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Reintegration of Local Communities Divided by Ethnic Conflict: Ethnically Mixed Municipalities in the Western Balkans

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Summary

The paper presents findings from the research on the intensity and quality of local inter-ethnic relations in the sample of five ethnically mixed Bosniak-Croat-Serb municipalities in the Western Balkans region which were hit by the ethnic conflict in the 1990s. In each municipality, potential territorial, ideological and socio-economic cleavages are investigated. Directions of the identified cleavages are compared with the ethnic cleavage. Depending on the *cross-cutting* or *reinforcing* character of the recorded cleavages in relation to the ethnic structure, it is assessed how much of internal cohesion has been achieved among once belligerent ethnic groups in these unique micro-regions. Findings show that reinforcing cleavages prevail in all three dimensions, while cleavages cross-cutting the ethnic divisions are limited. While part of the reinforcing cleavages is inherited and naturally reflects the pre-war socio-political cleavages, others are directly caused by the war-time and post-war nationalist politics of ethnic homogenization and as such are potentially manageable through the peacebuilding process.

Keywords: Ethnic Communities, Post-War Reconciliation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Inter-ethnic Relations

1. Introduction

The recent history of the geopolitical space of the Western Balkans has been determined by re-emergence of the ethno-territorial conflicts.¹ Since the early 1990s, an

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upsurge of ethnic wars spread through the post-Yugoslav space resulting in tens of thousands of casualties and millions of refugees, and fundamentally changing the political, social and demographic structure of the historically volatile region. Between 1990 and 2001, seven distinct yet interdependent armed conflicts had been fought among 10 ethnically defined actors in the Balkans (Pettersson and Wallenstein, 2015). While different in their localization, duration and intensity, all these hostilities had one fundamental feature in common: the ethno-territorial character of the actors' incompatibility. From Croatian Vukovar, through Bosnian Sarajevo, Herzegovinian Mostar, Kosovar Drenica to Macedonian Tetovo, hostile ethnic groups were fighting for control over once shared territory. In all these cases, the hostilities were not only accompanied by but also carried out through massive forced displacements of population. Warring parties used ethnic cleansing either in violent or non-violent form as the core tool for fulfilling their political goals, which resulted in unforeseen socio-demographic consequences. Many villages, towns and whole regions that had been ethnically intermixed for centuries, were ethnically homogenized by war and post-war nationalist policies. Moreover, final resolution of conflicts and post-conflict settlements then often confirmed and legitimized these homogenising outcomes.

The Yugoslav wars have generally led to the territorial division of once ethnically intermixed population into homogenous ethno-territorial units separated by war-drawn borders. Croatia got rid of most of its historically significant Serb minority and became a true nation state (Carmichael, 2003; Mojzes, 2011; Mulaj, 2008). Bosnia and Hercegovina has been internally divided along the ethnic lines among Bosniak, Croat and Serb semi-autonomous entities, cantons and municipalities (Campbell, 1999; Hayden, 1993; 1996; Toal and Dahlman, 2011). Kosovo lost most of its Serb community whose remains now live mostly isolated in semi-autonomous enclaves (Adelman and Barkan, 2011; Jenne, 2009). Overall, the whole geopolitical space of historical Catholic-Orthodox-Muslim coexistence and ethnic heterogeneity has undergone a process of ethnic homogenization and division into ethnically exclusive political entities. Internationally administered post-conflict stabilization processes attempted to reverse the results of the ethnic cleansing and restore the pre-war heterogeneity through support of the refugee return. However, the actual impact of this process remained limited and brought only partial success (see Black, 2001; Jenne, 2010; Kříž and Čermák, 2014; Toal and Dahlman, 2011; Žila, 2014). Hence, as a direct consequence of the ethno-territorial conflicts of the 1990s, most of the region's population now live in mono-ethnic political units with limited contact to other ethnic groups.

While most of once intermixed areas have been ethnically cleansed, rare islands of ethnic heterogeneity can be found throughout the region today. Despite all mutual hostilities, ethnic cleansings and population transfers, there are places where

different ethnic groups live alongside each other. This brings us to important and universally relevant questions regarding the prospects for coexistence and social reintegration of hostile ethnic groups after violent conflict. Is sustainable coexistence after war possible? Can a reintegration of war-divided society be achieved? Or, as Kaufmann (1996) suggests, the only option for restoring sustainable peace is the physical separation of communities into defensible territorial units? To contribute to answering these questions, this study focuses on five cases of post-conflict micro-regions where the coexistence of once belligerent ethnic groups has been preserved. The main aim of the research is to investigate comprehensively the socio-political situation in these areas and analyse the intensity and quality of local inter-ethnic relations. This approach shall contribute to answering the above-introduced question and as such has high relevance both for theory and political practice.

From the theoretical point of view, this research has ambition to be an empirically based contribution to the ongoing debate about prospects for sustainable inter-ethnic coexistence after ethnic conflict.² In the field of policy implications, findings of this research are potentially relevant for peacebuilding strategies both within the Western Balkans region and in other post-conflict areas. Since the mutual relations among nations in the post-Yugoslav region have generally remained tense on the nation level as well as in many local communities, experience of multi-ethnic communities could serve as a useful guideline for other regions. Likewise, such an experience has also its general relevance for structurally similar areas in geographically different post-conflict zones. Thus, the question relevant for many other local communities, the three nations in general and the whole geopolitical space of the Western Balkans as well as for other post-conflict regions in the world is whether the once belligerent ethnic groups in these unique areas succeed in peaceful coexistence, cooperation and reintegration of society.

2. Theoretical Background

Without any exaggeration, the 20th century can be considered a century of nationalism and nation state. Old-fashioned multi-ethnic empires, modern colonial realms as well as multi-national socialist federations, all one after the other split apart into ethnically homogenous nation-states. Shifts of political frontiers in Europe, Africa or Asia during the 20th century well illustrate the process of territorial fragmentation of multi-national entities into smaller national units. Consequently, this transformation of the international system was accompanied by a great record of ethno-territorial conflict. Since 1945, internal wars, most of them ethno-territorial, have

² This debate was opened by controversial works of Kaufman (1996); since then, among others, Ayres (2000), Laitin (2004), Pischedda (2008) or Sambanis (2000) have contributed to it.

outweighed the traditional form of interstate conflict, and their incidence, duration and intensity have been continually rising (Cederman, Min, and Wimmer, 2010; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Scherrer, 1994). This trend culminated in the 1990s when a new wave of ethno-territorial wars flared up in the Balkans, the post-Soviet space and Africa. Again, new nation states have arisen from these conflicts. While some of the volatile regions have been stabilized since then, the most recent cases of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East or Caucasus confirm the persisting relevance of the ethno-territorial conflict in the 21st century. Does the violent historical record of separation imply that peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups on a shared territory is impossible and their separation into national units is the only solution? Fortunately, the answer offered by the state of research is not so sceptical.

The theories of conflict and peace have brought no clear agreement regarding a direct or even causal effect of ethnic heterogeneity on the presence or absence of violent conflict. Quantitative regression analysis of modern conflicts and ethnic heterogeneity of the involved societies have brought no clear picture (see i.a. Bleaney and Dimico, 2009; Collier, Honohan, and Moene, 2001; Ellingsen, 2000; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). More robust findings have been achieved when the relative strength of respective ethnic communities has been considered through the *ethnic polarization index* (see Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005; 2010). However, probably the most universal and useful theoretical framework has been introduced by Blimes (2006) who, assuming the multi-causal character of violent conflicts, analysed the ethnic diversity as an indirect catalyst factor for escalation of the violent conflict. He reached a quite robust conclusion that ethnically heterogeneous communities are more vulnerable to other potential primary causes of internal conflict. Hence, the general assumption that more divided societies have less ability to deal with challenges has been largely confirmed.

Thus, the crucial question for the stability of ethnically heterogeneous communities is how much they are actually divided along the ethnic lines. In this regard scholars are speaking about the conceptual continuum between *coexistence* and *cohesion* (Lederach, 1997; Bloomfield, 2006; Clark, 2009). While communities merely coexisting, even peacefully, next to each other would have smaller ability to deal with potential causes of conflict, integrated ethnic communities would have better prospects to accommodate such challenges. Accepting these theoretical assumptions, to assess the community's prospects for sustainable stability, we need to assess the actual level of its internal division and integration. Very useful for this purpose is the theoretical framework of *multiple cleavages*, introduced first by Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

Cleavages are generally understood as “a specific kind of division, one that is distinctive because of its shape or source” (Zuckerman, 1975: 231). The more pre-

cise concept of *political cleavage* is then defined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967: 1-9) as a social division possibly leading to diverging preferences, hence potentially becoming politicized.³ Lipset and Rokkan also formulated a theory of particular cleavages that are, as they argue, central to the modern European political systems. Their study, grounded in the historical analysis of the political development of Western Europe, identified two main dimensions of a cleavage: *territorial* and *functional*. Within the former, two particular cleavages have developed through modern history: the division between *centre and periphery* and between *urban and rural areas*. In the functional dimension, divisions between *the church and the state* and between *capital and workers* have dominated.

Nowadays, most scholars agree that the Lipset-Rokkan model fits well to the modern political environment in Western Europe, but it is hardly applicable in other geographical or historical contexts since different political environments have been historically formed by different factors. Hence, authors are pointing out that it is problematic to use the four standard categories of cleavages for an analysis of political developments in post-Communist countries that are transforming into democratic systems since these are formed by spatially and temporally specific factors (Kitschelt, 1995; Hloušek, 2000). This limit is even more pronounced in societies that are not only transforming from an authoritarian to a democratic system but simultaneously also from conflict to peace, such as is the case of societies in the Western Balkans (Henjak et al., 2013).

In response to these limits, some scholars tried to adapt the Lipset-Rokkan model to fit better to the specific political environment of the transforming Central and Eastern European countries or post-conflict area of the Western Balkans. Some of them attempted to develop rather precise categories of cleavages that are central to the politics of transforming countries, focusing narrowly on the specific issues in transforming party systems (i.a. Markus, 1993; Ágh, 1998). Others, such as Deegan-Krause (2006), Beyme (1994), Kitschelt (1995) or Zakošek (1998), rather tried to adapt the original Lipset-Rokkan model in a more general way that would be applicable universally and would not so much depend on the specific historical determinants of Western Europe.

