

Community, Identity and Locality in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Understanding New Cleavages

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Abstract

The predominant view in the literature on post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina is that the war has mobilized multi-layered discourses of nationhood and permanently transformed people's identities to ethnic. This view disregards many other identities that people developed through life projects in the past two decades, and tends to simplify otherwise complex social dynamics, particularly at the community level. This includes the influence of migration, mobility, diaspora, and above- and below-ethnic identifications, technologies, educational experiences, consumer/labour markets, gender norms, leisure opportunities and fashions (Mandić and Trošt 2017), producing new identities and cleavages. This paper focuses on geographic community and proposes a concept of *identity of place*; this is attached to home communities and *identity of experience*, which are brought about by forced displacement and post-war migration leading to life away from home communities. Drawing on the concepts of translocality and transcommunality, the paper argues that the drivers of cleavages should be sought in the *identity of place* and strength of commitment and connection with the home community. When the *identity of place is weakened and taken over by the identity of experience*, the bond and commitment one has to home communities dissipates and results in the cleavage between the permanent residents in the community and migrants. Lastly, the paper draws particular attention to the nuances of new, post-war resident heterogeneity. The study uses data from eighteen months of fieldwork and mixed methods data collection in two small towns, Stolac in Southern Herzegovina and Kotor Varoš in Northern Bosnia, between 2012 and 2013.

Keywords: translocal, transcommunal, identity, cleavages, ethnicity, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

The societal transformations over the last two decades in socialist Southeast Europe followed two distinct paths – some transformations came about by violent means, through wars, while others followed a peaceful trajectory, through globalization, movement of population, financial crisis and post-socialist transition. Wars instigated more dramatic transformation for people, places, and societies because of their violent nature, most notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the deadliest violent conflict on the European soil since the Second World War. The violence of this

war most often targeted people based on their ethnic identity in order to create monoethnic territories, which was, to a great extent, achieved (Costalli and Moro 2012, Weidmann 2009). The division along ethnic lines was formally recognized by the peacebuilding architecture outlined in the Dayton Peace Agreement (DAP)¹, created to end violence and prevent future conflict. This

¹ Office of the High Representative (OHR), The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina http://www.ohr.int/?page_id=1252 (last accessed 11/05/2019)

peace solution, however, has been widely criticised for reinforcing ethnic segregation established through violence and eroding state sovereignty (Hromadžić 2011, Fischer 2006). Further criticism of both local ethno-nationalist projects and international caretakers of the country is that they are destroying multi-layered discourses of nationhood that existed in pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, characterized as trans-ethnic *narod* (Hromadžić 2013, 259). The literature on Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates that both peace-building and state-building approaches lead to assumptions that the war has mobilized and permanently transformed people's identities, fixing them as ethnic and created ethnic cleavages that are permanently set. In an analytical sense, the ethnic nature of the war created what Cohen (1978:961) calls "ubiquitous presence" of ethnicity in the analysis of the social reality and people's identities in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Tone Bringa argued that the view of ethnic groups in English-speaking literature does not reflect the complexity of the connotative power of these terms in BiH (1995), particularly the terms "nation" and "ethnic group" in a Western European sense because their use results in "... ignoring and distorting local conceptualisation." (1995:22) In the context of identity scholarship, Rogers Brubaker (2004, 2014) problematizes how we understand and study social categories and groups and criticizes the tendency to study ethnicity, race, and nationhood as individual parts of a system of bounded and closed groups. Brubaker also criticises 'groupism', which he defines as the "...tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (2004:8). In the context of questioning ethnicity as a group, Melešević defines ethnicity as a "social condition, a particular state of individual and collective existence." (2011:79). I argue that that we should accept ethnicity as a context for everyday life in BiH, but not as a dominant ana-

lytical lens for understanding societal ties; in BiH, both solidarities and social cleavages are particularly dominant in a political sphere, even when they involve "identity entrepreneurship" (Posner 2017).

To address these criticisms, new enquiries into the contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina take a step back from ethnicity and turn to investigating other identities, social relations, and societal changes by focusing on generational gaps (Hromadžić 2011, 2015), everyday experiences of fighting economic challenges (Jasarević 2017), the role of space and place in building peace (Bjorkdahl and Kappler 2017), and the significance of local agency (Kappler 2014). Emphasizing complexity and salience of social identities, Mandić and Trost (2017) argue that the emergence of new identities and lifestyles leads to transformation of old solidarities and cleavages and the creation of new ones, which need to come into analytical focus. New identities, they argue, particularly among the youth in the Balkans, emerge from experiences of everyday life amid rapid global changes or from living in a diaspora. With 2.2 million of the Bosnia and Herzegovina population displaced and uprooted from their original place of residence during the war, exposure to such experiences has been very common.

