



June 15th and 16th, 2020

International Conference "From So Far to So Close. Addressing the Refugee Phenomenon: History, Sociology and Technology",

AGENDA

ROUNDTABLE 1 (JUNE 15, 9:30 CEST TIME) "HISTORY OF REFUGEES IN THE 20TH CENTURY"

- Dr. Magda Fitili (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) – “Violence, civil war and female forced displacement”
- Prof. Virgiliu Țârău (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania) – “Mass violence and forced displacement in communist countries in Europe”
- Dr. Dženeta Karabegović (Post-Conflict Research Center, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina/University of Salzburg) – “Mass violence and displacements during and after civil war, the case of former Yugoslavia”

Chair: Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

ROUNDTABLE 2 (JUNE 16, 9:30 CEST TIME) "SOCIOLOGY OF REFUGEES: RESEARCH, ACTIVISM, EXPERIENCE"

- Prof. Massoud Sharifi (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)
- Merlys Mosquera (Asociación San Juan de Dios España)
- Roland Fosso (Activist and writer)

Chair: Professor Sari Hanafi (American University of Beirut)

ROUNDTABLE 3 (JUNE 16, 11:45 CEST TIME) "CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DIGITAL MEDIA. BUILDING SYNERGIES AMONG H2020 PROJECTS"

- Paul Mulholland (The Open University, SPICE): <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/870811>
- Mikel Zorilla (Vicomtech, IP TRACTION): <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/870610>
- Marc Hernández (La Tempesta, SO-CLOSE): <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/870939>

Chair: Luisa Passerini (European University Institute, Italy)

ROUNDTABLE 1 (JUNE 15, 9:30 CEST TIME) "HISTORY OF REFUGEES IN THE 20TH CENTURY"

Violence, Civil War and Female Forced Displacement: the case of Trikeri (Greece)

Dr. Magda Fitili
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Political exile in Greece started during the Metaxas dictatorship, a typical interwar authoritarian regime that lasted from 1936 to 1940. It was, however, during the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), the last event of the Second World War and the link to the Cold War, that political exile reached its climax. The creation of concentration camps on Greek islands constitutes a major unique feature of twentieth-century Europe, since they were the only camps that opened after the end of the Second World War in the liberated Western Europe a few years after stories about the horror of Auschwitz became widespread. In contrast to other European countries, where Nazi collaborators were detained in internment camps –for example in France–, in Greece it was left-wing resistance fighters who were detained, abused and tortured in internment camps during the War. Left-wing individuals continued to be exiled in camps long after the Civil War ended, throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, and again during the Colonels' military Junta (1967–1974).

Idyllic and not so idyllic barren islands, that nowadays form tourist attractions, were part of a topography of exile and terror. About 50,000 people were interned in prisons or camps and banished to islands between 1947 and 1949.¹ Public security committees and not courts deported the political exiles to islands with penalty that was officially named “administrative banishment”. The government established mass internment camps on the inhabited islands of Makronisos, Giaros and Trikeri –the last one for female political exiles, to punish and rehabilitate its internal enemies. Makronisos was destined for the soldiers and officers who were not convicted for any offence whatsoever, but were interned for “rehabilitation through enlightenment and education” –a latter-day secular Inquisition. “Rehabilitation”, as defined by the state language and propaganda of the time, meant the transformation of leftist prisoners into nationalist and loyal citizens. In all camps as illustrated in many exiles' memoirs, torture, solitary confinement, propaganda, hard labor, wretched living conditions, and mass killing took place.²

Female experiences

The Second World War and the Axis Occupation (1941–44) changed Greek society profoundly. The extraordinary conditions that the Occupation had created radicalized a large part of the destitute population and gave the Communist Party of Greece the opportunity to lead one of the most massive resistance movements in occupied Europe. In this context, Greek women entered the public sphere massively for the first time. Although the gender division was clearly reproduced in the resistance movement, the war gave women the opportunity to act as historical subjects and gain self-respect and self-confidence through their resistance activities.³ In the Resistance, the ideology of the patriarchal family was breached, the role of the family and the control of men over women was weakened, women undertook traditionally male tasks; there was considerably more gender equality than before. Ultimately, the resistance movement proclaimed its support for women's rights, by granting women the right to vote for the first time in local elections in a free Greece.⁴

During the Greek Civil War, women constituted half of the Democratic Army of Greece dominated by the Communist Party; 30 percent of its fighters and 70 percent of its personnel in support services were women.⁵ The Right accused left-wing women of being dishonorable and prostitutes because their main focus was on political issues rather than solely on their families, and for the first time in Greek history, women were executed. Women also began to be arrested, sentenced, and transported to island detention camps on the basis that they were “dangerous for public order”.⁶ In the exile, there were not only women who had participated in the resistance movement or in the Civil War, but also female relatives –mothers, grandmothers, aunts, daughters and sisters– of men politically engaged on the Left, based on an alleged “family’s collective responsibility”,⁷ a sort of “political DNA”. At the end of the armed conflict, almost 5,000 women, some with their children, were sent to a concentration camp, which had been established especially for women on the island of Trikeri. The exile camp circuit started with exile to Xios, then Trikeri, afterwards Makronisos to end once again in Trikeri.⁸

The case of Trikeri camp

Trikeri is a tiny island in the Pagasitic Gulf off in the north of Greece, isolated and inaccessible due to its geographical position; an excellent site for the establishment of a concentration camp. From 1949 to 1953 nearly 5,000 women were ostracized on this deserted island. When the women, many carrying babies, landed on Trikeri were pleasantly surprised with the stunning views and the green landscape.⁹ Notwithstanding, very soon they realized that they would live under conditions of extreme deprivation, and constant physical and psychological pain. The exiles at Trikeri faced extreme hardship, ranging from lack of water and medical treatment to malnutrition and forced labor, while they were under military discipline and constant pressure to sign statements of repentance.

The irrational camp regulations imposed unnecessary hardships on them, such as carrying all the food supplies and building material from the port to their tents by making circles – the women called it “Calvary”.¹⁰ The most exhausting and needless chore was to carry sand, pebbles and seawater to make an enormous crown on a slope so it could be seen by the ships that were passing by.¹¹ Despite the fact that they could stay in the facilities of the monastery, their oppressors obliged them to stay in worn-out tents: “our life in Trikeri was horrible. We stayed outside in tents. In the summer we suffered from the heat. And of course, there were terrible flies. When the first rains started [...] and they blew away our tents, we were forced to request that they let us rebuild our tents up on the hill, close to the monastery where it was more sheltered from the wind. So, we did that, and they came a couple of times and destroyed these tents, forcing us to rebuild them again each time. And they beat us around, and made us sleep in the mud, even with the children to force us to give in and sign declarations of repentance”.¹² The abduction of their children was another measure to press them to sign. Children were considered a national property and therefore the role of the nation’s role in its upbringing was vital to save them: “Your children belong to Greece. Whoever wants her child must first become Greek”.¹³

The presence of the children was a source of both comfort and torture for the mothers. Red Cross did not recognize the children so there were no food supplies for them: “so the growing number of children –224– were fed by the food they gave their mothers”.¹⁴ Women gave birth in the camp and watched their children fall ill or die: “in September 1949, a woman gave birth to twins on the ground. One baby died in two days and the other was christened Eleftheria – in Greek means freedom. She also died a week later”.¹⁵ Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, dysentery and scabies frequently ripped through the camp, while healthcare for the women and

the children was non-existent: “Vagelitsa, A small 18-year-old village girl died of tuberculosis a few days after she arrived at the camp. She was buried there as an animal, but I must not forget her”.¹⁶

A starvation diet was imposed accompanied with insufficient food rations; they ate normally beans and chickpeas and a slice of bread. But women found ways of surviving: “fortunately for us there were a lot of olive trees around there and we would gather them and soak them in seawater brine. [...] Also, there were wild mushrooms growing around the basis of the olive trees and we'd pick those. I would say to the children, come on you are going to eat liver”.¹⁷ The lack of water was also stated to be a major problem. The exiled men, who were exiled in Trikeri before it was transformed into a female camp, had constructed four wells. However, only one functioned and the water was really muddy.

Physical abuse in the form of beatings¹⁸ or even attempted rapes¹⁹ was also present. However, it was the national and religious indoctrination, censorship and isolation that have been described as the most painful aspects of their experiences.²⁰ After the defeat of the Democratic Army in 1949 they received visits from “repentees” from the Makronisos camp who were transformed through torture into tormentors.²¹ Additionally, the guards very often kept the letters that their families sent to them as a punishment or burnt them, or even when information came about a death of a family member, they used to read them in front of the poor mother, sister or wife. In the letters that they sent to their families they “could write only that we were well”²² due to censorship and because they didn’t want to upset them.

Despite all this hardship, women managed to form in Trikeri a collectivity and a society devoid of men. Within the confines of a concentration camp, a social organization was created and all tasks both traditionally considered men’s work and women’s were undertaken by them. A general organization of life took place by means of an elaborate committee structure. The women formed committees for the unloading and carrying of supplies, digging up for water in the wells, carpentry, cleanliness, cooking, food distribution, classes, recreation or children’s care, disencumbering the old women and the children.²³ In their “free time” they dedicated to crafts, knitting, embroidery and even volleyball, basketball and pantomime: “We cut the olive wood and made spoons and other small tools. We embroidered with shells and made various ornaments, necklaces and toys for the children”.²⁴

In the camp there were besides the children, 230 illiterate women, 380 who only knew to write their name and 52 teachers, among them the prominent educationalist and prewar feminist Rosa Imvrioti. Secret classes were taking place every day everywhere, while Imvrioti gave lectures on fine arts, history, folklore and hygiene. The teachers prepared high school age girls for university, as well as they taught the children. They didn’t only give classes to the children but they also managed to build a day nursery, where they amused children while the mothers were in chores.²⁵ There the children did exercise, played, sung and learned to write in the sand: “One Sunday we all happily went up to the plateau where they would show theater. There was a great emotion. They showed us Little Red Riding Hood”.²⁶

Various resistant measures were collectively agreed upon and used for mutual encouragement, such as lessons, plays and singing: “There I learned dances from all parts of Greece, and songs from all over, we would teach each other our native songs and dances. I danced, I was in plays, I joked my way through”.²⁷ The youngest women tried to cheer up the rest of the camp with their energy: “To the very old women we would go out of their tents, where they sat down speechless and sung to them. This was our help, no greater than the one that were giving us those with their courage and patience when they heard that one of their children was dead”.²⁸

When “repentees” came for indoctrination women started to murmur and made the guards furious.²⁹

The women adopted quite different strategies of resistance than those of men, such as color. There was a tacit agreement not to wear black clothes, when almost every woman could do that on the grounds of mourning.³⁰ The cleaning of their body, their clothes and the take-care of their appearance was another strategy of survival and resistance.³¹ The women said farewell to those sentenced to death by “giving them a souvenir or some money and washing and combing their hair so as to leave beautiful and optimistic”.³² “The women did not listen to anyone, only to the supreme voice of self-survival and solidarity”.³³ The women that survived of these difficult times stated that their resistance activity provided a clear motivation to survive: “The life of each of us became the life of all”.³⁴

In 1991 the Association of Women Political Exiles sought permission from the religious hierarchy to place an honorary plaque in the monastery on Trikeri Island. Notwithstanding, the bishop proclaimed that it was time to forgive past discord, in order to avoid repeating in the future the mistakes of the past.³⁵ Finally, in 2017 the Federation of the Greek Women placed the honorary plaque. Concentration camps have been widespread throughout recent history, used to intern civilians that a state considers hostile, to control the movement of people in transit and to extract forced labor; to segregate groups of civilians by placing them in a closed or isolated location via special rules that are distinct from a country’s main system of rights and punishments.³⁶ The growing phenomenon of immigration detention – refugee camps –at the borders of the rich world bares certain resemblance to old concentration camps: if people are not allowed to leave, and are systematically denied their rights, then it starts to resemble more sinister creations. The point of historical comparisons should not be to find identical situations but to alert us to potential dangers in the way states exercise power.



















