

## CONCENTRATION CAMP RITUALS: AN EXTREME CASE OF INSECURITY

Original Scientific Paper

## RITUALI U KONCENTRACIONIM LOGORIMA: EKSTREMNI SLUČAJ NESIGUROSTI

Izvorni naučni rad

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### Abstract

**Reason(s) for writing and research problem(s):** This article analyzes the experiences retold by former concentration camp detainees who were placed in concentration camps like civilians at the beginning of the Bosnian war in the 1990s.

**Aims of the paper (scientific and/or social):** The article aims to describe the recounted social interaction rituals after time spent in a concentration camp as well as identifying how these interactions are symbolically dramatized.

**Methodology/Design:** The empirical material for this study was collected through qualitative interviews held with nine former camp detainees and four close relatives.

**Research/paper limitations:** The analyzed empirical examples revealed how the camp detainees' victim identity is created, recreated, and retained in contrast to 'the others' – the camp guards. The camp detainees' portrayal of their victim identity presents their humiliated self through dissociation from the camp guards.

**Results/Findings:** The detainees' new (altered) moral career is presented as a result of the imprisonment at the camp and the repetitive humiliation and power rituals. The importance of the camp guards was emphasized in these rituals, in which the detainees' new selves, characterized by moral dissolution and fatigue, emerged.

**General conclusion:** In their stories of crime and abuse in the concentration camps, the detainees reject the guards' actions and the designation of 'concentration camp detainee'. The retold stories of violation and power rituals in the camps show that there was little space for individuality. Nevertheless, resistance and status rituals along with adapting to the conditions in the camps seem to have generated some room for increased individualization. To have possessed some control and been able to resist seems to have granted the detainees a sense of honor and self-esteem, not least after the war. Their narratives today represent a form of continued resistance.

**Research/paper validity:** The interviewees' rejections of the guards' actions and their forced "camp detainee" status could be interpreted as an expression of de-ritualization, leading away from their own earlier experiences. The subsequently illustrated myriad of everyday interactions, which can be distinguished analytically in the interviewees' stories, expose rituals of humiliation, power, resistance, and status. Through these, we see the interviewees' loss of identity, others' recognition of one's identity, emotional involvement, and different symbols of resistance.

### Keywords

humiliated self, emotions, stigma, sacred symbols, de-ritualization

## Introduction

This article is based on interpersonal interpretations of violence during the 1990s war in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>. In their quest for 'ethnic cleansing' of Bosniacs and Croats from northwestern Bosnia, Serb soldiers and policemen, among others, used concentration camps. The aim of ethnic cleansing was to take control of the geographic area by expelling the Bosniac and Croat populations. In addition to concentration camps, the ethnic cleansing of northwestern Bosnia consisted of a range of other techniques, including mass murder, systematic rape, forced flight, and economic and legal discrimination. The common denominator was that warfare was directed against civilian populations, namely groups of people with other ethnic identities; the aim was to make life impossible for Bosniacs and Croats. It was not enough only to expel these individuals; the aim was to create an atmosphere in which they would never dare return (Bassiouni and Manikas 1994; Case No.: IT-99-36-T; Case No.: IT-97-24-T; Greve and Bergsmo 1994).

Scientific reports and legal judgments from the Hague Tribunal that address the living conditions in the concentration camps describe an existence characterized by humiliation, physical abuse, fear, and death. Detainees died on a daily basis from physical abuse, planned executions, food shortage, and illnesses. They were so emaciated that they could not stand up or move (according to trial witnesses and interviewees, most detainees had lost approximately 20–40 kilograms). The general atmosphere made the detainees lose any will of their own; they became apathetic, and the texts convey the image of detainees just sitting around waiting to die to end the pain (Basic 2007; Case No.: IT-99-36-T; Case No.: IT-97-24-T; Case No.: IT-98-30/1-A; Case No.: IT-95-8-S; Greve and Bergsmo 1994). In the German camps during the second world war, the aim was to kill from a distance, and the camps were highly efficient and industrialized in their operations. In contrast to this, the camps in northwestern Bosnia stood out for individualized crimes in which the perpetrator often knew his victims. The tools used for killing were not only firearms but also knives, steel rods, electric cables, and batons.