I argue in the paper that emergence of new forms of solidarity and cleavages are particularly palpable at the community level, where the war arguably disrupted what Hromadžić calls "cultural practice of interconnectedness and intermingling among ethnic groups" (2011, 268) and forced people to find new ways of connecting and interacting as part of the emerging new heterogeneity. Historically, regional and local identification was a way of understanding social groups, social norms and cultural practices that are embedded in family heritage, communal and societal histories, prior to emergence of the analytical concept of ethnicity (Fine 2005). Anthropologists who conducted research in BiH before the war in the 1990s found that one predominant identity among the citizens is linked to local-

ity and community (Lockwood 1975, Bringa 1993, 1995). Premilovac (2005) also showed that identities of people in BiH are very much constructed as local identities, coming from a place, and argued that national and ethnic identification in the communities affected by the war fades over time, primarily as a result of shared everyday experiences. I propose to think about these as *identities of place* because they are related to home communities and everyday life, while the new ones resulting from migration and being diaspora should be understood as *identities of experience*. Such approach allows for understanding the complexity of identities in BiH that are never fixed or singular, but multiple and constantly changing and their implications for new cleavages and solidarities. For this reason the scholars who study social relations in BiH, including cleavages, interactions, and networks, should direct discussions away from ethnicity and pay attention to nuances of daily life at the local level to discuss what is being 'seen on the ground' in the analysis of the current BiH society (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a). I argue that even if *identities of place* are maintained in perceptions and emotional discourses, there is a case of declining commitment to restoration of homeland or home community that becomes one of the drivers of cleavages between the *locals* and diaspora.

Seeking to expand the "inward facing identity politics" and overcome ideological divisions based on race or ethnicity, Childs (2003) proposed a concept of transcommunality for exploring the nature of social relations and bonds with the home community. It offers a conceptual framework for integrating differences of actions and opinions and "opens up ways of cooperation and communication" (2003,12) between groups that are connected by a common goal or actions linked to their community, but not always residing in the same locality. Furthermore, the framework of transcommunal cooperation emphasizes coordinated heterogeneity of "identity lines" (Childs 2003, 21) that extends beyond ethnicity, race and gender and is inclusive of

diverse settings organizationally, philosophically and cosmologically (ibid.). The concept is similar to that of translocality, which "usually describes phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation and spatial interconnectedness not necessarily limited to national boundaries" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 373). Translocal approaches found application in examining relationship between migration, territorial bond and identity formation (ibid. 378), particularly in the situations of heightened mobility that we find during conflicts. Similarly, Halilovich (2013) argues that the experiences of forced displacement, memories of violence and the influence of these memories on people and their communities are best captured through the concept of translocality rather than transnationality. The concept of translocality captures the orientation towards home by focusing on emotional connection to place and related *identities of place*, while transcommunality as an analytical framework captures diaspora's commitment to maintenance and restoration of the home communities. In other words, fading transcommunality is one of the key drivers of the cleavages in the communities between local residents and displaced citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Consequently, the following questions need to be addressed: If ethnicity is not the main driver of cleavages at the community level, what are their other determinants? What are the links between new communal heterogeneity, displacement and connection to place in the definition of cleavages? Are the cleavages homogenous across Bosnia and Herzegovina and what are the main drivers of difference? The first section of the paper discusses how community composition changed as a result of the war, forced displacement and post-war labour migration. The next section outlines the research methodology applied for this study, used to elucidate perceptions and discourses about *identities of place*, taking into account ethnicity, religion and the type of residence, including new settlers and diaspora. It continues by analysing relationships between the community members, drawing on the con-

cepts of transcommunality and translocality. I conclude the paper with a discussion of the main findings and answer the question: what are the links between identity, mobility, and community in framing the understanding of the social cleavages in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Who are the community members?

“They [Croats from Central Bosnia] moved from cultivating plums and apples to growing figs and pomegranates, which they had never seen before [...until they came here...]. It is more than certain that these people are longing for their old native land.”

(Private conversation, Stolac)

People make places and once there is a significant change of population, communities will not be the same anymore. The change will affect social relations between community members, their everyday activities and generate cleavages between the residents. This study focuses on geographic community that, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a core unit of social organisation and the origin of *identity of place*, born out of the notion that community represents an anchor of everyday life, and investigates community-level cleavages. The data was collected between 2011 and 2013 in two small towns: Stolac in Southern Herzegovina and Kotor Varoš in Northern Bosnia. The towns are the main urban centres of the municipalities with the same name, each with particular context of social relations and population change. The study approached them as two case studies to investigate connections, associations and cleavages related to mobility and transformation of territorially bound identities in a way that could be generalized for places that share common war experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study observes cleavages between three groups of residents: pre-war residents to whom the study refers as *locals*; diaspora; and newcomers who permanently settled in each of the towns during or after the war. This is not an easy task for outsiders because the cleavages are often invisible or so nuanced that they are apparent only to the people who

are directly involved (Bernard 1973). To address this challenge, the study used comprehensive methodological approach to capture multiple identities of the residents and the complexity of the cleavages between them. It also took into account labels that people use for identification purposes, to accommodate situations, to define themselves and explain their behaviours and differences.

