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List of abbreviations

BACA Bosnian American Cultural Association

BiH Bosnia and Herzegovina

BiHACC Bosnia and Herzegovina American Community Center

ICC Islamic Cultural Center (Northbrook, IL)

IPTF International Police Task Force (Bosnia)

1. Introduction

Chicago has long been a city of 'ethnic' neighbourhoods. Polish, Swedish, Ukrainian and other European immigrants created ethnic enclaves in the city during years of mass immigration in the early twentieth century. While some traces of those earlier groups remain in neighbourhoods named Pilsen, Andersonville and Ukrainian Village, their earlier residents have largely left the city for the suburbs. They have been replaced by new immigrants. Chicago's north side, especially in neighbourhoods like Uptown, Edgewater, Albany Park and Lincoln Square, has become one of the most diverse areas in the United States. A large percentage of the population is Hispanic (about 25 per cent in Uptown), but new residents have also come from refugee-producing countries such as Vietnam,

unique in that they have been penetrated by global capitalism for centuries and have a particular class and racial hierarchy. The hegemony of Anglo-American economy and culture has also been very strong (Robotham 1998). The changing conditions of global capitalism have disrupted the local economies of these countries, spurring out-migration. At the same time, deindustrialization in migrant-receiving countries has made it difficult for migrants to find economic security in their countries of settlement. Transnational enterprises may help migrants to improve their economic situation under these conditions. Furthermore, political and economic crises at home may catalyse migration, but they may also motivate migrants to retain ties with their sending country when family members are left behind in a difficult situation (Basch *et al.* 1994).

Basch *et al.* (1994) argue that the groups of migrants they have observed are also confronted with racial and social exclusion in their host country. Maintaining transnational ties with their home country may help them to resist this subordination. Through transnational activities, migrants can raise their social standing and validate their self-esteem.

Other scholars have suggested additional factors contributing to the growth and strength of transnational ties. Faist (1999) writes that transnationalism is characterized by reciprocity, mutual obligations, and solidarity in communities between people who share similar positions or symbolic bonds. His argument builds on work on migrant networks and social capital that emphasises interdependence among kin groups, communities, formal and informal associations, and broader groups. Networks, and sets of interpersonal ties between migrants and non-migrants, influence migration decisions, perpetuate migration to certain destinations, and shape the way migrants adapt to new societies. Social capital consists of resources in networks that allow individuals to access information, rely on the good

ditions were refugee-specific and may be similar to those experienced by Bosnians: rapid and massive flight, a high degree of politicization among some migrants and a fear of politics among others, and a keen interest in co-opting refugees' autonomous political projects. Salvadorans expected that their exodus would be temporary. They saw themselves as 'sojourners', and this shaped their behavior. They left families in a state of violence and poverty, creating a strong sense of social obligation.

Recent work on refugees and transnationalism by Al-Ali, Black, and Koser (2000) has looked for evidence of transnational activities among Bosnian and Eritrean refugees in Europe. They describe these communities as being in a 'dynamic process' of becoming transnational and detail numerous ways in which they contribute to reconstruction in their home countries through transnational activities. Other researchers are also looking at the ways in which diaspora communities contribute to their homelands. For example, Pérouse de Montclos (2000) uses data about remittances to argue that Somali refugees play an important role in rebuilding their country. Such research suggests that, for refugees as well as labour migrants, a transnational perspective helps to explain, analyse and redefine the settlement process (Landolt 1999).

Bosnians and transnationalism

It seems that, in part because Bosnian refugees

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respondents spoke English, but magazine articles were translated by a Bosnian student.

3. Formation and development of Chicago's Bosnian community

3.1. Bosnians come to Chicago

The first Bosnians to arrive in the US are difficult to find in census data. At the beginning of the twentieth century, groups of Yugoslav immigrants were classified incorrectly by US immigration officials. Slovenes and Croats were counted together, as were Serbs, Montenegrins, and Bulgarians. A third group was classified by region of origin as 'Dalmatians, Bosnians and Hercegovinians' (Colakovic 1973: 44). It is impossible to know how many Bosnians came to Chicago in this early period, and most written documents about ethnic communities in the city have described its Croatian and Serbian communities but ignored its small Bosnian population (Linton 1996)

It has been written that Bosnian refugees had no immigrant community to receive them when they began to arrive in the US (Maners 1994: 1). But the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks¹) who came to Chicago before the war broke out in 1992 emphasize that their community – the largest concentration of Bosnian Muslims in the US – has existed for a century. A few Bosniaks were among the more than thirty million Europeans who, around the turn of the century, fled poverty and repression in the 'old world' for the perceived freedom and opportunity of America. Most came without families. Respondents told me that these 'oldcomers' travelled by ship from Dubrovnik (Croatia), where they were granted free passage in exchange for stoking the ships' boiler rooms. When they reached Chicago, they lined up for jobs, potential employers feeling their muscles as they picked workers from the line for their mines and construction companies.