By analyzing sequences taken from qualitative interviews with exiled Bosnians, detained as ci-

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1 This text is in some parts earlier published in journal *Humanity and Society* with the title *Concentration Camp Rituals: Narratives of Former Bosnian Detainees* and in journal *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* with the title *Ritualer i koncentrationslägret. Avståndstagande, moral och anpassning i före detta lägerfångars berättelser från Bosnien*.

vilians and placed in the concentration camps (Omarska, Keraterm, and Manjača<sup>2</sup>) at the start of the war, this article conveys how those former camp detainees perceived the crimes committed against them. David Knottnerus (2005) asks for more research on de-ritualization, i.e., interrupting participation in a ritualized practice in which the ritualized individual experience of the concentration camp is highlighted as a striking example. The first purpose of my article is to understand, discover, and describe interaction rituals depicted after time spent in the concentration camp. The second is to identify how these interactions are symbolically dramatized, such as through stories, gestures, profanity, and other everyday actions. The third purpose is to analyze different discursive patterns involved in the construction of the category “concentration camp detainee” and to distinguish how the actors’ morals emerge within these patterns. How do the detainees describe their everyday life in the camps? In the following, I would like to point out that social interaction rituals and symbolic dramatizations emerge when interviewees speak about their everyday lives in the camps, and more specifically, when they speak about (a) the arrival, (b) going to the toilet, (c) the overnight conditions, and (d) food and cigarettes. I will also show that the interpretations of biographical consequences arising from violence during war are intimately related with the adaptation to living conditions in the camps.

The material for this study was collected through qualitative interviews held with nine former camp detainees and four close relatives. All of the interviewed now live in Sweden, Denmark, or Norway. Three were women and ten were men (all between ages 30 and 65 years), all of whom had survived the ethnic cleansing in northwestern Bosnia, carried out by Serb soldiers and policemen. Eleven of them came from the Prijedor municipality and the remaining two from other municipalities in northwestern Bosnia. Among the interviewees, ten were Bosniacs and three Croats. Ten lived in Sweden, two in Norway, and one in Denmark. The interviews were performed from April through June of 2006. The stories created during those interviews were interpreted within an analytical context of interaction rituals (Goffman 1982[1967]; Collins 2004:34; Knottnerus 1997).

### De-ritualization in contrast to earlier experiences

All the former concentration camp detainees in this analysis disclose that they were placed in the concentration camps as civilians, unarmed and harmless to the guards who abused and humiliated them. When Nesim described his transport and arrival to the concentration camp, he said in a sad voice:

*We spent the night there (in Keraterm) and everyone asked the same question: Why me, why did they take me? People had been captured in the streets and many wore only shorts and t-shirts with sandals on their feet. People who were completely innocent, without any reason ...*

<sup>2</sup> Omarska is a village that belongs to the municipality of Prijedor in northwestern Bosnia. The population of Omarska is predominantly of Serb origin, and the camp was located in the management buildings of the Ljubija Ironmine. Before the war, Keraterm was a brick-burning factory in Prijedor. Manjača is a mountain massif in the northwestern part of Bosnia, and prior to the war, the Yugoslav People’s Army had several training facilities in different locations within the massif. When the war in Croatia began, some of the army compounds became concentration camps for captured Croatian soldiers and civilians. This continued when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina began; Manjača was used as a concentration camp for civilian Bosnians and Croats (Basic 2007; Case No.: IT-99-36-T; Case No.: IT-97-24-T; Case No.: IT-98-30/1-A; Case No.: IT-95-8-S; Greve and Bergsmo 1994).

Nesim's first encounter with the living conditions in the camp seem to be imbued with a lack of explanations for why this happened. His reproduction can be seen, using Goffman's terminology (1990[1961]: 67), as a sad tale, a kind of lament in which he explains that he doesn't belong among those legitimately placed. Scott and Lyman (1968: 52) also write about "sad tales" in their article on "accounts." They argue that actors often account for that which deviates from or violates our expectations. In this way, an actor repairs uncertainties during an interaction by neutralizing something that occurred or the possible consequences of what happened (Scott and Lyman 1968). Through his sad tale, Nesim also rejects the guards in the camp, i.e., those representing the concentration camp as an institution.

