

The Ethnobiographical Perspective of Refugees Victim of Ethnic Genocide: The Bosnian Experience of Exile, Identity Ruptures and Cultural Bereavement

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Abstract

Being the central concepts of this research subject, Exile and Culture here imply a double temporality: the first one is diachronic, the second is synchronic. Through the ethno anthropological analysis of their relationship within the genesis of identity, this research enlightens the social and cultural representations of refugee's victim of ethnic genocide in general. Particularly, the refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, settled in Quebec since 1992, are the population source of the group of actors selected for this study. The non probabilistic technique of the sample constitution process led to the choice of a group of actors such as the three Kučković brothers, in reliance with the research selection's criteria, based on the originality of their discourse and their high sociocultural representativity. The life histories collected through the use of the ethnobiographical research typology formed the main basis unit of the qualitative process of the semantic content analysis inscribed in the scientific perspective of the phenomenological and comprehensive paradigm. The results of this research have a heuristic and scientific value of a great originality.

Their scope is very revealing of the permanent inscription of the historical temporality into the biographical temporality through the expression of the subjective intensity of the refugee's idiosyncratic and collective true-life experience of their traumatic identity trajectories in ethnic cleansing and genocide context. Such results contribute to the foundation of a veritable anthropology of Exile and Cultural Bereavement phenomena which mediate the experience already irreversible of physical, symbolic, psycho affective and linguistic losses and separations. The final issue of such bereavement hardships of one's own culture in a new host country and society consists either of the reconstruction of an individual and collective identity and memory already ruptured, or of the indefinite perdurance of a traumatic fixation. Ultimately, the global results of this research include two levels of relevance: through their theoretical relevance, they suggest new research leads and original orientations on many sociological and anthropological dimensions of such a research subject, still less theoretically and empirically explored:

through their social and practical relevance, they are appropriately helpful to the cultural empowerment of many other war refugees communities (Rwandese, Sudanese, Iraqi, Afghan, etc) basically from the definition of a social work practical framework of intervention strategies, which, beyond social workers, will be able to involve sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, etc. Such a practical framework should be able to take into account the refugees communities endogenous beliefs, knowledge, dignity, expectations and their true-life experiences.

Introduction

The justification of the choice of this research topic and its sociological and ethnoanthropological scope is based of my scientific interest in the field's studies of identities in migration contexts, their intercultural dynamics and their societal challenges, through their anthropological and sociological foundations. This interest originated from two major sources: the multidisciplinary nature of my intellectual and professional trajectory: (philosophy, health sciences, psychopathology, social work, anthropology, ethnology and sociology) and my personal and professional experiences of migration throughout Africa (especially in Rwanda), in Asia (especially in Cambodia), and finally in Europe and in North America. This migration experience of crossing various societies and cultures, combined with my long absence from native country: enabled me to establish an important observation which consists of: The existence of multiples losses and separations which punctuate such trajectory. The irreversibility of such losses and separations, beyond their psychological, relational, and interpersonal expressions based on an individual level, involved and incorporated a wider sphere of the self-identity sense, through the divided feeling of one's own personality, as well as one's own cultural belongings.

Those losses and separations imposed among others, a deep psychoaffective or emotional experience of renunciation hardships: which painfully questions, often through a persistent existential state of uncertainty and identity anxiety, the ultimate sense of belonging. These very subjective hardships of losses and separations are not only about an individual disparity of people, objects or idiosyncratic expressions of such identity issues, but more specifically about a vaster and collective set of a sociocultural, sociosymbolic and structural components. Those renunciation hardships suggested here the notion and the form of bereavement that I conceptualized and formulated through what I have called: "*Cultural Bereavement*" or "*Cultural Mourning*" which concept remains mostly applicable to various contexts of vital physical and symbolic losses at a broader societal level due to political violence against Identity such as ethnic genocides. Those ethnic genocides which are characterized by tragic attempts and massive destruction perpetrated against individual and collective identity, as well as socioethnic, cultural or religious belongings configured the notion that I conceptualized and formulated through what I have called: "*Identity ruptures*".

Additionally, beyond their tragic experiences of the ethnic genocide they have to face new traumatic hardships of their uprooting exile and their cumulative cultural shocks through their integration process, with the heavy burden of their communication barriers and the loss of their maternal language which was the public language in country of origin. Through their assimilation process within a new language, within different and unknown sociocultural, political and economic systems of their new host societies, they always have to start over on the basis of the only individual and collective legacy which escaped and survived over such chaos the traumatic memory of their overall human, sociocultural and irreversible experiences of losses and separations.

Such traumatic memory usually carries two major different critical psycho-social tendencies according to both individuals' subjective potential of integration and the receptivity or the exclusivity of their new host society. The First tendency consists of a self-construction of the meaningfulness and the sense of renunciation to attribute to the experiences of irreversible losses and separations and to invest in the present and in the future in order to be able to better integrate and to give birth to a new culturally balanced personality and identity through the receptive values and spaces available in the new host society in combination with the recollection of the basic values carried from the culture of origin.

The second tendency depending on the depth of the trauma impacts upon individuals and their lack or their low potential of self-meaningfulness reconstruction process combined with experiences of social exclusion in the new host society might result into a mechanism of a traumatic fixation and regression. Such traumatic fixation and regression mechanism could finally find expressions in conversion phenomena of the identity anxiety aggravated by a deep crisis of the ontological security which ultimate process falls into various psychosomatic, physical or mental health problems. My Master's research thesis entitled "An Exploratory Study of Cultural Factors Influencing the Use of Health Services by the Fulani Nomadic Community of Borgou, in Northern Benin (West Africa) facing Political and Structural Settling Constraints" founded in a formal manner, my first theoretical and empirical experience of this vast sociological, anthropological and multidisciplinary issues surrounding the relations between *Migrations, Ethnic Identities, Cultures and Structural Political or Ideological Oppression Systems*.

