedicated to those who participated in the crimes, and monuments to these individuals stand in front of the schools. The educational system throughout the RS today, the curriculum being taught, and the iconography displayed on the walls all promote further division, the glorification of criminals, and the denial of genocide and crimes.

Teachers in schools, as well as parents at home, must, first and foremost, for the better future of their children, inform them that the renovated classrooms, halls, and schoolyards in which they sit and play, were locations of mass torture and killing, and that in the often ruined cultural centers that stand in their towns and cities across the RS, the last things that happened there, were the torture and murder of their parents’ neighbors.

## Conclusion

Schools and cultural centers, which were once places of education and culture, have become symbols of mass crimes, torture, and genocide during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The systematic crimes carried out by RS authorities in areas they considered to belong “only to Serbs,” especially in municipalities

where Serbs were a minority according to the 1991 census, revealed a precisely orchestrated strategy of mass crimes, and the expulsion of Bosniaks and Croats. This work confirms that 1992, marked by these mass crimes, was a pivotal year during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marked by massacres, and the formation of camps. The subsequent realization of the “strategic goals” ultimately led to the mass expulsion of Bosniaks and Croats from areas controlled by the VRS. Numerous facilities, including school and cultural centers across over 25 Bosnian municipalities, were used for mass torture and mistreatment, as demonstrated in this work.

The educational system in Republic of Srpska remains a major obstacle to adequately confronting the past. The control of education policy by the ruling elite in the RS, which deny genocide, further entrenches a culture of denial of genocide, war crimes, camps, and the glorification of convicted war criminals. Without acknowledging genocide, ceasing the glorification of crimes, and educating the youth in the RS about the true history, including that of their schools which bear no truthful marks of their dark past, there is no possibility for the process of peace building within Bosnian society.

Therefore, adequate memorialization of these facilities and acknowledgment of their criminal functions during the war are essential to preserving the memory of the victims and preventing the repetition of similar crimes in the future.

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Schools and Cultural Centers as Detention Sites in the Territory of the Self-Proclaimed Republic of Srpska During the Aggression Against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995)

BOSNIA  STUDIES  
SARAJEVO

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The Position of Religion in the Digital  
Age

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## Summary

*Whenever the topic of religion is debated, Heraclitus' thought about the "logos" in the world that "neither hides nor reveals itself" comes to the fore. According to him, "logos" is the universal principle of the cosmos, the principle of the unity of opposites, and to know it one must make a mental effort, which is nothing but the light of faith, as such. The "Logos" is the "cosmic connector" and is operative in all things because it unites the two opposite poles, God's speech, and the world. The world is nothing but "symbolic speech of God". Human imagination has the ability to clothe the spiritual ("logos") in sensory form (logic). The interpretation of symbols is based on deepening their contents and enriching their meanings through scientific research and scientific knowledge. The symbolic language of the keyboard (digital religion) is not suitable for such a process.*

*Religion, as a variable social phenomenon prone to diffusion, is aided by the digital age in its mission, without knowing what consequences it will experience in the foreseeable future. In order to master the ideas of individuals, by inversion, he wants to present the "external activity" with faith as such, to enter the subjective world of the individual and his intimacy with God. Just as language is the medium of thought, religion is also the medium of faith. In the digital age, man becomes the medium of the media.*

*Keywords: faith, religion, symbols, community, digital religion.*

## Introduction

There are several, general social causes: A higher degree of development in production technology and the division of labor, an increase in the accumulation of social goods, and specialization in society lead to religious specialization. Reality is divided into the religious world, and the world of ordinary human affairs, and knowledge is divided into the sacred and the profane. Thus, religion becomes a limited but prominently "visible" part of social reality, encompassing not only its founders, sacred texts, rituals, and theologians, but also its buildings, schools, organization, financial means, officials, and funds. The faster this specialization grows, the more the discrepancy between the ideals of the religious model and the facts of social reality becomes apparent. When this situation becomes radicalized, as it is today, only a minority will be seriously socialized within the official religious model, while the majority will choose another model of approach and integration into society, leading to the complete social neutralization of official belief schemes. Everything indicates that the institutional specialization of religion is the cause of a historical process that transforms this religion into a subjective and private reality, destroying the socially "visible" religion and creating a socially "invisible" one. The very fact that individual religion is modeled by a highly specialized social institution brings with it many important consequences.

Religious tradition, once interpreted by authorities, must now be thrown into the marketplace like any other commodity, as it needs to be sold to customers who are no longer forced to buy it. Therefore, the situation of contemporary religion is essentially a classic market situation, and a significant part of religious activity is driven by the logic of market economics. It is not difficult to see that this situation has serious consequences on the existing social structures of different religious groups. Simply put, today religious groups have transitioned into a competitive market situation. The “market” situation does not guarantee any secure result. The necessity to achieve results leads, in the contemporary competitive situation, to the rationalization of religious structures. As in other institutions of modern society, this rationalization is primarily expressed in the emergence of a managerial, situational approach. The spread of this approach to religious institutions, makes them increasingly resemble one another, despite their completely opposite theological traditions.

Summarizing the essential sociological and socio-psychological characteristics of a pluralistic situation, it must be said that religion can no longer be simply imposed but must find its place in the marketplace of ideas. It is impossible to offer goods to free consumers without considering their desires. The need to adapt the fundamental positions of religious traditions to the personal wishes of a large segment of the population marks the beginning of a tendency that empowers consumers to exercise control over the products offered to them in the market. Therefore, it is not surprising that this situation of pluralism and the religious marketplace is accompanied by increased interest in the role and place of lay-people in interpreting religious truths.

## 1. Religion and the Modern World

Many contemporary sociologists emphasize that religion is a central theme to sociological analysis and one of the greatest challenges to sociological imagination. It permeates not only the spiritual life of the individual but also the entire social structure. With its strong internal force, manifested outwardly in public life, religion regulates relationships among individuals, families, communities, and societies. These relationships are not limited to the private sphere but extend to the realms of culture, economy, and politics. However, this influence is not one-sided, as society also exerts a certain influence on religion. Therefore, we say that the relationship between religion and society is correlative, and the consequences they have on each other, are mutual.

