

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
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THESES

of the Doctoral (PhD) Thesis

ETHNIC CONFLICTS

AND CRISES IN THE NATION STATE

STATE, XENOPHOBIA, GENOCIDE

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SUBJECT, AIM AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The subject of my research is the nature and main forms (from xenophobia to genocide) of ethnic conflicts and crises inside the nation state.

Since in the relationship between individuals – all the more, in the relationship between their primary communities – reservations to otherness are usually more characteristic than acceptance of “otherness”, I approached the increasingly political and state-wide ethnic processes from the *perception* of strangeness in individual and public space – ultimately, from *xenophobia* which I understand not as strong dislike but as hostility toward what is perceived as foreign or strange.

In other words, *on the individual level* I took not the unconditional identification with or the unconditional acceptance of the other but the non-acceptance of strangeness as a starting point. This approach was not motivated by a general philosophical or anthropological belief but the *historic experience* of the relationships between communities and the process of these relationships to becoming political and national. This experience shows that from a national and ethnic point of view, groups of people living in concrete historic-social relations tend to dispute, be hostile and fight with each other rather than dissolve in each other’s communities.

On the national-political level, this approach places the war between nations and ethnic groups, as well as its most extreme form, the intent and reality to annihilate peoples – *genocide* – to the other end of the range of examination possibilities. This is also a historic experience; all the more, the most terrifying experience of the 20th century.

These two concepts, xenophobia and genocide, as *starting and end points* – thus, both in a real and metaphorical sense – marked out the borders of my research, and defined the subject of the thesis. All the more, the former concept, xenophobia, not only marked out the borders but also facilitated contact between the phenomena examined in the thesis. The general aim of the research is the examination and conceptual-

ization of the examined subject – ethnic conflicts and crises – inside the borders marked out by *these two concepts*, thus, within a pretty wide framework.

My thesis is based essentially on the theory of the state and political theory so long as it examines conflicts inside a state type, the nation state. In the course of this examination I approached the subject using particularly methods of *social theory* and *sociology*, and to a lesser extent *normative* (legal, ethical and axiological) methods which are characteristic for these disciplines (theory of the state, political science). I consider the theory of the state a discipline of a mixed nature examining social (sociological), legal and ethic aspects. Scholars of both disciplines merge, interdisciplinarily utilize, and then synthesize the results of other disciplines.

Relying on the strength of this approach, I built particularly on the critical analysis of theories developed by others, and did not conduct empirical surveys. In the case of such a wide and comprehensive subject I analyzed it is impossible to conduct independent empirical surveys, therefore, one can do nothing else but to do case analyses from data collected by others. As for the analysis, I preferred *analytical* methods, from the *conceptualization* of phenomena through the *comparison of main developments* unfolding from historical tendencies to the *emphasis of various contrasts*. I placed the analytical analyses in *historical* perspective, although I did not wish and would not be able to write a thesis of historical nature. As for the sociological analyses, I often approached the problem from the perspective of the *sociology of knowledge*, i.e., I explored the thinking about the subject or some of its sub-questions, as well as the discourses taking place as a result of that. I did not simply examine historical processes and concepts but evaluated the emergence, changes and employment of concepts used to capture the processes.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis has five substantive units. Chapter I shows the “*changes of the nation state*” which I understand as moving from homogeneity to diver-

sity. Chapter II analyzes the *communal subjects of the nation state* – nation and nationality, ethnicity and race. Chapter III – under the title “Xenophobia” – aims to grasp the sometimes real, sometimes metaphorical “gravity point” of ethnic conflicts and crises, xenophobia, in a way that it gets in an always wider social context, is being “politicized” in a more and more *intensive* form, and in the end, becomes a tool of political repression. In Chapter IV – under the title “State, Violence, Ethnicity” – I review the main forms, functions and consequences of political repression and state violence used as a tool to pursue ethnic goals. I highlight and analyze three of them – *ethnocide*, *ethnic cleansing*, and *genocide* – in detail. At the end of the chapter I raise the question whether the concept of “criminal state” can be used in any sense or not. Chapter V – under the title “Conclusions” – summarizes the new scientific outcomes as a result of the research. Each substantive unit is concluded with a bibliography.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE THESIS

I.