The Bosniak periodical *Zambak* devoted a recent issue to the history of Bosniaks in Chicago. Chicago's first Bosniak organization, 'Džemijetnl hajrije', was founded in 1906 to assist people with health care, funerals, organizing religious rituals

The goal of the Bosnian war was ethnic cleansing, the expulsion of particular ethnic groups from particular territories. Both Serbia and Croatia built their own para-states within Bosnia. Serb forces, the dominant aggressors, gained control of three quarters of Bosnia's territory. Most violence consisted of attacks on towns and atrocities committed against civilians. Although all sides were guilty of atrocities, it was the Bosnian Muslims who bore the brunt of ethnic cleansing, with both Serbs and Croats claiming territory and expelling or killing its Muslim residents (Alcock *et al.* 1998).

By the time the war ended, the population of Bosnia was reduced to 3.4 million, about 1 million less than before the war. About 2.5 million citizens were displaced, 750,000 of these to Europe, about 200,000 to North America, and most of the rest internally (Bojić and Kaldor 1999). Before the war, 400,000 Muslims lived in the area sur-

the first refugees arrived, the bulk of Bosnian resettlement cases involved family reunification (Orr 1998). This demonstrates a similarity between refugee and immigrant migrations, in that many community members used kin and friendship networks to navigate their passage to the US, just as many immigrants do.²

Besides receiving the assistance of sponsors, every refugee in the US is paired with a resettlement agency. If family is absent or able to offer little help, the agency helps new arrivals to find

together to coordinate activities taking place in Chicago and other Bosniak communities. A coordinating body has been established for Chicago organizations, and in May 2000, the fifth Congress of Bosniaks from North America was held in Chicago. It brought Bosnian Muslims from all over the US and Canada together to discuss the creation of a common Bosniak identity in the diaspora

Social ties: individual and household activities

The most obvious way in which Bosnians are connected with their homeland is through their families. The Bosnian Muslims who came to Chicago in the 1950s had a limited relationship with their homeland. One member of BACA stated that *'it was always in their hearts to support Bosnia and their families there'*, but many could not return home to visit. *'My father died wishing he could see his mother's grave'*, he continued. *'The older people were not allowed to go. They might have been tried for their participation in WWII.'* In 1965, the government of Yugoslavia granted those who were not old enough to have been in WWII amnesty so that they could return to visit their families in Bosnia. Since then, Bosnians have been able to maintain stronger ties to home, visiting family more regularly and bringing their American-born children to visit Bosnia.

Most refugee respondents had very strong family connections to Bosnia. Although communicating with family in Bosnia was difficult during the war, when many refugees lived in constant fear for their families, it has become much easier since 1995. Several people mentioned using e-mail to contact family, and shops in Lincoln Square now sell phone cards that allow calls to Bosnia to be made for 30 cents a minute.

Although it is impossible to quantify remittances sent to Bosnia, almost all respondents were sending money home and remarked that most refugees – 'ninety-nine per cent' – were doing the same. This often meant working two jobs and shouldering a heavy financial burden. Many emphasised that the cost of living in Bosnia was just as high as in Chicago, whereas even a doctor could earn only \$400/month there. Some refugees complained that the 10 per cent fee to wire money was high, and money sometimes disappeared. A safer way to send money to relatives was through others visiting Bosnia: *'We always put some money in an envelope to be sent to our relatives.'* Besides money, refugees often secured medicine for sick family members in Bosnia.

Because many Bosnians in the US were granted permanent residency and have travel documents, it has been relatively easy for people to visit family in Bosnia. This may distinguish the US from some European countries that limit refugees' freedom of movement (Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2000). It also makes Bosnian refugees more similar to immigrant populations in their ability to maintain social relations in their home countries. About two-thirds of my respondents had visited Bosnia, and most planned to go again soon. A few respondents had returned to their hometowns in

the Republika Srpska, but most visited relatives living in the Federation.