In the modern world, when discussing the phenomenon of religion, a conflict between two positions is evident: one that considers secularization as a fundamental characteristic of modern societies and another that is based on the thesis of revitalization, or the awakening of religion in modern society. According to the first

position, religion is opposed to modernity, whether modernity is understood as rationalization or increasing industrialization, urbanization, and mobility. Prominent theorists of secularization, such as Peter Berger and Bryan Wilson, explicitly argued that secularization is a logical and necessary consequence of rationalization, asserting that with the rationalization of society, religion loses its influence on thought, behaviour, and institutions in society. In the conditions created by modern society, traditional religious forms lose their recognition and are, in fact, dysfunctional.<sup>1</sup>

The second position starts from the view that social, economic, and cultural modernization, which was presumed to cause the disappearance of religion, has actually led to its return—a return of religion and a return to religions. This resurgence is particularly evident in politics and education, making this process significantly stronger than the other. The return to religion in Bosnia and Herzegovina has most profoundly affected youth, manifesting in: an increased interest in religion among young people, the awakening of religiosity, and the return to religion of those who were more or less distanced from it and its institutions during the socialist period. The influence of religiously motivated factors on practical behaviour among a larger number of people is enhanced, in terms of the return of functions such as religious integration, identification, homogenization, legitimation, and compensation. The social significance of religion and its institutions in the development of society is increased and there has been an emergence of political movements closely linked with religious and ecclesiastical structures. This is alongside a heightened confessional self-identification, the intensification of religious practice and the expansion of religious belief as key points of the dogmatic core of institutionalized religion.<sup>2</sup> It has been demonstrated that radical state secularization repeatedly triggers new religious movements, new religious uprisings, and a new revitalization of faith among people.

This revitalization of religion is an essential process to note when discussing religious changes in contemporary society. The activities of religious institutions in revitalizing religion are reflected in the increased significance of religion for the socio-cultural life of the community. This is characterized as “theism with public functions,” the heightened influence of religion on the political and legal activities of the state, and the elimination of all significant cultural and social changes brought about by the development of modern societies. The causes stem from a series of processes and relationships in the modern world: a general social crisis in worldviews and ideologies, tendencies against the excesses of “worldly secularism”; the disinterest of religious institutions in the “spirituality of the world”; the loss of human personality and identity in a dehumanized world; the questionable

1 Jukić, J. (2001). *Sociološki pristup sekularizaciji, Društvena istraživanja: časopis za opća društvena pitanja*, Vol. 10., no 3., Zagreb.

2 Blagojević, M. (2005). *Religija i crkva u transformacijama društva*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić.

legitimacy of social institutions; the reduction of mechanisms for social integration (e.g., the nation); the non-transparency of socio-political relations; a cultural crisis of ethics (meaning and values) and aesthetics (decadence of appearances); the collapse of social systems; and the upheavals of transition and globalization.<sup>3</sup>

The survival of religion, like any other social phenomenon, will depend on its readiness to change. Many authors support the theses regarding the emergence of new secular religions, new religious movements, and a new type of religiosity. Instead of believing in supernatural forces, people turn to the worship of society, some social creation, or their symbols. R. N. Bellah concludes that this is a 'civil religion'. This type of religiosity involves a system of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and institutions that, in turn, support and morally unify the entire society. Many consider globalization to be a new, emerging model of secular religion: "Today, democracy and parliamentarism have their faithful flock, who regularly pray to their gods in sacred times in daily life and at certain sacred places such as the press, radio, television, parliament, and here and there offer sacrifices on the altar to their god."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Media Culture

Media culture is a part of society's cultural tradition, and is characterized by dynamic development, rapid changes, and symbolic content, just like any other form of cultural heritage.

We can say that media culture is a complex concept with essential components including: working in media communication, actively participating in media communication, and maintaining a positive (ethical) attitude towards the processes of media production and consumption of media content. Media culture involves active and ethical engagement in the process of media communication, contributing to the collective act of public exchange of goods such as information, artistic content, and more.

Through the media, all forms of social behaviour and cultural content are depicted. Culture is mediatized, meaning that the media intervene between the audience and reality in its own way, which further means that culture, when depicted in the media is not reality, but a construction. Media culture should be understood much more broadly than media content because it encompasses people, behaviour, objects, and all symbolic products and media activities, as communication with users. Media culture is in a constant process of transforming objects, skills, goods, and services into commodities for the market. In the contemporary world,

<sup>3</sup> Vrcan, S. (1986). *Od krize religije k religiji krize*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb.

<sup>4</sup> Filipović, B. (2005). *Budućnost religije*, Centar za istraživanja religije Novi Sad, Štamparija Studio Bravo – Subotica. pp 109.

the media industry is one of the most important and profitable businesses. It is, in fact, a form of entrepreneurship that includes the film industry, radio and television programs, video, video games, music, the printing of newspapers and books, and other non-personal content.<sup>5</sup>

In the media, all forms of cultural content are mediatized, and at least four types of cultural areas can be distinguished:

1. Traditional Culture
2. Elite Culture
3. Mass Culture
4. Digital Culture

Each of these phenomena covers a specific area of cultural production and is defined by unique activities, objects, and practices.

Traditional culture is associated with customs, traditional clothing, various parts of attire and props, music, language, oral literature, rituals, and behaviours. Components of traditional culture include folklore, oral literature, folk songs, epic tales, legends, myths, rituals, naive painting and sculpture, handicrafts, and food. All of this is preserved, maintained, and passed down from generation to generation, as the term “traditional” itself implies, deriving from the Latin *traditio*, meaning transmission, handover, or passing down.

Elite culture is associated with concepts such as exclusivity, elitism, a selected part of society, special knowledge, and specialized education. Elite culture is manifested in content such as literature (poetry, novels, plays), classical music and jazz, as well as through various performance forms like theatre productions, concerts, operas, ballets, book promotions, artistic performances, and specialized cultural radio and television programs. This art is realized by writers, actors, opera singers, artists, painters, sculptors, and critics, with props and stage design differing from those associated with traditional art. Instead of traditional costumes, elite art features costume design, fashion performances, and special forms of high fashion. All of this requires specialized and focused education in various scientific and artistic institutions.

Mass culture is an urban culture that emerged with the advent of the media and is younger than both traditional and elite cultures. It is closely associated with media, including the emergence of film, radio, and television. In some ways, it is the opposite of elite culture due to its democracy and accessibility to all layers of society, regardless of knowledge, education, social background, or material status. It develops far from the formal institutions of society, away from universities, schools, religious institutions, and museums. It is accessible and appealing to a

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5 Kung, L., Pickard, R. G., Towse, R. (2008). *The Internet and the Mass Media*. London: Sage.

large number of people, and, given that its products are mostly stereotyped and standardized, it is thus tailored for a broad audience.