After the war. Communist mass violence and forced displacements in Eastern Europe after 1945

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Europe's twentieth century was a period of exceptional violence. It is another feature of history, besides the one related to progress, democracy, and prosperity. In many historiographical perspectives, it was the most violent century, with many wars (world, and civil ones), of intensive repression of the state-sponsored violence, developed in the name of ideological revolutions, of ethnic and identity conflicts that in many places were transformed in genocides or genocidal practices. In the words of Mark Mazower, Europe was a "dark continent," in which ideologies were interpreted by the nation-states to reconfigure their identities. Not only during conflicts but also afterward, during occupations and peace preparatives, anarchy and continuation of the wars with other means, bring racial eliminations and large-scale national displacements of the population that transformed the identities of the political communities in Europe. Forced migrations (i.e. expulsion, voyaging, and resettlement of populations) continued in a way the transformation of the ethnic balance in the region that started in the eve of the previous war.

The displacement of the population after the war, in the XXth century, was connected with (dez)organized terror, ideological storms that erupted everywhere, the economic crisis, but also with the territorial reconfiguration and the new states 'development'. In general, historiography divides the XXth century into two parts: the first violent one – 1914-1945 and a second in which the cold war inhibited direct violence. In this short article, we will try to argue that also in the second part of the century, - in Eastern Europe in the first decade - a lot of people suffered collective violence in very specific forms. Repressive policies connected with the Sovietization process, but also the changes in the borders of specific states in the region, the forced displacement of populations, internal migration and, retributive policies against different ethnic groups was common in the region.

Collective violence played a very important role in the transformative process orchestrated from Moscow after the Second World War. If during the Second World War the entire region became a site for Nazi exploitation and colonization, after the war, it became a space for Soviet strategic expansion. It was a process implemented in three different stages: 1944-1947 (national fronts); 1947-1949 (popular democracies); 1950-1953 (Stalinist regimes), with diverse degrees, taking into account structural but also national specificities: Moscow's sensitivity to Western views of their actions; the level of opposition to Soviet moves by domestic forces within each country; the relative strength of the local communist parties; and the gradual emergence of the Cold War.

In the wake of war and after it, in the context of the repeated reshuffling of borders, Eastern Europe experienced an unparalleled wave of forced migration. If after the First World War the estimated figures of the refugees are around four to five million in the years 1918–22, in the first five years after the Second World War were at least twenty million displaced persons.

It was extremely *violent peacetime* (Peter Gatrell) that left displaced civilians particularly vulnerable to coercion, whether from the reconstituted national governments or the inter-Allied occupying regimes. Two types of refugees appeared: the ones which were on move because of their ethnic origin and, and the ones who were considered responsible for what's happened during the war. In the first category, we can observe two developments. One was developed concerning the German population from the region. During 1945–50, more than 12 million German speakers

were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. At the Potsdam conference to limit and control the ethnic cleansing already in pace, Great Powers legalized the process of German expulsion deciding for an orderly and humane transfer of all Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The second one, the ethnic equilibrium in the region was reshaped during the war, but also after the war when exchanges of the populations take place under Soviet strategic umbrella. For example, in September 1944, the Polish communist puppet government established in Lublin, sign the *evacuation treaties* with the Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Lithuanian Soviet Republics about the exchange of minorities. In the next years, more than 1.5 million Poles were moved westward, and 480,000 Ukrainians and a few thousand Belorussian and Lithuanian were moved eastward, from Poland to the Soviet Union (another 150,000 who resisted were deported within Poland in 1947).

The second type of refugee appeared for political reasons. In the course of the liberation process, former officials and their collaborators in the occupied territories leave their countries to save their lives. They were pushed by the advance of the Soviet Army, but in some cases, many of them could come back in their region after the war. For example in Transylvania and Vojvodina, Soviet authorities prevent interethnic skirmishes and protect the Hungarian minority in general, even some of their representatives were deported in the USSR. In the end, in Europe alone, the ethnic cleansing between 1944 and 1948 uprooted up to 20 million people.

The movement of populations was a structural policy in Stalin's USSR. The Soviet leader was a man of the borderlands (A. Rieber) and started to use it in the late twenties in the context of the collectivization process. It was a part of what Timothy Snyder named *Bloodlands*, evaluating the destruction produced by the Nazis and the Soviets in terms of ethnic cleansing in the thirties. In the Soviet case during the decade, deportation was employed to keep the balance between territorial, ethnic, and class variables that Stalin imagined in his revolution from above. Million of persons were systematically repressed, destroyed, purged, deported, integrated into the GULAG to fulfill the Stalinist revolution. All the republics were exposed to exchanges of population, internal migration being a central structure of the whole process of transformation. In the wake of the Second World War, the ethnic cleansing continued, non-Russian nationalities in border areas in the west being deported eastward. At least 750,000 ethnic Germans, ten of thousands of citizens of Baltic republics, and from Moldavia were also subjected by such policies, being summarily deported to the east. In the winter of 1943–4, another wave of deportation of ethnic minorities took place. Almost one million people, comprising Chechens, Ingush, Kalmuks, Crimean Tatars, and others were sent eastward, in remote areas of the Soviet Empire.

The soviet-style operation of deportation was developed in time. It started during the civil war and was perfected during Stalin's *reign*. Usually, the *enemies* were identified according to the categories that were decided by the political authorities. The list with all the people identified was prepared in cooperation by the civil (political) and military (Army, Police, and Secret Services) authorities at the local level. They were proposed at the county and regional level and finally approved by the political authorities. Then the people enlisted in different categories were transmitted at the local level, were in secrecy the operation was prepared to take place during the night. Civil and military operational teams (5-7 persons) were prepared in advance to perform the intervention in each case. They act after 2 a.m. when they ask the people identified to prepare themselves urgently for deportation, and finished the job until 6 a.m. when the people were transported to the railway station to be despatched to their place of destination. This destination was not the same for all the members of a family. The ones which were considered more dangerous were transported in concentration camps and prisons, the rest of the families being transported in

administrative locations (obligatory homes) in remote regions in the Soviet Union, in Siberia, Central Asia, or Kazakhstan.

For example, the Baltic countries. Here, after their liberation and occupation in June 1941 started a „ project for cleansing of anti-Soviet criminal and socially dangerous elements from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia SSR Republics”. In the last twenty years, a lot of historical research focused on the numbers and the *quality* of the victims. Thousands of citizens of those three countries were arrested, and tens of thousands of members of their families being deported and placed in the so-called *administrative exile*. For example, more than 5000 people were arrested in Latvia, and a double number of persons – members of their families – were deported. In was the same situation in Lithuania - where almost 15000 people were deported – and Estonia with more than 9000 people having the same fate. Deportation continued with intensity after the *liberation* of the Baltic states by the Red Army. The process started in Lithuania where, on 18th of May 1948, started a massive operation of deportation, More than 40000 people - illegal residents, the families of the partisans, and other convicted bandits, nationalistic and kulaks families – were deported on that occasion. In the same scenario, but at a larger scale, between March and May 1949, in the context of the collectivization of agriculture, more than 20000 Estonians, 42000 Latvians, and other 33000 Lithuanians were displaced from their homes and sent in the administrative exile. The process of mass displacement continues in 1950 and 1951. Then, the representatives of bourgeois circles and neo-protestant believers (Jehova’s Witnesses) were targeted by the Soviet authorities for deportation.

According to a general evaluation in Lithuania from 1940 until 1953, more than 280 000 people were subjects of mass deportation, experiencing forced migration to labour camps and other places of administrative exile. The figures in Latvia (190 000) and Estonia (122 000) are also representatives of the intensity of the repressive policies.

In Moldavia (that means Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Herta territories that were integrated into the Soviet Union in June 1940) the situation was the same. In June 1941, a massive operation of forced displacement took place. Almost 6000 people were arrested, and more 20 000 being deported until autumn. Then, in 1949, in the context of the intensification of class struggle, the deportation of kulaks was prepared by the Soviet authorities. The goal was to remove all 15000 kulaks from Moldavia, but – as Nikolai Kruglov, the Interior Minister asks in 1948 – at least the most inimical 5000 of them must be removed. On 28 June 1949, the Moldavian communist authorities decided to act against *kulak families, landowners, and big merchants*. More than 11 000 families (more than 35 000 people) were identified to be deported and at the beginning of July (6-7).

In Eastern Europe, in the first stage of transition (national front phase), the repressive policies were diverse and gradually developed. From ideological storms against fascists (i.e. non-judicial executions during liberation campaigns to purges/epuration of the public administration and other services, it was continued with retribution policies against former fascists and their collaborators, but also against the representatives of the *democratic opposition* (National Front Strategy), expropriation and nationalization of the great landowners and industrialists; mass deportation of the guilty nationalities. It was in a way, a preparative assault, building the foundations for the ideological war, between *them* and *us*, from the second stage (popular democracy). In that period – 1947-1950 – in parallel with the building of the Soviet peace camp, transformative actions took place everywhere in the region. Constitutional reforms, central planning for the economy, accelerated industrialization and collectivization, “soft power” programs that promulgated Soviet models in culture, science, and society were deployed to calibrate the soviet-style political systems. It was also the period of the generalization of the

repressive policies against ideological enemies. *Salami tactics*, ...slicing piece by piece the representatives of the non-communist associations in each country, become a common experience in the relation between the communist authorities and former political, economical, social, and cultural elites. In the third stage, the Stalinization process was developed at higher levels. Everywhere take place actions that imitate the evolutions in the Soviet Union; communist parties were purged (the case of László Rajk in Hungary (16–24 September 1949) – the model of the future fake trials: Slansky, Kostov, but also the purge of the renegades (Paul Merker in the GDR, Marian Spychalski, and W. Gomulka in Poland, L. Patrascanu in Romania; then other guilty comrades were purged: left sectarians, right deviationists, Trotskyists, Titoists, and other party veterans. (see the case of Luca, Pauker, and Georgescu in Romania in 1952). Then, the structure of leadership was modeled increasingly as in the Soviet Union, public institutions get the soviet shape, a Soviet-type Gulag appeared in each country and the rules of the soviet system were deeply involved in the transformative processes that were underway in each communized country.