Kitschelt (1995) focuses more generally on three dimensions of politicized social conflict: over boundaries of citizenship, over type of political governance, and over distribution of resources. Similarly, Zakošek (1998), in accordance with Čular and Gregurić (2007), adapting the Lipset-Rokkan framework specifically for the case of Croatia, uses a simplified model based on three main dimensions of the

³ For more in-depth conceptualization of *political cleavage*, see Zuckerman (1975) or Rae and Taylor (1970).

political division. The first is the territorial-cultural, which on the state level concentrates on the question of territorial and cultural borders of the polity (Zakošek, 1998; Bagić, 2007). The second dimension is ideological-cultural, concentrating around the issue of national identity and its inclusive or exclusive character (Čular and Gregurić, 2007). The third dimension is then socio-economic and is stemming from the conflict over allocation of economic resources (*ibid.*). Due to its flexibility and feasible applicability to the environment of transforming societies, this three-dimensional model will be used in the subsequent analysis. Thus, in the ethnically mixed areas, potential territorial, ideological and socio-economic cleavages will be identified and analysed.

Naturally, any modern political community can be described by several politically relevant cleavages characterizing the territorial, ideological or socio-economic divisions within the society. Important for the assessment of internal coherence of the community are the mutual relations between these divisions. While mutually *reinforcing cleavages* go along the same dividing lines and hence reinforce the division of respective communities, *cross-cutting cleavages* go across other dividing lines, thus weakening the relevance of other divisions within the society and supporting cohesion of the community.⁴

Many scholars have suggested that cross-cutting cleavages are the factor which can bring stability and peace into divided societies, while reinforcing cleavages enhance the risk of internal conflict (see, among others, Coser, 1956; Lipset, 1960; Rae and Taylor, 1970; Simmel, 1964). However, this has been disputed by Lijphart (1975) with his well-known theory of *consociationalism*. In the case of the Netherlands, where two main social groups have been fully divided throughout history, Lijphart showed that managed reinforcing cleavages can work as a key to political stability in a deeply divided society. Hence, Lijphart's work opened a long-standing theoretical dispute about the assumption of the stabilizing effect of cross-cutting cleavages on one hand and the threatening consequences of reinforcing cleavages on the other.

Despite the great attention devoted to Lijphart's theory in the last decades, there is still a wide part of the research focusing on the reconciling effect of cross-cutting cleavages on divided societies.⁵ As stated by Zuckerman (1975: 241), these

⁴ For a theoretical and methodological discussion of the concept of cross-cutting cleavage, see Selway (2011b).

⁵ Among other studies, Joel Selway (2011a; 2011b) presents a quantitative evidence of the importance of cross-cutting cleavages as factors reducing the risk of internal conflict and raising the prospects for economic growth. Similarly, Gubler and Selway (2012) proved that mobilization for an armed conflict is more difficult in societies with cross-cutting cleavages. Kustov (2015) used a quantitative modelling of 'artificial societies' to test the stabilizing effect of cross-cutting

arguments are: “(...) linking a cross-cutting cleavage membership pattern with political conflict characterized by bargaining, compromise, stability and the absence of violence. A reinforcing cleavage system is associated with intensely held political attitudes, extremist positions, inability to compromise, instability and violence.”

The suggested causal mechanism is then explained by Dunning and Harrison (2010: 21):

When individuals who are members of the same group or social category in one dimension of interest or identity, such as ethnicity, are members of different groups in another dimension, such as social class, their competing interests in the second dimension may undercut their primary allegiance to interests arising in the first dimension. Cross-cutting cleavages can thereby inhibit the extent to which political alignments intensify along any single dimension.

Setting the research design of this paper into the theoretical framework introduced above, the research will first identify potential cleavages in the three structural dimensions and then assess their *reinforcing* or *cross-cutting* character in regard to the ethnic cleavage. By comparing directions of recorded cleavages, it will be found if these ethnically heterogeneous areas are actually functioning rather in the mode of mere coexistence or the local communities have undergone deeper re-integration and reached social cohesion, which gives them better prospects for long-term stability according to our theoretical assumptions.

3. Sample Selection and Research Methods

Methodologically, the research is compiled as a multiple case study with *case* defined as a *multi-ethnic post-conflict environment*. Considering the above-presented empirical record of prevailing ethnic separation, both in the Western Balkans region and in the international system in general, such cases can be considered as *deviant cases* (Gerring, 2007). Cases of ethnically mixed communities that withstood an ethnic conflict in their area and managed to coexist after such a conflict deviate both from recorded prevailing empirical trends as well as from some of the related theoretical arguments (e.g. Kaufmann, 1996). According to Seawright and Gerring (2008), study of deviant cases can not only explore new explanations for unusual outcomes but also disconfirm a deterministic argument. While directly related to the theory, this study is formulated mostly in *intrinsic* terms since it assumes that re-

cleavages. Bulutgil (2015) proved on the empirical record that cross-cutting social and ethnic cleavages decrease the risk of ethnic cleansing in a conflict. Finseraas and Jakobsson (2012) proved the stabilizing effect of cross-cutting religious cleavage. Furthermore, Robertson and Pop-Eleches (2011), Dunning and Harrison (2010) or Case (2015) conducted more case-specific research on the effects of cross-cutting cleavages focusing on single societies in transition.

search of multi-ethnic communities has a great impact as such, above all in the field of policy implications. If once belligerent ethnic communities in these areas succeed in reintegration of the society, their experience could be used for much needed universal guidelines applicable in the reintegration processes in other post-conflict environments.

The sample of cases included in the study was selected on precise criteria corresponding with the logic of the *deviant case* selection methods. To clearly delineate the borders of a *case*, the primary *unit of analysis* is defined as *municipality*. Municipalities are, in the regional context of former Yugoslavia, supposed to represent the lowest socio-political unit which is functionally coherent and institutionally self-governed. The *population of cases* was limited to municipalities located in the post-conflict area of Bosnia and Hercegovina and parts of Croatia. This reduction was done in accordance to the logic of deviant case selection. First, from the macro-level point of view, this region has historically been the centre of cultural and ethnic intermixing of Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim (Ottoman) influences with a high level of ethnic heterogeneity prior to the recent conflict. Second, this area was hit most intensively by the ethno-territorial conflicts and consequent separation in the early 1990s. Third, the regional conflict incompatibility was based on a highly complex trilateral structure with three ethnic groups and their sub-actors involved. All these factors combined suggest that cases of persisting ethnic heterogeneity highly deviate from the *norm*.

To define the sample of multi-ethnic municipalities within the population of cases, two quantitative criteria were set. First, to be considered as multi-ethnic, all three ethnic groups have to be settled in the municipality and represent at least 5% of its population. Second, the ethnic structure of the local population needs to be truly heterogeneous, implying relatively equal representation of all three ethnic groups. The level of ethnic heterogeneity was assessed using the measure of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation.⁶ Cases of municipalities performing value of ELF above 0.5 were considered as multi-ethnic for further research.

In contrast to the pre-war era when local ethnic heterogeneity was a characteristic feature of the region, nowadays there can be found only few places matching our criteria. A quick comparison of pre-war demographic data and recent estimates illustrates clearly the homogenization process recorded in the last decades on the local level. As Table 1 shows, the average level of ELF for municipalities in both Croatia and Bosnia dropped significantly as well as the number of areas matching

⁶ The measure of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation (ELF) reflects the probability that two individuals randomly chosen from the sample belong to different sub-samples (ethnic groups in our case). For more details and discussion on its advantages and limits in conflict research, see Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005).

Table 1. Decrease of Bosniak-Croat-Serb Local Ethnic Heterogeneity in BaH and Croatia Since 1991⁷

TERRITORY	ELF AVERAGE		NUMBER OF MULTI-ETHNIC MUNICIPALITIES	
	1991	2011/2013	1991	2011/2016
BaH	0,40	0,20	33	3
CROATIA	0,19	0,08	4	2

our criteria. Generally, it is clear that a substantial part of the pre-war local Bosniak-Croat-Serb ethnic diversity has been lost since 1990.

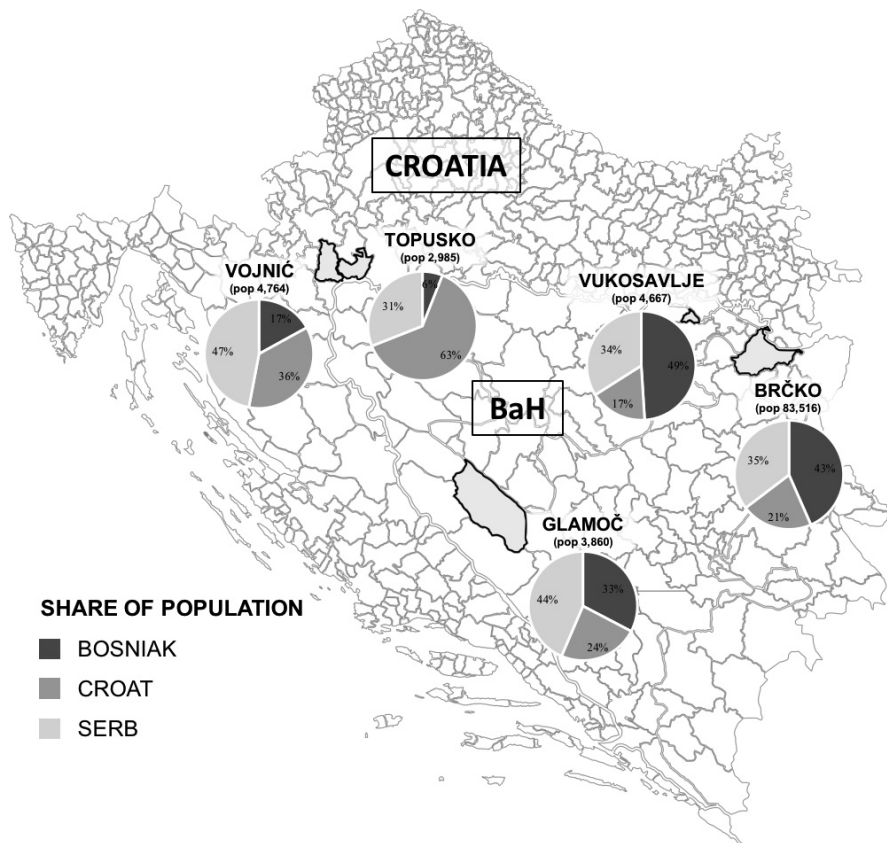
In contrast to the original 37 multi-ethnic municipalities in 1991, only 5 such areas can be found through the region today. The five micro-regions can be considered as the last remains of the historical Bosniak-Croat-Serb local ethnic heterogeneity. The territorial distribution of these units and their basic demographic characteristics are presented in Figure 1 (on the next page).

In each of the five ethnically heterogeneous municipalities, the author conducted in-depth study of local socio-political structures. Based on the analytical framework presented above, the research first identified relevant cleavages in the three introduced dimensions and then assessed their cross-cutting or reinforcing character in respect to the ethno-religious cleavage. A wide range of primary and secondary sources including 26 semi-structured interviews⁸ with local political, religious and NGO representatives were used and triangulated to reach a valid and reliable assessment.