Digital culture is the culture of our time, the culture of the digital age, the culture of the new millennium. It is “a part of the culture of society, a part of the cultural politics of society, and signifies the process of transforming the very idea of culture in society.”<sup>6</sup> It is associated with technologies and technological advancements in communication. Digital culture merges all forms of art and represents a specific way of consuming and producing cultural content. Like elite culture, digital culture also requires a specific type of education. Citizens without the necessary education, as with elite culture, cannot fully participate in the processes of the new digital cultural scene. Some of the concepts defining digital culture include: virtuality, mobility, convergence, interactivity, digitization, new audiences, new media, media industry, and the “cult of the new.”<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Relationship Between Media, Religion, and Culture

The relationship between media and religion is two-sided, though not symmetrical. Our focus is on media representation of religion and what the media does to religion and/or with religion. To understand this relationship, it is essential to distinguish between mediation and mediatization. Mediation (from Latin *mediare* - to mediate) refers to the process of conveying messages while maintaining a neutral stance. The emphasis is on impartiality, avoiding subjective framing, and valuing the content of communication. In contrast, mediatization refers to the process through which media, by selecting and representing social reality, influences the shaping and unfolding of social processes, resulting in the adaptation of social institutions and actors to the demands of mass media production. In this process, “media [has] developed into an independent social institution and simultaneously have become an integral part of the functioning of other institutions, such as family, politics, and religion. Consequently, “religion increasingly falls under the logic of the media, which becomes the primary source of religious ideas.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, for the contemporary individual, *homo medialis*, perceptions of religious phenomena, are to a greater or lesser extent now being determined by their media representation.

The role of mass media in distributing religious beliefs, values, and symbols has been crucial, especially since the emergence of various types of new media and the recent developments of communication technology. This is understandable

6 Zgrabljic R. N. (ur.), (2011). *Digitalno doba*. Zadar – Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zadru i Naklada medijska istraživanja. pp 38

7 Marshall, D. P. (2004). *New Media Culture*. London: Arnold.

8 Hjarvard Stig, “Introduction: The mediatization of religion: enchantment, media and popular culture” in: *Northern Lights* Volume 6, 2008. pp 5

due to the fundamental importance of words and communication in religious life and the intent of religious institutions to reach as many existing and potential believers as possible. Religion can only be expressed through some form of mediation, as “religion always involves techniques and technologies we think of as ‘media,’ just as, in the same sense, every medium necessarily participates in the realm of the transcendent, if nothing else, through their inability to be completely subjected to the instrumental intentions of their users.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to disseminating religious messages, media—especially online media due to their interactive potentials—are used to express the communal nature of religion by strengthening feelings of religious identity, belonging to a religious community, and connections among believers. On the other hand, religious symbols and practices, due to their transnational recognizability that transcends language and national barriers, represent a rich source of ideas and content for mass media production. Considering the additional symbolic value and emotional potency of religion for the audience, it is clear why media are interested in such symbols, rituals, and practices.

The inclusion of religious themes in media content, the engagement of believers on social networks, and the interpretation of religious dogmas by various sources mean that for religious institutions, adapting their communication methods and functioning to the changed social and technological environment is an absolute imperative. Failing to adapt would mean leaving the interpretation of religious dogmas and symbols to non-institutional sources. Becoming aware of this, most religious institutions and communities are using new communication technologies to publish spiritual content and communicate with and among believers. Many religious communities have realized that media messages can influence the attitudes and beliefs of their followers. They have recognized that by using media, they can capture a share of the market, advertise themselves, engage in debates, and “open a new practice of communication for religious communities.”<sup>10</sup>

Some researchers distinguish between two traditions and levels in the study of media, religion, and culture. These are religion in the media and media as religion. According to the first, religion in the media involves studying how major institutionalized religions and their discourses are represented in the media and what effects they can have on individuals, religious institutions, and society at large.<sup>11</sup> The second tradition, according to Hjarvard, has adopted a culturalist approach and views media as religion. According to this approach, it seems point-

9 Stolow, J. (2005). *Religion and/as Masmedia. Theory, Culture, Society*, Volume 22 Issue 4, August 2005. Sage Journals. pp 125.

10 Morgan D., (2008). *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*. London: Routledge. pp 6.

11 Hjarvard Stig, „*Introduction: The mediatization of religion: enchantment, media and popular culture*“ in: Northern Lights Volume 6, 2008.

less to distinguish between media and religion. We need to “rise above”<sup>12</sup> the idea that media and religion are two separate fields. Hjarvard notes that religion and media “occupy the same spaces, serve many similar purposes, and animate the same activities in late modernism.”<sup>13</sup> According to Hjarvard, focusing on the mediatization of religion means “focusing on the ways in which media and popular culture fundamentally transform existing religious phenomena and begin to serve collective functions in society that were previously performed by religious institutions.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, he defines the mediatization of religion as follows: “mediatization is the process through which media has developed into an independent social institution and have simultaneously begun to become an integral part of the functioning of other institutions, such as family, politics, and religion. As a result, religion increasingly falls under the logic of media, which becomes the primary source of religious ideas.”

Art and religion have been inseparable for centuries in their attempt to represent the invisible through material means and thus convey the message of the divine world. Today, they search for the same answers, even though they have diverged in their modes of communication. Contemporary mass media mimics equally our sacred spaces and provoke a kind of pseudo-religious experience, while people, who have the blessing of modern technology, continue to seek answers to ancient questions. The reason for this is precisely the lack of answers, or at least comprehensible ones. Thus, there is an abundance of entertainment, manipulation, and disinformation, which amuse ordinary people and manipulate their ideals, while waiting for the “right” answers to be found and for some new technical aids to achieve mutual communication: between person and person, between the material and spiritual worlds, between birth and death, which has been sought for centuries.

Technology affects not only the way we understand the world but also shapes the way we experience our own existence. It is impossible to separate the human being from their material environment, through which they find meaning in life and the world. Similarly, the material world cannot be separated from the ideas through which a person understands and uses the technical means they have created and utilize.<sup>15</sup>

One fundamental question is whether new media are perceived as a means of communication or if they genuinely represent a new socio-symbolic space. This is important to consider because the virtual environment differs significantly from every day, real-life space. The virtual environment is a space of multifaceted mes-

12 Hoover M. Stewart, (2006). *Religion in the Media Age*. London: Routledge, pp 268

13 Hoover M. Stewart, (2006). *Religion in the Media Age*. London: Routledge, pp 9.

14 Hjarvard Stig, „Introduction: The mediatization of religion: enchantment, media and popular culture“ in: Northern Lights Volume 6, 2008, pp 4.