The study of the two towns is set against the background of migration and communal change. Most of the displaced citizens have experienced more than two decades living abroad or holding multiple homes within Bosnia and Herzegovina². The legal framework, designed to accommodate return outlined under Annex 7 of the DAP³, allowed multiple residences within Bosnia and Herzegovina for internally displaced persons (IDPs), with a legal provision for citizens to be registered both at the pre-war and new place of residence. The movement of people continued during the post-war period because of prolonged economic uncertainties and poverty, giving impetus to labour migration and resulting in another wave of resettlement or temporary relocation for those in search for seasonal work.⁴ The constant movement of population resulted in formation of multiple identities connected to both their roots and the new lives in diaspora (Halilovich 2013), both abroad and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, experiences of migration and change continue to create in-between spaces that are neither *here* nor *there* and are open to adjustment at either end of a person's temporary placement, Halilovich further argues (2013:1). In other words, migration of diaspora between

² According to the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the official number of internally displaced persons at the end of 2015 was 98,324. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/bosnia-and-herzegovina> (last accessed 10/02/2018)

³ The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina <https://www.osce.org/bih/126173?download=true> (last accessed 11/05/2019)

⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina Migration Profile (April, 2017), Ministry of Security, http://www.msb.gov.ba/PDF/MIGRATION_PROFILE_2016_2ENG.pdf

the new home and the homeland where one is born is a reoccurring cycle that should be observed as an integral process of their identity formation. Identity revision (Jenkins 2004) is set at a broad spectrum of ethnic or nonethnic classification (Cohen 1978) such as gender, education or identity related to the place of living or to experience. Jenkins further draws attention to the relevance of stability and constancy of ordinary lives, which is often the main engine in a pursuit of identities (2004, 20). Just like identities, the labels are multi-layered and varying, which need to be taken into consideration in the analysis of the cleavages.

Methodology and Data

Starting with an investigation of the town demographics, the paper aims to account for the new heterogeneity that emerged as a result of the war. Bosnia and Herzegovina held the first post-war census since 1991 in 2013⁵, producing data on residents, households and dwellings, allowing for reliable analysis of the social composition of the municipalities and population change resulting from the war. It shows change in size of each town and settlement and, more importantly, information on dwellers based on their pre-war place of residence. The census was significant because it confirmed that the country lost around one fifth of its population since the last census in 1991, putting the total number of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens to 3,531,159⁶ and showed internal displacement and resettlement. However, at the time of my data collection in 2012 and 2013, information on the residents' pre-war place of origin, current formal or permanent residence, and different patterns of settlement, including return, repatriation and permanent relocation was not yet available. Therefore, I collected this data using a household survey.

Before the war, the central town of Stolac had close to 7,000 inhabitants, while the municipality

population was 18,861⁷. According to the 2013⁸ census, the town population was just over 5,000 people with 1,131 households and 1,527 dwellings. The total municipal population was 14,889. Located near the border with Republika Srpska, Stolac is one of the many municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was divided by the Inter Entity Boundary Line⁹ in 1995. Under the present administrative and territorial boundaries, the new municipality of Stolac was allocated 51% of the pre-war territory and became part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the newly established municipality of Berkovići is administratively part of Republic Srpska, positioned to the east of the town. Stolac didn't just lose its residents, who had a strong *identity of place*. The war destroyed cultural heritage and force displaced almost an entire population, predominantly Muslim, which created space for the arrival of a significant influx of new settlers (Kolind 2008, Mahmutcehajic 2011). Kotor Varoš is the urban, administrative and industrial centre of the municipality, less than forty kilometres from Banja Luka. While it didn't go through such a drastic territorial split as Stolac, the municipality and the town lost significant proportion of the population, which, before the war, numbered 36,853¹⁰. That said, according to the census in 2013¹¹, the total municipal population was

⁷ Library of Congress, Bosnia and Herzegovina--ethnic population by opština, 1991 census <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g6861e.ct003048/?r=0.039,0.177,0.966,0.606,0> (last accessed 11/03/2018)

⁸ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Preliminary Results of the 2013 Census of Population, Households and dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina http://www.bhas.ba/obavjestenja/Preliminarni_rezultati_bos.pdf (last accessed 11/03/2018)

⁹ Administrative border between the two Entities, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic Srpska

¹⁰ Library of Congress, Bosnia and Herzegovina -- ethnic population by opština, 1991 census <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g6861e.ct003048/?r=0.039,0.177,0.966,0.606,0> (last accessed 11/03/2018)

¹¹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Preliminary Results of the 2013 Census of Population, Households and dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁵ Bosnia and Herzegovina Statistics Agency, Census 2013 Results <http://www.popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjigePregled.html> (last accessed 11/05/2019)

⁶ *ibid.*

22,001, majority of which is Serbian population and returning Muslims, while the pre-war Croat residents remain permanently displaced and living as diaspora.

The data collection was divided in three phases. Starting in 2011, I conducted interviews with the representatives of international organisations and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees in Sarajevo. The next phase was a selection of the two research locations using the case study approach (Yin 2003), where the fieldwork was conducted from January to December 2012. The choice of case studies was made using most-similar, exploratory selection criteria. Both Kotor Varoš and Stolac had diverse ethnic composition before the war; the post-war population included both new residents and the pre-war residents, who were often returnees. Both towns also experienced ethnic-based violence and forced displacement as local residents in their home communities. The research design entailed a combination of qualitative approaches that employed semi-structured individual and group interviews, collecting in-depth life stories to capture and conceptualise ordinary, quotidian life of people in the two towns, their identities, and their interactions. Social interactions as well as those between the space and the social are used as the main indicator for absence of cleavages. I lived in each town for approximately six months, which allowed me to employ participant observation. However, the study is not an ethnography, as the limited duration of my residence in each town somewhat precluded it from a long-term immersion in the field to build what Geertz (1973) refers to as 'thick description.' Thus, it is more accurate to refer to it as a 'sociological version of ethnography' (Amit 2000). In order to corroborate the same facts from a larger group, this study used data triangulation (Patton 2002, Yin 2003).