The analysis of cleavages identified in the ethnically mixed municipalities is presented in the following chapters. These are organized according to the three dimensions of cleavages that have been analysed. First, territorial cleavages are discussed focusing primarily on the spatial distribution and concentration of population on the territory of municipalities. Second, ideological cleavages are analysed with the emphasis on the diverging political preferences within the societies in regard to the definition of the nation. Third, socio-economic cleavages are discussed in purpose to discover potential economic disparities. Directions of identified dividing lines are compared with the ethnic cleavage. Hence, for each of the identified cleavages, its cross-cutting or reinforcing character is defined. On the basis of

⁷ For calculation of ELF for the pre-war period, data from the last Yugoslav census conducted in 1991 are used. The contemporary data are taken from most recent censuses conducted in 2011 in Croatia and 2013 in BaH.

⁸ A list of all interviews with basic information about respondents can be found in the references.

Figure 1. Sample of Multi-ethnic Municipalities Encompassed by the Research

these findings, levels of both social division and cohesion can be evaluated in each municipality.

4. Territorial Cleavage

Within the three-dimensional model of cleavage introduced above, the territorial cleavage is understood above all as the conflict about definition of the borders of the state including the conflict between centre and periphery, ethnic majority and minority, and centralization and decentralization (Bagić, 2007: 95; Čular and Gregurić, 2007: 5). Hence, of the three principal cleavages, the territorial cleavage is most determined by the objective geographic and demographic reality. Since the territorial cleavage in its original understanding is to a great extent intended for state-level analysis, it was partly modified and simplified for its usage on the lo-

Table 2. Demographic Development of Ethnic Communities since 1991

MUNICIPALITY	ETH.	SHARE 1991 ⁱ	TREND DURING THE WAR	SITUATION 1995	POST-WAR TREND 1995-2015	SHARE 2016
BRČKO ⁱⁱ	S	23%	Fled / Cleansed from some rural areas; Strengthened in urban	Urban area homogeneously Serb; rural areas homogeneously Bosniak, Croat or Serb	Partial return into rural areas (1998-2002), strong immigration of IDPs into urban and some rural areas (1995)	35%
	B	49%	Fled / Cleansed from urban and some rural areas; Strengthened in rural		Significant return into urban and some rural areas (1998-2002)	43%
	C	28%	Fled / Cleansed from urban and some rural areas; Partly stayed in rural		Partial return into urban and some rural areas (1998-2002)	21%
GLAMOČ ⁱⁱⁱ	S	81%	Fled / Cleansed (1995)		Partial return (2001-2002)	44%
	B	18%	Fled / Cleansed (1992)	No civilian population	Significant return (1998-2002)	33%
	C	1%	Fled / Cleansed (1992)		Strong immigration of IDPs from central Bosnia into the urban area (1995)	24%
TOPUSKO ^{iv}	S	64%	Strengthened by influx of IDPs (1991-1995); Fled / Cleansed (1995)		Partial return (ca. 25%) 1998-2002	31%
	B	2%	Mostly fled / Cleansed (1991-1993), partly stayed	No civilian population	Almost full return (1995), further influx from BaH	6%
	C	34%	Fled / Cleansed (1991)		Almost full return (1995)	63%
VOJNIČ ^v	S	93%	Strengthened by influx of IDPs (1991-1995); Fled / Cleansed (1995)		Partial return (1998-2002)	47%
	B	6%	Mostly fled / Cleansed (1991-1993), partly stayed	No civilian population	Almost full return (1995), further influx from BaH	17%
	C	1%	-		Strong immigration of refugees from northern Bosnia (1995)	36%
VUKOŠAVLJE ^{vi}	S	20%	Mostly stayed + Strengthened by influx of IDPs		Further influx of IDPs from central Bosnia and adjacent Posavina	35%
	B	44%	Fled / Cleansed (1992)	Homogeneously Serb	Almost full return (2000-2002)	49%
	C	36%	Fled / Cleansed (1992)		Slight return (2000-2002)	21%

ⁱ For the purpose of comparison, only shares of the three ethnic groups are counted. Others represented from 2% (rural municipalities) to 10% (Brčko) of population.

ⁱⁱ The demographic analysis is based on the following sources: Interviews 1-9; Dahlihan and Tuathall 2006; Parish 2009; Nikolić 2010; UZOPIBH 2010a; Moore 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ Interviews 10-14; Filipović 2014; Vrebac 1998a; Vrebac 1998b; Index.hr 2009; Katavić 2011; SRNA 2011.

^{iv} Interviews 15-20; Škiljan, n.d.

^v Interviews 21-23; Škiljan, n.d.; Miljenović and Žganec 2012.

^{vi} Interviews 24-26; UZOPIBH 2010b; UZOPIBH 2010c; Zahirović 2012; Grbešić 2013.

cal level. For the purpose of this research, which is to compare the ethnic cleavage with other potential cleavages, the territorial cleavage is limited to the mere spatial dimension. Hence, the investigation of the territorial cleavage is focusing on the

territorial distribution and concentration of population within the territory of municipalities, distinguishing between central and peripheral areas.⁹ These features are then compared with the directions of ethnic cleavage. If members of different ethnic groups live intermixed equally across the whole territory of the entity, the territorial cleavage fully cross-cuts the ethnic one. On the contrary, if ethnic groups live separated in spatially delineated regions, or even divided between centre and periphery, the territorial cleavage reinforces the ethnic one.

To assess the territorial cleavage, in-depth analysis of demographic development and current situation was carried out for all five municipalities. Its results are presented in Table 2 and Figures 2-6 that show in chronological order the development of the ethno-territorial structure on the territory of the five municipalities from the pre-war period until today.

To understand the current ethno-territorial situation in the post-conflict areas under our examination, it is important to take into account the pre-war situation and its war-related changes. Therefore, the overview of the pre-war ethno-territorial situation is presented as a starting point in Table 2. As can be seen in the third column, not all of today's heterogeneous municipalities were ethnically diverse prior to the war. While areas of Brčko and Vukosavlje in Bosnian Posavina had been historically intermixed with high shares of all three groups, the other three municipalities had been more homogenous than today. In Glamoč and Vojnić, the now numerous Croat communities were missing and shares of Bosniaks were lower, which is also the case of Topusko. Hence, the contemporary heterogeneous ethnic structure is determined by the conflict and subsequent demographic shifts rather than by history of coexistence in these areas (this issue will be further discussed below).

It is also important to emphasize, as the first set of maps in Figure 2 shows, that prior to the war, the ethnic communities lived territorially concentrated and to a certain extent separated in ethnically homogenous areas. This was most pronounced in peripheral and marginal rural areas that, historically, had been mostly ethnically homogenous with mono-ethnic villages. Exceptions were mostly limited to some peripheral areas neighbouring to urban centres. Another exception are southern margin areas in Topusko and Vojnić which had been becoming mixed Serb-Bosniak since the 1960s as a result of modern economic migration (Škiljan, n.d.). Quite different was the situation in urban parts that functioned as centres of economic and social life during history and as such had become more ethnically diverse than peripheral rural parts. Besides the town of Vojnić that was historically homogeneously Serb, urban centres had been the actual centres of ethnic intermixture on the local level.

⁹ The categorization frequently used in the field of economic geography distinguishing *centre*, *periphery* and *margins* is used to conceptualize this distinction (for a thorough discussion, see Leimgruber, 2004).