If we look to a comparative perspective over the waves of repressive policies in each country of Eastern Europe we can observe that national peculiarities become more and more diffuse from the second stage. In Poland, for example, many Polish citizens (according to some sources they were more than 27 000) that refused to join the communist Army were deported in the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1944. Retributive policies were particularized in the first stage by the fact that in the spring of 1946, special regional martial courts were established to judge politicians for political crimes. Those who were found guilty were sent in prisons or concentration camps. There arrived also the ones who were *judged* by special commissions – under the aegis of the Interior Minister - for the fight against abuse of the law, which *convict* for administrative reasons people in the concentration camps for periods up to two years. All in all, until 1956, for political reasons more than 200000 people were subjected to forced labor until 1956.

In Czechoslovakia, where was applied the most radical process of ethnic cleansing, political persecution was considered endemic from 1948 to 1954. Almost 100 000 people suffered for their real or imagined *political crimes*; 22 000 were incarcerated in more than 100 labor camps. Many other enemies (40-45000) were convicted for not observing the stipulations of the Act on the Protection of the People Democratic Republic adopted in 1948. Other administrative measures were adopted against the ones who were considered or perceived as dangerous even if they did not act against the regime. In that direction of crucial importance were the special actions organized against the remnants of the old regime. In 1951, in the context of collectivization, after two years of pressures, majored taxes, kulaks were the subject of relocation. Until 1953 in the ACTION K those who act against or disapproved of the formation of collective farms, but also those who were considered enemies of the party/state were resettled in other parts of the country. More than 8000 people were take in custody by the special operation teams and deported to special places to help the process of the collectivization of agriculture. A special operation, ACTION P, was dedicated to the clergy of the catholic denomination. Thousands of priests, monks, and nuns, but also almost all bishops were affected by administrative decisions (house arrest or internment in assembly camps). In May 1952 started ACTION B which had in attention anti-state elements from the big cities. They (in the case that was not yet arrested) and their families were evicted from homes and confined in remote residences. The operation last until mid-1953 and few thousand families were affected.

In Hungary, the terror waves started early concerning the political enemies of the communist power. *Salami tactics* were used to remove them from the power position from 1945 to 1947. Afterward, from 1948 on, a generalized offensive was deployed against the ideologically defined targets. Former members of the economical elite, members of the former exploiting

categories, were evicted from their homes and settled with their families in different places in the countryside to be reeducated through forced labor or interned in camps, like the main one in Hortobagy (more than 13 000 people in the first years of the fifties). Kulaks and other villagers who act against collectivization were also transferred in the camps for different periods after December 1949 when Kadar Janos, Minister of Interior announced the beginning of the class struggle in the countryside. In Hungary, from 1945 to 1956 more than 43 000 people were sentenced for political reasons. Other persons which cannot be punished in court were targeted by administrative procedures. The peak of persecution took place at the beginning of fifties when more than 360 000 people were subject to penal and police investigation. In 1953 an amnesty was adopted and according to official data more than 40 000 people were released from prisons, internment camps, and forced relocation. In 1945 forced labor was introduced as an alternative form of punishment. More than 1000 labor camps appeared in the next years. AVO, then AVH, the security structure of the communist regime, exercised extrajudicial functions and arrest all the people that were dangerous for socialist build up. They were entitled to decide over the liberty of the *enemies* without any restrictions. Usually, those who were identified as such were *administratively confined* for democratic reconstruction in special camps for periods up to 24 months, with the possibility to extend indefinitely such decisions. After 1953 many of these camps were disbanded, but many of the former inmates were not released. If they remain dangerous for the regime they were tried and eventually sentenced. Otherwise, they could be relocated to special settlements (confined residence) were stay under the strict supervision of the authorities.

In Yugoslavia – political, but also ethnic cleansing operations were intensive in the first years after the war. Former officials, soldiers, Ustasa or Chetniks, were arrested. In July 1945 were more than 115 000 prisoners in the camps. Many of them were Germans. They were expelled from Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1946. The regime also deals with his ideological enemies through administrative punishments. Special Troika's organized by the Ministry of Interior decide over the fate of the people that were suspected as being dangerous. Without any formalities, they could send in labor camps their enemies. In the remote Adriatic islands of Grgur and Goli Otok enemies of Tito's regime were deported and punished without the right of appeal. Both camps for political detainees functioned during the communist period, but from mid-fifties, there were fewer political inmates.

In Bulgaria, intensive revolutionary repression took place from September to December 1944, without almost any legal constrains, afterward within the system of people courts, December to April 1945. Thousands of people were summarily executed. Others were presented in the courts for trials. In the 135 trials that were held in the first months of 1945, from 11 122 people accused of collaboration and pro-fascist attitudes, 9000 verdicts were decided against them. 2730 people were sentenced to death and other 1305 to life prison. In parallel at the end of 1944, the Government adopted a law that creates labor correction centers for politically dangerous people. In the next years' thousands of former officials of the Bulgarian administration during the war, but also the ones who make opposition to the communist power were interned there. Even in Bulgaria, the figures of the deportees for political reasons are not so impressive, we must note that at the biggest camp, at Belene, on the island of Persin, 90% of inmates that were there until 1953, were relocated for political reasons. On the other side, other measures were taken against the people's enemies. Labour mobilization was employed against some of them, but also members of their families were subjected to forced labor from 1949 on. Relocation from their homes in the countryside was also operationalized. More than 25 000 people, until 1953, were resettled outside of their hometowns.

In Romania, after two years of relative moderation in terms of repressive policies, immediately after the ratification of the Peace Treaty, on 11th of February, the Interior Minister adopted a secret order – no. 50000S – in which, without looking anymore to the penal procedures, ordered that all the speculators and political agitators must be arrested without the observation of the Habeas Corpus (during the night, without papers from the prosecutor, etc.). In July the authorities instigated the leaders of the National Peasant Party to escape from the country. It was a trap, and they were arrested and their Party was banned, and all the leaders at the county level were arrested on a new decision - Order 18000S from July 1947. In the next year former policemen, employees of the secret services, officers of the Army were administratively confined to prevent any ideological contestation of the communist power. In 1949 the peasants, not only kulaks become the favorite target of the authorities, in the aggressive campaign for collectivization of agriculture. In March 1949, more than 2000 families of the former landlords were removed from their properties and deported in closed cities. Then, in July and August 1949, more than 3000 rich peasants from the western part of Romania (Bihar and Arad counties) were deported in the middle of nowhere in Dobruja. In the next years, thousands of peasants were convicted and deported from their homes to help the collectivization process. Later on, Gheorghiu Dej admitted that “in the name of the struggle against the kulaks more than 80 000 peasants were sent for trial, the majority of them hard-working peasants, and of them more than 30 000 were tried in public proceedings. Also in 1949 the construction of Danube -Black Sea Canal started with political deportees. They were members of the already organized labor units, that became in 1952, work colonies (almost 20 000 in three years). There arrived the new contingents of political colonists, former members of the political parties, priests, kulaks, and their families.

In June 1951, from the southwest border of Romania, the Serbian and German population was deported in Dobruja and Baragan. More than 40000 people were removed in three days from the Banat region to protect the border with Yugoslavia. The process continued in the next years, tens of thousands of people being interned in work colonies and penitentiaries for political reasons. Even after 1954, when the authorities start a relaxation period with society, the pressures were still present. The ones who do not become flexible and reeducated were released from Gulag, but they were sent - also as an administrative penalty – in fixed domicile, or internal exile.

Conclusion

After the Second World War, the Eastern part of Europe was integrated into the Soviet sphere of influence. Territorial exchanges, the expulsion of the population from eastern parts, and their relocation in western parts of the region become instruments of the Soviet policy. Many millions of people left their homes under the war pressures, but also as a consequence of the decisions of the Great Powers after the hostilities ended. The refugees and the deportation of different categories continued with different intensities during the Sovietization process. In three stages, communist authorities performed Soviet-style operations against their enemies, arresting, deporting, and finally controlling the societies that were breakthrough by the revolutionary process. Nobody was safe on the road of building socialism...it was the ***beginning of the end.***

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Mass Violence and Displacement during the 1990s from former Yugoslavia: On Overview with a focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina

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This working brief will provide an overview of the historical and political situation in BiH to show the environment that has resulted in both a conflict-generated diaspora as well as diaspora mobilization since. It will address a few of the most salient issues within the country today, which will, in turn, contextualize diaspora initiatives. Overall, it also examines the continued struggle to constitute a Bosnian identity as well as solidify citizen representation and rights within a multiethnic setting. It is largely based on a PhD chapter, currently being converted to a manuscript.¹

A brief historical outline of BiH is followed by a section about the salient features of the Dayton Peace Accords, which continue to dictate how the country operates politically. A section about the geopolitics of the diaspora in BiH will follow before concluding remarks. The brief provides a background to the ongoing transitional justice process and the politics of memory that continue to be relevant in BiH politics today.

Demise of Yugoslavia

Much research has discussed the demise of Yugoslavia and the reasons for its breakup, its history, as well as the consequences thereof.² This short overview serves to situate the reader in the broader context for how this situation influenced the demographic changes in the country, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It speaks briefly to the history of Yugoslavia and the political identities with which some individuals in the diaspora identify with, harking back to the memory and nostalgia of a country that encouraged multi-ethnic belonging amidst other flaws.³

Yugoslav national identity was represented by the Partisan political movement and reaffirmed through 'brotherhood and unity.'⁴ It resulted in a federation of different constituent republics with Belgrade as the capital following WWII. "In BiH, the Partisan movement was particularly popular, and citizens of all nationalities and religions joined it."⁵ BiH was established as one of the six constituent republics (the others were Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Slovenia). It encompassed a mini-Yugoslavia by being multinational and multiethnic. Subsequent changes in the Yugoslav Constitution allowed for nascent Muslim nationalist factions to allow for Bosnian Muslims to declare themselves as 'Muslim, in the sense of a nation,' reflecting the tendency for Orthodox and Catholic Bosnians to call themselves Serbs and Croats. Malcolm explains, "once they had made that move, it became impossible for the Muslims to take the logical course, which would have been to describe their religion as Muslim and their ethnic substratum as Bosnian. That would have had the effect of setting up "Bosnian" as a third term in the contradistinction to "Serb" and "Croat" – which would be like the use of "Muslim" as a third term, only even more divisive, since at least the three groups can now still be referred to as Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats."⁶

Tito, who led the country in the post WWII period, died in 1980 and left Yugoslavia in shock and led to a downward political spiral which ultimately resulted in its demise through a series of wars in the

¹ Karabegović, D. (2017). *Bosnia Abroad: Transnational Diaspora Mobilization* [PhD Dissertation]. University of Warwick. ² Laura Silber and Allan Little's *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* provides a useful entry point. More recently, Catherine Baker has written a short introductory text titled *The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s*.