These very critical issues inspired me the scientific and epistemological necessity to theoretically and empirically deepen in this research one of its most complex historical and contemporary facets which questions here, the real-life experiences and the sense of people's culture, collective identity, and their massive and violent fragmentation through war. This theoretical framework respectively situates and discusses the socio-historical, political and ethnocultural background of the Bosnian experience of genocide, the goal, objectives and the multidisciplinary perspectives on exile, culture, identity ruptures and cultural bereavement. The methodological framework explains the qualitative nature of this research, its population of study, the selection of the participants (the three Kučković brothers) on the operating criteria basis, the ethnobiographical approach on life histories data collection and the phenomenological analysis of the final research results.

Theoretical Framework

The sociohistorical, political, ethnocultural context and background of the Bosnian experience of genocide

This research is based on the theoretical and methodological perspectives of the interdisciplinary crossroad of sociology, anthropology and social work as they conceive and approach culture phenomenon and exile experience through the interactional dynamics of relationships between immigrants, in general, but particularly ethnic war refugees and members of host societies. The basic question, which sustains its purpose and its theoretical framework, is structured from the fundamental concepts of "identity ruptures", "cultural bereavement" and "integration or adaptation process". The situational and illustrative case of population, country and events aimed by this study, regards ethnic war refugees, their traumatic trajectories through exile experience from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Quebec,

since 1992 and their interpretations of such a social and cultural state. Focusing this research on the sociological, ethnoanthropological and social work basis and perspectives of relations between exile experience and cultural mourning phenomena, enables to theoretically comprehend and to empirically apprehend in a better view-point, the human and social problematics which basically underlies the transition, by migration, from a society and a culture to others. But beyond such a transition, this problematics reveals deep and rough sociological and anthropological changes, such as war and genocide events, collective rapes, mass deportations and family dislocations, ethnic and racial cleansings, cultural shocks and psychosocial distress, innovative identity ruptures and drastic overtaking turns, hardly lived by Bosnian refugees in their innerside individual and collective personality.

Violently and deeply uprooted, men, women, and children, who were socially and culturally signified and structured by a common original identity, already broken, are now moving through new traumatic exile experience, carrying their memory as the rest of the only cultural heritage left to them, and constantly confronted not only to loss and regain duality, but also to other critical and unknown family rifts and new sociocultural divergences. Therefore, war exile experience cannot be reified and simply reduced to a physical expression of a displacement. Moreover, it incorporates the whole ontological value of human identity and its discovery process of otherness, as well as the losses and regains experience, deconstruction and reconstruction of representational spaces related to the fundamental sense of their original culture, their homeland and the global vision of differences which separate them from where they are destined. The current evolution of the world conjuncture has thrown on the international scene more than 130 millions of immigrants, including more than 19 millions of refugees.

The countless and innumerable conflicts mostly underlined by political, territorial, ethnical, cultural and religious causes, are permanently de-structuring and restructuring in an unrecognizable configuration, the historical spaces of belongingness of many cultural origins and their collective identities. As Gildas Simon (1995, p. 107) said:

"From 1950 to 1990, regional conflicts made about 20 millions of victims in the world. They are one of the major causes of forced migrations, escape for survival, mass exodus which affect the continents. These conflicts of all nature (territorial, political and ethnical), brutally throw out of their boundaries, hundreds of thousands and sometimes even millions human beings. One can't forget the unsustainable pictures of Lebanese, Kurdish, Yugoslavian and Rwandese crowds running away from the fighting area, but there are other populations in other areas less mediatized, silently subjected to enormous displacements : Central America, Western Africa, Caucasia, etc."*

From Bosnia-Herzegovina to Rwanda, from Tchetchenia to Kurdistan, from Kosovo to Albania, the sudden and conflictual growth of radical nationalisms constantly increases the demographic magnitude and trends of exiles through forced internal as well as external of populations' displacements, massacres, racial or ethnic cleansings, etc.

Here is the whole mechanism of the human contemporary ecology of uprootedness due to wars and exile experiences which Frederic Gaussen said that:

"It is a great hardship which just enables to escape by abandoning oneself half. It proves the madness of human beings, but also their amazing capacity to survive over catastrophes."

In the light of the actual configuration of these world-wide conflicts and their extensive trends, collective identity questions centrally remain at their bottom line. The global system of social and cultural standardization, now operating almost everywhere, mostly in the name of only economic and political aims, by denying these cultural sensibilities and traditional identities, their informal systems, by deconstructing their historical spaces and reconstructing new territories, new artificial boundaries and throwing out their historical people through war, population displacements and ethnic cleansings, seems to represent the main threat of the total mess over collective identities and also, the systematic dissipation of ethnic groups.

In reaction against such a threat, these ethnic minorities, in Africa, Latin America, Asia (India, Pakistan, etc.), Eastern Europe, are everywhere fighting for the political promotion of their cultural identities and the rehabilitation of their lost "kingdoms" and historical homelands. Given their statistical frequency, their multiplicity and their recurrence in the world, they appear, through their linkage with the past, mainly as contemporary epiphenomena of ongoing historical and ancient forms of cultural resistance.

Also, through their world-wide configuration and their whole human consequences, these types of conflicts and wars are, more and more, becoming the most dominant sociological and political paradigm of contemporary revolutions on the vicious duality basis of the relationship between majority and minority and its only statistical and quantitative value. The extensive evolution and the deepening social processes of these conflicts risk to shatter and to completely reorganize the social and cultural structures of many and many countries of the world in the next coming centuries. This research global sociological vision of such tragic ethnocides, by conceiving and reasserting the preservation of the existence and the value of the whole ethnic and cultural groups in the world mainly as essential and indispensable ontological entities which compose the biological and cultural diversity of the whole humanity might help, hopefully, to understand the loss of anyone of them as also the loss of an important part of the whole humanity's evolutionary patrimony.

Through the applicability of the principles of such a comprehensive ethical paradigm of human diversity which enables to dissipate the threat of their disappearance, it becomes more and more crucial to promote, in a realistic way, national and international programs for the preservation of ethnic groups or minorities 'cultural rights. Such programs could be sustainably taken in charge by civil society's movements, international and national non-governmental organizations and promoted on a non-violence basis, through methodological perspectives based on the principles of a historical, ethical and cultural relativity to develop within the general framework of international human rights policies. This very collective societal issue, in its human and sociocultural implications, sustains the scientific interest for a theoretical and empirical reflection more and more orientated towards a global perspective of a fundamental sociology of culture and exile phenomena.