In Chapter I, I made conclusions regarding the historical development of the nation state. The most significant of these concerns the fact the nation state has two main eras of development: the nation state pursuing homogenizing and the nation state pursuing polyethnic policy. The concept of “homogenizing state” was inspired by the ideas of German authors such as Hermann Heller’s concept of homogeneity and Daniel Thym’s analyses on social history. Taking this further, I consider that the modern-day European state homogenizes the modernizing societies not only *nationally-ethnically* but also *culturally* (linguistically), *religiously* (e.g., through the creation of established churches etc.), as well as *socially* (concerning the removal of former social differences, i.e., a kind of slow uniformization). Through these homogenization processes there emerge the modern nations – which are often the creation of conscious policies. Although the concept of “homogeneous nation state” – as I attempted to

show – can be understood in many ways – thus, it can be debated which states to be classified as such (as I tried to illustrate on the basis of the analyses of Georg Brunner and Ignác Romsics) – it can be well stated that until World War II the “society” (national material) of nation states became more and more coherent. This was often the result of *coercive policies*.

After World War II – having regard also to the genocide in the central and east-central parts of Europe – nation state policies changed and the individual states encouraged the continuation of ethnic-national diversity. I called the states pursuing this policy *nation states pursuing polyethnic policy* – a term that emerged earlier in the literature. This change took place in particular in Western Europe, not irrespective of the democratization of those states. In Eastern Europe, in the conditions of communism, “this kind of combating of nationalism” did not take place; therefore, the old-new states emerging after the turn in 1990 chose the path of national and ethnic homogenization.

This chapter is concluded with findings on multiculturalism; the basic idea that I attempted to prove is that the reason for the so-called regression or degradation of nation state development is not *globalization* but *multiculturalism*. However, in relation to multiculturalism, I argue that it does not equally characterize Western societies but features them to different degrees. Thus, it is possible to develop a so-called *multiculturalism policy index*. Such indexes are being developed already; I myself referred to one of them in the thesis. On this basis, it can be established that countries with higher policy scores are those in which (1) original national identity was not much strong either (Australia, New Zealand, Canada), and to which (2) there immigrated people following East Asian belief systems (e.g., Confucianism, Hinduism, Taoism), i.e., ethnic groups which can easily reconcile their views on the role of the state and the separation between the public and private life of society with the political structures arising from “Western state development” – in contrast with Muslims, for instance.

II.

In Chapter II, I analyzed the most significant communities of the nation state from the point of view of its national as well as ethnic character – nation, ethnicity, and race. In the case of nation – essentially, on the basis of the standard literature – I showed that this is a *historical creation*: nations are created and “done” consciously, and this perception can be reconciled with the so-called subjective nation perception which highlights the constitutive role of national identity.

As for the concept of ethnicity, I distinguished *two* possible *interpretations*. I argued that there are ethnic groups that *dissolved in a nation* (e.g., the Jász and Cuman people), or started to form a nation but due to public perception they did not clearly become one (the Catalan people are often classified as such). I also distinguished a different concept of ethnicity which is particularly characteristic for extra-European development: in the light of this, ethnicity appears to be a *genealogic* and/or *religious* community in the first place.

The literature is coherent regarding the fact that theories of nation and nationalism have become *ethnized* in the last decades; in my opinion it can be interpreted as the emergence or the all the more conscious nature of the two meanings of ethnicity. In the former sense, ethnicization stands for the *revival* or reinterpretation of old ethnicities, while in the latter sense, it means that *ethnicities* start to be interpreted as *nations* claiming or assuming that they are just like European nations. However, in contrast to nation, in the existence of ethnicities – as Norwegian social anthropologist Fredrik Barth argued – not only *cultural* values play a significant role but also the fact that these groups reproduce themselves *biologically*. Thus, ethnicity – according to T. H. Eriksen – revolves around “brain, blood and cult” (kinship, blood lineage, convivial relationship), as well as common “sacred symbols”.