³ Korac, Maja. 2009. *Remaking Home: Reconstructing Life, Place and Identity in Rome and Amsterdam*. Studies in Forced Migration. New York: Berghahn Books.; Hall, Jonathan. 2016. "Are Migrants More Extreme Than Locals After War? Evidence From a Simultaneous Survey of Migrants in Sweden and Locals in Bosnia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60 (1): 89–117.

⁴ Lovrenović, Ivan. 2001. *Bosnia: A Cultural History*. New York: New York University Press. 173-174.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Malcolm, Noel. 2002. *Bosnia: A Short History*. London: Pan.

1990s. National groups were increasingly played off each other, with Serb nationalism being revived throughout the country. By 1989, Yugoslavia was in economic turmoil, in large part due to its financial debt to the West. By the early 1990s, Yugoslavia faced numerous crises: an increasingly weak political system that could not balance powerful political figures, an economic and geopolitical crisis over the territory of BiH which fueled a rise of ethnic nationalism.⁷ Rivalries between Yugoslavia's constituent republics increased as each competed for more autonomy from the federal government in Belgrade. New political parties emerged to compete with the Communist Party, emphasizing ethnic belonging over political platforms. An increasingly republic-oriented media pursued nationalist goals which exacerbated the unstable political situation. In BiH, 'Yugoslavs' and by extension those who considered themselves 'Bosnians,' became 'stateless persons' as the very Yugoslav state started to disintegrate.⁸

Bosnia became embroiled in war, which resulted in close to 100,000 deaths between 1992 and 1995.⁹ "Suddenly one had to be Slovene, Croat or Serb – or almost by default, Muslim. Of all people I talked with between 1995 and 1998, the Muslims in Bosnia seemed most grounded – even now – in a cosmopolitan "Yugoslav" identity."¹⁰ "The idea of 'Bosnian' in an outside world that perceived only ethnic conflict and unidimensional concepts of national self-determination was too complex."¹¹ This continues today with Bosnia's citizens often declaring themselves by their ethnonational identity as Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim), Croat, or Serb. Outside of the country, between 1 and 2.2 million are estimated to belong to a Bosnian diaspora.¹² These individuals escaped the fates of many of their compatriots including ethnic cleansing, genocide, rape, being under siege, hunger – in short, conflict and war, that left the newly independent country devastated.¹³ Their recognition of themselves as Bosnians firstly rather than the ethnonational identity is in turn a particular political statement, a response to the political environment of their homeland and region which continues to promote limited concepts of belonging or not belonging to it.

BiH since 1995

A journalist once described Bosnia and Herzegovina as "Absurdistan."¹⁴ The General Framework Agreement, better known as the Dayton Peace Accords, was signed in Dayton, OH in November 1995 and ratified in Paris in December 1995, marking the official end of the war. In an effort to appease ethnonationalism as well as find a peaceful solution to end the conflict, the country became a consociational democracy.¹⁵ The Dayton Peace Accords were signed with support and the engagement of multiple international actors invested in the area including the United States and the EU. In fact, previous research has argued that Bosnia's governmental power is in effect in the hands of international institutions, a 'neotrusteeship.'¹⁶ However, over the last two decades, this international influence has waned and the country's political elites have effectively been left to co-opt the state without much incentive to move

⁷ Woodward, Susan L., and Brookings Institution. 1995. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution. 235-236.

⁸ Wilmer, Franke. 2002. *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia*. New York: Routledge.

⁹ The *Bosnian Book of the Dead* consolidated information compiled by the Research and Documentation Centre in Sarajevo and contained 96,895 cases with each relating to a victim who was killed, disappeared, or died as a result of the war. It is considered an approximation, and not the complete total.

¹⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹¹ Woodward, Susan L., and Brookings Institution. 1995. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution. 300.

¹² This number varies depending on what is considered diaspora, as second generation individuals might not have their citizenship papers all in order or be registered to vote in the homeland. I use Bosnian or Bosniak for the diaspora actors because, depending on what they indicated to me during interviews and how they present themselves.

¹³ Toal, Gerard, and Carl T Dahlman. 2011. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Kraske, Marion. 2008. "Bosnien: Showdown in Absurdistan." *Spiegel Online*, March 23. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bosnien-showdown-in-absurdistan-a-541913.html>.

¹⁵ Lijphart, Arend. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

¹⁶ Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2004. "Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States." *International Security* 28 (4): 7.

towards liberal democracy. Over time, this has led to external actors unable “to prevent local insurgents from wresting control of regions and the countryside.”¹⁷

On the subnational level, there are two so-called entities, the Federation and Republika Srpska. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), which comprises 51% of the country’s territory, is dominated by Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats, while Republika Srpska (RS), 49% of BiH’s territory, is mostly dominated by Bosnian Serbs. These territorial demographics are a direct result of the mass exodus of individuals during the war and the ethnic cleansing of the 1990s, which resulted in the country’s conflict-generated diaspora.¹⁸ The Federation is further divided into ten ‘cantons,’ in an effort to ensure that Bosnian Croats’ political voices are dominant in certain parts of the Federation where they are demographically dominant. Cantons are further divided into municipalities, *opštine*, that are assigned to deliver basic government functions at the local level, further decentralizing governmental functions. The RS is managed as one canton from Banja Luka, its capital, centrally.

The Dayton Peace Accords envisioned a governance system that would enable ethnic divisions to be overcome, over time, through multilevel mechanisms that give voice and agency to different groups within the country. While authors such as Bache and Flinders argue for the importance of considering multi-level governance as a system of overlapping networks,¹⁹ it is also important to acknowledge that the concept has not been applied effectively or researched in depth when looking at the Balkan region. “In other words, the double silence is complete: the multi-level governance literature is silent on the specifics of South East Europe, and even the best literature on governance in South East Europe is silent on the concept of multi-level governance.”²⁰ Instead, it has resulted in an effective political structure that benefits and maintains the current political elites in power. The fragmentation of the country has further weakened the state rather than instilling more democracy.²¹

Neither of the entities has historical basis and both are the product of “last-minute creative cartography.”²² “Dayton has been a poor foundation for peace-building because it institutionalized unresolved conflict, ethnic division, and fragmentation at the heart of the Bosnian state. Given the war crimes involved in its creation, the Republika Srpska is a difficult reality for most Bosniaks to countenance.”²³ Ultimately, ‘Dayton’ BiH, in an effort to maintain peace which has been its greatest success since 1995. However, it has resulted in continued political stalemates due to the complicated governmental structures overviewed in this section. The political elites, belonging to ethnonationalist parties that led the country to war, have maintained their grips on power and have not helped to forward democratization and peacebuilding processes.²⁴ Ethnoterritorial political forces have, over the last two decades, learned how to obstruct the state’s functions for their own benefit.²⁵ The country’s foreign policy potential has also been cut short in this regard, though different actors and institutions have forwarded its mandate.²⁶ This is ironic as BiH was the least homogenous republic within Yugoslavia prior to the war, where integrated notions of identity were embraced.²⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹⁸ Toal, Gerard, and Carl T Dahlman. 2011. *Bosnia Remade : Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. New York:Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ Bache, Ian, and Matthew V. Flinders, eds. 2004. *Multi-Level Governance*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁰ Stubbs, Paul. 2005. “Stretching Concepts Too Far? Multi-Level Governance, Policy Transfer and the Politics of Scale in South East Europe.” *Southeast European Politics* VI (2): 69.

²¹ Adis Merdzanović’s book talks about this at length.

²² Toal, Gerard, and Carl T Dahlman. 2011. *Bosnia Remade : Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. New York:Oxford University Press, 160.

²³ Ibid., 310.

²⁴ Mujanovic, Jasmin. 2014. “The Baja Class and the Politics of Participation.” In *Unbriable Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Fight for the Commons*, edited by Damir Arsenijević, 135–45. Southeast European Integration Perspectives 10. Baden- Baden: Nomos.

²⁵ Toal, Gerard, and Carl T Dahlman. 2011. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁶ Hasić, J., & Karabegović, D. (Eds.). (2019). *Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Foreign Policy Since Independence*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05654-4>

²⁷ Hromadžić, Azra. 2011. “Bathroom Mixing: Youth Negotiate Democratization in Postconflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

Consociationalism by means of the Dayton Peace Accords has led to a obstruction by political elites who are not held accountable at the polls, which has led to an increasingly dysfunctional and corrupt state framework. To cite an example, it took thirteen different steps to start a business in BiH, as opposed to 6 for the countries in the region with an average of 40 days rather than the average 16 in the region in 2012.²⁸ The same data in 2016 reflects that it takes twelve different steps, and approximately 50 more days to start a business in BiH than the rest of the European region.²⁹ This governance structure has maintained a perpetual state of post-conflict transition for the last two decades, with little reconciliation or justice. More importantly, integration with EU policies as well as the potential accession of BiH to the EU is continuously hindered by issues of internally contested sovereignty.³⁰

Previous research has noted the challenges moderate political parties face in elections as they are competing with dominant nationalist parties in post-conflict environments.³¹ Ethnic tensions within the country continue to be played out in the political sphere, only further benefiting the political elites.³² Rather than developing political platforms meant to foster more progressive policies and implementation of initiatives that help local populations, these ethnically based parties often simply compete with one another in order to gain votes as the “outbidding for ethnic support is a constant possibility.”³³ They take advantage of any real citizen engagement by seeking to discredit it and consolidate their power.³⁴ This stalls transitional justice processes due to a lack of political will.

The vigilant perseverance of three different ‘constituent’ nations – Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Serbs, has hampered the development of national unity among BiH citizens, simplifying them to their national belonging. Individuals who identify as ‘Bosnian’ find they have little political space to exercise their political identity amidst the ethnonational political environment. Rather, one must fit themselves within one of the ‘constituent nations’ categories in order to be able to receive state benefits of any kind. The political climate in BiH reflects a divided society in which nationalist parties dominate the political conversation and the people themselves have to an extent lost the option of being simply “Bosnian” within a political system in which ethnic belonging remains the dominant priority.³⁵ This of course is doubly difficult for the country’s recognized minorities who have little to no room for political agency. For those in the diaspora, it is a challenge to navigate the political structures within the country. The bureaucracy of the current system, not to mention the lack of representation many in the diaspora feel within Bosnian parliamentary and governmental structures, ensures they remain frustrated when they need to resolve any legal issues in their homeland. Further, it limits their political engagement in formal institutions.³⁶

This short overview provides some context about the political environment in the homeland functions and in turn how diaspora members experience it. It is noteworthy that change in the homeland, particularly civic engagement which creates opportunities for local actors to cooperate with diaspora, can potentially trigger diaspora engagement as it opens up the political environment for actors besides political parties to be influential. For example, the floods during 2014 elicited a diaspora response to fundraise in

²⁸ “Doing Business Measuring Business Regulations for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012.” 2013. Washington, D.C: World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreconomies/bosnia-and-herzegovina>. [Accessed January 2013].