A Croatian travel agent in Lincoln Square reported that her business had changed dramatically since the arrival of the Bosnian refugees. She now employs six travel agents who are busy selling tickets to Sarejevo. Tickets in the high season, between June and September, cost around \$800, and every plane is full. But even though many people are able to travel, Yugoslavian passports cause some difficulties. One couple reported that, when trying to visit family in Croatia, they were turned back when they reached Amsterdam because they did not have the required visas. As they have just passed their citizenship tests, they now plan to

funded by community contributions, is able to patch through to this radio station as well as those in Mostar and Sarejevo. Saba, a young woman from Prijedor, found another way to stay connected with Bosnia. Having received emails from friends in Bosnia about families needing assistance, she sponsored a child from Bosnia and helped organize other young people in Chicago to do the same. Saba sends \$50-100 a month to help with school expenses for her sponsored child, who she has not met.

The most active hometown association in Chicago is the Association of Bosnians from Gacko, a city in eastern Republika Srpska. The society holds social activities in Chicago, and in 1999, they became very involved in assisting a group of internally displaced Bosnian Muslims who returned to Fazlagića Kula, an area near Gacko where there were thirteen Muslim villages. The political activities of some Chicago Bosniaks (described below) helped remove obstacles to the return and secured them an escort by NATO troops stationed in Bosnia (SFOR) and the International Police Task Force (ITPF). The Association collected \$14,000 to provide returnees with items not supplied by UNHCR. They are appealing for donations of vans, school supplies, and computers to help the returnees communicate with the outside world (Tanović 1999a [t]).

The editors of *Tribina* have tried to encourage other hometown groups to follow the example of the people from Gacko and organize around minority returns:

'We have to build our own plan to try to get rid of the consequences of ethnic cleansing....The home country and diaspora must find a way for each town and village to organize with a plan for return. People from Gacko are organizing actions. This should be an example for others. If people are strong enough, they can return through an organized movement' (ibid).

But so far, Gacko is the only example of this type of highly organized hometown association.

Bosnians in Chicago have several other kinds of social links with Bosnia. One connection is through the media. The weekly Bosnian radio programme is a favourite among elderly refugees, providing a much-valued connection to home. As well as 'Glas Bošnjaka', some respondents listened to Chicago's Serbian radio station. '*We know it's all lies*', they said, '*but we listen anyway*.' Publications from Bosnia and Bosnian communities in New York and Seattle are available in Lincoln Square, and Chicago's Bosnian-language magazines are widely read in the city and also distributed in other US cities. *Zambak* includes

mainly articles about the Bosnian community in Chicago and the US as well as practical information about buying cars, applying for jobs, filling out tax returns, and other matters. *Novi Zena* was launched by a Bosnian immigrant who works as a refugee caseworker at Catholic Charities. It contains the work of women refugees who are Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croatians, as well as stories about America and writing by refugee women from Somalia and other countries. Headlines include: 'Better English, Better Jobs', and 'Sarejevo to Chicago: The little strong world of women'. *Tribina* is published by the Chicago chapter of the Muslim Party for Democratic Action (SDA-Chicago), which is discussed below under 'political connections'. It contains articles about the community in Chicago and a great deal of commentary on the situation in Bosnia.

Other connections to Bosnia are created when Bosnians and organisations working in Bosnia visit Chicago. Mental health workers from Tuzla recently visited, reporting on their work in Bosnia and sharing research with US professionals. The UN de-mining commission visited BiHACC to describe its work in Bosnia, and several officials from Bosnian cities attended the Bosniak Conference. In July 2000, the US ambassador to Bosnia spoke at the ICC, answering numerous questions from the audience about the situation in their homeland.

Community leaders are attempting to further institutionalize ties between Bosnia and its diaspora by holding various events. There have been numerous manifestations held at the ICC to commemorate Bosnian Statehood Day and Bosnian Independence Day, with speakers from Bosnia and Chicago and cultural performances. BiHACC has held events to celebrate the anniversary of the adoption of Bosnia's multicultural constitution. The Bosnian Government responded by holding an event of its own. In 1997, it spon-

an arts centre for refugees. He quizzed me: *'After a war, what's the first thing people need? A*

been in Chicago for thirty years – who have been investing in a company in Bosnia. This might eventually become an important way in which Bosnian emigrants could maintain ties to their home country. The World Bank and IMF have insisted on a neo-liberal model – based on market competition and the comparative advantage of cheap labour – to integrate Bosnia into the world economy. New economic activity is to come from the privatisation of state owned enterprises and by the entry of new private enterprises into the economy (Young 1999; World Bank 1997). Privatisation of industries and utilities will require foreign capital, as there is very little capital within Bosnia. The expatriate community might be one source of such capital. The US ambassador to Bosnia was asked during his visit to Chicago about the business environment and risk of investment in Bosnia. He replied that Chicago's Bosnian community was *'a unique group who can look beneath the surface for business opportunities, like food processing. Many factories need capital but could get up and running again.'*

Economic ties: collective activities

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Bosnian elections, but it does publish *Tribina*, which is widely known in the community.