In addition, I argued in this chapter that *race* became the third characteristic type of community in the nation state – particularly in the case of the United States –; however, in this relation, due to the troublesome European past, assumptions can only be made with great caution. In the American perception, race is partly a *perception community* (i.e., people

perceive themselves as members of a group defined as race on the basis of certain features) and partly a *mental unit* emanating from and based on this. The latter becomes constituted on a *socio-psychological* basis; however, historical background and political relations are often highlighted in that, too. (For instance, in America, a black person calls him- or herself not simply “negro” or “colored” but a member of the “African-American” race wherein “African” refers to his or her community’s past and, as a part of this, its historical-political oppression.)

While in the case of nation, the morphological features of people are completely insignificant, they can be given some importance in the case of ethnic groups (e.g., through the biological transmission of the group), and are decisive starting factors in the evaluation of race as a group – certainly without directly determining other characteristics of the group or defining any of its substantive features.

III.

In Chapter III, I assessed the *variations in intensity* of the so far discussed group differences from the perspective of the individual; thus, in the way that an individual sees the members of other nations, peoples or ethnic groups as aliens.

I set up a conceptual scale which indicates the intensity level of a person’s rejection of another person whom he or she sees as different from him- or herself, thus, as alien. The simplest case is *xenophobia* which unravels in different situations and conditions differently. I proposed the following 15 possibilities for a detailed analysis: 1. perception of otherness, 2. dislike of otherness (aversion), 3. desire to prevent the social presence of otherness, 4. legal homogenization, 5. hate incident, 6. hate speech, 7. social-sentimental exclusion, discrimination, 8. hate crime, legal discrimination (inequality before the law, whether hidden or indented to be hidden), 10. violent assimilation, 11. apartheid (overt inequality before the law regarding property rights, public law, family law, etc.), 12. cultural annihilation: ethnocide, 13. forms of ethnic cleansing leading to the expulsion of the population, 14. displacement, resettlement, deportation, “population movements”, i.e., the “classical” forms of ethnic

cleansing, 15. physical annihilation: genocide. The different steps of this scale can naturally be classified into several main groups.

I emphasized that I approach the levels of the intensity of rejection *conceptually*. I defined the levels in the first part of the scale (xenophobia, hate speech, hate incident, etc.) as having no more than an indicative value; later, in further parts of the thesis I unraveled the more intensive – and by getting into a political context, especially dangerous – levels conceptually and historically, as well.

In other words, I sketched a conceptual arc which, however, does *not* stand for *historical dynamics* (i.e., one does not necessarily entail the other) or a *causal chain* but is useful for an analysis of ethnic conflicts. (This conceptual arc defines the mental arc of the thesis and provides an explanation for its subtitle, as well.)

IV.

Chapter IV unravels the darker side of the above mentioned xenophobia scale in historical as well as conceptual analyses. Essentially, it discusses the various levels and more serious forms of *political repression* and *state violence* used as tools to endorse *ethnic goals* leading to ethnic crises in the most serious cases.

1.

In this framework, I examined the questions of *ethnocide* arriving to the conclusion that state violence conceived as ethnocide *formally* very much resembles forced (violent) assimilation. The reason for this is that in the concept of ethnocide there is a blending of *cultural oppression* through the elimination of institutions (e.g., linguistic discrimination), *assimilation pressure* due to the transformation of lifestyles (thus, in the course of urbanization or in the case of the enforcement of the American melting pot), as well as *destruction of cultural heritage*. In the case of violent assimilation and ethnocide, the same *tools* are used; however, the *aim* pursued on the ground of certain measures distinguishes them. In the case of the former, the main aim is *merging*, while in the case of the latter it is

annihilation. However, it rarely becomes apparent due to the slowness of the process.

2.

In the course of the thesis, I demonstrated that in the scale of political repression used as a tool to endorse ethnic goals, ethnic cleansing is a *separate level* – despite the fact that the concept stands for very *mixed* activities.

These activities were described for the first time in 1994 by Croatian Dražen Petrović whose analysis seems to be a valid approach ever since. Behaviors that can be classified as such stand for different facts in international criminal law and do not always constitute a crime; therefore, ethnic cleansing is *not a separate legal concept* despite the *cohesion* and separate types of these activities in sociological and political terms. The main forms of these activities are as follows: 1. administrative measures restricting rights, 2. discriminatory steps taken by authorities, 3. decisions intimidating or terrorizing the population, 4. violent military maneuvers. Apart from these activities reflecting in the first place Bosnian and Yugoslav experiences other characteristic implementation tools of ethnic cleansing – complementing the work of Petrović – involve *deportation*, *population exchange*, *population movement* whose most well-known instances took place before, during and after World War II in Europe.