²⁹ “Doing Business Measuring Business Regulations for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016.” 2016. Washington, D.C: World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreconomies/bosnia-and-herzegovina>. [Accessed June 2016].

³⁰ Hasić, J., & Karabegović, D. (Eds.). (2019). *Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Foreign Policy Since Independence*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05654-4>

³¹ Hulsey, John W. 2010. “‘Why Did They Vote for Those Guys Again?’ Challenges and Contradictions in the Promotion of Political Moderation in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Democratization* 17 (6): 1141.

³² Merdzanovic, Adis. 2015. *Democracy by Decree: Prospects and Limits of Imposed Consociational Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Ibidem-Verlag Haunschild.

³³ Horowitz, Donald L. 2000. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press. 346.

³⁴ Hasić, J., & Karabegović, D. (2018). Elite responses to contentious politics on the subnational level: The 2014 Bosnian protests. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 18(3), 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2018.1489609>

³⁵ Hulsey, John W. 2010. “‘Why Did They Vote for Those Guys Again?’ Challenges and Contradictions in the Promotion of Political Moderation in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Democratization* 17 (6): 1139.³⁶ Respondent BH16 (2013) Interview in August, Sarajevo, BiH. Respondent UK2 (2014) Interview in May, Birmingham, UK. Participant Observation at World Diaspora Congress, Sarajevo, May 2014.

order to help homeland communities, demonstrating diaspora's continued interest and engagement in its homeland. The following section will provide an overview of the Bosnian diaspora and their role in BiH today.

The Status of Diaspora and Returnees in BiH

The Dayton Peace Agreement, which serves as the country's constitution to date, provided for the return of refugees to their former regions after the end of the conflict. Annex 7 explicitly grants the right to return home safely, regain lost property, or to obtain just compensation among other things.³⁷ However, many individuals, having begun new lives abroad and having experienced their villages and homes destroyed as a result of the war have been reluctant to return. This has in turn benefited those in power after the war, solidifying the demographic shifts which happened during the war as a result of ethnic cleansing.³⁸ Between 1995 and 1998, more than 300,000 individuals returned to their homes.³⁹ Others rebuilt their homes, and continue to spend at least a few weeks in the homeland each year, usually during the summer period. Returnee communities have been firmly established in certain portions of the country such as the Bratunac/Srebrenica area as well as the Kozarac area near Banja Luka and Prijedor. For those who remain outside of the country, the structural set-up and political representation in their former localities is new and unfamiliar and diaspora members often feel disenfranchised and frustrated with the political realities of their post-conflict homeland.

Today, an estimated 2 million Bosnians live outside of its territory, across Europe, Australia, the United States and Canada, creating an incredible amount of potential for influence if mobilized. According to the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, the number of those in the diaspora registered to vote dropped to 38,000 for the 2012 elections from 458,000 in 1996, a drastic change, despite many retaining their citizenship and returning to BiH on a regular basis. In more recent election cycles, the number has increased closer to 70,000, but diaspora voting and thus, political engagement as a whole, is not prevalent in the country or outside of its borders. When asked about political participation in BiH, whether it is through voting or by other means, such as political party membership or adherence to party politics, diaspora interviewees almost exclusively answered they felt unrepresented by the existing political parties in BiH. They consider the voting process complicated as most feel unsupported by the embassies in their countries of settlement. "I have to re-register for every election, even though I've voted before. It's like they don't want us to vote from abroad."⁴⁰ The low rate of voter turnout signals the discontent many feel with the current political party structures. For local elections, moderate political choices are unavailable as many of the places from which diaspora members come from are now part of the RS where Bosnian Serb parties dominate the political scene, both in local as well as federal elections.

How does diaspora mobilization make an impact, if any, in the peacebuilding and transitional justice processes? How do they mobilize amongst each other? On one hand, recent protests, as mentioned earlier, combined with citizen solidarity in light of recent floods in May 2014 indicate that BiH's population is relying more and more on each other, sensing the divide between the political elite and ordinary citizens rather than embracing ethnonationalism. The diaspora has in large part supported these efforts, both through social media as well as donation campaigns. On the other hand, finding avenues where action is possible, whether by embracing national institutions at risk, or mobilizing in domains where the state is unable to do so or where diaspora influence can create change. Examples include mobilizing in order to reopen the National Museum of Bosnia or lobbying for policies on a national basis, regardless of citizens' background, to renaming streets, to seemingly banal shows of solidarity such as inclusive national festivals,

³⁷ *Dayton Peace Agreement, General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 21 November 1995.

³⁸ Toal, Gerard, and Carl T Dahlman. 2011. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and Its Reversal*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³⁹ Statistical Estimates of Displacement and UNHCR Populations of Concern, 1993 – 2009.

⁴⁰ Respondents BH6 and BH10 (2013) Interview in July, Sarajevo, BiH; Other respondents such as SWE8 and SWE9 (2014) Interview in June, Malmö and Gothenburg, Sweden.; Respondents DE22 and DE23 (2014) Interviews in October, Munich, Germany echoed similar sentiments.

cross-national support for the football team.⁴¹ Often, creating social capital among different civil society organizations has more positive effect for rebuilding communities in post-conflict society than political parties.⁴² Diaspora mobilization aims for a similar impact.

While the Bosnian state remains in political gridlock, there are nonetheless efforts to include the diaspora within larger frameworks within the country. In May 2014, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Development Program organized a roundtable discussion entitled “Migration and Development.” Diaspora from several countries, representatives from Bosnian and Herzegovinian institutions at different levels of government, local nongovernmental organizations and international agencies met to discuss how best to implement policies in order to encourage more socio-economic development.⁴³ A policy on diasporas has been spearheaded in the BiH government by several local politicians who are interested in implementing a diaspora strategy that will foster better relationships between BiH and its diaspora.⁴⁴ More recently, a diaspora mapping exercise and more institutional cooperation in order to link diaspora to development projects have signaled a willingness on the state and local levels that diaspora can and should play a larger role in the country.⁴⁵

Events like this bring together both diaspora and local actors in order to discuss the potential of working together.⁴⁶ However, often times there is a limited engagement with peacebuilding and transitional justice, with the focus on economic development. For example, 2014 also marked the second Bosnian and Herzegovinian Diaspora Business Forum, bringing together members from the diaspora willing to invest with local actors, in an effort to ensure that investment happens in a transparent and efficient way, in order to benefit both the diaspora investor as well as the homeland by bringing revenues, employment to some citizens, and profit for the region.⁴⁷

Bosnian diaspora activists cite their potential political power if engaged effectively through mechanisms such as voting and economic development. They are also keen to help build the country's capacity as they see both financial benefit for themselves, feel the desire to give back, and see the potential for their homeland to prosper.⁴⁸ The relationship between the diaspora as both an economic and political power in BiH, amidst international organizations, ethnonationally focused politicians, and other state actors represents a delicate balance between competing interests in a transitional state after conflict, something under-explored in within the academic literature.

As such a vibrant group with a variety of elements and mechanisms for engagement, they remain an underutilized resource of their homeland. At the same time, this research offers insight into theory building in regards to diaspora and fragile states such as BiH. Diaspora mobilization often addresses poorly functioning governmental and political institutions in the country and thus can sometimes also be at odds or in direct opposition to local governments. In post-conflict environment, it is thus imperative that the mechanisms which influence diaspora mobilization are understood better.

⁴¹ Ivie, Robert L., and Timothy William Waters. 2010. “Discursive Democracy and the Challenge of State Building in Divided Societies: Reckoning with Symbolic Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Nationalities Papers* 38 (4): 462.

⁴² Pickering, Paula. 2006. “Generating Social Capital for Bridging Ethnic Divisions in the Balkans: Case Studies of Two Bosniak Cities.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (1): 79–103.

⁴³ Participant Observation, Migration and Development Roundtable Event, Sarajevo, May 2014.

⁴⁴ Hasić, Jasmin. 2016. “Involvement of Diasporas in Peace-Building Processes – A Comparative Analysis of Views and Attitudes towards the Bosnian Diaspora as an External Peace-Building Factor in the Country.” PhD Dissertation, Université libre de Bruxelles/Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli di Roma.

⁴⁵ Karabegović, D., & Hasić, J. (2019). ‘Protection and Promotion of BiH’s Citizens’ Interests Abroad’: Foreign Policy Relations with Diaspora. In J. Hasić & D. Karabegović (Eds.), *Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Foreign Policy Since Independence* (pp. 209–231). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05654-4_10

⁴⁶ Respondent BH17 (2014) Interview in June, Sarajevo, BiH; Respondents SWE14 and SWE12 (2014) Interview in June, Stockholm, Sweden.; Participant Observation, Migration and Development Roundtable Event, Sarajevo, May 2014.

⁴⁷ Respondent BH17 (2014) Interview in June, Sarajevo, BiH.; The website for the 2nd Annual BhDiaFor is bhdiafor.org.⁴⁸ Respondent BH17 (2014) Interview in June, Sarajevo, BiH. Respondent SWE9 (2014) Interview in June, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Previous Scholarly Work on Bosnian Diaspora

Scholarly work on the Bosnian diaspora often focuses on individuals within that population, and their lives in the host country, rather than collective actions undertaken by the diaspora within a larger context. Several monograph-length works based on empirical research with Bosnians, or individuals from former Yugoslav states, exist, detailing their links to their host land and, increasingly, their attachments to the homeland.

Valenta and Ramet's book on Bosnian diaspora is perhaps the most comprehensive collection of work on the population, incorporating research from several countries across Europe as well as Australia and North America.⁴⁹ Halilovich's chapter on Bosnian diaspora in Australia highlights how diaspora often organize in 'local' clubs and associations which are, to various degrees, multi-ethnic or mixed (i.e. include members of all Bosnian ethnic groups).⁵⁰ He argues that the general Bosnian diaspora population in Australia maintain a distance between larger umbrella organizations they consider as too nationalistic or victim-centered around a certain ethnicity. Thereby, they further stress their independence in regards to political pursuits differentiating between the larger organizations' pursuit of "the political and business agendas of their leaders than with the real local issues "back there at home" or "over here in exile" of those on whose behalf they claim to be acting."⁵¹ This reflects on their lack of interest in being identified as 'victims' or otherwise taken advantage of by one of the existing political agendas in their homeland. In this way, the lack of activity to larger diaspora organizations becomes a political stand as they do not want to be associated with the political dynamics present in the homeland.