The main justification of the sociological and anthropological scope of this human tragedy is summarized and well defined by the concept of “uprootedness” which evokes this abrupt wrench of a population from its usual vital space, often in catastrophic conditions, with the whole destructive consequences on its human personality. To better understand and to more conceptualize “identity ruptures”, “cultural mourning phenomena” and their consequences on war refugee’s integration and adaptation process within foreign host societies, I finally retained the population case of Bosnian refugees arriving in Quebec since 1992.

This choice is due to the particular situation that, amongst refugees groups welcomed in Quebec since the seventies, Bosnians are still the one of the most politically and culturally resistant ones . Because of many factors, linked to their political system (socialism), their social collectivism, their traditional and religious background (official atheism but historically converted to Islamism by the Turks) and finally, the cultural distance and linguistic discontinuities which separate them from the Canadian society, Bosnian refugees appeared, also, like some of the first ones who really question the traditional political models and paradigms of immigration management in Canada (Quebec), particularly in refugees’ area.

The analysis of these differences, in combination with their traumatic war experiences and exile trajectories, could reveal the hidden sociological dimensions of many cultural factors less theoretically and empirically explored and which could also explain most of the structural and interactional barriers to integration and adaptation process. The achievement of such a process depends, mainly, on the impact depth of traumatic war events and exile uprooting experiences that have been lived by refugees themselves.

In fact, since 1990, the sudden return of the national question, long time smothered by the political monolithism of the federal state system, now opposes three major nations, three major religions and three major ethnic groups: Orthodox Serbians, Catholic Croatians and Muslim Bosnians. Nevertheless, they all commonly share the same and unique genealogical Slavic origin. Therefore, racial and ethnic cleansings, systematically extended and applied even to religious and linguistic levels and massively operated on a militarily planned basis, remain the only guarantee which ensures the national, territorial and demographic homogenization. Beyond the fact that all these groups commonly originated from the same former Slavic founders and beyond their separated evolution and sub-ethnification process, through their social and cultural specifications due to the historical impact of their colonial past, one of the major cause of the actual dilemma is the political attribution of a religious denomination and identity to a republic nationality. This is what Tito did in the Constitution of 1974 when he gave and assigned “Muslim nationality” (with “M”: as capital letter) to Bosnians, belonging to Muslim religion, in the only aim to decrease and to stop the dramatic growth of Serbian nationalism.

This confusion, which assimilated and reduced to a national identity a religious identity, has conflictually increased the ethnic complexities and tragically amplified their violent expressions in the war opposing these three groups, the final toll and assessment of this collective disaster, pushed until to the ultimate paroxysm of horror, was approximately estimated at more than hundreds thousands killed people and more than 2 millions refugees in world. Since their arrival in Quebec between 1990 and 1992, Bosnian refugees built a community of more than one thousand members, unequally spread in Quebec region.

Being welcomed in this host society at the same time and in the same way than other refugees, particularly Serbians and Croatians who are still represented like their aggressors, Bosnian refugees, through their community, are developing many integration strategies within Quebec francophone society. These strategies carry over many important social and cultural challenges (linguistic, religious, etc.) finding expressions into the relational barriers with most of the institutional levels involved in their integration process, also with the host society members. In such a context of adaptation and integration issues in Quebec society, the Bosnian refugee's background and trajectories as marked by their traumatic identity ruptures could be worsened by cultural shocks, cultural integration stress and cultural bereavement hardships. In addition, regarding these refugees' trauma burden, most of the documentary sources (Mr. Adélarde Tremblay, 1988) indicate that Quebec society has never been confronted, in its past and present, to such war events like genocide .

Therefore, its social and cultural confrontation, with more and more massive influxes of such war refugees and other immigrants from different origins, arouses many irreversible changes. Through the influential sociological effects of new irreversible processes and changes, like most of host societies, Quebec has become the receptacle of new social and cultural mutations mainly occurring at the level of the basic foundations of its collective identity. Beyond the deepening shifts of its ethnic identity structure and its demographic trends, through its social diversification process, these mutational changes crucially demand, from both refugees and host members, a strong ability to cope with the new sociological context of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Meanwhile, the quest of a global solution of integration, particularly regarding these refugees which could be able to take their war true-life into account, still remains very crucial.

Because, most of war diasporas badly integrated in their host countries, abandoned and left to themselves, could turn into a potential source of intrinsic or extrinsic reproduction and transposition of their previously lived historical trauma, frustrations and violence. Such a situation was recently illustrated and updated in North America (USA, Canada, etc.) and in Europe by many reactions and massive demonstrations of Serbian and Kosovo refugees, by way of reappraisals against the war opposing NATO and Kosovo alliance to Serbia in the Balkans.

This last war has already generated more than one million refugees in the world. The promotion of a global and harmonious integration, in accordance with their experience of war and exile, their vital needs to repair and to heal their broken identity and to achieve their cultural bereavement requires to identify, first of all, their heavy suffering losses and separations, to attribute to them new reconstructive and very meaningful senses, to reappropriate cultural values, both from their native and host countries, in order to realize, here and now, their final investment, in the present and the future.

The scientific interest which founds the sociological questioning about "identity ruptures" and "cultural mourning phenomena", through the critical social mutations generated by war, in their original homeland and their implications in the host country, is to reveal the major sociological dimensions and cultural representations which determine, from both host society members and refugees, the social emergence of new intercultural dynamics of a mutual integration and adaptation. Regarding this research question as raised in the light of its problem statement, the main concepts of "identity ruptures" and "cultural mourning" are the sources of the fundamental dimensions of this study which will be theoretically, methodologically and empirically documented and investigated according to the following objectives.

Research Goal and Objectives

This research major goal is:

- To explore Bosnian refugees perceptions and representations about the state and the sense of their global identity as affected by traumatic impact of war events and by multiple losses and separations, their brutal uprooting their integration and their adaptation process.