Figure 2. Ethno-territorial Structure of Municipalities in 1991 and 2016: Brčko

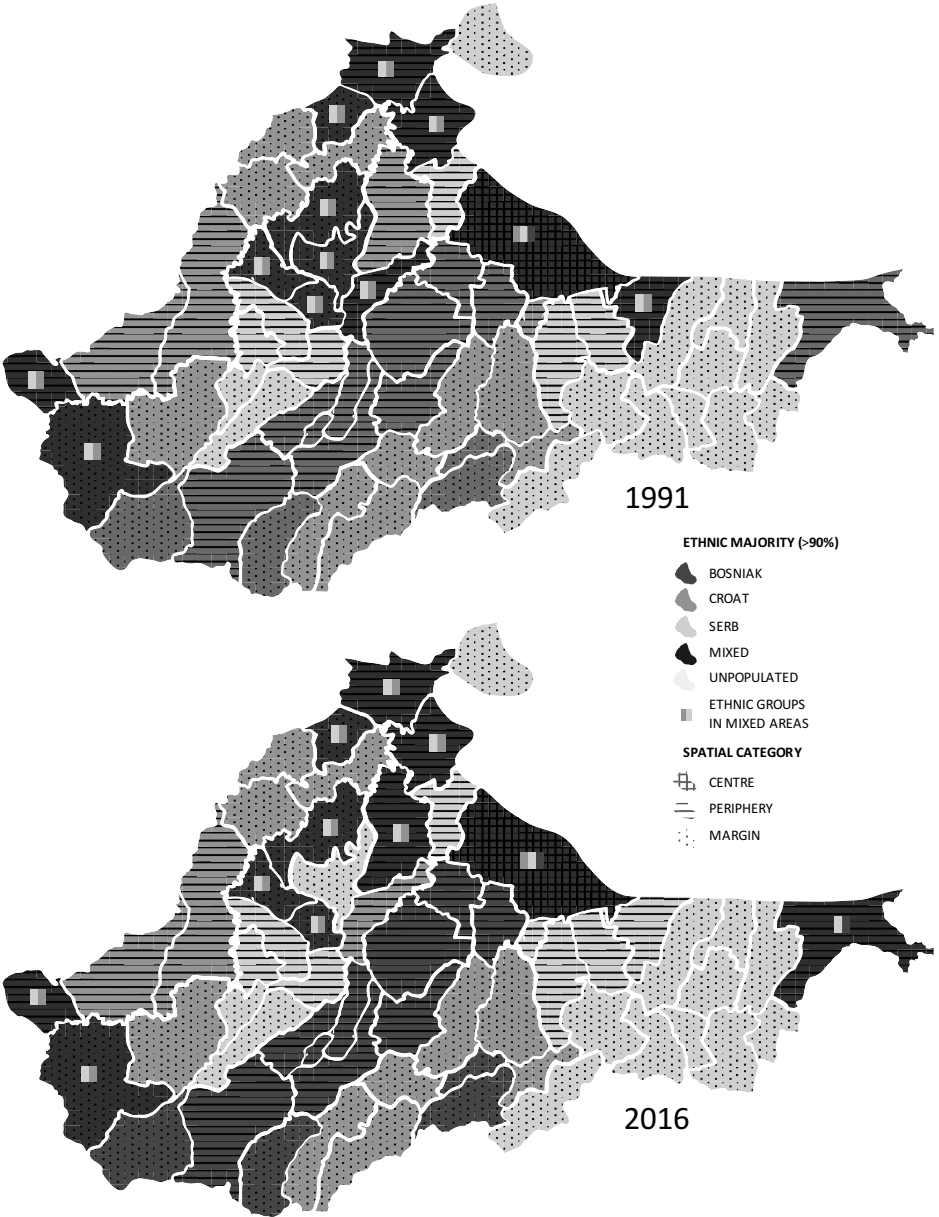


Figure 3. Ethno-territorial Structure of Municipalities in 1991 and 2016: Glamoč

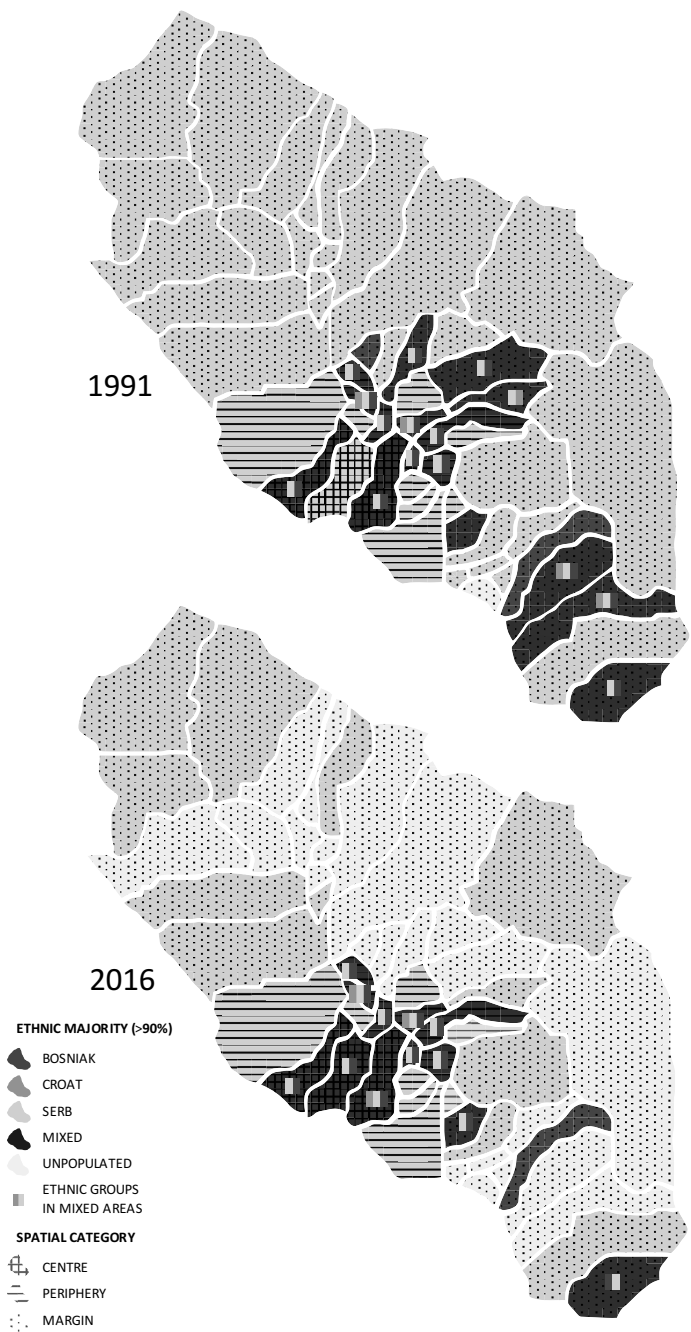


Figure 4. Ethno-territorial Structure of Municipalities in 1991 and 2016: Topusko