Halilovich expands his ideas about Bosnian diaspora in his own monograph. He argues articulately about how Bosnian communities across the United States, Europe, and Australia have integrated into their respective host communities, while nonetheless expressing some attachment to the previous homeland. For many, the homeland remains marred by a lack of economic opportunities and political agendas that do not align with their own views. The country they remember does not exist anymore, and the communities in which they find themselves become central to their identity construction.⁵² He adapts this belonging, with a focus on the shared past, as 'trans-local,' due to 'deliberate and informed decisions when choosing destinations for their resettlement.'⁵³ 'They are rather both increasingly imagined as well as made up of concrete social relations.'⁵⁴

As such, they challenge, but at the same reinforce national identities of the larger diaspora group, and might not be recognized, or in other words, are seen as competing with larger umbrella organizations. This extends to individuals from Brčko, Mostar, the Podrinje region, and Prijedor, and is based on shared memories of the local place of origin combined with those of the hostland. 'Displaced Bosnians are not only members of their broader ethnic or national diasporas, nor simply refugees waiting to return to their original homelands.'⁵⁵

Korac, in exploring Bosnian communities in Rome and Amsterdam, has also touched on the importance of how diaspora build their communities. Rather than naming this 'translocal,' for her it is a matter of 'emplacement,' a process of pluralization which moves beyond citizenship and incorporation regimes, embracing both national borders within host countries as well as transnational processes of these communities across state borders. She stresses the importance of considering social networks and contextualizing relationships between places of origin and destination. Valuable in its empirical insights and rich interview material, Korac focuses on the individual agency of refugees from former Yugoslavia in building and reconstituting their communities, both in the respective cities she researched, as well as

⁴⁹ Valenta, Marko, and Sabrina P Ramet, eds. 2011. *The Bosnian Diaspora: Integration in Transnational Communities*. Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

⁵⁰ Halilovich, Hariz. 2012. "Trans-Local Communities in the Age of Transnationalism: Bosnians in Diaspora." *International Migration* 50 (1): 171.

⁵¹ Ibid. 170.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Halilovich, Hariz. 2013. *Places of Pain: Forced Displacement, Popular Memory, and Trans-Local Identities in Bosnian War-Torn Communities*. Space and Place, v. 10. New York: Berghahn Books. 134 – 135.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 151.

transnationally.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, this research focuses on how the lives of individuals are rebuilt and remade in the host countries, beyond the dichotomies of citizenship or non-citizenship, assimilation and integration, and others, rather than also looking at the individuals' agency towards their homeland. She is much more focused on the migratory patterns refugees decide on when fleeing or choosing to settle in certain places, rather than their potential to mobilize once they have.

Other research has provided particular insight into Bosnian communities in particular countries. Franz's research examines integration schemes in both Austria and the United States and the Bosnian immigrants and their assimilation processes through a comparative lens. She also stresses the importance of agency among the Bosnian refugees she interviews for her case study, around 25 from Austria (Vienna) and 20 from the United States (New York City).⁵⁷ However, this kind of research demonstrates a limited engagement with the post-conflict dynamics of the homeland. Rather, the interest remains on integration in the host country, rather than post-conflict processes in the homeland and the politics as a result of which diaspora mobilize. Still, it provides a useful comparison of the challenges Bosnian refugees encountered between political legal frameworks in the United States and Austria, bringing to light the importance of the host land contexts and opening up the field to examine how diaspora mobilization is influenced by host country policies.

Perhaps the most concentrated research on Bosnian diaspora focuses on the case study of Bosnians in Sweden, often placed within the larger context of an ongoing discourse on integration within Swedish society and the welfare system.⁵⁸ Eastmond notes Bosnians used the system to their advantage sometimes, gaining further entitlements based on their status as refugees, whether job placement or social benefits. She notes how Bosnian diaspora members were not interested in being labeled as victims but wanted their prior lives and potential skills acknowledged in their new homeland.⁵⁹

Further research has also focused on transnationalism and returnee dynamics with a particular look at the importance of local community dynamics. This research in turn speaks to the translocality research mentioned previously by examining the difficulties and risks associated with repatriation and reconstruction of one's homeland.⁶⁰ It calls into question that individuals might not consider themselves 'diaspora' because of the continued time they spend in BiH despite also living in their host countries. This becomes particularly salient for individuals who continue to be involved in their local communities in BiH, and who are in many ways more involved in their homeland as citizens than in their host land. It calls into question whether one can delineate clearly between homeland and host country and between individuals as diaspora or non-diaspora due to the time spent in BiH and, in many cases, the continued relationships they maintain on a local level within BiH.⁶¹

Different models for the homeland to connect with diaspora populations have been considered, if briefly, with circular migration, or diaspora retiring back in the homeland.⁶² This is also relevant when considering second-generation diaspora individuals, as relationships to the homeland can change depending on future generations, who have more ties to Sweden, as younger individuals have closer ties to Sweden and their Bosnian Swedish acquaintances rather than those from the homeland.⁶³ Eastmond also notes the negative impact Bosnians felt when they were separated in different parts of Sweden, away

⁵⁶ Korac, Maja. 2009. *Remaking Home: Reconstructing Life, Place and Identity in Rome and Amsterdam*. Studies in Forced Migration. New York: Berghahn Books.

⁵⁷ Franz, Barbara. 2005. *Uprooted & Unwanted*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

⁵⁸ Eastmond, Marita. 2011. "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (2): 277–95.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Eastmond, Marita. 2006. "Transnational Returns and Reconstruction in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina." *International Migration* 44 (3): 141–66.

⁶¹ Respondent SWE10 (2014) Interview in June, Gothenburg, Sweden; Respondent SWE3 (2014) Interview in March, Motala, Sweden.

⁶² Blitz, Brad. 2015. "Bosnia Revisited: A Retrospective on the Legacy of the Conflict." *Forced Migration Review*, September. <http://www.fmreview.org/dayton20/blitz#sthash.CbntwRC.dpuf>.

⁶³ Eastmond, Marita. 2006. "Transnational Returns and Reconstruction in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina." *International Migration* 44 (3): 156.

from others who had arrived with them from their respective hometowns.⁶⁴ For example, it can mean maintaining dual citizenship, two homes, and seasonal returns to a particular community in the homeland.⁶⁵ This is particularly also interesting to consider as there have been increased migration waves of Bosnians, and generally individuals leaving the countries of the region over the last decade, not through forced migration, but as a result of political and economic stagnation.⁶⁶

Further research on Bosnian diaspora in Sweden has addressed questions about the relationship between diaspora and conflict. It demonstrates reconciliatory attitudes are actually stronger and that identity politics seems to play a smaller role in diaspora members' lives than previous theories indicate. They explain this through increased structural integration in diasporas' host countries, primarily inclusion into societal institutions as well as the labor market.⁶⁷ This data relies on a national survey of diaspora from former Yugoslavia, rather than interviewing, offering a more comprehensive look at attitudes within the population. Hall and Kostić stress that socio-cultural integration does not play a role in affecting reconciliatory attitudes. Socio-cultural integration refers to informal social ties with both Swedes but also with their host societies.

As such, their conclusion has potentially lasting impacts on how host countries look at diaspora groups and the effect they can play in mitigating the negative aspects of diasporic activity. Additionally, through surveys conducted in Sweden with Bosnian diaspora, as well as in BiH simultaneously, these authors show that diaspora favor multiculturalism and have a greater propensity towards forgiveness. In fact, due to certain exposures in the host country, diaspora can develop different views of conflict from homeland populations.⁶⁸ This conclusion points to the fact that issues of transitional justice and the importance of these processes for post-conflict environments potentially have more importance to diaspora members.

Kostić and Hall's research opens up the space for research on diaspora mobilization in light of transitional justice initiatives that seek to address post-conflict homelands, particularly considering that reconciliatory attitudes are higher than expected. This indicates the potential of diaspora as being more prone to cooperative initiatives that seek to reconcile relationships in the homeland as well.

Biculturalism is 'simultaneous identification with both one's heritage culture and the dominant culture in the settlement country,' as an acculturation strategy which is one of the most difficult, but also promising when considered in regards to diaspora's reconciliatory attitudes.⁶⁹ Here, Hall's research points to the importance of recognizing the complexity of identity identification among Bosnian diaspora in Sweden who 'nurture a separate but inclusive Yugoslav (rather than ethnic) heritage.'⁷⁰

More ethnographic studies of Bosnian refugees in Sweden present their integration challenges in finding employment. While limited in scope, they nonetheless also point to the importance of integration in the homeland. However, it also correctly notes that this is not the only validation for diaspora individuals. "One could say that especially those who experienced downward mobility make up for it, or "catch up" with their former status, through their children's "appropriate" achievements in Sweden."⁷¹ Today, their employment rates are comparable and higher, depending on the municipality in Sweden, than other refugee

⁶⁴ Eastmond, Marita. 2011. "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (2): 277–95.

⁶⁵ Eastmond, Marita. 2006. "Transnational Returns and Reconstruction in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina." *International Migration* 44 (3): 141–66.

⁶⁶ Vracic, A. (2018). *The Way Back: Brain Drain and Prosperity in the Western Balkans* [Policy Brief]. European Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_way_back_brain_drain_and_prosperity_in_the_western_balkans

⁶⁷ Hall, Jonathan and Roland Kostić. (2009) "Does Integration Encourage Reconciliatory Attitudes among Diasporas?" Working Paper No. 7, Global Migration and Transnational Politics, George Mason University.

⁶⁸ Hall, Jonathan. (2010) "The Transnational Dimensions of Societal Reconciliation." Working Paper No. 14, Global Migration and Transnational Politics, George Mason University.

⁶⁹ Hall, Jonathan. 2013. *Migration and Perceptions of War: Simultaneous Surveys in Countries of Origin and Settlement*. Report / Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University 100. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 99.

⁷¹ Povranović Frykman, Maja 2012. "Struggle for Recognition: Bosnian Refugees' Employment Experiences in Sweden." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 31 (1): 78.

groups.⁷² For those who were unable to find work or were underemployed, the education opportunities and potential for their children gave them an impetus to remain in Sweden.