Its specific objectives are:

- To understand basic cultural and collective traditions of peace and their state and definitions of their identity before the war;
- To identify cultural forms and endogenous knowledge and practices of conflict ritualization;
- To know the traditional and endogenous forms and healing practices of the cultural mourning within the original society;
- To draw up an inventory of events, individual and collective trajectories during the war, during the exile and the consequences of their integration and adaptation within the host country;
- To suggest and formulate new and original research leads and social intervention frameworks able to take into account their endogenous knowledge and practices, their intimate hope and expectations, their losses and separations, the state of their identity, their cultural bereavement and their global contribution to the reconstruction of their new cultural references as well as to their host society's ethnocultural diversity.

The Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Exile, Culture, Identity Ruptures and Cultural Bereavement

The way of considering the intellectual question which structures this research problem ,objectives and dimensions, led us to the exploration of the pertinent literature raised on this subject, in relation with the main concepts of "identity ruptures", "cultural bereavement", through integration and adaptation process.

This research object, in light of its sociological foundations, is mainly documented in a very multidisciplinary perspective, respectively varying from basic cultural sociology to anthropology, from ethnology to ethnopsychiatry, from intercultural psychology to psychoanalysis, from existential and phenomenological philosophy to thanatology, etc. As previously mentioned, the cultural sociology and anthropology view-points remain very relevant to the analysis of identity ruptures and cultural bereavement phenomena and the historical context of the relationships between exile and culture, in this study.

Exile, culture and identity

Through the literature related to this subject, many authors considered exile experience as one of the founder principles of human culture and history.

Its historicity is permanently stated by most of the ancient religious tats, as in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, etc. In this scope, Gomes Mango (1988, pp.4-5) said:

"Exile and culture have intrinsic interactions. One can say that exile is one of the fonder myths of all cultures. To only refer to great monotheistic religions, exile and foundation acts are the two constitutive movements of Jewish tradition and Islamic tradition.

Moses, the founder, is an exiled and exodus is the preservation of origins. Therefore, exile experience is the foundation of culture experience. The mythical figure of exile seems to mew with the commencement of culture evolution. A wrench, a split, a gap, a separation, a loss might be the origin of what has to be built, what has to take form and to set up. Culture work is a foundation within absence and loss experience; the state of exile is an appeal to open-mindedness, it is source of culture."

The concept of identity is approached from many intellectual sights. The notion of identity generally refers to the state of individuality and its uniqueness. This individual uniqueness, at the human society level, also even in nature, doesn't exist in ex-nihilo and escape from any principle of otherness and alterity without any structural linkage with its own genealogical past or its own gender, family, group or society and all kind of differences.

The principle of difference, within otherness process, is the main basis and source which provide the sense of uniqueness, belonging and its complementarities with other. At the human society level and, hopefully, perhaps elsewhere in the nature, human culture and social organization is that source which gives to uniqueness, biologically and symbolically, at every stage of its evolution, the vital means of its own survival, reproduction, sense and belongings within what sociologists, such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber and others, called a "social totality". In the philosophical approach, "identity" has no reality and can't be defined without any relationship with otherness.

Socially, self-identity and self-consciousness are the same results of the relationship with otherness. (F. Hegel 1958, J.P. Sartre 1970, E.M. Lipiansky 1989). In the psychological approach, self-identity appears through many authors as the profound unity of an individual personality who identifies and assimilates far oneself, the different states of self-consciousness (S, Freud 1912, L.M. Morfaux 1980, R.A. Spitz 1969, etc.). Nevertheless, all these authors have recurrently and respectively emphasized the sociological genesis of identity and on its founder role in its evolution. In the sociological approach, culture appears as the social basis of the whole psychological dynamics and interactions which provides sense to oneself identity through otherness. This sense, among others, is also the one of belongings. According to G. Mead (1963), oneself identity is the developing result of the whole relationship sustained by any individual with the entirety of social processes. In the light of these reflections "identity" is a consciousness of belonging to a social and cultural entity which provides to its members the ontological attributes and the existential justifications, able to make them signified and significant. Then, it essentially expresses the social totality of an individual, a social being, whose reality, according to K. Marx, cannot be anything else than the result of the whole social relationship (1978, t.1, p. 8).

The major sociological issue, remaining at the bottom of this study, as already mentioned, is to understand the social and cultural state of identity and mourning phenomena through the relationship between exile and culture, within war context. In relation with the critical and cultural state of a collective identity, among others, it is more about the radical partition of physical and symbolic substratum of a transnational country and people collective identity, politically and militarily realized through the extreme territorial fragmentation so called "cantonization" of belongings and homeland.

It is also through population deportations, concentration camps, genocide, destruction of any historical and cultural monuments, any ethnographic patrimony of the past, that the paroxystic methods of social, cultural, ethnic and racial homogeneity has sanctioned the assassination of a collective memory by another one and for another one benefits of victory. In such a context, one can say that an identity is disrupted when its social structuration basis and its original anchorages are shattered and fragmented by war and exile violent events like genocide and brutal uprooting, which traumatic impact is deeply inserted into the individual and collective personality.

The effects of such events split up and subdivide the whole unity and initial coherence of the fundamental and cultural belongings system such as family, social, ethnic and national identification of individuals or people. The reconstruction of another cultural ethos similar to the lost one, proceeds from a very demanding work of an individual as well as a collective memory which includes a cultural bereavement hardships which consists of the renunciation of irreversible losses and the acceptance of what will never come back and will never be the same. This cultural bereavement process, implying a deep and painful affliction and nostalgia, mainly addresses multiple losses and separations experiences. It is mostly about loss of homeland, loss of maternal language as public language in the native country, separations and losses of own family members, ethnic, family psychoaffective kinship and networks, cultural and sociosymbolic losses of original traditions, customs, impossibility of ritual and ceremonial practices for dead family members, etc. But this process and its personal and social challenges don't allow any forgetting mechanism, because the memory, as the only receptacle of true-life experiences, is also the only faculty, from which, creation or reconstruction of new cultural paradigms are truly possible.

To better understand this phenomena, it is useful to examine also the multidisciplinary approaches developed about the concept of mourning or bereavement within culture and exile context.

Multidisciplinary Conceptions of Cultural Bereavement

Sociology of culture is one of the general sociology branches which have really enlightened the studies of other different cultures from one's own. It explores among others, those cultures' different rituals, conceived as social institutions or structures, particularly related to the representations of death and mourning or grief experiences (Emile Durkheim 1912; Marcel Mauss 1950; Marcel Griaule 1975)).