The primary qualitative data is comprised of 116 formal interviews that were conducted in

the two towns, out of which thirty-six are life stories or oral histories, while the remaining eighty semi-structured interviews were collected both during the first phase of the fieldwork (qualitative data collection) and as in-depth interviews during the household survey¹². I surveyed 300 households— 150 in each town— using a mix of random and intentional sampling. The interviews were always conducted in one of the local languages¹³, usually in people's homes or in public spaces. In Stolac, the pre-war population, predominantly Muslim, lives in the old town centre, while the new settlers, predominantly Croats, live in the newly built neighbourhood called Vidovo Polje on the outskirts of the town. In Kotor Varoš, the new settlers are mainly ethnic Serbs, who live in a newly built colony called Bare. More frequently than in Stolac, new settlers bought houses from the permanently exiled Croats and Muslims, which created conditions for leaving next door to the pre-war residents. In order to ensure data validation, crosscheck data, and avoid biases, I used both data and methodological triangulation (Bailey 2007, Gering 2007). The interviewing included both the pre-war population and the new settlers, which allowed for mapping the local residence structure of the sample categories. This also meant that the survey avoided sample selection based on ethnic markers, although it quickly transpired that neighbourhoods tended to be monoethnic and new settlers were not housed together with the pre-war residents but in separate, newly built quarters (Djolai, 2016).

The survey was designed using analysis of the primary, qualitative data collected in the first phase of the fieldwork. It starts with three sections of questions designed to capture the movement of population from rural to urban areas, within and outside the municipality and the towns, and establish whether the residents are

¹² Each household survey respondent was asked by enumerators whether they would like to participate in an in-depth interview, which I followed-up and interviewed these individuals.

¹³ Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian

http://www.bhas.ba/obavjestenja/Preliminarni_rezultati_bos.pdf (last accessed 11/03/2018)

Table 1 Resident Groups (Author's data 2012-2013)

Pre-War RESIDENTS		New settlers	
Stolac	Kotor Varoš	Stolac	Kotor Varoš
Permanent: Living in the pre-war place (neighbourhood, house)	Permanent: Living in the pre-war place (neighbourhood, house, MZ)	Arrival path displacement: IDPs from central Bosnia; rural areas of municipality	Arrival path displacement: IDPs from north Bosnia or rural areas of municipality
Diaspora: living abroad, occasional visits	Diaspora: living abroad, occasional visits	Arrival path family connection: New spouses (of the pre-war residents)	Arrival path family connection New spouses (of the pre-war residents)
Residing somewhere else in Bosnia and Herzegovina; visit frequently or spend protracted periods of time in the town ("weekenders")	Working abroad, formal residence in town, returning home every 2-3 weeks ("weekenders")	Foreigners; artists interested in cultural heritage of Stolac	Labour migrants; work in the local factory

permanent, temporary. The respondents were asked about the place of residence before 1992, the year they arrived in the town (applicable for new settlers), the year they returned to the town (applicable for the displaced pre-war population), and their place of birth. To participate in the survey, the respondents had to be registered¹⁴ at an address in Stolac or Kotor Varoš and had to be born in 1977 or before. The age restriction ensured that respondents were eighteen years or older in 1996, which means they were likely to have lived in the pre-war community and developed *identity of place*. The youngest respondent in the survey was born in 1977, while the oldest was born in 1915. In both towns, a significant number of houses were empty because people live abroad, so enumerators were instructed to knock on every door until they found a respondent. Response rate (successfully conducted interviews divided by all selected and contacted respondents during fieldwork) was 0.38. No incentives were given to the respondents.

Identities and Labels as Drivers of Cleavages

Table 2 and Table 3 in the paper introduce household composition, residence status, religious and

ethnic affiliation of the survey respondents in both Stolac and Kotor Varoš. They had an option to choose between Muslim and *Bošnjak* [Bosniak] for their ethnicity because both labels are still used in everyday conversations. A majority of those born before the war preferred to describe their ethnic identity as Muslim instead of as *Bošnjak*, while in the interviews and in everyday conversation some talked about their inability to accept the latter identification and found it imposed by the new, post-war sectarian and political reasons. Pre-war residents for analytical purposes in the paper are also referred to as *locals* to emphasize their identification with the place as their primary identity and community of belonging. They referred to themselves as *Stočani* and *Kotorvarošani* (derived from the town name), which shows that *identity of place* is the primary identification. The survey respondents reported political and socio-economic barriers they encountered in daily life, in places of practice and through social interactions (Table 5). The barriers are mostly not physical, but invisible and yet often dominant, acting as cleavages in everyday life for the town residents who, as a result, are inadvertently driven to interact with particular identity group.