The creation of an identity happens, *inter alia*, through an interactive activity, with individuals distancing themselves from the others (Goffman 1990[1961]). In Goffman's study, we find several ways to dissociate and thus pursue one's own identity labor. One way is to dissociate from a category, showing that you don't belong to it. Another way is to reject an assigned status. In the preceding quotations, Nesim seems to perform a similar rejection. The depiction of the arrival at the concentration camp shows that Nesim does not belong to those legitimately placed; he rejects the category "concentration camp detainee" and having it assigned to him as a status.

Nesim's arrival at the camp can be seen as an individual transfer from one social context to another, from freedom to captivity. Life in the camp can be seen as a structure in which the ritualized interactions of the individual create mobility within the framework of the camp's system but not outside the system. No matter what perspective we choose as an explanatory model, Nesim's life in the camp is delineated by several interruptions from participating in the ritualized practices of ordinary social life. In the words of Knottnerus (2005), Nesim's living conditions are de-ritualized in relation to his past and future living conditions.

Inspired by Goffman and Collins' analysis of interaction rituals, Knottnerus (1997) developed a theory on "structural ritualization" that can be seen as a theory on ritual practice. In his analysis, Knottnerus focuses on chains of interaction rituals where the ritual is perceived to have an important role in social life. At the heart of the theory is the role rituals play for groups of people and the individual in the myriad of everyday interaction. Knottnerus argues that rituals are an important part of everyday social life and that individuals use these in structuring various social activities. Thornburg et al. (2007) examine, for example, how the ritual practice is disturbed in the context of disasters and how individuals handle these events. De-ritualization is most clearly manifested through the individual's passive performance (withdrawal from the incurred situation) and identity loss associated with disasters (Thornburg et al. 2007: 164).

Those social phenomena analyzed above, namely the dissociation from the others as well as from a forced status position, are being actualized when Nesim recounts his experiences from the concentration camp. In this way, Nesim's stories become an expression of de-ritualization in relation to his earlier experience according to Knottnerus' (2005, 1997) conceptual apparatus.

### **Portrayals of humiliation rituals**

In a concentration camp, the act of going to the toilet can be seen as a specific interaction ritual. It is a repetitive action, on a daily basis, that is carried out in relation to other inmates and guards. The common denominator in the interviewees' stories about camp conditions was

that they all were beaten when visiting the toilet. These depictions are symbolically charged and reinforced with emotions. Nesim's description of the circumstances surrounding the toilets reveals two distinct constructs. On the one hand, Nesim describes himself as a victim in the situation. On the other hand, Nesim rejects the camp guards' behavior. Several times during the interview, he gets agitated and sweats profusely. Nesim explains:

*I had to go to the toilet because I got dysentery and I saw that it was vacant. Afterwards, when I had finished and was about to go away from there, the guards noticed me and wondered what I was doing there. There were two of them, and they immediately began interrogating me. They asked who I voted for, they harassed me and started beating me. One of them kicked me with his military boot, and it felt as if my intestines had shifted. I am quite skinny. It wasn't fear that made me shit myself, since I have to put it bluntly, it was the dysentery, it was just water. Everything just flushes straight through you in an instant, you get a stomachache and you faint from the pain. I did that towards the end. /.../ I went to the water house and washed my underwear.*

As I have mentioned, Goffman (1990[1961]: 12–74) notes the humiliated self caused by the interaction rituals in the concentration camp. The above quotation contains a story describing how the humiliated self affected the individual's identity and vice versa. The humiliation of having diarrhea and going to the toilet with fear of being followed and physically abused there, then being forced to go outside to wash the feces from your underwear, humiliates you both physically and mentally.

Using Collins' conceptual apparatus, the retold humiliation could be named as a violation ritual. These rituals seem to contribute to the individual's moral exhaustion and eventually lead to a shift in an inmate's moral career. We can assume that Nesim's road to the new humiliated self begins upon arriving at the camp and is lined by many interaction rituals, such as special admission rituals, prison guards' distrust, physical and mental violations, and not least, the described violation and abuse during toilet visits.

By recounting violation rituals and describing the guards' behavior, Nesim constructs the guards' behavior as morally reprehensible. Nesim implies that he experienced loss of identity in connection with a trauma (Thornburg et al. 2007: 164). According to Goffman (1990[1963]: 11–55), an individual is stigmatized when not receiving full recognition of social identities. It seems that stigmatization can occur as a result of violation rituals. Goffman analyzes three types of stigma: physical deformities; tribal stigma based on ethnic affiliation; and stigma that stains your personal character related to "mental disorders," such as alcoholism. Common denominators for all types of stigma are that a stigmatized individual would have been accepted into general social rituals but that the stigma removes him or her from the community (Goffman 1990[1963]: 11–55; Stein 2009).