Cultural Anthropological and Ethnopsychiatric Perspectives: Dialectical Relationships between Exile and Cultural Bereavement

These studies have mostly influenced other social sciences in that field, by providing them with theoretical frameworks and empirical bases which enabled, subsequently, to specify their autonomy through their own scientific evolution (B.Malinowsky (1944), M. Mead (1937), C.-Levi Strauss (1958). From this sociological basis, the multidisciplinary approaches on the concept of bereavement also includes many important other perspectives.

Among many researchers, L. Vincent Thomas and Tobie Nathan (1988, no 10), describe, first of all, different semantic statements made about the concept of mourning or bereavement:

"The expression 'to be in mourning' regards the status of someone who just lost a cherished king. 'To achieve his mourning' designates the whole affective states of someone who lost a loved person.

This is what psychoanalysts call 'work of mourning' in which course the subject progressively surpasses the depression and starts to enjoy life again. Finally, 'to carry mourning reveals a state of mourning by external marks, socially imposed and recognized'(p.10).

Through the empirical observations of their sociocultural expressions and manifestations many cultural sociologists and cultural anthropologists have revealed, from the experience of loss and separation, the dialectical relationship between exile and mourning, on the common basis of the same effects as well as into the one than into the other. It is the same experiences of losses and separations which arouse and also explains the same critical psychic processes, characterizing the state of mourning for an individual or a group in post-mortem context of lost cherished persons, which also affects an exiled person facing the same loss and separation from the original culture, homeland, family members, belonging sense etc.

Analogically to the exile experience, the bereavement or mourning process of own culture and homeland is lived with a profound and painful sensation of oneself loss and death, as well as the death of a cherished person appears also to survivors like a brutal and unexpected revelation of their real state of exiled. In that sense, the grief or bereavement process, through its disorganizational impacts and effects on identity certainties, incorporates and expresses metaphorically a state of exile, very similar to the territorial and cultural exile, where it arises analogically, in ultimate terms of a demanding renunciation. To confirm this dialectical relationship, within which, the state of exile remains in the state of mourning and vice versa, Lise Monette (1991) showed that:

"Any mourning or bereavement reminds us that we all are exiled from ourselves and from others in different degrees. The funerary ritual could be therefore understood as a gathering of exiled people, when it is public. But, we deny and reject that state of collective exile when the ritual is private. As a ceremonial of memory, the funerary ritual, private or collective, initiates the separation and struggles against it. The fundamental stake remains the same: how to overcome the intimate suffering without adding to the real loss another loss issued from the disillusion of what became obsolete, in order to open an interior space which will enable to project oneself in the future again" (p. 21).

Cultural Bereavement in Exile as a Traumatic Hardship: Issues of Transcendence for a Global Rebirth

The previous analysis well reflects how exile is an integral part of mourning experience and subsequently, how the reverse trend shows also that may act of exile implies necessarily a mourning experience. But, this mourning form within exile, the cultural mourning, is more total and durable, more multidimensional and afflicting, more abstract and historical than the mortal loss of a loved person.

Not only, it includes this form of loss, but it also transcends it by the importance of trauma potentially, of violent events that have been lived and kept in gestation and which justifies the fact that, war and exile refugee is a human and social category fundamentally and qualitatively different from any other kind of immigrant.

To state the scope of mourning in exile, their mutual interactions and their common ability and predisposition to global cultural rebirth, Gomez Mango, once again, wrote:

“The mourning process which inevitably accompanies exile, if it is really accomplished, can end up to an availability of love and creation. The violence of exile, what it implies as a wrench of a space and a chattering of temporality, can turn into a place of an experience: first, a place of memory and writing. All happens as if, after having lost all places in the crossing of a perpetual displacement, the exiled could find sharing and belongingness. One can, I think, conceive exile, not only as a figure of misery, of nostalgia, as a desperate uprooting and hopeless, but also as propitious of new forms of spirit life. It is, within the movement of a same quest, which is a sane cultural and social identity, not alienated that, by the same time, new cultural forms emerge” (1988, pp. 8-12).

Beyond any critical consideration of the different contexts of these studies, it appears that the social and cultural complexity of this research subject remains really original and still needs to be theoretically and empirically documented through the sociological and anthropological perspectives of exile, culture, identity ruptures and cultural bereavement issues among refugees victim of ethnic genocide.

Methodological Framework

Regarding also this research problem and questions from which the major goal and specific objectives are formulated, it is useful to describe the relevant methodological framework able to achieve them. The specific objectives are, here, the particular and concrete dimensions empirically attainable through the following methodological directions, instruments and technique of the data collection and analysis process.

Nature and Type Of Research

Given the epistemological state of its general purpose and particular objects, this research favors a qualitative approach. Such a choice is determined by the essential state of human subjectivity related to identity ruptures and cultural bereavement implications. It is in that sense, according to Epstein (1985) that qualitative methods enable to describe complex social processes and subjective perceptions and representations of people involved in those processes (pp. 263-274).

Population of Study and Sampling Technique

Their perceptions are important to know, in order to describe refugee's trajectories during their integration and adaptation process.

Given its qualitative orientation, this research is also based on a non-probabilistic sampling technique, this option is justified by the fact that this type of sampling technique is very relevant to qualitative approaches and the sampling statistical representativity is no more required as criteria (Chauchat, 1985). Amongst the varieties of techniques, covered by the non-probabilistic sampling technique, this study favors the “volunteers sampling technique”. Such a technique, as every qualitative sampling process, is mostly based on an inductive approach and on the principle of selection criteria and the content saturation which are very different from the hypothetico-deductive approach of quantitative research methods.

In such a case, R. Mayer and F. Ouellet (1991) precise that:

“Another principle is applied to the setting up of this type of sample: the principle of content saturation. In such a situation, where people express themselves much more in terms of reality representation than statistical representativity, the final sample is built up, when the data collection doesn’t provide any new idea comparatively to ideas and opinions already collected” (p. 393).

The population of the study includes refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina living in Quebec since 1992. The selection criteria are based on participants’ lived experiences and hardships of the ethnic genocide, the collective uprooting the massive deportations in concentration camps, the ethnic and “racial” cleansing campaigns. The real-life experience of these events constitutes the selection criteria basis of sampling representative informants.