Amongst non-ethnic labels assigned by the research participants to themselves, the residence status seemed the most significant and

¹⁴ In Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens obtain photo ID at the age of eighteen, which states their Unique Identification Number (JMBG) and address or residence. A person can be registered at one address only.

Table 2: Household Survey (Author's Data 2013)

		TOWN	
		Stolac	Kotor Varoš
Gender	Male	72	59
	Female	78	92
Are you the head of the household?	Yes	97	88
	No	53	63
Marital status	Single	11	7
	Married	99	106
	Widowed	36	30
	Separated	1	1
	Divorced	3	5
	Other	0	2
	Don't know	0	0
Do you have children?	Yes	135	141
	No	15	10
Is this your permanent residence?	Yes	143	148
	No	7	3
Where were you born?	This town/MZ	62	45
	Other village in municipality	53	67
	Other municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina	32	34
	Other country	3	5
Where did you live before 1992?	This town/MZ	102	68
	Other village in municipality	19	48
	Other municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina	27	20
	Other country	2	15

was identified as one of the key determinants of the post-war cleavage, which is set between the *locals*, the new-settlers and diaspora. This cleavage, as the paper explains later, is a result of the notion that only the long-term residents held strong enough commitment and a bond to the town. Out of total number of the respondents, 143 in Stolac and 148 in Kotor Varoš stated that the house where the interview was being held is their permanent residence. 68% of the survey respondents in Stolac and 45% in Kotor Varoš were living in April 2013 in the same town (but not necessarily the same house) as before the war. In Stolac in particular, the connection to place for the pre-war residents was very strong, which became apparent when a first interviewee from the town explained, “*citizens of Stolac are*

very patriotic and have this unique (pathological) bond with their town” (ST310112). Diaspora was not included in the survey, although some of them were interviewed as part of the qualitative data collection, which provided information about their connection with a place and the nature of social relations with the *locals*. Interestingly, the diaspora’s *identity of place* remained strong despite living away from their home communities and they are still referring to themselves as Stočani. This is a clear case of what Childs (2003) referred to as identity lines that extend beyond ethnicity and race and gender, providing unique form of inclusion of diverse settings organizationally and cosmologically.

The majority of the interviewees had been displaced away from their home communities dur-

Table 3: Household Survey (Author's Data 2013)

		TOWN	
		Stolac	Kotor Varoš
What best describes your religious beliefs?	Muslim	86	49
	Catholic	54	2
	Orthodox	7	94
	Atheist	0	3
	Other	3	3
	Prefer not to say	0	0
What best describes your ethnicity?	Muslim (Musliman)	13	17
	Bosniak (Bošnjak)	72	31
	Serb (Srbin)	7	92
	Croat (Hrvat)	54	2
	Other (Drugo)	3	6
	Mixed (Miješan/a)	1	3
	Prefer not to say	0	0

ing the war and many had lived in more than one place, either somewhere else in Bosnia and Herzegovina or abroad. Upon return, some of them chose not to live in their village or settlement in the municipality and instead moved to the town. The survey further showed a significant level of rural to urban, mainly post-war, migration in both case studies. In Stolac, around 13% of the survey respondents moved from villages in the municipality to the town after the war, while this figure is significantly higher in Kotor Varoš at 31.8%. Stolac had a larger proportion of respondents who settled in the town from other municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (18%) in comparison to Kotor Varoš (13%), while the latter had more respondents from other countries, almost 10%. The survey data on birthplace showed several interesting trends. Only 40% of the respondents in Stolac and 30% of those in Kotor Varoš were born in the towns before the war, while 35% in Stolac and 44% in Kotor Varoš were born in villages in rural parts of the municipality. In short, around one third of Stolac residents and two thirds of people from Kotor Varoš are living somewhere else as diaspora, while both towns had a significant influx of new settlers from rural areas of the same municipality or from other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The *locals*, the pre-war town residents, made a clear differentiation between themselves and those who migrated from rural parts and villages in the municipalities. Mainly based on knowing people individually, particularly in Stolac, interviewees emphasized that only those from the town are Stočani, while those from the villages in the municipality are not.

The arrival of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mainly between 1993 and 1996, to settle in the town permanently was one of the most important changes in the post-war demographics with direct implications for the interactions. According to a local official who works at Stolac Municipal Council, in the department in charge of return of refugees and displaced population, around 2,000 new residents arrived mainly from central Bosnia, the municipalities of Kakanj, Zenica, Bugojno and, to a smaller extent, other municipalities. Ethnically, they are mainly Croats who were settled in Stolac as part of the population exchange programme under the DAP and didn't have a prior social contact or familiarity with the town. In Stolac, the *locals* more often referred to the new settlers as Bosanci (*identity of place*) rather than as Croats (ethnic identity), while they maintained identity of their pre-war place of residence from which they were dis-