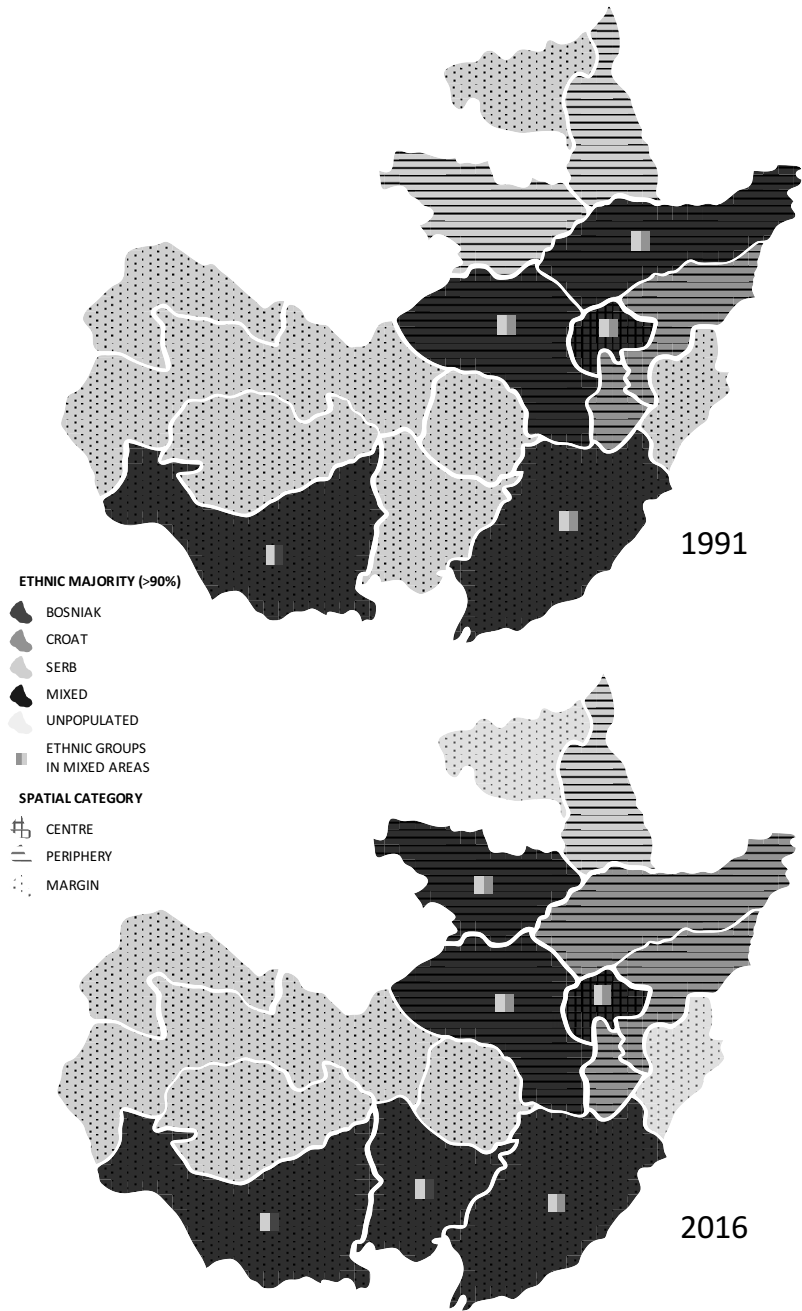


Figure 5. Ethno-territorial Structure of Municipalities in 1991 and 2016: Vojnić

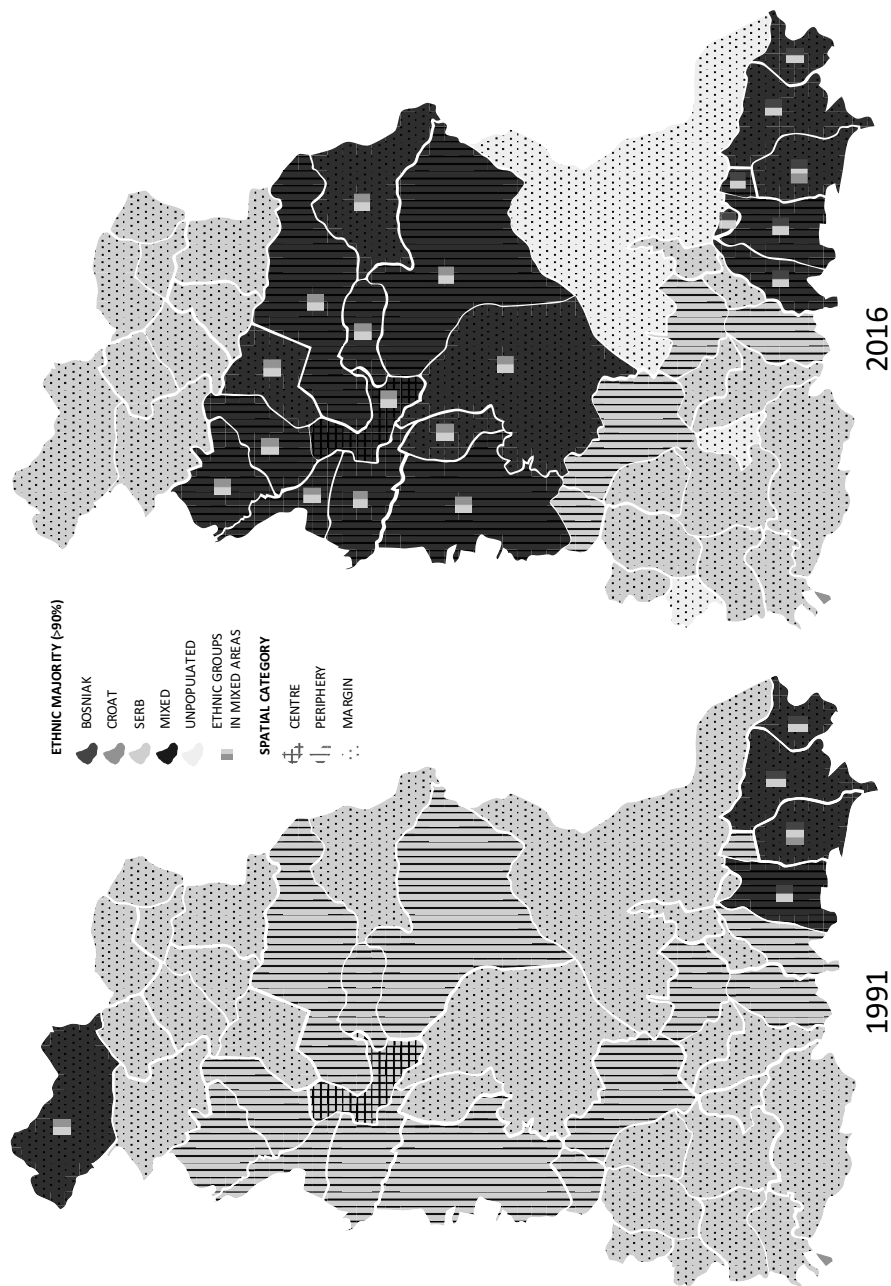
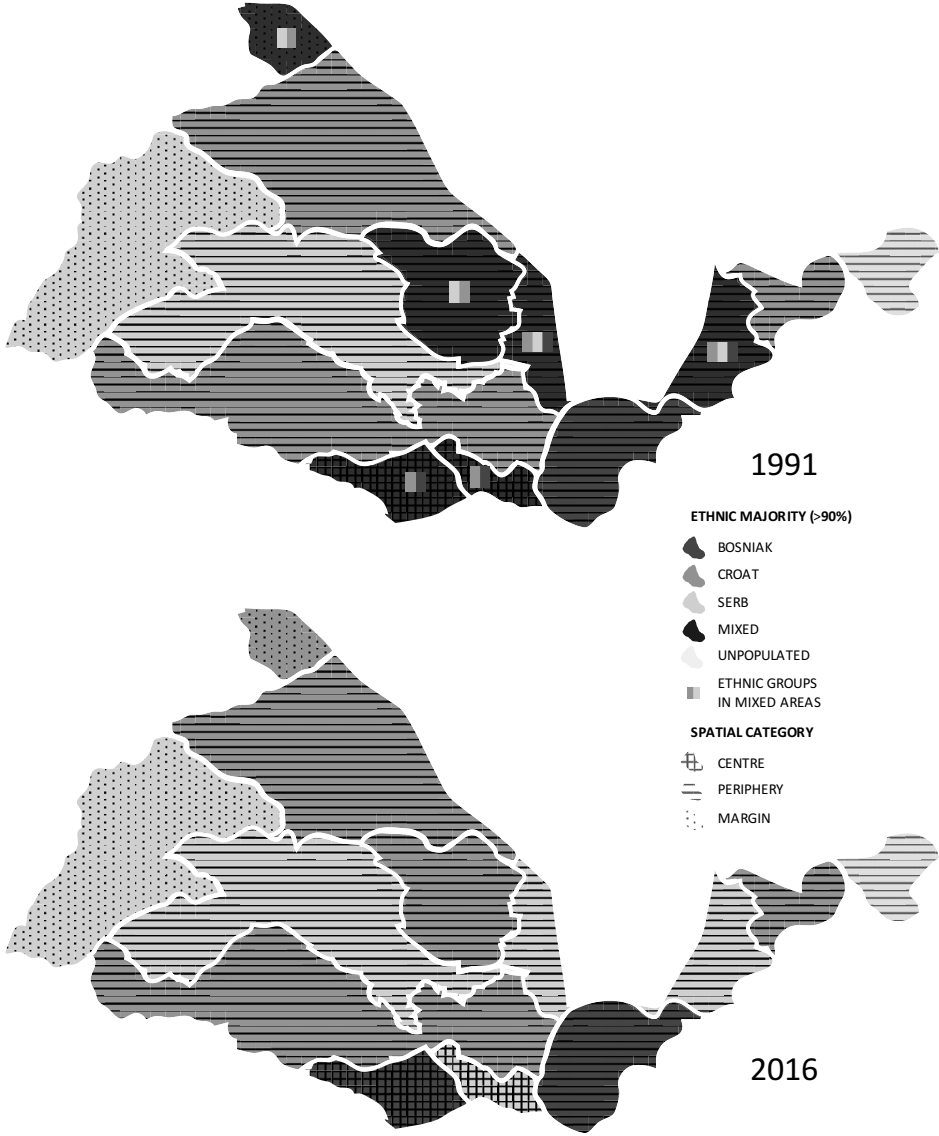


Figure 6. Ethno-territorial Structure of Municipalities in 1991 and 2016: Vukosavlje



The conflict in the early 1990s brought fundamental changes in the ethno-territorial structure of all the municipalities. As already discussed above, due to its ethno-territorial character, the conflict was not only accompanied but also carried on by forced displacements of particular ethnic groups with the purpose of ethnic homogenization of the territory by the controlling side. As a result, displacements led to an almost total ethnic homogenization of the population in all areas already in the initial phase of the conflict (see the fourth column). Besides violent or non-violent cleansing of minority groups, homogeneity was further reinforced through influx of refugees or IDPs from other parts of the conflict zone. In the cases of Glamoč, Vojnić and Topusko, the ethnic homogenization was carried out even twice during the conflict, first by the Serb side in the initial phase of the war and then by the Croat side at the end of the conflict. Hence, these three municipalities had almost no civilian population when the fighting ceased, while the other two were ethnically homogenous (see the fifth column in Table 2, p. 201).

Once the open conflict was over, the international community attempted to reverse the results of the ethnic cleansings and homogenization through its pressure for the refugee return with emphasis on those groups that were in the position of minority in the respective areas (see Black, 2001; Toal and Dahlman, 2011; Žila, 2014). However, the process of return was complicated in all areas not only due to the persisting insecurity and inter-ethnic mistrust caused by the war, but also to strong influx of refugees and IDPs belonging to the ruling ethnic group. The municipalities of Glamoč and Vojnić, where almost no Croats lived prior to the conflict, recorded a strong influx of Croat refugees and IDPs from other parts of Bosnia, who immediately became the clear majority in almost deserted territories. The situation was similar in some parts of Vukosavlje and Brčko where Serb IDPs reinforced the Serb ethnic dominance. Due to a combination of all these obstacles, the return of minority refugees, which was supposed to reverse the ethnic homogenization, did not start for several years after the war.

Eventually, the process of refugee return brought different results for different ethnic communities (see the sixth column). Some communities (mostly but not exclusively Bosniak) returned almost fully to their pre-war homes and thus reclaimed their original share of population. On the other hand, most non-Bosniak communities (above all Serb) returned in much lower numbers with mostly older generations coming back for permanent living. Some pre-war communities returned in almost negligible number that does not fully guarantee their long-term existence in the area. Despite these limits, the process of refugee return resulted in a (re-)emergence of at least temporary ethnic intermixture in all five municipalities (see the current ethnic structure in the seventh column in Table 2, p. 201).

What is important in regard to the territorial cleavage is the difference between urban centres and rural peripheral and marginal areas in ethnic heterogeneity, which

was confirmed or even reinforced by the war-related population shifts. Hence, similarly to the pre-war situation, rural areas are today again mostly ethnically homogenous since only the pre-war homogenous population or a part thereof has returned there. On the other hand, urban centres and some previously intermixed rural areas have partly preserved their heterogeneity since members of all pre-war groups have returned there. Moreover, the new influx of IDPs and refugees was mostly directed into the urban areas, which have thereby further strengthened their ethnic diversity. Hence, the town of Glamoč became mixed Croat-Serb-Bosniak instead of Bosniak-Serb prior to the war, and Vojnić became Serb-Croat instead of homogeneously Serb. However, despite some degree of heterogeneity reached in urban centres and adjacent areas, due to the prevailing rural character of all municipalities, a great part of the population again lives territorially divided in mono-ethnic areas today (see the second set of maps in Figures 2-6). There is also a significant difference among ethnic groups in regard to their concentration in different types of space. While only Serbs usually live equally dispersed across the territory and its different types, the presence of Bosniaks and Croats is often concentrated either to urban centres or to rural peripheries or margins. These features then have direct implications for the cross-cutting character of socio-economic cleavage which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Overall, in relation to the ethnic cleavage, the reinforcing shape of territorial cleavage prevails. The turbulent developments of the last two decades had fully different demographic consequences for different ethnic groups. Single ethnic communities have gone through their own specific demographic development mostly isolated from other communities. As a result, we can now speak of communities divided over the territorial and demographic dimension, which has further consequences for their contemporary demographic and socio-economic prospects (see Chapter 6). From the territorial point of view, cleavages cross-cutting the ethnic lines are generally limited to the ethnic intermixture of urban centres and some surrounding peripheral areas. Besides these, reinforcing territorial cleavages prevail since a great part of the population is settled in mono-ethnic rural areas. Moreover, the reinforcing character of the territorial cleavage is further underlined by frequent concentration of ethnic groups into a single type of space (urban centre or rural periphery and margins) which has significant consequences for their socio-economic situation and the cleavage related to it.

Importantly, the recorded features generally cannot be understood solely as a consequence of the war and post-war politics of ethnic homogenization. They should be rather considered as a reversal to the pre-war general situation in predominantly rural areas that had historically been mono-ethnic. The war-related displacements of population have eventually even led to a higher level of ethnic intermixture. Ironically, the level of ethnic heterogeneity in areas under our examination was strengthened as a consequence of ethnic homogenization in other conflict zones.

5. Ideological Cleavage

According to the three-dimensional model of cleavage introduced above, the ideological cleavage is concentrated around the problem of defining the national identity, its exclusive or inclusive character, and the definition of the nation and the polity in general. As such, it is less determined by objective spatial categories than the territorial cleavage yet still deeply rooted in the historical development of the society. Hence, the ideological cleavage reflects dealing with crucial questions of modern political history – the relation between religious and secular, tradition and modernity or, most importantly in the post-conflict context of the Western Balkans, nationalist and universalist (Henjak et al., 2013: 457; Bagić, 2007: 95; Čular and Gregurić, 2007: 5).

For the purpose of this research, the intensity and direction of ideological cleavage is assessed through the voting behaviour of citizens in state-level elections. The reason for such an approach rests in the character of the state-level political scene in BaH and Croatia, which is to a great extent concentrated around the issues of the definition of the nation (see Stojarová and Emerson, 2013). All major parties have a clear position in regard to this primary ideological conflict. Major political parties competing in state-level elections both in BaH and Croatia can be categorized in this dimension and, through their election support, ideological preferences of local populations can be estimated with a relatively high precision. Both in BaH and in Croatia, voters can choose from different political options in respect to their preferred definition of the nation as a political community. These options are ranging from non-ethnic parties through moderate ethnically oriented parties to ethnically exclusive nationalist parties. The following analysis is using the categorization introduced by Bieber (2006: 104-105), who classifies political parties in the post-ethnic-conflict political environment of BaH into four basic categories depending on their position on ethnicity and multi-ethnicity. On the most nationalist pole are *extreme nationalist parties* advocating change of status quo (parties from this category are absent or irrelevant in the examined areas). Less extreme are *established national parties* engaging in cooperation with each other and operating within the status quo. *Moderate national parties* follow these on the continuum with stronger commitment to cross-national co-operation, but well-defined commitment to only one community at the same time. Most multi-ethnic are the *non-national parties*, which “do not have a group-specific programme and potentially appeal to more than one group” (*ibid.*: 105). Incorporating this categorization into our framework, support of the non-national option across different ethnic groups would represent an ideal cross-cutting cleavage in respect to ethnic division. On the other hand, division of voters’ support along the ethnic lines reinforces the ethnic cleavage.