The non-probabilistic process of the sample constitution is limited to the three brothers of the Kučković family.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The qualitative technique of data collection applied in this research, are ethnobiographical “life histories”.

Life Histories

Chaufrault-Duchet (1987) and Desmarais (1986) defined “life histories” as a global research process where the narrator stands like someone who thinks and acts by organizing through his own speech, the meaningfulness to attribute to his true life experience. This actor is not dissociated from his belonging social group. This enables the researcher to get access to life experiences in order to apprehend the configuration of the relationships between the individual, his group, his community and his society. Among the typological varieties of life histories, such as autobiography, psychobiography, the sociological and cultural orientation of ethnobiography is more appropriated to the lightening of this research problematics. Within this sociocultural orientation, as J. Poirier and al (1983) explains, the person is considered as the mirror of his time, his culture, his society. According to J. Poirier this approach consists of situating the narrator as the mirror of his culture, his society, his belonging group and the significant events that marked the individual and collective identity throughout his representations.

The global corpus of five hundred (500) pages in three (3) volumes respectively collected as ethnobiographical data from these three brothers, revealed the whole sociological and ethnoanthropological scope of their experiential, sociocultural and discursive representativity. The ethnobiographical life histories, therefore, have been the basis of the category and semantic content analysis.

This qualitative analysis is inscribed into the theoretical and the empirical perspective of the phenomenological and Comprehensive Paradigm.

Data Collection Instrument and Dimensions of Study

This research ethnobiographical life histories data were collected and recorded on the basis of an interview guideline elaborated and pretested among Bosnian refugees more or less reflecting similar selection criteria as the final sample of this research' actors: the three Kuckovic brothers.

The particular empirical dimensions explored through the data collection are the following ones:

- Differences of their representations about their society, culture family, ethnic group and religion between the periods before, during and after war;
- Main significant events lived by Bosnian refugees and their traumatic impact on their individual and collective identity during the war and the exile experience;
- Different kinds of losses, separations, frightening and suffering events that have been lived and the survival alternatives and means deployed in order to face or to escape;
- Inventory of endogenous traditions and customs of peace, different forms of conflicts ritualization within their own culture and ethnic group and their inter-ethnic relationship with other groups;
- Individual and collective endogenous knowledge on life, death, suffering, healing and repairing, their ritual and social practices on death, the cultural and traditional forms of mourning phenomena, their sense of forgiving and surpassing or transcending and the way to apply them to their situation ;

- State of survival guiltiness: having run away to escape and abandoned ones own family members and relatives;
- Loss of their native maternal language as public language and loss of their original environment of social, religious and traditional practices far their culture perpetuation;

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Framework:

The Research Results

In light of these dimensions, the data analysis and interpretation were operated on the basis of the fundamental objects of this research, Exile and Culture which revealed here a double temporality through dialectical relations which link them together within the emergence of the objective and subjective configuration of identity ruptures, cultural mourning, and the integration process of refugees victim of ethnic genocide.

The Diachronic Temporality

It translates here the whole historicity of origins, even the most mythical ones of human society's evolution. It is about "Exile as the founding principle of cultures" to which Leon and Rebecca Grinberg (1986) and Edmundo Gomez Mango (1999) signified key figures through Abraham the patriarch, Moses and others, such as Oedipus, etc. Such historicity of exile experience as incarnated by these key figures has been previously discussed. Its ethnoanthropological scope is recurrently translated through the intergenerational and ancestral experience of exile across the Kuckovic family genealogy all along the ethnobiographical narratives. In addition, the prehistorical anthropology's perspective on the migration of the Anthropoids from the forest to the Savannah through the Rift Valley reveals the major foundational exile experience as the underlying basis of human kind anthropogenesis and ethnogenesis.

The Synchronic Temporality

It refers, in the light of the relations between Exile and Culture, to the contemporary reality of their configuration crucially marked by the world crisis regarding the national question, the emergence and the proliferation of radical movements of self-determination characterized by cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic oppression and resistance. The omnipresence and the geopolitical, economic, and military complexification of such a crisis have consecrated new types of war.

These wars have now reached the extreme levels of massive exterminations, ethnic and “racial” cleansing, social and cultural decomposition, collective deportations and detentions in concentration camps, in brief, “racial”, religious, and even linguistic homogenization practices, fully materializing the complete tragic sense of ethnic genocide as crime against humanity, according to Pierre Fédida (2000). Therefore, as was the case with so many other countries like Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina constitutes here the central purpose of my research. According to this approach, according to the data analysis the configuration of the diachronic and synchronic temporality scales in the ethnobiographical histories of the Kuckovic brothers were operationalized and subdivided into four major stages:

The Pre-War Period

In the light of the ethnobiographical life histories, the analysis reveals, during this period, the previous states and the impacts of and the different stages of the socialization process and the cultural ethnogenesis of the identity formation according to the family and the belonging community’s traditions, values, ideal expectations and it’s projections in the future.

To better understand the sudden occurrence of the ethnic genocide, the complex mechanisms and the nature of the Identity Ruptures and the Cultural Bereavement processes as traumatic consequences of such genocide, it is logically necessary, first of all, to analyse here the anthropological configuration of the culture and the ethnic group structure through the specific ways they generate the individual and collective identity in the Bosnian society before the war.

The War Period

Through the Data analysis, this period shows the sudden break-up of the war specifically marked by the massive and systematic destruction of the Bosnian ethnic, religious, cultural and national identity. This period is described and analysed through the life histories as crucially affected by tragic attempts perpetrated by Serbian military forces and militias against the Bosnians’ individual and collective identity. Those Serbian military and paramilitary campaigns of collective violence varied from the mass-expropriation of Bosnian Muslim families ‘properties, massive exterminations, racial and ethnic cleansings, population displacements and deportations into concentration camps, public rapes etc.

The ultimate complexification of such a violence was illustrated by sophisticated tortures and specific dehumanization practices based on a systematic application of scientific methods of human personality’s destruction to death camps prisoners inspired from the Nazi traditions of the Holocaust .Etc.

The Exile Period

With the approximate death toll of 800.000 Victims and more than 1000.000 Refugees, the survival principle of such period is to: fly or to die.