Besides providing support, Bosnians in Chicago have also tried to influence their homeland politicians. When fighting broke out between Bosnian

Table 1: Transnational activities in Chicago's Bosnian community

	Individual/household level	Collective level
Social	Contact with relatives in Bosnia; visits to Bosnia; remittances	Hometown associations; sports clubs; clubs and restaurants; assistance to minority

what happened during the war. For example, *Tribina* features articles on '*concentration camps*', and its editorials remind readers that '*in Bosnia*

Political barriers: a divided country

Bosnia's political problems are obvious and apparently intransigent. During the worst phase of the war, there were no functioning state-level institutions. The country's administrative structures disintegrated. The Dayton Agreement established a national government for the country as a whole, consisting of representatives from each constitutive nationality: Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. Five years after the Dayton agreement, however, the country's three separate administrative entities, the Republika Srpska, the Federation, and to an extent the Croatian para-state of Herceg-Bosna, largely operate as independent states. They have separate constitutions, governments, parliaments, and armed forces (Amnesty International 2000).

Attitudes about ethnic segregation have changed but little since the war. Many Muslims feel the Republika Srpska is an illegitimate creation, something that '*never existed in the history of Bosnia*'. Serbs and Croats are more closely affiliated to Bosnia's neighbours than to the fledgling independent state. Even within the Muslim-Croat federation, there are few functioning joint institutions. The key actors in nationalist parties remain the same, and the ruling parties still control the country's economics, politics and security. Their power base lies outside the formal economy, and existing state structures are little more than an empty shell. Forces of disintegration led by the extreme nationalists may overpower forces of ethnic cooperation and integration. Robert Barry, the head of the OSCE mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina, reported that, '*as long as these par-tocracies exist, the transition to democracy will not happen*' (Barry 1999a). With the Bosnian state so divided, it is small wonder that it has been unable to respond to Bosnians abroad, to incorporate them, or to take better advantage of

gan detailing the history of Bosnia, starting with Roman times, as if that were explanation enough. Others described how millions have been 'raked off' by state officials: *'it's a spooky thing. People have gotten close to investing but have withdrawn. The current climate has no rule of law.'* Many had lost money in Bosnian banks and lost their trust in the banking system. Boris described other perceived economic obstacles, including patronage networks that he believed would limit his investment opportunities:

It would be difficult to invest in something there, because there is no market for products. You would have to make product and provide the market as well—to do it all from the start to the bitter end. As for buying shares: I would like to get shares in the electric utility. But those are taken by people with connections. I could only get useless shares in some technologically outdated company.

A new rule adopted in February by Bosnia's Provisional Election Commission may improve the investment climate by preventing elected officials from sitting on the boards of public enterprises and privatisation agencies, where they have consolidated their hold over key economic assets. The OSCE (2000) argued that, *'if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to have a future as a viable state with a dynamic market economy, ... the economic development of the country can no longer be held hostage to the short-sighted interests of an elite few.'* This legal reform may improve the situation, but it also demonstrates the extent of the obstacles described above.

Another possible economic connection with Bosnia might be through the provision of skills by returnees or through educational programmes like the Loyola-Sarejevo partnership. Refugees, however, have a much better standard of life in the diaspora than in their villages. Return is limited because there is little possibility of finding a job in Bosnia. Some 50 per cent of people with a BA degree, for example, have left Tuzla, and the exodus continues (Boji

When it came to raising money, the larger aspirations of the Chicagoans involved in the project were quickly stifled. They believed that the funding should come from Bosnia, from those who would benefit from trained workers, and they tried to convince Bosnian officials and companies to support the Sarejevo students by paying their tuition. Zdenko was obviously frustrated by the lack of support they have received from institutions in Bosnia:

I am tired of just receiving verbal support. The government has received a great deal of money. It should support the project. We also spoke to Coca-cola because they have a factory in Bosnia, but they were concerned about investing in anything. This is not big money—only scholarships. We are proud of our program, but we are not happy that we weren't able to do more.