placed. In Kotor Varoš, the change of the resident structure was even more drastic. The forced displacement of 20-25,000 residents during the war, followed by an arrival of few thousand new ones, caused the community to lose social familiarity built through long-term experience of everyday life, actions, and intimate participation in life projects of friends, family, and neighbours. One of the interviewees stated: *“By getting rid of the people you used to know and bringing in the new ones from anywhere will disrupt social relations and create cleavages because it is not easy for new comers to fit in”*. (KV121212) In terms of the level of acceptance by the *locals*, there is a significant difference between the new settlers from the municipal rural areas and those who arrived from other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina or abroad. The first category, from the municipality, commonly has had some form of interactions and shared everyday life in the past with the town residents, through schooling, work or informal social relations, participation in local associations e.g. music orchestra in Stolac or a folklore group in Kotor Varoš. Therefore, the social familiarity built through past interactions, circulation and spatial interconnectedness meant that they formed a connection similar to a translocal bond (Halilovich 2012)¹⁵ that helped them overcome post-war identity cleavages with the *locals*. On the other hand, those who arrived from other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina didn't have the translocal bond and lacked orientation towards the place, which in combination with perceived socioeconomic distance created a cleavage with the *locals*.

In the paper, identities of the new settlers are conceptualised in two ways for analytical reasons. First, they have all the characteristics of diaspora, where they maintain group boundary and member control in the new environment, which determines their interactions with the new place and commonly creates a cleavage between them and

the *locals*. They also maintain very strong attachment to their home communities and former life, which affects their joint social actions and commitment to their new communities. Even in the situation where their aim was to permanently settle in Stolac and Kotor Varoš, the first generation of the new settlers could not elude sociocultural boundaries and cleavage firmly set in place by distinct social norms. Similar to diaspora, the new settlers grapple with the sense of having multiple identities and being caught in between spaces, as argued in the concept of translocality. Second, from the perspective of the current residence status, the new residents became *locals* in comparison to diaspora living abroad; who through experience of everyday life, begin to develop the identity of the new place. The cleavage between them and the pre-war residents is thus diminishing through *identity of experience* in the new place of living, particularly amongst the new generations, who share experiences of everyday life.

Cleavage between diaspora and the locals

A useful conceptualisation of diaspora for this study comes from Brubaker, who argues that it should be understood as an idiom, a stance, or a claim, rather than as a bounded entity (2005:12). A familiar problem of groupism, discussed earlier in relation to the nation, ethnic or religious group, transpired with the attempt to place boundaries on diaspora in analytical terms or as a category of practice. According to Brubaker (2005), three characteristics make the diaspora: dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary maintenance in the new place of residence. Diaspora is oriented towards home, which includes preserving the memories of home and the connection and relations of the homeland, while they are committed to the maintenance of home and its restoration (Safran 1991). It can be argued that these characteristics are not far from what Childs (2013) defines as transcommunality. The paper started from the premise that diaspora is not delineated and definite group formed at one point in time when temporal and special com-

¹⁵ Halilovich (2012) provides a review of other authors who contributed to the development or used the term “trans-local”.

ponent of the mobility are taken into account. Because of the prolonged movement of the population during the war and during the post-war period, imposing limitations through a group boundary problematizes the use of the concept in the analysis of cleavages at the community level in its restrictive form. This is also partly due to the fact that both towns have a significant number of new residents, who can be classified as internal diaspora. In both towns, most of the diaspora kept their properties and formal address, which gave them access to health and social services and the right to vote, access to reconstruction aid, and, ultimately, a right to repatriate if they wish.

In Stolac, diaspora are local residents who were displaced mainly between 1993 and 1994, and who live abroad, often in the neighbouring Serbia and Croatia. They usually come back during the summer to spend holidays in the town, but the pattern and frequency of these visits are slowly decreasing. In the past diaspora would rush back to *'their Stolac'*; they now return for a shorter time and instead choose a seaside holiday, while many of them have completely stopped with annual visits. This led to emergence of a growing distance from their home community, resulting in a diminished commitment and engagement with the town and causing significant grievances amongst Stolac residents who live there permanently. They perceive the declining interest in the town as disruptive, which, in a group discussion, they explained by saying: *Diaspora people keep telling us what should be done in Stolac. At the same time, they all live on government benefits abroad. Like what we need is they telling us what to do, and they don't invest anything. They don't even bother to register for postal voting, only 105 in the last elections* (GR01052012). Fading transcommunalism among the diaspora is particularly relevant in Stolac, where the emotional attachment to the town and a lasting *identity of place* is considered as necessary for overcoming the cleavages resulting from the diaspora's absence from the participation in everyday life.

In Kotor Varoš, identifying the drivers of cleavages is more complex for analysis because identity of the diaspora overlaps with the ethnic boundaries formed through war violence. In other words, the largest diaspora group in Kotor Varoš are Croats who predominantly live and work in Austria and Germany and they maintain their ethnic boundary in the town. The cleavage between them and local residents is very much structured around the war experience, which resulted in limited interactions, mainly constituting chance encounters in the neighbourhood or possibly rebuilding social relations that existed during the pre-war period. Displaced Croats only visit the town twice a year, typically to celebrate Christmas and Easter; meanwhile, the closed houses with blinds on the windows of their beautifully refurbished homes are a constant reminder of their long absences. Their participation in the restoration of the town is limited to reparation of the former neighbourhoods, particularly infrastructure (electricity, water mains and roads); destroyed cultural and religious Catholic heritage such as churches, and their own, private houses. Their gatherings and interactions are oriented towards religious and cultural activities of their own ethno-religious group, to remembering the victims of war by building monuments and supporting a small community of around 250 local Croats, many of whom are unemployed and disadvantaged. The study hasn't found any commitment to the wider town community, although, due to a lack of data, information about the diaspora orientation and bond with a homeland is very limited.