Table 3. Distribution of Support for Political Options among and within Ethnic Communities

MUNICIPALITY	ETHN.	NON-NATIONAL PARTIES	MODERATE NATIONAL PARTIES	NATIONAL PARTIES
BRČKO	B	~ 35% (SDP, DF)	~ 25% (SBB, SBIH)	~ 40% (SDA, BPS)
	C	< 5%	-	> 95% (HDZ, HDZ1990)
	S	< 5%	~ 15% (PDP, SP, DNS, SNS)	> 80% (SDS, SNSD)
GLAMOČ	B	~ 35% (SDP, ZzP)	-	~ 65% (SDA)
	C	< 5%	-	> 95% (HDZ, HDZ90, HSS)
	S	< 5%	~ 15% (SP, SNS, DNS)	> 80% (SNSD)
TOPUSKO	B	~ 90% (SDP)	-	~ 10% (HDZ)
	C	~ 25% (SDP)	< 5%	> 70% (HDZ)
	S	~ 70% (SDP)	-	~ 30% (SDSS)
VOJNIC	B	~ 40% (SDP)	-	~ 40% (SDA, BDSH); ~ 20% (HDZ)
	C	~ 25% (SDP)	~ 10% (MOST, ŽZ, MB)	~ 65% (HDZ)
	S	~ 60% (SDP)	-	~ 40% (SDSS)
VUKOSAVLJE	B	~ 25% (SDP)	-	~ 75% (SDA)
	C	< 5%	-	> 95% (HDZ)
	S	< 5%	~ 15% (PDP, DNS, SP)	> 80% (SDS, SNSD)

To estimate the intensity and shape of the ideological cleavage, the support for these categories of parties in different ethnic communities was analysed in the five municipalities. Firstly, the prevailing political preferences within particular ethnic communities were investigated through interviews with their representatives. Second, the preliminary estimates gathered through information from interviews were controlled through in-depth analysis of election results in the last state-level elections¹⁰ taking into account the territorial distribution of votes among single polling stations and the territorial distribution of ethnic communities.

Results of this analysis are presented in Table 3 that shows the estimated distribution of voting support within ethnic communities among the main ideological categories of political parties. These values indicate the prevailing ideological preferences in respect to the crucial question of the definition of the nation. For each municipality, the distribution of votes for respective categories of parties is shown for single ethnic communities in respective lines. Parties are divided into three categories (columns) introduced above. Percentages in single cells show estimated

¹⁰ These are the 2015 parliamentary elections in Croatia and the 2014 general elections in BaH where voting to Parliamentary Assembly of BaH, the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, the Parliament of the Federation of BaH and the Assembly of Canton 10 were taken into account.

support for the category within the respective ethnic community (line) with major parties of the category indicated in brackets.

The above-presented estimates of voting support indicate that the distribution of ideological preferences among and within ethnic groups highly differs between municipalities in BaH and those in Croatia. In BaH municipalities, citizens are fully divided by ethnic lines in their voting with almost no overlap of support for a single category of parties at all. While there are some active non-ethnic parties seeking support from all three communities in BaH, this category is supported solely by a slighter part of Bosniak voters, which eventually undermines their legitimacy as a non-ethnic option. The rest of the society is voting solely for the ethnically based options. While ethnically oriented Bosniaks and Serbs are divided into a smaller part supporting moderate ethnic parties and a larger part voting for nationalist parties, the support of Croat voters is fully concentrated into the nationalist category. Hence, it is clear that the society in the three multi-ethnic municipalities in BaH is fully divided along the ethnic lines in their ideological preferences.

The situation in municipalities in Croatia is then fully different from that in BaH. Both in Vojnić and Topusko, the significant part of all three ethnic communities prefers the non-ethnic option, with the share being higher in the Serb (60-70%) and Bosniak (40-90%) communities and lower in the Croat community (around 25%). The rest of Croat and Serb voters is voting for their respective national parties. The situation of the ethnically oriented Bosniak community is rather specific – their support is divided between Bosniak national parties and Croat national HDZ. Overall, it is clear that, in contrast to the situation in Bosnian municipalities, the political preferences in municipalities in Croatia are cross-cutting the ethnic lines, and the ideological division between ethnic and non-ethnic understanding of nation and polity is much more pronounced.

Some of the ideological and political divisions can be understood as a natural continuation of the pre-war division of society, such as higher support for post-Communist SDP by Serbs in municipalities in Croatia, who were more loyal to the pre-war regime, and the opposite by Croats. However, most of the recorded divisions in ideological preferences are undoubtedly direct consequences of war and post-war nationalist political mobilization. It is obvious that this factor now has a much lower impact in the Croatian political environment where the non-ethnic option gained legitimacy in all three ethnic communities and as such created an important cleavage cross-cutting the ethnic division. On the contrary, in the still nationalist-dominated political environment of BaH this option has only weak support solely within Bosniak communities, which reversely limits its legitimacy for other communities and its non-ethnic essence in general.

6. Socio-economic Cleavage

Contrary to the two above-introduced structural cleavages, the socio-economic cleavage is rather a functional category reflecting the economic reality. As such it is much less pre-determined by the given spatial and deeply rooted ideological categories and is more prone to structural changes. As noted above, in the three-dimensional model the socio-economic cleavage is understood not solely in its original meaning as the division between capital and workers, but in a more general meaning as any conflict about allocation of economic resources (Bagić, 2007: 95). As stated by Čular and Gregurić (2007: 5): “This cleavage can take different forms depending on the existing distribution of resources and on dominant mechanisms of allocation in the status quo”. Using this more open-ended conception, any potential economic disparities within societies in the five municipalities were identified through the research and their shapes were compared to the direction of the ethnic cleavage. If members of a single ethnic community belong to different socio-economic categories and meet members of other ethnic groups within these categories, then the socio-economic and ethnic cleavages cross-cut each other. On the contrary, if there is a significant overlap between ethnic group and socio-economic category, the two cleavages reinforce each other.

Before the actual analysis of the socio-economic cleavage, the general economic situation in municipalities under examination needs to be briefly discussed. Besides the rural area of Vukosavlje, which has always been mostly agricultural without any production capacities and developed services, the economy of all municipalities used to be based on a structural balance between several economic sectors.¹¹ However, the war destroyed much of the pre-war capacities in the secondary and tertiary sectors, and thus brought fundamental structural consequences for local economies. Nowadays, all municipalities still lack an important structural part of their pre-war economic capacities.¹² After the decline of the secondary and related tertiary sectors, local economies are very much dependent on the quaternary sector based on public administration and goods, and the ‘real’ economy is limited to primary-sector activities concentrated on agriculture or forestry and the limited tertiary sector of services.

As a natural result of such structural imbalance in local economy, the general socio-economic situation is unsatisfactory in all municipalities and most people live

¹¹ For the purpose of the following analysis, the concept of *economic sectors* is used as defined by Kenessey (1987). According to him, the *primary sector* consists of agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining, the *secondary sector* of construction and manufacturing, the *tertiary sector* of services and trade, and the *quaternary sector* of finance and public administration.

¹² These are diverse industrial capacities in Brčko, food processing and woodworking capacities in Glamoč, once well-developed spa tourism in Topusko, and ceramic industry in Vojnić.

Table 4. Socio-economic Disparities among Ethnic Communities

MUNICIPALITY	ETHN.	RELATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION ⁱ	PREVAILING SECTORS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ⁱⁱ	ACCESS TO PUBLIC SECTOR
BRČKO	B	Slightly younger population	Quaternary (public sector) Primary (agriculture) Tertiary (services)	Proportional
	S	Slightly older population	Quaternary (public sector) Tertiary (services) Primary (agriculture)	Proportional
	C	Significantly older population	Primary (agriculture) Quaternary (public sector) Non-active (pensions, remittances)	Proportional
GLAMOČ	S	Significantly older population	Primary (agriculture) Non-active (pensions) Tertiary (services)	Underrepresented
	B	Slightly younger population	Primary (agriculture) Tertiary (services)	Underrepresented
	C	On average	Quaternary (public sector) Primary (forestry) Tertiary (services)	Overrepresented
TOPUSKO	S	Significantly older population	Primary (agriculture) Non-active (pensions) Tertiary (services)	Underrepresented
	B	Significantly younger population	Primary (agriculture)	Underrepresented
	C	On average	Quaternary (public sector) Tertiary (services) Primary (agriculture + forestry)	Overrepresented
VOJNIĆ	S	Slightly older population	Primary (agriculture) Non-active (pensions) Tertiary (services)	Underrepresented
	B	Significantly younger population	Primary (agriculture)	Underrepresented
	C	Slightly younger population	Quaternary (public) Primary (forestry + agriculture) Tertiary (services)	Overrepresented
VUKOSAVLJE	S	Slightly older population	Secondary (production) Tertiary (services) Primary (agriculture)	Proportional
	B	Significantly younger population	Primary (agriculture) Tertiary (services)	Proportional
	C	Significantly older population	Non-active (pensions, remittances) Primary (agriculture)	Proportional

ⁱ Assessed in respect to the municipal average.ⁱⁱ Sorted in order of importance for the respective community.

on or even below the level of sustainable existence. Unemployment is high in all areas, especially among young people, which leads to the intensive economic emigration of younger generations causing further negative economical consequences. Elder generations are often dependent on external sources of income in the form of pensions or remittances. Overall, all local actors agree that the current situation is hard for all ethnic groups since none of them is in a socio-economically sustainable position.

However, even in such an intensive economic hardship, there are significant differences among ethnic groups. Structural disparities have roots in differing demographic and territorial positions of the ethnic communities as indicated by the data presented in Table 4 and Figures 7-11.

Firstly, there are significant differences in the relative demographic position of ethnic communities in regard to the *population pyramid* in all municipalities (see the third column of Table 4). These are mostly determined by the fate of the respective community during the conflict. Bosniak communities are relatively youngest in all cases regardless of their prior forced displacement and return. Communities that came to municipalities as IDPs or refugees from other areas are generally on local average (Croats in Glamoč and Vojnić, Serbs in Brčko and Vukosavlje). Most importantly, non-Bosniak 'returnee' communities are usually significantly older in relation to local average. This is the case of Croats who returned to Vukosavlje and Brčko and of Serbs who came back to Glamoč, Topusko and Vojnić. Naturally, these features have important direct implications for economic productivity of these communities and their dependence on external incomes such as pensions and remittances.

