

reconciliation is not perceived as inter-ethnic (across the state borders) but primarily as intra-state affair (within the state borders).

Second, it would be hard to argue that the main difference between the “advocates” and the “opponents” is ideological since they both share fundamental appreciation in the principle of justice and disrespect in crime. Thus killing of civilians, tortures of prisoners or rape are equally condemned by both groups.

Third, both “advocates” and “opponents” would claim that those crimes were acts of individuals and that the quest for responsibility or guilt should be placed on those individuals only and not on entire ethnic groups or states. Correspondingly, both groups would try to marginalize the concept of command responsibility as in their view the Yugoslav civil wars were rather chaotic events than results of centrally planned and executed policies.

Here though it should be mentioned that some of the more radical “advocates” do believe that acts of collective catharsis through an admittance of guilt would be the best way of reconciliation. The often-revoked example is the kneeling of German Chancellor Brandt in front of the Warsaw WWII monument. Yet, even though Brandt probably had the personal courage to do the same gesture back in 1945, it took 25 years for two states to build their relations to the level of trust, respect and mutual benefits that such an act requires. Only by 1970 these two states have resolved their border issues, issues of mutual recognition, and issues of war reparations so that the gestures of reconciliation could be played seemingly unilaterally and without a fear that they will hurt any of the sides.

Therefore, neither the “advocates” nor the “opponents” would like to start the post-Tudjman/post-Milosevic state-building era with a heavy stigma of collective responsibility for war crimes, or the economic burden of having to pay for war reparations. So, what then divides the “advocates” and “opponents?” It could be argued that the spiraling of mutual complaints between the “advocates” and the “opponents” is primarily due to the application of different levels of analysis – meaning that it is of a methodological nature. In this case different levels of analysis essentially mean that if one group points at specific episode as a war crime the other group would approach this same episode from the general prospective arguing that war is dirty affair related to unwanted elements of human nature and that crimes always happen during wars. Social scientists and linguists will tell you that in a situation where different levels of analysis were used there is no dialogue but cacophony between interlocutors. Or to quote the favorite academic expression: “you are mixing apples with oranges.”

This is probably why those two groups seem to be so apart while essentially, as mentioned earlier, they share the same theoretical foundations. This methodological fallacy of oscillating between different levels of analysis was the ill-born product of Yugoslav crisis. At the very end of the 1980s the bureaucratic communist discourse invented and applied this technique when faced with political challenges of democratization and possibility of loosing its power. The environment of civil war and nationalism further facilitated spread of this technique into society so it became a part of dominant discourse, or more precisely a standard method of conducting a discourse.

So, despite this analytical attempt to understand “the ins and outs” of the “advocates” and the “opponents,” the question remains: could this knot be untangled, and apples and oranges put into two separate boxes. Could the addressing of specific crimes be debated for what it is – specific event. Correspondingly, could we change the status quo and achieve some progress on the issues of freedom of movement, return of private property to its pre-war owners and prosecution of war crimes. It seems obvious that the fundamental difference in the perception of