The project has received little coverage in the Bosnian media. *'They like sensation'*, said Zdenko, *'but there is nothing spectacular here. It's a slow process, but it must be a priority there.'*

Besides this perceived neglect by the Bosnian government, Bosnians in Chicago may also be resented by some of their countrymen in Bosnia. Some Bosnians view refugees as traitors for abandoning the country during the war. They do not appreciate the arrival of relatively wealthy returnees who increase income stratification in Bosnia. When I discussed the possible roles of the exile community with a student visiting from Bosnia, his reaction toward them was harsh. *'These people have no right to get involved'*, he said. *'Where were they during the war, when we were suffering there? Sitting comfortably in Chicago. And would they ever go back to live there? But still they want to tell us what to do.'*

The relationship between newly independent Croatia and its emigrants – some 200,000 of who live in the Chicago area – provides a marked contrast to that between Bosnia and its emigrants. During the war, the Croatian diaspora was highly mobilized, providing funds, arms and even soldiers to President Tušman (Kaldor 1999). It has since been rewarded by independent Croatia. Croatian officials are frequent visitors to Chicago, and Croatia opened a consulate in Chicago in 1999 to promote economic and political ties between Chicago's Croatians and their homeland. Officials hope the embassy will promote tourism and economic opportunities in Croatia, help Chicagoans to obtain visas to visit Croatia, and serve a cultural focal point for Croatian-Americans in the city (Craven and Janega 1999).

5.2. Obstacles to connections with Bosnia: the exile community

In this section, I will identify barriers to transnationalism found within the exile community itself. Oddly enough, these include both problems within

way to mobilize them.' People, he believed, were afraid to donate money because they were still afraid for their own futures. *'They arrived without any money and want to make their families secure here.'*

A divided community

As described earlier, social capital is an important resource for transnational communities. It often takes the form of solidarity and mutual trust; communities share symbolic and collective representations that increase their social cohesion (Faist 1999). The Bosnian community, however, is characterized instead by various divisions and a lack of common symbolic representations of Bosnia. Solidarity is often limited to close friends and family. One respondent described how divisions in Bosnia have been brought to the US: *'We have very difficult political issues. The government cannot agree, and this is reflected in our community. The government must represent the three nationalities, and the diaspora should respond by doing the same.'* Obviously, some differences between refugees are based on national and religious backgrounds. But there are also differences among Muslims. These include both divisions between the new refugees and earlier arrivals and among the refugees themselves, who had different wartime experiences and have different attitudes toward their home country and its government.

The most obvious division within the Bosnian community is between those who view Bosnia as a multicultural society and those who characterize it by its ethnic divisions. As previously described, this is demonstrated by the different portrayals of Bosnia that have been created in the exile community. To some extent, these contrasting views of Bosnia reflect differences between people who came from urban and rural areas. In Bosnia, a quarter of the population was intermarried, and a secular pluralist culture flourished around the urban areas (Kaldor 1999). Aleksandar, from a

'They're saying now, "come back, things are okay, let's live together again". But I can't live with them anymore.'

Aleksandar's parents had a mixed marriage. They divorced, and he lives in Chicago with his Serbian mother. He says he feels more accepted in Chicago than he ever did in Bosnia. He has no plans to ever return to Bosnia and does not speak to his

are an especially cheap and flexible source of labour. (Cross and Waldinger 1997; Sassen 1996).

Transnational activities help offset households' economic vulnerability under these conditions; migrants adapt to the insecure labour market by maintaining homes and businesses in both host and home countries. Glick Schiller *et al.* (1999: 86) argue that by creating transnational networks, families

*maximize their resources in multiple settings
and survive within situations of economic un-*

the fact that, unlike many migrants, Bosnians have permanent resident status.

Besides those who have relocated to Iowa, other Bosnians have left Chicago's north side to locate better job opportunities and a better quality of life. Many have gone to St. Louis, which has a 3 per cent unemployment rate and plenty of jobs available. It now hosts 15,000 Bosnians. The small number of refugees who were first resettled there in the early 1990s found the cost of living so low that the area soon attracted Bosnians who had been resettled elsewhere. *'St. Louis is seen as a cheap place to live'*, noted one refugee, *'People come from California, Chicago and Florida, where it's more expensive. Bosnians don't care if they start by buying the smallest, ugliest house. At least they feel they have something.'* Almost n

Although assimilating into Chicago may be the dominant concern for Chicago's Bosnian community, this does nothing to disprove findings about other groups; perhaps the experience of this European population highlights the very different experiences of refugee and immigrant communities who have arrived with fewer skills and suffered a greater degrees of social and racial exclusion. Furthermore, as the situation in Bosnia changes, people may be more likely to participate in transnational activities. Strong family connections may evolve into stronger economic and political ties if obstacles to such connections decrease during the reconstruction process. At the same time, people may have more resources to invest in Bosnia as they advance economically in Chicago. This is not the end, but only the beginning of Chicago's Bosnian story.

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