My own previous research has also focused on Bosnians in the United States and Sweden by documenting a specific example of transnational cultural production in response to the commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide. I argue that diaspora cultural production can help move beyond ethnonationalist public political debates evidenced in Bosnia and Herzegovina while reaffirming belonging to the diaspora in respective host countries.⁷³ Through their emphasis on the importance of genocide recognition within a Bosnian context rather than within a particular Bosniak political narrative, diaspora communities differentiate themselves and their commemoration activities from many of those that are dominated by ethnonationalist discourses in the homeland.⁷⁴

Building on the importance of contextualizing and comparing diaspora mobilization across hostlands, in a joint article with Koinova, we linked diaspora mobilization with transitional justice, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.⁷⁵ The importance of this work in the context of literature on the Bosnian diaspora is that it emphasizes the spatial dynamics of diaspora mobilization, hence, the understanding of diaspora that they can try to affect change not just on the local level in the homeland, but also in the hostland, nationally, as well as globally. More recently, the link between diasporas and transitional justice has been made more explicitly when it comes to Bosnian diaspora, through mechanisms that enable commemoration and remembrance activities, and thus place these important migration actors into transitional justice and peacebuilding processes in the country through more than economic development.⁷⁶

Conclusion

With more than 2 million individuals who live outside of its borders, the Bosnian diaspora accounts for over half of the less than 4 million individuals who are considered to be living within BiH's borders. While they are not a homogenous group, understanding the demographics and the historical background of this population, particularly its variations, including conflict-generated diaspora and guest workers, contributes to a better understanding about how individuals mobilize. BiH as a post-conflict state, while stable, does not provide the economic conditions for individuals to return, thus ensuring that BiH will continue to have a significant diaspora population for the foreseeable future. Bosnian citizens continue to emigrate outside of the country in order to pursue better lives rather than face deteriorating economic conditions which include a 42% unemployment rate according to the Agency of Statistics in BiH, only further ensuring this.⁷⁷ The influence of this population on the country, through remittances and beyond, remains an important element to consider for its future in terms of political, social, and economic terms.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Karabegović, Dženeta. 2014. "Što Te Nema?": Transnational Cultural Production in the Diaspora in Response to the Srebrenica Genocide." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 20 (4): 455–75.

⁷⁴ Karabegović, Dženeta. 2017. "Forgetting and Remembering: Diaspora, Homeland Politics, and Justice." paper presented at ISA-ERC Workshop, "Diasporas and Transitional Justice: Local, National, and Global Dimensions.," Baltimore, MD, February 21, 2017.

⁷⁵ Koinova, Maria, and Dženeta Karabegović. 2016. "Diasporas and Transitional Justice: Transnational Activism from Local to Global Levels of Engagement." *Global Networks*.

⁷⁶ Karabegović, D. (2019). Who chooses to remember? Diaspora participation in memorialization initiatives. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1577473>

⁷⁷ This information can be accessed on the Agency's website at www.bhas.ba/ and is regularly updated, though has remained relatively stable around 42% over last few years.

ROUNDTABLE 2 (JUNE 16, 9:30 CEST TIME) "SOCIOLOGY OF REFUGEES: RESEARCH, ACTIVISM, EXPERIENCE"

Forced migration & sociology

Massoud Sharifi Dryaz¹

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona/CER-Migracions-Barcelona/CADIS-EHESS-Paris

The number of refugees and forced migrants in the world exceeded 70 million globally last year. Millions of people around the world every year forced to move by conflict, oppressive state regimes, civil wars, political unrest, terrorism, demographic engineering, natural disasters, and development projects. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other forms of forced migration have occupied the attention of a broad range of scholars and policymakers for several decades. Researchers from a variety of disciplines have contributed to the field and one can certainly say that today, forced migration questions have become increasingly interdisciplinary. In this context, forced migration is a fairly new area of sociological research, which has developed mainly over the latter part of the twentieth century. This presentation proposes to approach how refugee migration has been constructed as an object and analysed by the sociologists. The focus of the presentation is to present overall trends in the development of sociological studies on the subject of refugee migration. This contribution argues that sociological research on the forced migration attempts the move toward an integration of microlevels and macrolevels of analysis that involves a broad range of interconnected research topics ranging from refugee's subjective experience to transnational dynamics.

Reception conditions for refugees in Spain

Merlys Mosquera Chamat

Abstract

For the last three years, Spain has experienced the significant increase on the number of new asylum seekers from 15,755 people in 2016 to 118,264 people in 2019; which caused the collapse of the asylum procedure system; added to the claims of the European Union to adapt national legislation to the community guidelines. The increase of asylum applications also impacts the need to accelerate the response of the National Reception System in order to preserve the guarantees of human rights. This document presents a summary of some of the main challenges in the reception conditions for refugees and asylum seekers:

Access to international protection: the vast majority of asylum applicants face difficulties in accessing both the asylum procedure and reception conditions. The duration of the asylum procedure varies significantly depending on the nationality of applicants and can last from 3 months to 2 years, and even up to 3 years in exceptional cases.

Receptions conditions: material reception conditions under national legislation on asylum are the same for every asylum seeker. It is divided into three phases, which the asylum seekers follow without distinctions. Theoretically, these phases foresee an 18-month period; this can reach a maximum of 24 months for vulnerable people. In case of getting a negative decision on their asylum application, the most part of applicants abandon the system in fifteen days.

Reception conditions include accommodation within a Refugee Reception Centre or NGO-run reception facilities located over the Spanish territory, the coverage of personal expenses for basic needs, educational activities, training in social and cultural skills, legal assistance, psychological support, learning a host country language, and vocational training. After six months applicants move out the Reception Centres and receive financial support to start an independent life; during this period, intensive language courses and access to employability programmes are offered in order to gradually get autonomy.

The system works with families moderately structured, with resilient capacities or educational skills that can be deployed in the new context. However the time on the system is highly challenging for victims of gender-based violence – such as women or LGBTI+ people on whom the trauma of persecution persists; people with mental health problems due the violence experienced at their countries, people with chronic health problems who need special care for a longer period. That's why one of the main challenges is to manage the system from the real need and profiles of the people in order to decrease their vulnerability and improve their capacities.

Labour issues: in general asylum seekers face many obstacles to accessing the Spanish labour market in practice. Asylum seekers are legally entitled to start working six months after their application for asylum is officially accepted, while their application is being examined. However, many of them do not speak Spanish at the time they receive the job permit. In addition to that, the recognition of their qualifications is a long, complicated and often expensive procedure. Last but not least, they face discrimination due to their nationality or religion.

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Social cohesion, Participation, and Inclusion
through Cultural Engagement

Technological approach taken in the SPICE project

Paul Mulholland

The Open University, UK

SO-CLOSE Conference



1

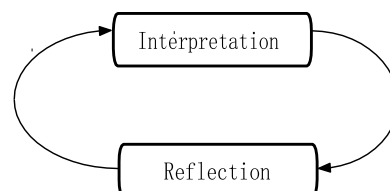
SPICE project

- *SPICE: Social cohesion, Participation and Inclusion through Cultural Engagement*
- *Funded under the H2020 topic Collaborative approaches to cultural heritage for social cohesion*
- *3-year project started 1st May 2020*
- *Consortium of 4 museums, 3 technology companies and 8 universities*
- *Coordinated by University of Bologna and CNR Italy*



Citizen Curation

- SPICE is developing tools and methods to support Citizen Curation
- Citizen Curation involves two interrelated processes of interpretation and reflection
- Interpretation
 - Citizens use cultural objects to develop their own interpretations (stories, collections, exhibitions)
- Reflection
 - Interpretations used collectively to reflect on similarities and differences in perspective within and across citizen groups
 - Focus on within-group diversity and across-group similarity



SO-CLOSE Conference, 15-16 June 2020



3

Citizen Curation

- Bringing curatorial methods to citizens (as citizen science initiatives brought scientific methods to citizens)
- Enable all to participate in curatorial activities and share their interpretations
- Museums accommodating multiple voices rather than providing an authoritative view
- Inclusive: adaptive to different citizen groups
- Promote empathy and social cohesion (looking across and within groups)
- Provide a source of research material and tools to access them (social experiments, understanding audiences)



4

Citizen Curation case studies

- Finland, Design Museum Helsinki
 - Enable older people to connect personal artefacts and interpretations to Finnish culture
 - Use virtual and touring galleries to span generations
- Ireland, Irish Museum of Modern Art
 - Support groups who are less able to visit the museum physically, such as asylum seekers and children with serious illnesses, to share their own perspectives.
 - Use universal, personal themes such as family to make interconnections across groups.



5

Citizen Curation case studies

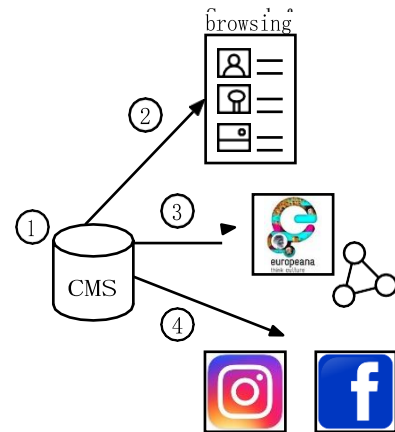
- Spain, Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid
 - Use games and puzzles in the museum to elicit views on the environment
 - Explore similarities and differences of opinion
- Italy, Fondazione Torino Musei
 - Enable Deaf people to interpret and tell stories about artworks for the benefit of others
- Israel, Hecht Museum
 - Enable children from religious and secular communities to express and share their viewpoints and appreciate the variety of opinions even within a community.
 - Provide support for exploring opinions across different communities in order to find similarities and respect differences.



6

Current museum use of social media and the Web

- (1) Collection Management System (CMS) used internally by the museum
- (2) May support website access to the collection but not visitor contributions
- (3) Whole or part of the collection may be exported as structured data or to Europeana
- (4) Social media platforms mainly suited to broadcasting rather than cultural engagement



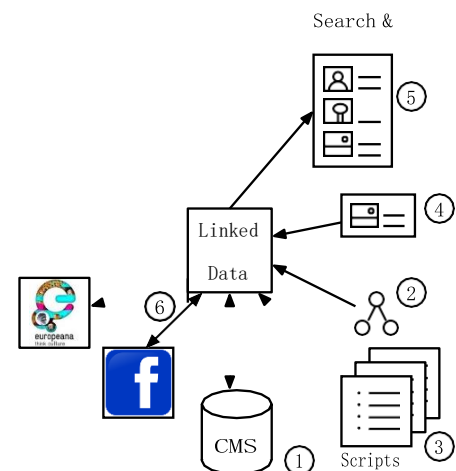
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7

Linked Data architecture for Citizen Curation

- Linked Data server as standalone web application with own digital assets and data
- (1) Can access resources from a CMS
- (2) Has its own taxonomies and ontologies
- (3) Scripts define citizen activities (e.g. collecting, storytelling)
- (4) Citizen contributions can be added and managed
- (5) Searching and browsing functionality
- (6) Connect to other platforms (e.g. Facebook, Europeana)