It is the period of the International Community and Organizations' involvement in the discovery of mass concentration and death camps and in the Settlement of Refugees Camps where the Exile of Bosnian prisoners and other Asylum seekers were protected and organized for their exile. This experience of Exile was lived through a contradictory emotional duality: the happiness and the guiltiness of survival. From their homeland to their new host societies their exile trajectory through different countries was marked, among many other eventful experiences, by fear and shocks of differences, confusion due to language communication barriers and other additional stress to their pending substantial trauma which crisis is instantaneously revived by the presence of any officer wearing a military or police uniform as it the case at their arrival to Quebec-city aeroport as well as at many others through they journey.

The Arrival, The Settling, And The Integration Period

It includes the welcoming, the housing and the first contacts with Immigrants and Refugees Agencies dealing their adjustment and integration process. It is also the period which, after their registration in the Social welfare Program, they have to experience the French Immersion School in the same classes with other Serbian refugees still perceived as their aggressors and enemies. It's during this period that their long time repressed and suspended trauma suddenly re-emerged and affected, through multiple types of psychological, emotional and physical disorders and distresses, their abilities to face the integration hardships in their new host society. Their experience of such war trauma was aggravated by the lack psychosocial assessment and the inexistence of helping services specialized in the psychotherapy and the sociotherapy of refugees victim of ethnic Genocide.

In the light of these scales, the research results revealed through the narrators' ethnobiographies the anthropological issues of their culture, religion and history in a particular ideological and socio-political system which was strongly denying their community's collective identity and ethnicity. They emphasize the importance of the collective as well as the personal sense of their identity and history, as being members of an oppressed family in the pre-war period. Such importance situates:

- The identity challenges of birthright statute in the family within the macro sociological context of a political and cultural prescription of a new ethnonymy to their ethnic group which confused and reduced a religious belongings to a nationality (The Revision of Yugoslavia's Constitution in 1963 by Tito).
- The identity significance of accident occurrence appears as a marking and structuring factor in the subject's life history which reveals:
- The duality between the social and family projection on an individual identity and the eventful contingency phenomenon of the factual history which makes it different from the initial expectations.

That duality found expressions within the accidental occurrence of two major symbolically structuring events in the cultural formation of individuals' identity though the narrators' life histories. It reveals the modality by which representations, interpretations, are inscribed, recorded and internalized in the collective and mythical imaginary of the identity archetypes specific to their culture and society.

The First Event

It revealed that the first names of the three (3) brothers are perceived as the nominal metaphor of a survival myth through the contingency of the coincidental or accidental choice of their first names. The parents' choice through the family maternal line of their three children' first names was coincidentally inspired from a Turkish film reporting based on a real historical war event the survival of three brothers over a massive extermination of all the population of a village. The attribution of these three survivor brothers' first names respectively to the three Kuckovic brothers is symbolically meaningful of a type of psychocultural transference of the "potential inherited capacity" of survival skills from the first ones to the second ones.

The cultural interpretation of such transfer is based on a spiritual premonition which implies the occurrence of eventful and deadly hardships that the three Kuckovic brothers through their gift of such survival skills will overcome. Therefore the anthropological significance of the ontological transposition of first names within the genealogical relationships, from dead ancestors to living descendants appears to be a fundamental taboo and prohibition, within their culture. At the opposite side of the cultural and symbolic significance of such transference of survivors' first names to living human beings, the transposition of dead ancestors' first names to living descendants is interpreted as a phenomenal transposition which will quickly precipitate the tragic destiny of the first ones and will shorten the starting life of their young descendants.

The Second Event

Being the circumcision is considered as a very important ritual of socialization which sacrificial value and sociosymbolic statute are generally inscribed in a religious and cultural justification and significance.

As a great skill of survival experience the circumcision tradition is collectively perceived as a crucial rite of passage and as an empowering instance of the cultural and religious socialization of individuals and within which the three Kuckovic brothers had to acquire a vital sense of endurance and resilience enabling them overcome and transcend eventual hardships in their life such as tragic events that they finally lived through the war as the confirmation of those premonitory and anticipatory experiences. Among these three brothers, the circumcision of the eldest brother which spontaneously occurred when he was three (3) years old, while sleeping alone and without any family member or other person intervention, was culturally and religiously integrated into a special ritual which signified it as a sign of a divine protection through the action of an entity called: "Mellecci": the Angel. Among other decisive traditional instances of their personal identity socialization process within their family, ethnic community, culture and collective rites which forge and mark the individual's belonging sense to their group, the baptism's ritual remains the most foundational one.

The Baptism's Ritual

This major socialization event is essentially marked the cultural importance and social presence of the "**Zadruga**", meaning the much extended and largely inclusive family community reveals the social structuring value of the socialization process of the Kuckovic brothers, their family and ethnic group, based upon the four founding customs which are:

The Pobratimstvo: Fraternity

This custom's vocation consist of a very inclusive brotherhood relationship at a broader of the society's diversity and applies to different members of different religions and ethnic groups.

It is a preventive custom against conflicts between families, communities and ethnic or religious groups. It plays a vital role of conflicts' ritualization.

The Posestrimstvo: The Blood's Sorority

It consists of a blood ritual which sociocultural and historical role in precedent war periods was to seal a blood brotherhood between enemies who would therefore respect and preserve the prevalence of peace by considering themselves as brothers in a mutual and collective protection. Such value was still preserved and applied before the war in the Bosnian society as a major cultural tradition and component of conflicts' ritualization and resolution between Bosnians, Croatsians and Serbians.

The Kumstvo: The Godfatherhood

This custom allows any member of any ethnic or religious group different from the Bosnian group to become the Godfather of a Bosnian newly born child. For instance any previously unknown person from those groups, passing near the family house whereas a child is being or was recently born or again a child is sick, will be called and invited by the family to become his Godfather. Such a value was, still before the war, the social and cultural mechanism of the kinship's development and enlargement which, not only enrich the child's diverse socialization models, but also reinforces and promotes the individual and collective responsibility for a global social peace and harmony.

The Komsiluk: Good Neighbourhood Values

The Komsiluk appears in the Bosnian culture as being the integrative model of the whole value system presented above.