15 Levi, P. (1999). *Cybercultura. Gli usi sociali delle nuove tecnologie*, Milano, Feltrinelli

sages, diverse images, and often controversial content. The virtual space lacks the character of sacredness, and such an environment fits much better into the market logic rather than a sacred space. It is a space/environment that is accessible to everyone and available to everyone. It is even unnecessary to leave the house and go to sacred spaces because faith can be practiced from one's own home through new technologies. In this space, every experience, including religious ones, is in a certain sense dematerialized, available through a keyboard.

When we find ourselves looking at the virtual space, we can see that the heritage of faith is exposed to arbitrary interpretations and interpretations that cannot be controlled. This is particularly evident and challenging when it comes to the truths of faith. While the truths of faith within traditional religions are clearly defined, within the context of virtual space, an unlimited range of different interpretations is possible. Everyone is left to choose from a vast array of options. In such a situation, great freedom is left to each individual, who can choose based on personal interests or desires. Observing the way religious identities are shaped, today's person shapes their religious identity by accepting solutions and answers that more closely align with their own personal desires. Doesn't the internet space become a very suitable environment for shaping faith that can become a means and a way of fulfilling personal needs, or an answer to one's own quests?

New forms of communication via social networks bring the individual to the forefront. The sacred is "present" within the virtual space in a different way. This change can be marked as a transition from "religion to spirituality", to a 'religion' within which there is an emphasis on creative role of the individual. The focus is not on objective truth to which one aspires, but on subjective authenticity, with its passions, arbitrary imaginations, and so on.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

A religious worldview or religious consciousness, as such, is by no means a "free-floating consciousness." Social consciousness is inherent to it and necessarily precedes religious consciousness both temporally and in terms of content, as it is shaped by the influence of science (knowledge), tradition, and personal reflection on the world. Without social consciousness, the fullness of religious consciousness can never be achieved.

In the modern age, there is an illusion of mutual exclusivity and incompatibility among philosophical, scientific, artistic, religious, and other types of knowledge, due to the different systems and bodies of knowledge from which they are built. Separate systems of human knowledge are nothing more than differentiated forms of social consciousness, which undergo differentiation only within our conscious-

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, C. (2011). *Izvori sebstva — razvoj modernog identiteta*, Naklada Breza, Zagreb

ness, while in reality, they are inseparable because they all perceive one and the same reality. No system has ever separated itself from others on its own; it is the human soul's egotistical nature, driven by separate desires, interests, and goals, that creates this division.

Similarly, just as behaviour reflects a person's psychological state, religion reflects faith in God. Religion is always a manifestation of faith, while faith is always a person's intimate connection with God. Faith is, by rule, always the "matrix," and religions are its manifestations. If the "matrix" is not fully ordered, its deficiencies will be reflected in religious forms. The interdependence is inevitable, and just as a disordered matrix of faith can disrupt religiosity, religion, as a social construct, can also alter the "matrix of faith" according to the needs of the moment.

The position of religion in the digital age essentially does not change. It only changes its approach, methods, and means. From a bureaucratic orientation, it shifts to a managerial, situational approach. Just as market orientation does not allow for a clear distinction between science and ideology, a similar phenomenon occurs in the domain of religion, as in the digital age, it takes on the "color" of ideological consciousness. If we align two characteristics of ideological consciousness—that it distorts reality and simultaneously is an accurate reflection of that reality—then only one question remains: if we attribute both of these characteristics to religion, considering the interdependence of faith and religion, what can we attribute it to faith?

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BOSNIA  N  
STUDIES  
SARAJEVO  
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## Summary

*Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina are two distant countries with similar near-historical legacies, particularly regarding the tragic events that affected them during the wars of the 1990s. These adversities are certainly one of the reasons why these two states have not been able to establish stronger connections in various fields in the past. Although they established diplomatic ties in 1995, more serious mutual cooperation has only been intensified in the last decade, which, compared to Azerbaijan's cooperation with other Western Balkan countries, is almost negligible. In recent years, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina have had numerous meetings aimed at strengthening their relations, but it seems that the great potential that exists has not been fully utilized. The visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the spring of 2023 could be considered a turning point in the relations between the two countries however, demonstrating Azerbaijan's interest in deepening cooperation. It is important to note that Aliyev had been invited to visit several times by members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who in turn, had previously had the opportunity to visit the capital of Azerbaijan on working visits. Among them, the visits of members of the Bosnian presidency, Mladen Ivanić, Bakir Izetbegović, and Šefik Džaferović stand out.*

*To date, there are very few sources on relations between Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina to date, so this paper can be seen as a pioneering effort in discussing diplomatic relations between the two countries. To make Azerbaijan's foreign policy clearer in this context, it is necessary to present certain segments of its foreign policy after 1993, when under the leadership of President Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan made efforts to strengthen its foreign policy position.*

*The aim of this paper is to present the existing diplomatic relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan using chronological, descriptive, and analytical methods. The hypothesis of this paper is that although diplomatic relations and certain cooperation exist between the two countries, there are many shortcomings, especially when compared to the level of cooperation Azerbaijan has with other Western Balkan countries. The second hypothesis pertains to the prospects for the development of relations between the two countries and the general improvement of cooperation in numerous areas.*

*Keywords: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Diplomacy, Enhancement of Cooperation, Shortcomings, Foreign Policy*

## Introduction

Azerbaijan's foreign policy became more dynamic after 1993 when the experienced, long-time Soviet official, Heydar Aliyev assumed presidency. From the

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late 1990s to the early 2000s, the focus of Azerbaijan's foreign policy was on garnering attention from all relevant powers in both the West and the East. During Ilham Aliyev's tenure, Azerbaijan showed a noticeable interest in establishing closer relations with smaller states and regions, including the beginning of more intensive cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina share a very similar history during the 1990s, various circumstances meant these two countries only began to engage in more active cooperation in different fields thirty years after establishing diplomatic contacts. To understand Azerbaijan's position in general after the end of the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, it is essential to present the foreign policy activities of the political leadership of this country in the early period of its existence, in order to gain an introductory understanding of the efforts made in building a stronger international position. Accordingly, in the final stage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Azerbaijan focused its foreign policy on establishing an international presence and connections with all relevant global powers, which ultimately allowed them to make an economic leap by monetizing their energy resources. Such a foreign policy seemed necessary as it was a prerequisite for internal stability, diplomatic successes, and the beginning of directing foreign policy influence toward countries that, truth be told, do not have significant importance on the international stage. Certainly, we are talking about the countries of the Western Balkans, where Azerbaijan has been more actively present over the past decade, particularly in Serbia and Montenegro, and is showing increasing interest in cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina. A pivotal event in strengthening the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina was the visit of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in 2023, which will be discussed in more detail in this paper. Diplomatic visits, signed protocols, and individual contacts have certainly existed since 2011, which will also be presented in this work. However, in practice, the fact remains that the relations between the two countries could be much more dynamic than they have been in the previous period.

### Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy during Heydar Aliyev's Era

After the end of the hostilities in Karabakh, which had a significant impact on the future development and direction of the Republic of Azerbaijan<sup>1</sup>, the then president Heydar Aliyev understood the importance of international engagement in the context of rebuilding and developing Azerbaijan, which had just emerged from war. In 1993, due to the previously mentioned wartime circumstances, Heydar Aliyev was not often able to leave the country. However, a diplomatic visit at the end of 1993 marked the unofficial beginning of strengthening Azerbaijan's ties with Western European countries, which remained one of the most impor-

1 About the war in Karabakh see in: Deljković, Adis (2022). *Rat i mir u Nagorno-Karabahu*, Sarajevo: Autor

tant priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Heydar Aliyev's visit to France, where he was warmly welcomed at the Élysée Palace by the President of France, François Mitterrand, is noteworthy. They discussed strengthening the relations between Azerbaijan and France. During his stay in Paris, Aliyev presented all the important facts regarding the current situation in Azerbaijan, emphasizing foreign policy goals, including strengthening cooperation with all Western European countries. After numerous highly productive meetings in Paris, at the UNESCO headquarters, Heydar Aliyev was awarded the UNESCO Memorial Medal by the Director-General, Federico Mayor. He also had the opportunity to deliver a speech at the Diplomatic Academy. The outcome of the diplomatic visit to Paris was the signing of a mutual understanding, cooperation, and friendship agreement between France and Azerbaijan, signed by the presidents of the two countries. This visit can certainly be considered a crucial event in the entirety of Azerbaijan's diplomacy under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, as his trip to Paris marked the beginning of an intense development of Azerbaijani diplomacy towards Western countries.<sup>2</sup> This foreign policy was maintained with focus and intensity from the end of 1993, until the end of Heydar Aliyev's rule. Diplomatic meetings within and outside of Azerbaijan were extremely frequent, and discussing each of them would be a complex task requiring a dedicated book. Therefore, we will focus here on the most significant activities that impacted Azerbaijan's positioning on the global geopolitical scene. Given the complexity of organizing a new system of governance and presenting it to the global public, Aliyev aimed to maintain equal relations with both Eastern and Western countries, creating a balance that was necessary in the early years following Azerbaijan's renewed independence.<sup>3</sup> Since Azerbaijan's independence and continuing to the present day, the United States and Azerbaijan have maintained exceptionally good relations, characterized by political, economic, security, cultural, and educational cooperation. The invitation extended by then-President of the United States, Bill Clinton, to Aliyev for an official visit from July 27 to August 6, 1997, can rightly be seen as the confirmation of the mutual readiness to enhance and strengthen the ties between the two countries.<sup>4</sup> Aliyev also used his stay in the United States to visit the Azerbaijani diaspora living there, and the culmination of various meetings, particularly the main one between Aliyev and Clinton held on August 1, was the signing of a significant cooperation document between Azerbaijan and the United States in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.<sup>5</sup> The fact that Aliyev managed

2 Lisica, Admir (2023). *Heydar Alijev osnivač modernog Azerbejdžana: unutrašnje prilike, vanjska politika i ekonomski razvoj*, Sarajevo: Centar za geopolitička istraživanja, pp. 61-62.

3 Ibid, p. 63.

4 Svante E. Cornell (2011). *Azerbaijan since independence*. New York: M.E. Sharpe. p. 397.

5 Official visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to the United States of America (July 27 - August 6, 1997), Available at. <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/6555664.html>

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to organize and hold 88 different meetings with businessmen, politicians, intellectuals, and diaspora representatives during his eleven-day visit shows that he aimed to make the most of his visit to the United States, ensuring that Azerbaijan would reap substantial benefits upon his return to Baku. Zbigniew Brzezinski, a prominent American political advisor, deemed this visit extremely important, personally thanked Aliyev, and concluded that this visit marked the beginning of a new era in American policy in the Caucasus.<sup>6</sup> Another of Azerbaijan's significant partners is undoubtedly the United Kingdom, which has always been a priority on Azerbaijan's foreign policy agenda, both during Heydar Aliyev's time and today. Continuous contacts between the officials of the two countries have been maintained since Azerbaijan declared independence, but more intensive cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom began after Aliyev became president. In 1994, at the invitation of the British government, Aliyev visited the UK, where he held a series of important meetings, including one with then-Prime Minister John Major. During his stay in the UK, Aliyev met with various British dignitaries, notably former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President of the British Petroleum Simon David. According to available archival data from the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Baku, the visit contributed to strengthening the relations between the two countries. Aliyev had the opportunity to speak to a large number of credible British media, visit important educational institutions, and hold meetings with various dignitaries.<sup>7</sup> Aliyev's foreign policy also focused on building relationships with European Union countries, as evidenced by his meetings with leaders from Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Latvia, and Poland. Azerbaijan particularly invested efforts in establishing good cooperation with Turkey, which ultimately became one of Azerbaijan's most important partners in the 21st century.<sup>8</sup> Of course, besides visiting leaders, Aliyev was an exceptional host, but in the context of his proactive foreign policy, it is crucial to highlight that, even in his eighth decade, he energetically travelled worldwide to lobby for the interests of Azerbaijan and its people. This very active period in Azerbaijani foreign policy period after Heydar Aliyev came to power, focusing on establishing equally good relations with powers both in the West and the East, has been maintained by the current President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, who has expanded foreign policy interests to areas that were not a significant focus of his father Heydar.