Apart from the waning commitment to the town, the diaspora's image of the home community is perceived as "the place that was" (Fullilove, 2014), which shapes expectations of their social relations upon return to their nominal homelands. Even if the return is only a temporary visit, the migrant population, because of the "reverse diaspora" effect (Hess, 2008) goes through a process of acculturation in their nominal homelands to get accustomed to the transformations and changes that took place since they left. This

process enables them to overcome the cleavages created by their absence from the quotidian life in the communities that otherwise gradually widen the gap between diaspora and the *locals*. New generations who are born abroad or who grew up there from early age without ever experiencing residence in Stolac or Kotor Varoš are likely to have even weaker transcommunal bond, which was already noticeable among several young returnees that informally took part in the interviews alongside their parents. The reduced frequency of the visits to the home community and the right to “claim” the community and the related *identity of place* will lead to a fading connection, which is likely to reinforce cleavage between the *locals* and diaspora.

Occasional residents and cleavage with the locals

Diaspora resides abroad, which, in an analytical sense, allows for easier conceptualisation of their past and present attachment and their *identity of place*. However, there is a third category of who are not diaspora but don't reside in the town permanently, even though they keep a registered addresses in their hometown. This makes them partly absent and partly present in everyday communal life. In Stolac, there is a group of the pre-war residents who are living and working in Sarajevo, where they moved during the war or even before, to study or as labour migrants. Another group is based in Mostar, which was the main displacement locale for the residents after they got evicted from Stolac in 1993. They found work and permanently settled in there, which is only forty kilometres from their home community. While not being willing to abandon their new life, Stočani kept and repaired their houses after the war's end, which allows them to spend most of their weekends and holidays in Stolac and even longer periods of time during holidays or once they retire. I argue that they need to be assigned a specific category because they can be perceived as diaspora, with characteristics such as the maintenance of a strong community bond while being displaced. However, because they still live in their homeland in a broader

sense, they should not be referred to as diaspora because they have frequent interactions with Stolac and they don't tend to maintain group boundaries in the new place of residence. The study refers to this group as *weekenders* to highlight the irregularity of their residence and participation in the communal life, but also to distinguish them from the diaspora. The nature of the cleavages between the *locals* and the *weekenders* is specific. For the *weekenders*, cleavages are primarily constructed as ethnic while their ethnic identity has been reported as equally important as the *identity of place*. One of the interviewees commented: *I don't socialise with anyone, only with these my Muslims in Poplašići*¹⁶. (ST290612) Because they don't share everyday life with the new settlers their perceptions of cleavages are different to those of the *locals* whose quotidian life unfolds in Stolac. Even though they share *identity of place* with the *locals*, their commitment to the community restoration and maintenance has been fading similar to diaspora; they are unwilling to move adjust boundaries that were created by the war violence, the cleavage between the two groups is obvious.

Both in Stolac and Kotor Varoš, many residents are temporarily working abroad, such as seasonal workers or labour migrants, while their families are still residing in the towns. This category is particularly dominant in Kotor Varoš, among the Muslim returnees, many of whom work in the neighbouring Slovenia. This is a commutable distance, which allows them to spend weekends at home fortnightly or monthly. These are predominantly men, whose wives and other family members were interviewed as part of the study. Their social dynamics is similar to the *weekenders*, given that their orientation is primarily towards the family, a trend which is typical for all town residents. The survey respondents in both towns were asked about with whom they spend the most time with during the day; their first response was their spouse, children and neighbours (data presented in Table 4). Tempo-

¹⁶ One of the neighborhoods in Stolac.

Table 4 Household Survey (Author's Data 2013)

Who do you spend most time with daily?	MUNICIPALITY			
	Stolac		Kotor Varoš	
	N	%	N	%
Spouse	74	49.3	76	50.3
Children	64	42.7	87	57.6
Family	40	26.7	58	38.4
Extended family	2	1.3	12	7.9
Friends	46	30.7	21	13.9
Neighbours	75	50.0	58	38.4
Work colleagues	17	11.3	23	15.2
Spend time alone	4	2.7	9	6.0

Table 5 Household Survey (Author's Data 2013)

Have you felt that barriers were erected to keep you out of certain places (physically, economically, socially) since 1996?	MUNICIPALITY			
	Stolac		Kotor Varoš	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	53	35.3	30	19.9
No	97	64.7	121	80.1

rary migrants' time when they are in the town is devoted to their families and homes, which leaves little space for interactions with other community members, although they tend to participate in the community projects. For example, in one of the suburbs of Kotor Varoš, they collectively built a new water system to replace the old one that was destroyed during the war, which indicates certain level of commitment to the community.