An analysis of 138 interviews with concentration camp survivors from the second world war, carried out by Steins (2009), shows that the described stigmatization that appears in the interviews, in relation to the interviewees' own recounted experiences of the camps together with how community members treated and questioned them after the war, creates an interactive chain that seems to affect the creation and recreation of identity in the interviewed. Similar ritualized identity dynamics seem to appear in this article when looking at the interviewees' relation to their own experiences.

### Portrayals of power rituals

Even such a thing as spending the night can be seen as an interaction ritual in a concentration camp. It is a necessary activity in an individual's life, it is repetitive, and it takes place in close proximity to other human beings (detainees and guards). According to all interviewees in this study, overnight conditions in the camps were severe. The quarters were usually old offices or workers' dressing rooms, crowded with inmates who were often unable to lie or even sit on the floor. In addition, the inmates were blackmailed and beaten when they would sleep. When talking about the overnight conditions in the camp, Sanel recounts some particularly important objects. He says, outraged:

*It was horrible, 150 people were pushed into a room of nine square meters, you couldn't breathe. A guard came in and he threw a shoebox inside saying that he wanted 500 DM<sup>3</sup> or he would let us suffocate in there. Many didn't have any money, others had a little but since we didn't succeed in collecting the money, they started beating those standing closest to the door. This was a kind of cruelty which cannot be retold nor described.*

Sanel's description of the overnight conditions is charged with dramatizations of various objects ("room of nine square meters"; "shoebox"; "500 DM"; "money"). Dramatizations can defend a particular depiction against alternative interpretations (Goffman 1990[1959]: 23–25; Potter 2007[1996]: 107–108, 121–129). The dramatized portrayal can be presented with various degrees of intensity. A particularly powerful description creates a starker image because the metaphorical nature gives such depictions more intensity (Drew and Holt 1988).

The highly colored image Sanel gives seems to create and recreate elements of power demonstrations, which Collins calls 'power rituals' (2004: 348–351). The overnight experience at the camp can be seen as a repeated interaction in which the detainees probably would value space, peace, and quiet, but instead they are forced into overcrowded facilities and are blackmailed and abused. In this described power ritual, Sanel exposes his victim identity which is created, recreated, and maintained in contrast to the others, i.e., the guards. Furthermore, it shows that the image of morally wrong action is created and recreated in Sanel's identity labor. There is a clear connection in Sanel's narrative between his portrayal of a victim identity and the guards' morally wrong actions.

In the described sequence, Sanel is highlighting "a guard" who is also engendered as especially important. The dramatized role that Sanel gives the guard is that of someone issuing orders ("threw in a shoebox and said ..."). At the same time, Sanel is placing himself (and the other detainees) as order-takers. In Sanel's story, this guard is well identified with his official self. In the description, he is quite aware of the symbolism regarding his order-giving ("he wanted 500 DM or he would let us suffocate in there"). Sanel is portrayed as someone taking orders, an individual without any options but coping with the incurred situation.

### Portrayals of resistance and status rituals

Eating as well as spending the night and going to the toilet can also be seen as an interaction ritual. According to the detainees, food was distributed as follows: First the detainees were

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<sup>3</sup> German marks, approximately 250 euros.

lined up in groups of approximately 30 people and then had to wait for several hours until it was their turn. When going to the dining area, the detainees had to run a gauntlet through a passage of guards hitting them, usually with steel rods, batons, and electric cables. If someone fell during the gauntlet, the guards sometimes beat him to death. The only meal during the day consisted of a “water slurry soup” and 100 g of bread. The meal lasted barely three minutes, and the detainees were beaten during the meal itself. It was considered difficult to avoid all the blows, and the price for eating was to endure being beaten (Basic 2007: 36). Asim furiously depicts the way in which food was distributed:

*Ten guards stood at one side and ten at the other. All had steel rods and at best batons. They beat us while passing so we tried to take cover behind each other but everyone received at least five to six blows. We had to eat fast because ten guards walked around hitting the tables, yelling at us to hurry up. We slurped up the soup and then got beaten on the way back again. People just become like animals, it's hard to imagine this today, but I know that it could happen again. They let a man lie among us for 15 days until he finally died from his injuries. Maggots were crawling in his open wounds, but they kicked him out among the other detainees at the piste. They had already killed thousands of people, but they left this man to die there among us in horrific agony and pain, why couldn't they just kill him? After that he lay there dead, among us, for a couple of days. And we walked around there stepping on him and being lined up to go and eat. That was the regime, you lined up and got beaten when you went to eat this stale soup in order to survive.*

According to several interviewees, they sometimes skipped meals to avoid getting physically abused. Rasim explains with irony and laughter:

*... sometimes I didn't eat for 24 hours or 48 hours, not because I didn't want to, nor because a lack of food, but because of the beating, the torture – that's why you skipped the meals.*

Asim is angry while telling, and Rasim's story is filled with irony and laughter. When actors recount in this way they, according to Potter (2007[1996]), give extra emphasis to the story's arguments. When talking about food in such a way, one gives this category the status of a charged symbol. Food is necessary for survival, but it also has a symbolic worth. In the above description, Asim does not portray food as nutrition that is bought on the lunch break to cope until you go home. Instead, the food intake is described as something shaped by repetitive humiliation rituals, power rituals but also resistance and status rituals. In Asim's story, violation rituals are actualized through the humiliated self (“people just become like animals”). The reduction of one's individual value and the environment's disrespect for status positions from before the war become evident when Asim describes himself as an animal. The loss of identity in relation to one's position before the war, which Asim seems to depict, is a result of the humiliation of the self. Power rituals, as Asim renders them, are present in almost every segment of his description of the conditions concerning food distribution. The guards' ritualized interaction with the detainees, in which repetitive and frequent physical abuse occurred, is a clear example of power wielding that resulted in “that was the regime,” in Asim's words.

How and where, in the empirical material, do we find resistance and status rituals? Goffman (1990[1961]: 61–66) writes that the adjustment to a total institution offers some room for different individualistic ways to deal with it. I argue that resistance and status rituals can be

distinguished in precisely those empirical examples that highlight the adjustment.

Goffman (1990[1961]: 61–66) writes about five methods of adaptation. *Situation withdrawal* is about an inmate who draws attention only to events in his immediate environment. He is quiet, staring into the wall; he is dehumanized. The *intransigent line* is characterized by the inmate's deliberate refusal to cooperate with the staff. *Colonization* is about an inmate who settles into the new environment and is satisfied with the little reward given by the institution. *Conversion* is characterized by an inmate who seems to take over the staffs' view of him, trying to play the part of an ideal prisoner so that the inmate thus imitates the staff regarding their language and behavior. *Playing it cool* is the most common way to adapt, according to Goffman, and here inmates (depending on the current situation) choose one of the four mentioned methods for adaptation to cope with institution stress.

The portrayed power and violation rituals show that there was very little room for individuality in the camps. According to the interviewees, many prisoners chose as adaptation methods either situation withdrawal or playing it cool. Stories with an element of resistance rituals become visible if we analyze resistance as an answer to an imposed social control (Collins 2004: 297). The study's empirical material offers few examples of heroic tales in which a hero comes forth and openly opposes the guards. The intransigent line, i.e., resistance, can be glimpsed in Rasim's remark about occasionally skipping meals to avoid being beaten. In other words, he refuses to cooperate with the guards because he does not want to carry out a joint project with them, i.e., the food distribution.

Rasim's description can be interpreted as a dramatization of the importance of remaining invisible to the guards. From the perspective of Collins (2004) and Goffman (1990[1959], 1990[1961], 1990[1963], 1982[1967]), being invisible means that the individual deliberately participated in the creation and the preservation of a humiliated self although in a general and diffuse way, avoiding the attention from the person who is humiliating him (in order to survive), which in turn can be seen as a resistance ritual. The intransigent line together with playing it cool in the previous quote shows the resistance rituals becoming visible when prisoners reflect on how they coped with the hardships.