It puts an important emphasis on the social, cultural and interpersonal centrality of on the neighbourhood relationship system as being the source of the extended families through intermarriages and mixtures between different ethnic and religious groups with Bosnians. The Komsiluk values system explicitly reflects the social and cultural stature of the Bosnian matrilineal exogamic structure and its crucial role in the constant social reproduction, the development and the renewal of the extension of the large family communities (*Zadruga*) in a spirit of a collective cohesion. Before the war there was no Bosnian family ceremonial instance in the center of which neighbourhood is not celebrated for the reactualization of their collective historical memory.

The purpose as an important traditional form of conflict ritualization is still to remind them that despite their genocidal all the different groups fighting each other (Bosnians, Croatsians and Serbians came from the same Slavic origin. In the light of these different marking events and fundamental cultural values two major socialization trajectories are described through the ethnobiographies. The analysis of both the traditional and the modern trajectories respectively demonstrated the acquisition process of the collective ethnic identity founding models and the socio-economic, geopolitical, ideological oppression and instrumentalization of ethnic rivalries within which the Bosnian community's collective identity became the central target of the war, as lived and witnessed by the three Kuckovic Brothers

The Trajectory of the Traditional Socialization

The three Kuckovic brothers' experience of this trajectory provided them with the essential core of their personal and collective identity through the family and ethnocultural context of individual symbolic appropriation of the collective founding models.

The analysis of their life histories showed in summary important cultural traits such as the memory of their history, the traditions and rituals related to migration experiences as well as to the bereavement ceremonies about losses and separations during the departure of travelers. Those traits reveal:

- The paradoxical vivacity of the Kuckovic brothers' memory and consciousness recalling the historical and cultural anchorage of their genealogical and kinship relationships of the family and ethnic group lineage.
- The experiences and traditions of past family migrations, the rituals and the various forms of losses and separations bereavement related to the departure of travelers.
- The cultural beliefs and practices through the conjuration and protection rituals against illnesses, misfortunes and bad luck along the travelers' journey.
- The transmission of the cultural memory and traditions by a key figure: the grand-mother.
- The cultural mourning rituals and customs related to the experience of loss and separation: the importance of the ritual of water during the departure of travelers in order to prevent misfortunes of their journey.
- The representations and interpretations of their survival within and beyond their experience in concentration camps which evoke the sense of their first names, their circumcision experience and the spirit of the "Melleci", the protective angel.

The Trajectory of the Modern Socialization:

The Three Brothers' experiences of such trajectory indicate the following processes.

- Their educational path and profile as a military and his experience as an industrial technician, lived through various institutional forms of oppression of his ethnic and religious identity and belongings.
- As victims, they witnessed the ideological process of ethnic identity racialization through the violent rejection of any kind of cultural mixing.
- The eruption of the genocide war and the macro sociological configuration of collective fractured identities: massacres, public rapes, ethnic purifications through families' exterminations, violent eradications of traditions of ethno cultural mixing, tortures, deportations, massive concentrations and exiles.
- The reminiscence movement of collective traditions of the "Komsiluk" values system, during the war, allying Catholics and Muslims against racist xenophobia, ethnic and linguistic cleansings perpetrated by Serbian military forces.

This research carries a very heuristic scope through the originality of its results and scientific contributions. The ethnobiographical analysis of the result of life histories reveals how the representativity of the subjects' traumatic life experience constitutes a metonymy of the social totality within the collective experience of refugees victim of ethnic genocide. One of the major contributions of this research consists in revealing, in an original manner, the modalities by which a culture incorporates contingent events of a high level of social and identity significance in order to register them within its sociosymbolic system. Such a cultural incorporation of those kinds of events helps to provide meaningfulness to the major life cycles and hardships of individuals' victim of traumatic experiences.

It also shows that the resorption mechanism of such devastations resulting from identity ruptures and the facilitation of the cultural mourning process remains essentially the basic symbolic material necessary to the psychosocial reconstruction of refugees victim of ethnic genocide. The global and qualitative reconstruction of ethnic war refugees identity ruptures and their integration or adaptation depends on two (2) main processes:

1. The individual and collective capacity of cultural mourning achievement and the useful implication of their cultural endogenous patrimony, original values, available knowledge and practices to apply in that process;
2. The perceptions and attitudes of acceptance and solidarity or exclusion and rejection by host society members.

Ultimately, the global results of this research include two (2) levels of relevance:

1. In its theoretical relevance, these results contribute to suggest new research leads and original orientations on many sociological, anthropological and cross-cultural social work dimensions of such subject, still less theoretically and empirically explored;
2. In its social and practical relevance, they consist of the cultural empowerment of such war refugee's communities and also an eventual elaboration and proposition of practical framework in immigration areas for consistent interdisciplinary intervention strategies among them, such as social workers, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, etc.

It should be a practical framework which will be able to take into account their endogenous beliefs, knowledge, practices, dignity expectations and their real life experiences, basically from who they really are.

Such a framework as this research outcome is very relevant to Conflicts Studies for the promotion and the integration of communities and peoples' traditions, culture and values of peace, skills and knowledge through a methodologically sensitive approach which could help such fractured individuals, families and rival ethnic groups to heal, self-forgive, forgive and overcome their collective emotional, psychosocial traumatic injuries, their shattering experiences and tragic trajectories for a possible reconciliation with their antagonist ethnic group which in general they use to share the same historical origin, the same neighbourhood and the same cultural and biological mixing.

This framework is pertinent to the applicability and the practical outcomes of the comprehensive and phenomenological paradigm in Social work approaches on war or genocide trauma, also to the Critical theories, Community studies and Anti-oppressive Social Work perspectives. Such perspectives could also include the psychosocial assessment of trauma to which professionals such as, among others, former refugees or immigrants who lived similar experiences will be able to help war refugees to overcome their deep psychological, physical, emotional and social ruptures through a very comprehensive methodological approach based on the different stages of their cultural bereavement process of their physical, symbolic and psycho-affective losses and separations.

This will provide them with the ability to generate a new meaningfulness to their experiences which they will be able to invest it in their present and their future and situate them at the first rank of the achievement process of their own individual and collective changes and aspirations

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