Due to the *mixed* nature of ethnic cleansing it is difficult to differentiate it from the early forms of genocide: all the more, in practice, ethnic cleansing often transforms into genocide. The frontiers between the two concepts are fluid.

3.

I dealt with genocide in detail; in this regard, one of the main conclusions of the thesis is that the concept of genocide has become *complex* in the last 70 years since 1948. Beside the concept of originally legal nature – while it was not employed for decades in the courts – there emerged a

political genocide concept, as well. This drew the annihilation of ethnical consideration near genocide. I showed how the literature tried to solve the theoretical problems behind this concept with the employment of alternative categories (*democide, politicide, holodomor, linguicide, ecocide, urbicide, etc.*); however, these attempts were mainly unsuccessful.

I overviewed the main arguments of the literature providing the features of holocaust, and found that there are five significant solutions and ways of reasoning regarding the conceptual relationship between *genocide* and *holocaust*. According to the first, holocaust is *a kind of genocide* retaining all the characteristics of other kinds of genocides while having no special features. According to the second, holocaust and genocides targeting other peoples have *single* (unique) as well as common features with other genocides; thus, they have common characteristics while possessing unique features at the same time. According to the third, holocaust and genocide have no common characteristics; i.e., holocaust is a completely *unique* phenomenon. These possibilities are discussed in the literature, as well. I also distinguished a fourth and fifth way of thinking and conceptual model. According to the fourth, which is in a sense the inverse of the first, Shoáh is the prototype of genocide; while according to a possible fifth – which I personally agree with in many ways together with the prominent representative of the literature, Yehuda Bauer (and which attempts to incorporate the “universal” and “unique” features – the genocide of the Jewish people called Holocaust and genocides of other peoples have common characteristics while both possess unique features, as well.

I discussed the *role public administration played in holocaust* by evaluating in the first place the role that Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman attributed to bureaucracy. In this respect, I came to the conclusion that the differences of certain sociological theories – thus, in a concrete case the differences between the theories of Baumann and the English Paul du Gay – are essentially differences in *emphasis*, which are connected to the great conceptual disputes of history, thus, e.g. to the questions of the so-called intentionalism vs. functionalism dispute.

In the analysis of the Hungarian Holocaust I addressed the phenomena referred to with the concept of *bureaucratic anti-Semitism*, and argued

that this concept refers to real facts – however, from the point of view of the science of public administration, slightly incorrectly.

Finally, I examined whether the concept of *criminal state* is a concept to be used theoretically or not. Some use this concept while some passionately reject it in the case of the most serious cases of illegal use of violence for ethnic purposes – i.e., apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. In this respect I argued that in an *historical*, general *sociological*, and *criminological* sense the concept can be used – and it can be claimed that the state can commit a crime –; however, from a *legal* and *international legal* sense there lie deep contradictions behind this concept. The differences in the analysis of this phenomenon are differences of possible perspectives.

V.

Finally, in the end of my thesis, I summarized shortly and in the form of theses the results of my enquiries, and made further assumptions.

THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS

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2. A holokauszt és a közigazgatás Magyarországon (1944). Általános értékelés és esettanulmány. [Holocaust and Public Administration in Hungary (1944). General Evaluation and Case Study.] *Acta Humana. Új folyam* Vol. 2, Issue 2014/2, 51-67.
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5. A migráció jogi aspektusai és társadalmi-kulturális hatásai [konferencia-beszámoló] [Legal Aspects and Socio-Cultural Effects of Migration [conference report]]. *Kisebbségkutatás*. Vol. 25. Issue /4, 140-150.

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 7. A holokauszt Békés megyei történeteiből [recenzió] [Holocaust in the Stories of Békés County [Recension]. *BUKSZ. Budapesti Könyvszemle*. Vol. 28, Issue 2016/1, 71-73.
 8. Magyar és német tapasztalatok a xenofóbia terén az eltérő állami megközelítések tükrében [Hungarian and German Experiences of Xenophobia in the Light of Different State Approaches]. *Polgári Szemle*. Vol. 13, Issue 2017/1-3, 387-393.
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