Conclusion

This paper set out to explore what constitutes the cleavages at the community level in two small towns of Stolac and Kotor Varoš in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both of which were exposed to massive destruction and violence during the war. The analysis was conceptualised against the backdrop of forced displacement and migration

that permanently changed the population in both towns, with the large numbers of the pre-war residents becoming diaspora, while IDPs from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina permanently settling in. In 2012, they constituted at least 30% of Stolac population and approximately 50% in Kotor Varoš.

The paper argues that the present day cleavages at the community level are not driven by ethnic identities and that it is also necessary to renounce "groupism" in framing ethnicity analytically. It proposes to expand theorising of social relations and cleavages to other identities, particularly *identity of place* and *identity of experience*. In the analysis of cleavages the paper works with crosscutting concepts of transcommunality and translucality that examine relationship between territorial bond and identity formation, as well as the nature of ties to the home community or

between people originating from the same locality. The concept of translocality is an idea of spatial interconnectedness that exists outside the national boundaries amongst the migrant population, implicating strong connection to home communities. This concept ties with an idea of a homeland as a geographic community, understood as the “space produced by the practice of particular place” (de Certeau 1984:117) and a product of interactions between the community members (Bruhn 2011) who live in the place or have a connection to it. For both displaced residents and *locals*, the homeland is expressed through attachment and sense of belonging to the home community, a place where the house is located, where they were born and grew up and provides bases for *identity of place*. It is the primary identification for the many citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the new one, developed from being a migrant and diaspora should be viewed as *identity of experience*.

Drawing on the concept of transcommunality (Childs, 2003), the paper argues that there are three main cleavages between the local residents, diaspora and the new settlers, who are slowly becoming *locals* through the experiences of a quotidian life in the town. The first driver of cleavages is the way in which different resident groups practice and engage in the social processes of everyday life; this engagement leads to promoting interpersonal relations, while its absence results in cleavages. Second, actions through which they work to restore their communities are the main tools for dissolving cleavages. On the other hand, lack of commitment to the home community restoration and maintenance by diaspora is one of the main drivers of the cleavages. The negotiation of actions and cooperation is captured in the wish and aspiration to restore the community and to bring it into a condition that corresponds to the memories, often over idealistic, aspirations of diaspora. The new settlers equally struggle to either identify with the new communities or to overcome the isolation in the new environment by engaging in the communal activities and strengthening coop-

eration. The third cleavage emerges as a result of the diaspora’s, the locals’, and the new settlers’ different perceptions of the community. Living permanently outside the community, or even temporarily, in the *weekenders’* case, leads to a lack of understanding of the communal change, which further deepens the cleavage between them and permanent residents. Despite the fact that diaspora, particularly among families with historic bonds and lasting generations, still carry strong identification with the place, these cleavages are compounded by two decades of separate everyday life and lack of joint experiences.

In the process of investigating cleavages, the paper also problematized the concept of diaspora and its use, arguing that it requires more nuanced analytical framing to account for its temporal and dynamic nature. However, the study struggled to corroborate Brubaker’s idea of diaspora not being a group (2005) because the cleavage between them and the locals in the two towns was clearly set in local discourses and in the way social interactions occurred. Residents of the two towns clearly articulated that they considered diaspora as a group living abroad. Furthermore, the paper argues that the new settlers who sought permanent residence in the two towns also have characteristics of diaspora, such as dispersion and boundary maintenance in the new place of residence, which resulted in the cleavages with *locals*. In this sense, cleavages within Bosnia and Herzegovina communities can be analysed in the same way as those of diaspora living abroad, in their new locale of emplacement. In the case of internal diaspora, the cleavages between them and the *locals* are driven by *identities of place*, because they still maintain identity of the pre-war place of residence. The *locals* referred to the new settlers both according to their ethnicity e.g. Croats in Stolac and according to their regional identity i.e. *Bosanci* (from municipalities in Bosnia).

The two case studies show common patterns for many places in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina and offer some clues on how the new cleavages are formed, maintained, and dissolved.

Ethnicity remains the context of social, political and economic life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the community level, and needs to be included as a crosscutting category in the analysis of the cleavages. The study has found that ethnicity still plays a significant role in the cleavages exactly because of the way the memories of the violence and forced displacement are maintained within diaspora and the *locals*. However, the survey showed that only 0.7% of respondents in Stolac and 2% of respondents in Kotor Varoš said they were avoiding interactions with someone because they are of different ethnicity (to theirs). The main difference in between Stolac and Kotor Varoš is ethnicity of the diaspora. In Stolac, the diaspora are pre-war, displaced Muslims, which means that the cleavage between them and the locals is identity of experience and lack of transcommunality. In Kotor Varoš, diaspora are displaced Croats and Muslims, which makes it more difficult to delineate between the lack of transcommunality, weakening translocal bond and ethnicity as a cleavage, given that the *locals* are mainly Serbs. It can be argued that despite migration people tend to maintain their ties to the homeland, which has an important role in formation of their identities while ethnicity, as Malesevic (2011) argues, should be understood as a form of collective existence that shapes the society. As authors of this edited volume claim, cleavages are much more complex and their enquiry requires more nuanced conceptual framing, for which I propose trancommunality and translocality as a way forward.

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