Another important factor conducive to economic disparities among ethnic communities is the territorial distribution of the population. Maps in Figures 7-11 show in more detail what was already mentioned in Chapter 4 – the urban-rural distribution and concentration of ethnic communities. In each municipality, there are clear differences among ethnic groups in regard to their concentration in either rural areas (distinguishing more interconnected peripheral areas and rather isolated margins) or urban centres. The maps indicate that many ethnic communities, above all those which are numerously weaker, are concentrated mostly in one category of space which in turn naturally limits their economic opportunities. Such a situation can be equally unfavourable for a community concentrated in rural margins and economically dependent solely on agriculture as for a community concentrated in urban areas which is reliant only on the tertiary or the quaternary sector.

These territorial characteristics, together with the demographic profile, largely determine the prevailing type of economic activity of respective communities, as can be seen in the fourth column of Table 4. Unsurprisingly, while predominantly

Figure 7. Territorial Concentration of Ethnic Communities in Different Economic Types of Space: Brčko

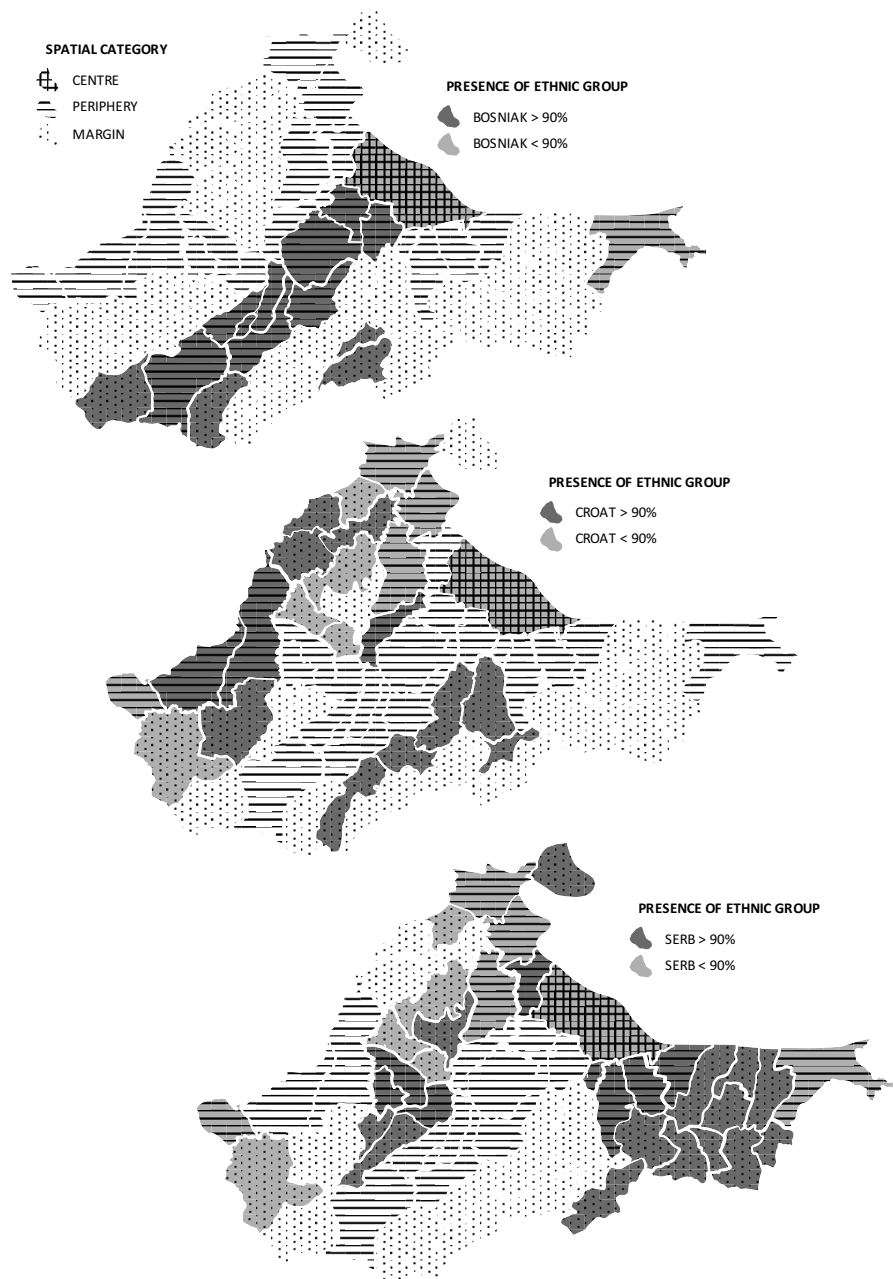


Figure 8. Territorial Concentration of Ethnic Communities in Different Economic Types of Space: Glamoč



Figure 9. Territorial Concentration of Ethnic Communities in Different Economic Types of Space: Topusko

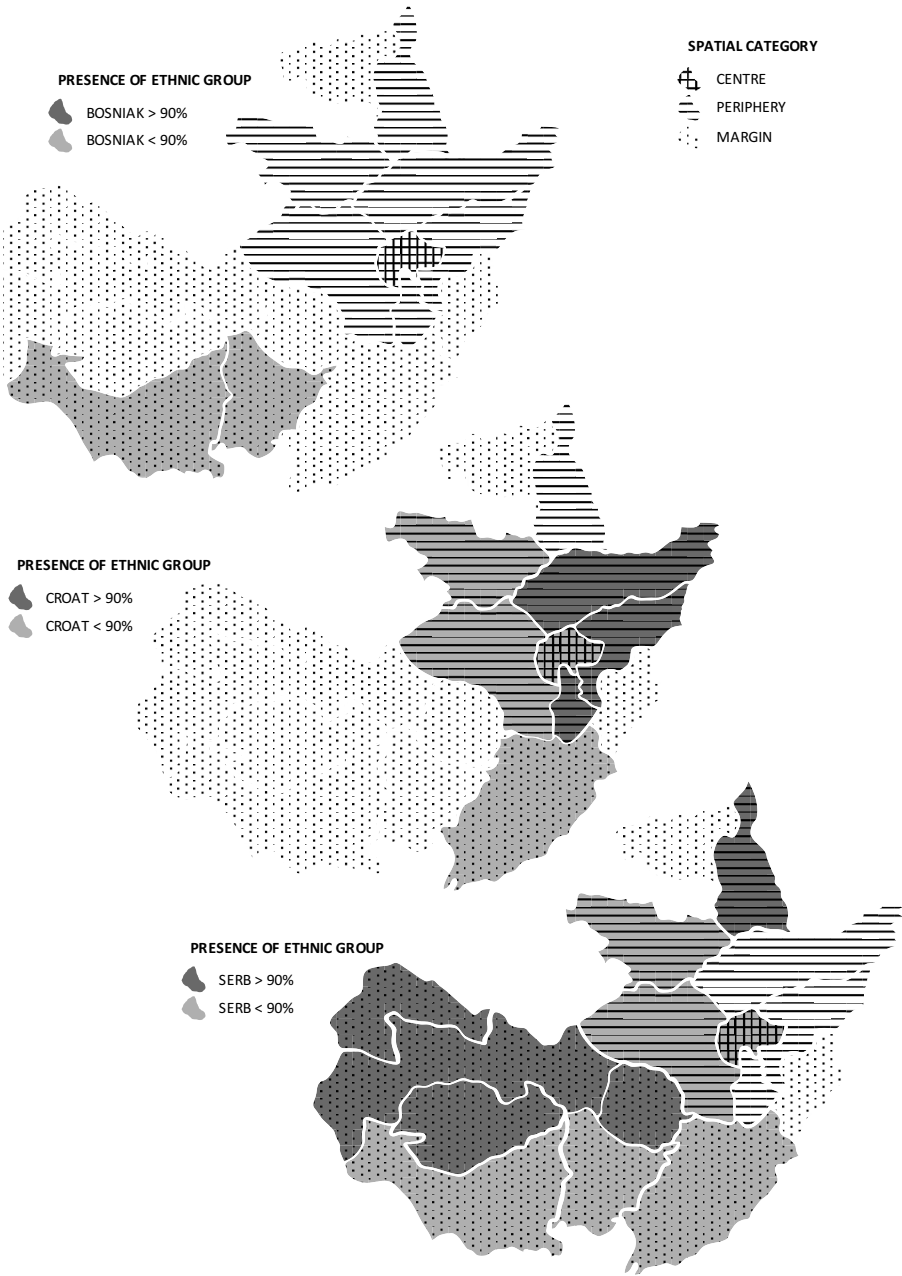


Figure 10. Territorial Concentration of Ethnic Communities in Different Economic Types of Space: Vojnić