6 Lisica, Admir (2023). p. 66.

7 Official visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 22.-25.2.1994., Available at: <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/84097101.html>

8 Lisica, Admir (2023). pp. 68-69.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Step Forward in Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

In the initial wave of modernization following independence, Azerbaijan's foreign policy focused on building strong relationships with major powers. However, having (arguably) successfully established these relationships over the past decade, Azerbaijan then sought to be present wherever opportunities arose, as evidenced by its more active involvement in the Western Balkans.<sup>9</sup> One of the countries with which Azerbaijan has recently sought to enhance relations is Bosnia and Herzegovina. Diplomatic relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan were established on February 9, 1995, during the final year of aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>10</sup> Much later, Azerbaijan opened its diplomatic residence in Sarajevo on March 1, 2011,<sup>11</sup> creating conditions for closer cooperation and more frequent official diplomatic visits.

In 2012, in acknowledgement of their similar tragic histories, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation initiated the opening of the Azerbaijan-Bosnia Friendship Park. The park, dedicated to the victims of Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina, was inaugurated in the presence of Bakir Izetbegović, then a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>12</sup> These two countries had faced similar challenges in the early 1990s, which were the aftermath of political changes in Europe. Azerbaijan went through the dissolution of the USSR, while Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced the breakup of Yugoslavia. Both states became independent under post-communist regimes but faced aggression in the early years of their independence—Azerbaijan from Armenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia. Interestingly, both countries suffered territorial losses during the aggression, as well as severe crimes. The genocide against Bosniaks in Srebrenica and the massacre of Azerbaijanis in Khojaly<sup>13</sup> are often compared in terms of the gravity of the crimes committed against these two peoples.

9 Balkan Insight (2023). *Balkan Insight Baku and the Balkans: Azerbaijan's Growing Influence, Built on Gas*, Available at. <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/09/13/baku-and-the-balkans-azerbaijans-growing-influence-built-on-gas/>

10 Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020). Available at. [https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska\\_politika\\_bih/bilateralni\\_odnosi/datumi\\_priznanja\\_i\\_uspostave\\_diplomatskih\\_odnosa/?id=6](https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska_politika_bih/bilateralni_odnosi/datumi_priznanja_i_uspostave_diplomatskih_odnosa/?id=6)

11 His Excellency Mr. Eldar Hasanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Bosnia and Herzegovina, presented his credentials to His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on January 27, 2011, thereby creating the conditions for deepening the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

12 Karčić, Hamza (2016). *Khojaly: The Worst Massacre in the Nagorno-Karabakh War and Azerbaijan's Quest to Commemorate the Tragedy*. Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, pp. 3-4.

13 Halapić, Edin (2018). *Kodžali (Xocali) – nedokazani genocid*, Godišnjak Pravnog fakulteta u Sarajevu, LXI, p. 219-220.

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Among the first visits by a Bosnian official to Azerbaijan occurred in 2015 when Dr. Mladen Ivanić, then a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited the country on an official trip. Similar visits have taken place in subsequent years.<sup>14</sup> Ivanić, then the Chairman of the Presidency of BiH, also visited Baku at the invitation of the President of the European Olympic Committees to attend the opening of the European Games, as well as at the invitation of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, whom Ivanić met upon arrival. President Aliyev expressed his satisfaction with Chairman Ivanić's visit and stated that it would further promote the enhancement of relations between the two countries. During the meeting, discussions focused on improving cooperation between these two friendly nations in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. Presidency chairman Ivanić particularly emphasized the importance of economic cooperation and investment in infrastructure projects.<sup>15</sup> An important meeting between the delegations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan took place in Astana, Kazakhstan, during the First Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Science and Technology. In September 2017, a meeting was held between Ilham Aliyev and Bakir Izetbegović, then a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They discussed the current situation in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan. In a warm and friendly conversation, they also reviewed the bilateral relations between the two countries. It was jointly noted that the political relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Azerbaijan were very good and that cooperation was continuously improving. It was highlighted that Azerbaijan's investment in a fruit and vegetable processing plant in Dobož was an excellent example of a project that stimulates economic development. Izetbegović reiterated his earlier invitation to Aliyev to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Aliyev gladly accepted the invitation and confirmed he would visit in the future.<sup>16</sup> During the Baku Forum in 2018, Mladen Ivanić visited Azerbaijan again, achieving continuity in high-level cooperation between the two countries. The year 2018 was also significant in terms of a meeting between the then-Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Republic of Turkey, Bakir Sadović, and President Ilham Aliyev, during the presentation of credentials, which further strengthened the diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>17</sup>

A review of the official intergovernmental visits between the officials of the two countries shows that ministers and deputies met a total of twelve times between

14 Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023). Available at. <https://mfa.gov.az/en/category/europe/bosnia-and-herzegovina-bandh>

15 Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015). Available at. <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/saop/default.aspx?id=66384&langTag=bs-BA>

16 Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017). Available at. <http://predsjednistvobih.ba/saop/default.aspx?id=77125&langTag=hr-HR>

17 Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2023). Available at <https://sarajevo.mfa.gov.az/ba/content/3/bilateralni-odnosi>

2011 and 2019, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan. Additionally, a significant number of inter-parliamentary meetings were held, resulting in six intergovernmental agreements on various forms of cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

Both countries were forced to rapidly rebuild their nations after the devastation of their respective wars, with Azerbaijan managing to do so somewhat faster. This is understandable for several reasons, with one of the main factors being Azerbaijan's growing economic power, with the country's significant energy reserves positioning it among the emerging energy powers. This became particularly significant during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as Azerbaijan began to emerge as a potential energy player capable of helping Europe compensate for the current energy shortages. In 2022, Azerbaijan nearly doubled its gas exports to Europe, and this trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future.<sup>19</sup>

When discussing economic cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan, it can unfortunately be observed that the current level is not exactly impressive. This is evidenced by the fact that from January to September 2022, the trade exchange between Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to merely \$3,421,280. Bosnia and Herzegovina primarily exported pharmaceutical products to Azerbaijan, while Azerbaijani construction firms had certain projects within Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>20</sup> These examples highlight only some of the possible areas of cooperation that the two countries can benefit from. There is significant potential for growth and substantial opportunities for enhancing cooperation, particularly in the context of Azerbaijani gas supply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be a significant step toward strengthening the bilateral relationship. Former member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Šefik Džaferović, during his 2021 visit to Azerbaijan, discussed with President Ilham Aliyev the possibility of Azerbaijan supplying gas to Bosnia and Herzegovina, concluding that economic activity between the two countries could be improved.<sup>21</sup>

*“We discussed our relations, which are truly friendly. We considered ways to improve these relations. What is most important from the meeting is Azerbaijan's willingness to help Bosnia and Herzegovina join the Adriatic-Ionian Pipeline. This would allow us to receive gas from Azerbaijan. You know that Albania, Montenegro, and Croatia have joined this project. Bosnia and Herzegovina should do the same.”*<sup>22</sup> It would be very important for our country. President Aliyev promised

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Radio Slobodna Evropa (2020). Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/gas-azerbejan-eu/32029818.html>

<sup>20</sup> Lisica, Hejdar Alijev, p. 118.