Becoming visible in the camp meant, on one hand, possible physical abuse resulting in death and, on the other, gaining a favorable position compared to other detainees, a status position. A happy and excited Rasim told me how he got some food from a guard he got to know in the camp:

*The next time he came to guard duty, he called on me and gave me a quarter of a loaf of bread, a quarter of a loaf was a lot, it felt like a whole car. A quarter of a loaf of bread and some boiled beef which the guards had gotten to eat, fucking unbelievable, Goran (Rasim addressing interviewer by name), then I got one cigarette. I started to gain hope that someone still watched over me or looked at me positively.*

Rasim is a passionate smoker; during the interview, he explained the ritualized pleasure this gift, in the shape of a cigarette, brought to his life in the camp (Collins 2004: 297–344). Other detainees used cigarettes as trade goods. Nesim told me how his wife had sent him a package through a guard (containing cigarettes, food, and money). The symbolic value of these sacred objects (package, cigarettes, food, and money) participates in different rituals, such as in power rituals (those with power can get cigarettes, food, money, or packages); this in turn creates ac-

cess to other symbols, which in turn contributes to the creation of, for example, status rituals. Namely, detainees who received packages, cigarettes, food, or money also gained a special status position in the camp. On status rituals, Collins (2004: 347) writes: "On the dimension of status rituals, persons differ in how close they are to the center of attention and emotional entrainment: the person who is always at the center, those close by or sometimes in the center, those further out, marginal members, non-members". Those status rituals, described above, are products of an experienced and subsequently portrayed myriad of everyday interactions that can be singled out analytically from Rasim's story (Knottnerus 2005, 1997; Thornburg et al. 2007). There emerges a recognition of identity ("someone still watched over me or looked at me positively"), emotional commitment ("fucking unbelievable, Goran"), and different charged symbols ("a quarter of a loaf of bread," "a whole car," "one cigarette").

The interviewees occasionally mentioned cooperation between guards and prisoners. There was the smuggling of cigarettes and biscuits. The arrangement was that some of the detainees sold the merchandise on behalf of the guards, and sometimes they betrayed others who had money, which resulted in guards robbing and sometimes killing them at night (Basic 2007: 41). Nesim dramatizes the interaction between guards and detainees:

*A pack of biscuits and a pack of cigarettes with the risk of being discovered and then they could come at night to kill you. They wanted money, that's why it was best to lay low.*

Nesim's narrative is characterized by his advice on how to survive such a distressing situation. He says, "that's why it was best to lay low," which can be seen as a marker saying that, depending on the current situation, a detainee should choose if he will withdraw from the situation or come forward and interact (for example, with a guard who receives detainees packages). Sometimes, the cooperation resembled the adjustment approach described above, namely conversion. Ivo says:

*Lako (a fellow detainee whom Ivo knew before the war) became completely insane. He determined the order in our room and when we should eat ... he behaved worse than a guard.*

Luchterhand (1953) analyzed 52 interviews with former concentration camp detainees after the second world war. In his analysis, he focuses on those interactive patterns, created in interpersonal relations during time spent in concentration camps and retold after the war. More specifically, Luchterhand focused on described interactions between guards and prisoners and the prisoners' descriptions of sharing food with other prisoners and stealing from them. The study shows that camp detainees depicted the others (criticized inmates) as if they changed their personality, adopted the guards' values as their own, and identified with the guards.

Ivo's story reveals a similar conversion noticed by Goffman and Luchterhand; it's about Lako's taking over the guards' view regarding his humiliated personality and trying to play the role of the perfect prisoner. Ivo seems to have seen this as a status marker or pure madness ("he became completely insane").

The detainees' balancing act between different ways of adjustment, in which various charged objects are dramatized, reveals status rituals. According to Collins' perspective (2004: 79–101, 150–151, 183–222), this balancing could be used in future rituals, such as trade rituals (using the cigarettes you get). This example shows that even enemies can cooperate but that doing so requires interaction, role-taking, and defining common sacred objects.

### Concluding remarks

During the war in northwestern Bosnia, civilians were direct targets – and even participants – in acts of war. In this article, I have on the one hand described some of the social interaction rituals that occur during a war like this in concentration camps; on the other, I have identified how these interactions are symbolically dramatized. Finally, I analyzed the morality emerging from these interactions.