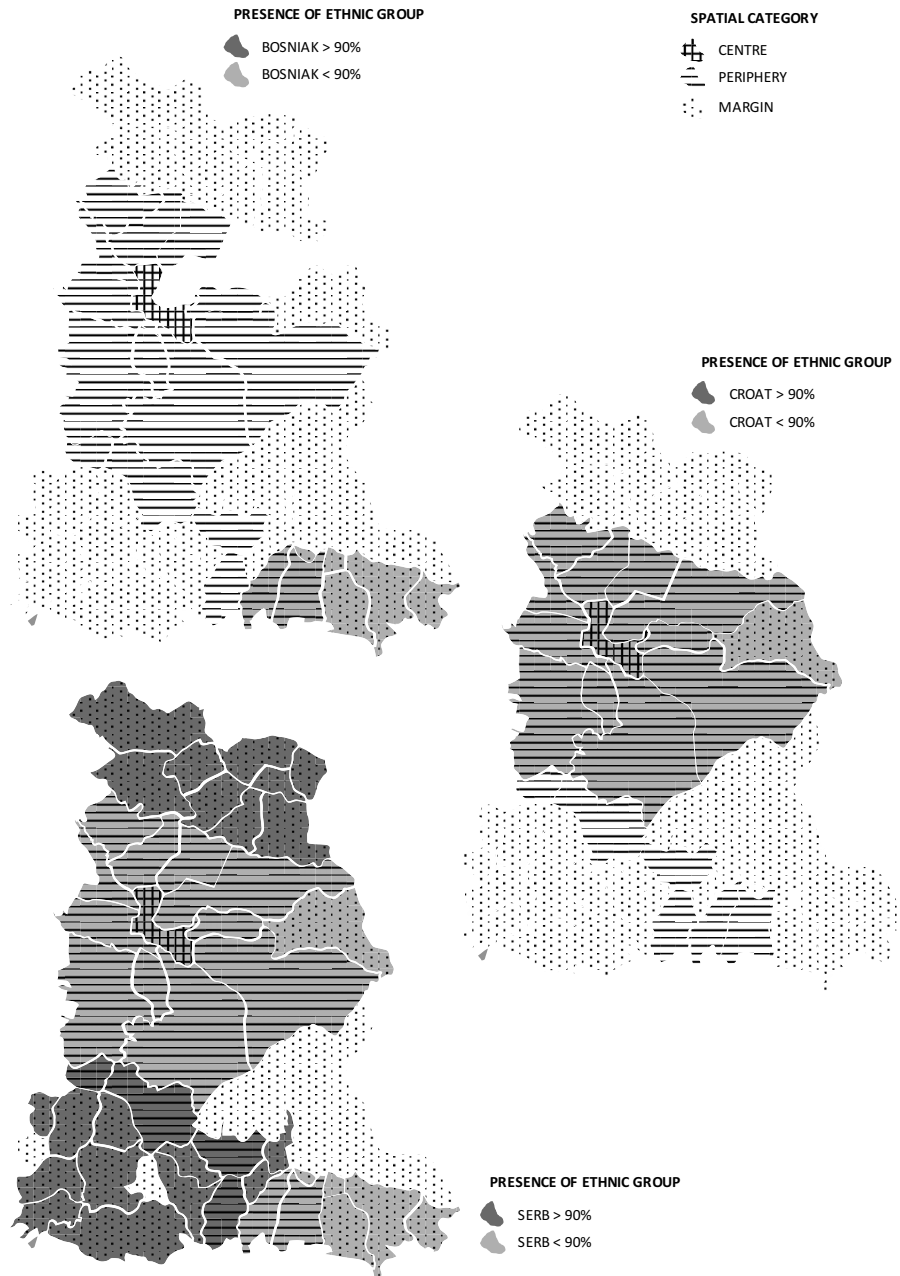


Figure 11. Territorial Concentration of Ethnic Communities in Different Economic Types of Space: Vukosavlje



rural communities mostly concentrate their economic activity into the primary sector (agriculture), more urban-concentrated communities are oriented on the tertiary sector of services. Besides, relatively elder communities are less economically active and much more dependent on external incomes.

Specific is the situation in the quaternary sector of public administration and, more generally, all the public goods. According to the law both of BaH and that of Croatia, all ethnic groups should be proportionally represented in the public sector. However, this is in fact true only in the case of Vukosavlje, where the public sector is very tiny, and in Brčko, where the law is strictly followed. In other three municipalities, Bosniak and Serb communities are underrepresented in the public sector while Croats who came or returned first into these areas after the war were in an advantaged position and are overrepresented in the public sector. Bosniak and Serb leaders in these areas are also pointing to the important role of Croats' closer links to higher institutional structures (Republic of Croatia and Canton 10 in BaH) which are predominantly Croat and as such represent Croat interests, and directly or indirectly close the public sector for non-Croats.

Overall, the recorded socio-economic cleavages are to a great extent reinforcing the ethnic cleavage in all municipalities stemming from the demographic profile and territorial distribution of particular ethnic communities. Many ethnic communities appear in an economically disadvantaged situation either in the territorial (such as solely rural Bosniaks in Vojnić, or predominantly urban Croats in Glamoč) or the demographic (older Serbs in Glamoč) dimension. Most divisive and problematic are cases where these two disparities reinforce each other, which is the case of mostly older rural Croats in Vukosavlje and Serbs in Topusko. Another factor intensively deepening the socio-economic cleavage and its reinforcing character in relation to ethnicity is the limited access to the public sector for some communities.

While some of the identified demographic and territorial disparities can be regarded as a natural return to the pre-war situation (younger rural Bosniaks in Vojnić or rural concentration of Croats in Brčko), others are direct results of the war and post-war politics of ethnic cleansing and its consequences. Above all, this is the generally higher age of some communities and their territorial concentration as a result of ethnic cleansing and problematic return to pre-war homes and the politically motivated limited access to the public sector.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

This paper presented results of the research conducted in the last five remaining ethnically mixed Bosniak-Croat-Serb municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Its aim was to analyse the quality and intensity of inter-ethnic relations and thus answer the both politically and theoretically highly relevant question if these

historically interconnected and recently belligerent ethnic communities can succeed in reintegration of the multi-ethnic society, or if they rather merely coexist next to each other. To discover and analyse relevant inter-ethnic relations and divisions, the research used the concept of cleavages, more specifically its adapted three-dimensional model focusing on territorial, ideological and socio-economic dimensions of cleavages. Directions of the cleavages identified in these three dimensions were compared with the ethno-religious cleavage. In this way, the cross-cutting or reinforcing character of the particular cleavage was discovered. Accepting the theoretical assumption of the integrative and stabilizing effect of cross-cutting cleavages and the divisive effect of reinforcing cleavages, such an approach intended to answer the question of prospects of post-conflict multi-ethnic areas for long-term stability.

Unsurprisingly, the answer to this question is far from clear. Both cross-cutting and reinforcing cleavages were identified in all three dimensions. For the cross-cutting side, part of the population lives territorially intermixed, there are cross-ethnic ideological preferences in some areas, and economic hardships go across the ethnic lines. However, reinforcing cleavages still prevail. A large part of population lives in mono-ethnic rural areas. Also, more citizens prefer ethnically exclusive ideological options and, as a result, the society is to a great extent politically divided along ethnic lines. Even in the situation of general economic hardship, there are significant socio-economic disparities among ethnic communities and many of them are relatively economically disadvantaged.

According to our theoretical framework, such cleavages reinforcing the ethnic division could potentially become a catalyst of destabilizing processes; hence they represent an indirect and latent threat for the stability and general viability of multi-ethnic areas. While part of the reinforcing cleavages shall be understood as a natural reversal to the pre-war socio-political reality that was also characterised by some reinforcing divisions, another part is clearly a direct consequence of the war-time and post-war nationalist politics of ethnic homogenization. To support the reintegration of the multi-ethnic society, these 'new' cleavages should attract our attention since they are, in contrast to deeply rooted inherited cleavages, potentially manageable within the ongoing peacebuilding process.

Territorial cleavages are difficult to reverse since new patterns of settlement are given by hardly reversible conflict events and to a great extent reflect the pre-war demographic situation. As such, the partly reinforcing character of the territorial distribution of population shall now be accepted as the status quo. On the other hand, the reinforcing cleavages in the ideological and socio-economic dimension offer much more space for an outside intervention. In regard to ideological preferences, the cases of Croatian municipalities show that a civic-oriented political op-

tion is able to reach wide legitimacy and support in an otherwise ethnically divided society, and thereby considerably cross-cut the ethnic division. It is direct evidence that political reintegration of once hostile groups is possible. Above all, the socio-economic sphere offers most opportunities for diminishing the reinforcing effects of cleavages. While a smaller part of the recorded socio-economic disparities between ethnic groups can be considered as inherited from the pre-war era, it is clear that most of them are stemming from the nationalist policies that spilled over into the socio-economic sphere. Appropriate policies such as structural economic support and diversification, prevention of depopulation or guaranteeing equal access to the public sector have great potential to reverse these inequalities. In sum, from the policy point of view, the 'new' ideological and socio-political reinforcing cleavages should be managed through political moderation and economic equalization with the aim of reversal, or at least moderation, of inequalities. Success in these efforts is needed for preserving the ethnic heterogeneity and reintegration of society not only in the unique areas under our examination, but potentially in any other post-ethnic-conflict areas in general.

Turning back to the fundamental question of the prospects for peaceful post-conflict coexistence of warring ethnic parties, five deviant cases under our examination clearly repudiate the deterministic argument of the necessity of ethnic separation. Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs cohabiting peacefully in Brčko, Glamoč, Topusko, Vojnić and Vukosavlje are living evidence that coexistence of once belligerent groups is possible even after extremely intensive ethnic war and ethnic cleansing. However, mere coexistence as such is no guarantee for the long-term stability of these areas, as both the theory and the empirical record suggest. Hence, the post-conflict peacebuilding strategies of local and international actors shall concentrate on identification, moderation and final reversal of those cleavages within post-conflict society that reinforce its ethnic divisions. If the peacebuilding process overcomes these challenges, a society once divided by war can be reintegrated, its internal ties cemented, and prospects for its long-term stability and sustainability highly improved.

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List of Conducted Semi-structured Interviews

Brčko

1. Chair of the Assembly of Brčko District (Male), Brčko, 29 October 2012.
2. Vice-chair of the Assembly of Brčko District (Bosniak, Male), Brčko, 18 June 2015.
3. Chair of the local SDP (Male), Brčko, 18 June 2015.
4. Chair of the local DF, Brčko, 18 June 2015.
5. Sustainable development NGO worker (Female), Brčko, 18 June 2015.
6. Youth support NGO worker (Female), 29 October 2012.
7. SNS candidate for the municipal council (Serb, Male), 29 October 2012.
8. SBB candidate for the municipal council (Bosniak, Female), 29 October 2012.
9. Brčko District Government (Office for European Integration) official (Serb, Male), 29 October 2012.

Glamoč

10. Youth NGO worker (Serb, Female), Glamoč, 27 March 2013.
11. Advisor to the municipal mayor (Serb, Male), Glamoč, 19 October 2012.

12. Chair of the municipal council (Croat, Male), Glamoč, 27 March 2013.
13. SNSD representative in the municipal council (Serb, Male), 27 March 2013.
14. Official of the Livno regional OSCE office, Livno, 19 October 2012.

Topusko

15. Mayor of the municipality (Croat, Male), Topusko, 17 June 2015.
16. Vice-mayor of the municipality representing the Serb minority (Serb, Female), Topusko, 14 May 2015.
17. Ex-mayor of the municipality (Croat, Male), Topusko, 10 June 2015.
18. Member of the municipal Serbian National Minority Council (Serb, Female), Topusko, 10 June 2015.
19. Representative of the Bosniak national minority (Bosniak, Male), Crni Potok, 9 June 2015.
20. Local journalist (Serb, Male), Perna, 14 May 2015.

Vukosavlje

21. Vice-mayor of the municipality (Serb, Male), Vukosavlje, 11 June 2015.
22. President of the municipal council (Croat, Male), Vukosavlje, 11 June 2015.
23. Leader of the local opposition – SNSD (Serb, Male), Vukosavlje, 11 June 2015.

Vojnić

24. Mayor of the municipality (Croat, Male), Vojnić, 17 June 2015.
25. SDP ex-mayor of the municipality (Serb, Male), SDP municipal councillor (Serb, Male), Vojnić, 20 May 2015.
26. Local Bosniak religious representative (Bosniak, Male), Vice-mayor of the Cetinograd municipality representing the Bosniak national minority (Bosniak, Male), Cetinograd, 10 June 2015.

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