<sup>21</sup> Agencija Anadoluja, (2021). Available at. <https://www.aa.com.tr/ba/politika/d%C5%BEaferovi%C4%87-i-alijev-razgovarali-o-ja%C4%8Ddanju-saradnje-bih-i-azerbejd%C5%BEana/2188070>

<sup>22</sup> N1 BiH, (2021). Available at. <https://n1info.ba/vijesti/dzaferovic-ekskluzivno-za-n1-azerbejdzan-ponudio-pomoc-bih-sa-plinom/>

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*all his support,”* said Džaferović, after one of the most productive meetings between the officials of the two countries.

Azerbaijan is present in the Western Balkans, particularly in Montenegro, where Azerbaijani businesses are operating very successfully. Also, the economic activity between Serbia and Azerbaijan is already significant, which provides additional incentive for Bosnia and Herzegovina to make efforts to position itself as Azerbaijan’s most important partner in the Western Balkans. In addition to the similarities in their recent history, a significant connection between Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina is their exceptionally friendly ties with the Republic of Turkey, which potentially gives these countries an additional reason to establish stronger relations. Sarajevo and Baku have been friendly cities for several decades, and if you walk through the streets of Sarajevo or Baku, you can find streets named after the capitals of the two countries. Delegations from Sarajevo visited Baku as early as 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1979. In 1975, prominent Bosnian intellectual Atif Purivatra, as a member of the Sarajevo city delegation, was the guest of Heydar Aliyev.<sup>23</sup> Intensive cooperation with representatives of Sarajevo was a sort of prelude to the building of friendly relations between Baku and Sarajevo, which are now friendly cities. On April 29, 2014, Bosnia and Herzegovina further proved its friendship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, by adopting an extremely significant resolution ‘On Recognizing and Supporting the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.’ In this way, Bosnia and Herzegovina, through its institutions, showed readiness to stand on the side of truth and support the people of Azerbaijan, as well as its legitimate institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The understanding between these two countries is currently at a high level, and this can serve as an excellent starting point for upcoming major projects. Recently, it is noticeable that intellectuals and researchers on both sides are establishing contacts and seeking to jointly advance cooperation in the fields of science and other forms of research activity.<sup>25</sup> Along with the economic and energy sectors, science is one of the potential areas of cooperation. A few years ago, with the support of the Topchibashov Center from Baku, a project was realized for the publication of a book in Bosnian titled *War and Peace in Nagorno-Karabakh* by author Adis Deljković.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, in the field of science, during 2018, the project of

23 Lisica, Admir (2023). p. 7.

24 Resolution on the Respect and Support for the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 34/14, April 29, 2014, Sarajevo. Available at <http://www.sluzbenilist.ba/page/akt/JN36vQTXyls=>

25 Former political representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Presidency member Mladen Ivanić and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Zlatko Lagumdžija, established a very close cooperation with the leading Azerbaijani think tank center, Nizami Ganjavi, in the previous period. More about Nizami Ganjavi: <https://nizamiganjavi-ic.org/>

26 Topchubasov Center, (2022). Available at <https://top-center.org/en/events/3416/book-on-karabakh-published-in-bosnian>

researcher Edin Halapić titled ‘Khojaly – Unproven Genocide’ also received support. This work represents the result of research under the Research Fellowships Program of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and the Institute for Law and Human Rights. The research program was made possible by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and the International Cooperation Agency (AIDA).<sup>27</sup>

Tourism is also a significant asset for Bosnia and Herzegovina and a well-recognized brand, but a significant problem in the serious cooperation regarding tourism between the two countries is the lack of a direct flight between Sarajevo and Baku, which complicates the arrival of visitors. For example, Montenegro and Azerbaijan have an established direct line between Tivat and Baku.<sup>28</sup> Another hindrance to establishing closer cooperation is the current inability to travel without visas. Although the procedures are not rigorous, and visas can be obtained within a very short time and with minimal bureaucratic issues, visitors would be much more encouraged if visa restrictions between the countries were lifted.

In light of the current global political changes affecting the world, it is crucial for Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain relationships with existing partners and seek new ones. Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina have had diplomatic relations since 1995, but citizens of both countries are still waiting for the realization of significant projects that would certainly bring mutual benefits. It is the responsibility of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to attract Azerbaijan and convince it of the advantages of its presence here. On the other hand, Azerbaijan needs to understand the specificities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially its complex administrative structure, which sometimes makes it difficult for foreign investors to enter the Bosnian market.<sup>29</sup>

A significant advancement in the relationship between the two countries was the visit of a high-level Azerbaijani delegation to Sarajevo on April 13, 2023. The large delegation, which consisted of over a hundred members, was led by President Ilham Aliyev.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Balkanski centar za analizu i studije, (2018). Available at. [https://balans.org.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/kodzali-nedokazani-genocid\\_halapic.pdf](https://balans.org.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/kodzali-nedokazani-genocid_halapic.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> EKapija, (2023). Available at. <https://me.ekapija.com/news/4285227/od-danas-dva-puta-sedmicno-letovi-na-relaciji-baku-tivat>

<sup>29</sup> If Azerbaijan begins exporting gas to Bosnia and Herzegovina soon, it will significantly reduce the country’s dependence on Russian gas. The question arises whether officials from the Bosnian entity Republika Srpska will block this, as it would diminish Bosnia and Herzegovina’s reliance on Russian energy, with which officials from Republika Srpska have very close relations despite the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. So far, political representatives from Republika Srpska have shown a friendly attitude toward Azerbaijani officials, but the connection between the political leadership of this entity and official Moscow must be considered, which could be a challenge in strengthening the relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan.