The analyzed empirical examples revealed how the camp detainees' victim identity is created, recreated, and retained in contrast to 'the others' – the camp guards. The camp detainees' portrayal of their victim identity presents their humiliated self through dissociation from the camp guards. The detainees' new (altered) moral career is presented as a result of the imprisonment at the camp and the repetitive humiliation and power rituals. The importance of the camp guards was emphasized in these rituals, in which the detainees' new selves, characterized by moral dissolution and fatigue, emerged (Collins 2004; Goffman 1990[1959], 1990[1961], 1990[1963], 1982[1967]).

In addition, detainees reproduced the image of morally wrong behavior that was created and recreated within their identity labor. The morality created in these conversations can be seen as a product of interaction rituals. It can be altered, created anew, reconstructed, and redefined. It seems that moral constructions materialize through reinforcements in the descriptions, such as recognizing and/or displaying emotions.

The interviewees' rejections of the guards' actions and their forced "camp detainee" status could be interpreted as an expression of de-ritualization, leading away from their own earlier experiences. The subsequently illustrated myriad of everyday interactions, which can be distinguished analytically in the interviewees' stories, expose rituals of humiliation, power, resistance, and status. Through these, we see the interviewees' loss of identity, others' recognition of one's identity, emotional involvement, and different charged symbols (Knottnerus 2005, 1997; Luchterhand 1953; Thornburg et al. 2007).

The portrayed rituals of humiliation and power show that room for individuality in the camps was heavily restricted; still, the rituals of resistance and status, as well as adjusting to the living conditions in the camps, seem to have generated a certain room for increased individualization. The ability to resist and possess some degree of control seemed to give the detainees a sense of honor and self-esteem, not least after the war.

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### Sažetak

**Inspiracija za rad i problem(i) koji se radom oslovljava(ju):** Ovaj članak analizira prepričana iskustva bivših logoraša koji su kao civili odvedeni u koncentracione logore početkom rata u Bosni i Hercegovini 1990-tih godina.

**Ciljevi rada (naučni i/ili društveni):** Cilj članka je opisati prepričane rituale socijalne interakcije poslije vremena provedenog u logoru, kao i identifikovati kako su te interakcije simbolično dramatzovane.

**Metodologija/Dizajn:** Empirijski materijali za ovu studiju su prikupljeni primjenom kvalitativnih intervjua provedenih sa devet bivših logoraša i četiri bliska rođaka.

**Ograničenja istraživanja/rada:** Analizirane empirijske sekvence prikazuju stvaranje identiteta žrtve u kontrastu sa drugim kategorijama, primjerice u kontrastu sa kategorijom čuvara logora. Bivši zatočenici u logorima prezentiraju svoj identitet žrtve kroz poniženje i kroz disocijaciju od postupaka čuvara logora.

**Rezultati/Nalazi:** Bivši logoraši predstavljaju svoju novu (izmijenjenu) moralnu karijeru kao rezultat boravka u logoru i kao rezultat rituala poniženja i rituala moći. Značaj čuvara u ritualima poniženja i moći je naglašen tako što bivši logoraši sebe predstavljaju kao ponižene i demoralisane.

**Generalni zaključak:** U svojim pričama o zločinima i zlostavljanju u koncentracionim logorima, logoraši odbacuju postupke čuvara kao i taj naziv 'logoraš'. Priče o ritualima sile i moći pokazuju da je prostor za individualizam u logorima bio veoma ograničen. Ipak, rituali otpora i statusa su naizgled, zajedno sa adaptacijom na uvjete u logoru, generirali prostor za povećanu individualizaciju. Imati malo kontrole i moć pružanja otpora naizgled je dalo logorašima osjećaj časti i samopoštovanja, naročito poslije rata. Njihove priče u današnjici predstavljaju jedan oblik nastavljenog otpora.

**Opravdanost istraživanja/rada:** Disocijacija od postupaka čuvara logora i od naziva/statusa 'logoraš' se može protumačiti kao izraz deritualizacije, u odnosu na prijeratna iskustva. Deritualizacija je vidljiva i kombinaciji sa ostalim interakcijama, ali se analitički može izolirati u pričama ispitanika kroz analizu rituala poniženja, rituala moći, rituala otpora i rituala statusa. Kroz ovu analizu je jasno vidljiv gubitak identiteta logoraša, priznavanje identiteta drugoga, emocionalni angažman, i različiti simboli otpora.

### Ključne riječi

poniženje, emocije, stigmatizacija, uzvišeni objekti, deritualizacija

### About the Author

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