<sup>30</sup> Radio Sarajevo, (2023). Available at. <https://radiosarajevo.ba/vijesti/bosna-i-hercegovina/ilham-aliyev-stigao-u-sarajevo-evo-kako-je-docekan-ispred-predsjednistva-bih/491990>

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*“We exchanged numerous views and possible ways of cooperation. We established good political consultations that have elevated our collaboration, including through international organizations. We also support each other, and this is evident today, especially when discussing issues of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity during the Armenian occupation. Your country’s stance on this issue was important to us. Two and a half years ago, Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity. Bosnia and Herzegovina stepped forward and supported our efforts. I would like to thank your country for its position of friendship and brotherhood. Azerbaijan supports your country and its interests on all issues, including the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina,”* stated Aliyev following his historic visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>31</sup>

The joint statement by the Azerbaijani delegation and their Bosnian hosts aims to create an environment for entering a new phase of bilateral relations, which will increasingly develop in the future.<sup>32</sup> After the formal meetings, a joint lunch was held with the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the delegation of President Ilham Aliyev. Both Aliyev and a part of his delegation returned to Baku the same day, while the other part stayed an additional day in Sarajevo. Among the members of the Azerbaijani delegation were numerous media representatives, as well as members of significant organizations such as Nizami Ganjavi.

President Aliyev visited Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of strengthening Azerbaijan’s presence in the Western Balkans. It is important to note that his focus this time was specifically on Bosnia and Herzegovina, as indicated by the messages conveyed to the media during his visit, highlighting Azerbaijan’s support for the sovereignty and integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>33</sup> This support is currently very visible however, especially considering that President Aliyev had visited Croatia and Montenegro as early as ten years ago. Notably, all prominent Azerbaijani media outlets reported on Aliyev’s visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, depicting it as Azerbaijan’s effort to establish stronger economic ties and expand its energy influence in a new region.<sup>34</sup> Since the opening of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Sarajevo, it has been noticeable that the embassy staff and the

31 Agencija Anadolu (2023). Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/ba/politika/predsjednik-azerbejd%C5%BEana-aliyev-pove%C4%87ati-trgovinsku-razmjenu-sa-bih/2871143>

32 During the visit of the high-level Azerbaijani delegation, a mutual agreement was signed confirming both sides’ commitment to achieving a strategic partnership in the near future. Radio Slobodna Evropa, (2023b) Available at. <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/bih-azerbejdzan-aliyev-predsjednistvo-stratesko-partnerstvo/32362523.html>

33 Borić, Faruk (2023). *Bosnia-Herzegovina external relations briefing: Visits from Azerbaijan and Spain: What can BiH offer?*, China-CEE Institute, Vol. 61, No. 4 (BH), 3.

34 Centar za geopolitička istraživanja, (2023). Available at <https://geopol.ba/dva-mjeseca-nakon-posjete-velike-delegacije-azerbejdzana-hoce-li-bosna-i-hercegovina-iskoristiti-priliku-za-uspostavljanje-jace-saradnje/>

current ambassador, Vilayat Guliyev, are striving to enhance cooperation with officials, intellectuals, and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, aiming to broadly improve relations between the two countries. This is a clear signal to the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina that now is the right time to advance these relations.<sup>35</sup> The potential exists; whether it will ultimately be utilized depends on the willingness of political decision-makers. The fact that Vilayat Guliyev, a former Azerbaijani Foreign Minister and a close associate of Azerbaijan's modern national leader, Heydar Aliyev, is currently serving as the Azerbaijani Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a clear sign that Azerbaijan intends to expand its influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Azerbaijan's goals, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in other Balkan countries, are primarily to secure support for Azerbaijani sovereignty, institutionalize the memory of the horrific massacre of Azerbaijanis in Khojaly, and promote investments.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina are making efforts to establish good cooperation, but as it is, this cooperation lags behind the level of cooperation Azerbaijan has with Western Balkan countries such as Montenegro or Serbia. Their lack of any outstanding issues is in itself an encouragement for advancing bilateral relations at all levels. There have been, in recent decades, strong efforts to establish relationships, which for the moment, remain merely symbolic. The truth is that these two countries are significantly distant from each other, which presents a certain obstacle to closer cooperation, but this does not diminish the opportunities available to the authorities of these countries. The shared fate of the two states during the 1990s can aid mutual understanding, but without more pronounced economic cooperation, any other connections will remain marginal. It is clear that the two countries have some cooperation in the fields of education and culture, but this could be at a higher level. As an emerging energy power, Azerbaijan will become an increasingly desirable partner on the international stage, and it is of great importance for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its government to recognize this moment and respond energetically.

Indeed, according to the developments of 2023, which included the historic visit of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to Bosnia and Herzegovina, a turning point was achieved in the relations between the two countries. However, neither side has yet made serious strides toward deepening cooperation. It is crucial for

35 Elvir, Hodžić (2024). *Ambasador Azerbejdžana u BiH Guliyev: Genocid u Hodžaliju bio je jedan od najsvirepijih zločina u 20. stoljeću*. Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/ba/politika/ambasador-azerbejd%C5%BEana-u-bih-guliyev-genocid-u-hod%C5%BEaliju-bio-je-jedan-od-najsvirepijih-zlo%C4%8Dina-u-20-stolje%C4%87u/3147089>

36 Karčić, Hamza (2021). *Međunarodni odnosi: pogled iz Sarajeva*. Sarajevo: Fakultet političkih nauka Univerziteta u Sarajevu, pp. 57-58.

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Azerbaijan to strengthen its influence in the Western Balkans, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the context of current geopolitical relations, must make efforts to gain new allies. The paper presented a brief history of Azerbaijan's foreign policy, which has been exceptionally active since the end of the First Karabakh War. This approach has facilitated Azerbaijan's international positioning, easing its expansion into less prominent areas such as the Western Balkans.

There have been missed opportunities also. Bosnia and Herzegovina can offer high-quality domestically produced weapons, which it already exports to the United States, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Efforts should have been made to offer their export to Azerbaijan and this should certainly be a topic for trade discussions in the future. Sadly, this topic was not a focus of the meetings, which could have presented a concrete opportunity for deepening mutual cooperation. Obviously, it would be in Bosnia and Herzegovina's interest to sell its exceptionally high-quality defence industry products to Azerbaijan, but it is a question of whether all political actors would find such an arrangement acceptable.

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