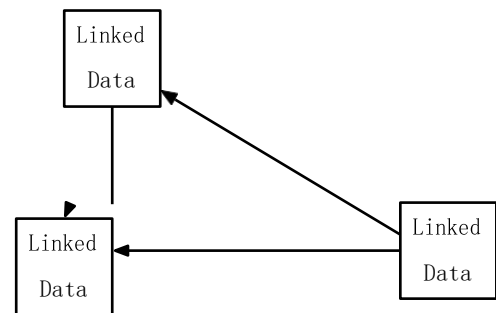
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8

Linked Data architecture for Citizen Curation

- Data can be shared with other servers
- Different museums or groups can have their own server
- Each server can have its own:
 - Repositories
 - Taxonomies
 - Scripted activities
 - Search and browsing functionality
 - Connections to other platforms



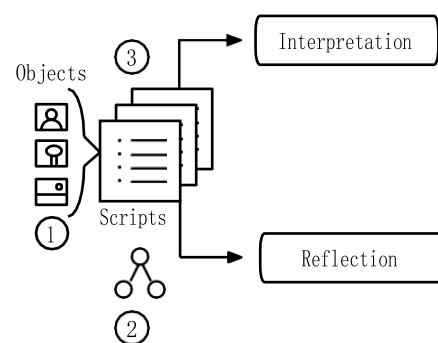
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9

Linked Data server supporting Citizen Curation

- (1) Each server has its own digital objects from CMSs, repositories or citizen contributions
- (2) Has its own taxonomies/ontologies
- (3) Has its own scripts made up of a combination of interpretation and reflection activities



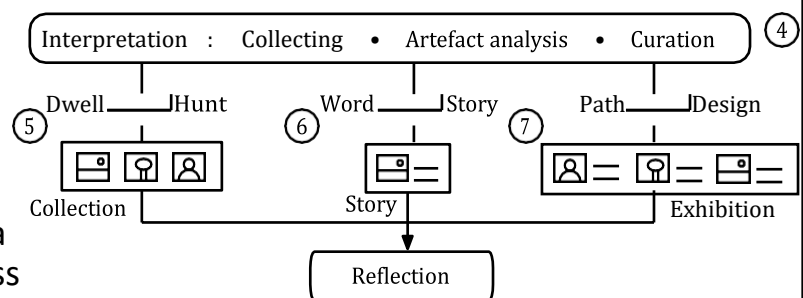
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10

Linked Data server supporting interpretation

- (4) Support for different interpretation activities (e.g. collecting, artefact analysis) of varying levels of engagement
- (5) Collections built automatically from dwell time or through a treasure hunt
- (6) Captioning or storytelling about an artwork
- (7) Exhibition built automatically from a path taken or through a curatorial design process



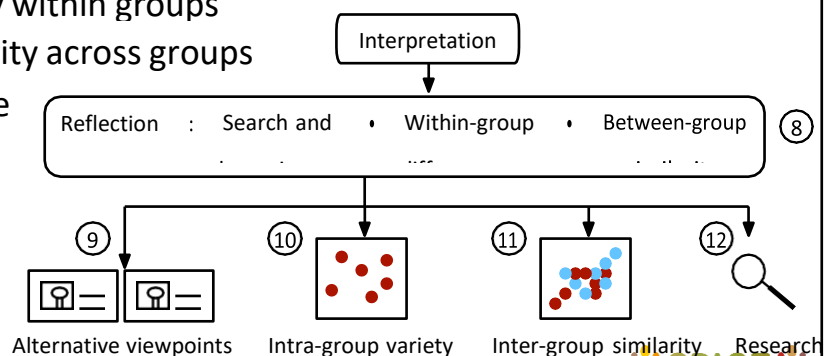
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11

Linked Data server supporting reflection

- (8) Support for different reflection activities
- (9) Suggest alternative interpretations of the same object
- (10) Visualising variety within groups
- (11) Visualising similarity across groups
- (12) Research resource for how citizens respond to cultural artefacts



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12

Technology design process

- Co-design with user communities and museums
- Iterative prototyping starting with lo-fi (paper) versions
- Tools supporting all local languages in the project (English, Italian, Spanish, Finnish and Hebrew)
- Built-in accessibility support (e.g. text to speech, text magnification, high contrast display, media captions, audio descriptions)



13

Technical summary

- Technology to support the process of Citizen Curation
- Linked Data servers with their own repositories, taxonomies, scripted activities, search and browsing
- Data can be shared between Linked Data servers
- Servers support their own interpretation activities (e.g. collecting, treasure hunts, storytelling, tagging)
- Servers support their own reflection activities (e.g. alternative interpretations, visualising differences and similarities)
- Technology co-designed with user communities
- Accessibility support for user interfaces



14

International Conference "From So Far to So Close. Addressing the Refugee Phenomenon: History, Sociology, Technology" (June 15-16th, Virtual format)



TRACTION

Abstract: Opera uses all the visual and performing arts to create extraordinary worlds of passion and sensibility. It is rightly recognised as a great achievement of European culture. And yet a form that once inspired social and artistic revolutions is often seen as the staid preserve of the elite. With rising inequality and social exclusion, many see opera—if they think of it at all—as symbolic of what is wrong in Europe today. TRACTION aims to change that using opera as a path for social and cultural inclusion, making it once again a force for radical transformation.

We do not want to make opera palatable to those who don't attend. We want to define new forms of artistic creation through which the most marginalised groups (migrants, the rural poor, young offenders and others) can work with artists to tell the stories that matter now. By combining best practice in participatory art with digital technology's innovations of language, form and process, we will define new approaches to co-creation and innovate in three fields: a) Opera creation and production; b) Immersive and interactive digital media; and c) Social integration and community development.

Experimental projects in inner-city Barcelona (ES), a youth prison in Leiria (PT) and rural communities in Ireland will test and share new ideas. Bridging the social and cultural divides involved will challenge many existing beliefs, structures and habits. The exceptional resources of the TRACTION partnership will help us meet that challenge through mutual support. The immediate outcomes will be new routes for social and economic integration for the people involved, better relationships between opera producers and society, and cutting-edge technological development. But the long-term prize is the definition of new processes that renew the art's potential to build cohesive societies and imagine a revitalised, common



Motivation

Inequality is the defining issue of our time, as politicians from Barack Obama¹ to Jean-Claude Juncker² have recognised. It constrains the lives and chances of millions of European citizens, and makes it harder to address existential threats like global warming. Because inequality is visible and experienced in daily life, it also makes the easy promises of populists seem attractive. The distance that most people feel from elite culture might not seem the most urgent of social inequalities, but its symbolism is powerful. Europe is a cultural space or it is nothing. Unless its citizens share, and feel common ownership of, the culture that expresses what are lightly called '**European values**', there is a real threat to the most successful peace-building project we have known.

Opera is the unavoidable heart of this challenge. A cornerstone of European cultural heritage, opera has always spoken to both elites and people, expressed both authority and revolution. Its colour, passion, beauty and drama have inspired generations. But in recent decades, this art has too often lost sight of its popular roots and radical edge. European Opera may be economically and artistically valuable, with a **turnover of €5 billion**, a permanent workforce of 50,000 and over 15,000 performances each year³. It may be the total art that includes every aspect of practice, the theatre of emotion that aspires to transcendent and universal artistic experience. It is certainly the form that gets most public subsidy for music, and the one that reaches least beyond the wealthy sections of society. Research shows that today's typical spectator is a 54-year-old woman with higher education, who travels by car and spends an average of €159 on her evening of culture⁴.

Opera is in danger of becoming a symbol of European inequality but - crucially - it also has the capacity to rewrite that story, to include those left behind in wider prosperity, to **renew itself** and so find the energy, the resonance and the heart to be once again **the root of living culture**. Achieving that means working on three things at once.

First, it means using new ideas of **co-creation and participatory art** to involve citizens in the creative process - and to prioritise those who are currently marginalised or ignored by opera: the poor, migrants, people living outside dominant cities or in institutions, disabled people, those of non-white heritage, in short, the majority of our fellow citizens. This means going much further than making opera accessible, though that is always important. It means **empowering people and communities** to become creators in their own right, to tell the stories that reflect their lives and resonate with their neighbours, to express their version of European values, to become active citizens, with agency and a meaningful right to be heard in the national cultural conversation.

Secondly, it means releasing the form, language and aesthetics of opera from the stuffy museum in which it has too often become trapped, not through glossy and surface changes (which are common enough as it struggles to be 'contemporary') but through **brave experiments with music**, performance and art. Unless opera learns to speak a language

¹ The Guardian (2013): <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/04/obama-income-inequality-minimum-wage-live>

² State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a better Europe (2016): http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-3043_en.htm

³ Opera Europe (Antony Feeny, economist) <http://www.opera-europa.org/en/benchmarking-exercise/mapping-exercise>

⁴ Opera, a European worth. Deloitte 2013.



that excites people again - without imitating those easy promises of populism - it is destined for a future of irrelevance.

Thirdly, it must **embrace new technology** both for the new possibilities it is rapidly creating all around us, and as a means to achieving the first two goals. What can digital technology, immersivity, virtual reality, the internet, social media, robotics and miniaturisation bring to the process of co-creation? What can they bring to the artistic language of opera and the ways in which artists connect with audiences? It is fair to say that other opera houses and other partnerships have done good work in relation to the first two objectives, but we do not know of any attempt to harness the potential of new technology in that process on the scale proposed by TRACTION.

It is not TRACTION's ambition to solve the challenges outlined here: it would be naïve not to recognise their scale and complexity. But we do aim to make an **important step** in the right direction. Our project is experimental, as it must be: we need new ideas if we are going to make an impact here. Not everything we try to do will work, but everything will bring new knowledge, and we are committed to sharing what we learn as widely as possible so that others can build on it in other cities and with different communities. We want to show that opera, and art more generally, is a powerful resource in reducing the effects of inequality on the people it touches and a meaningful way of challenging the values that have allowed it to become so widespread in recent decades. Many will feel that is an unrealistic ambition. But we are artists and scientists, and we know that nothing is real until we create it.

TRACTION will **provide a bridge** between opera professionals and specific communities at risk of exclusion based on three trials, understood as experimental attempts, to foster an **effective community dialogue** between diverse individuals and collectives on each one of the nodes: community opera with **migrants** (around LICEU at Barcelona), opera co-creation with **young inmates in prison** (driven by SAMP in Leiria) and bringing a novel digital operatic to **rural and depopulated areas** (led by INO in Ireland). Moreover, TRACTION will address also **cross-fertilisation** activities between these trial-nodes and new ones that will join the network during its lifetime (Expert Advisory Board members and supporters, early adopters, facilitators, other communities, etc.).

The project will enable community dialogue through two simultaneous processes. On the one hand, TRACTION will research, design and develop a **collaborative and participatory production toolset**, establishing a novel workflow for the co-creation and co-design of operas. It will include a front-end that provides conversational support for community dialogue, tools for user-generated rich media capture, such as immersive audiovisual and 360-degree content, smart media editing mechanisms, narrative engines and interactive adaptive media distribution technologies, that will produce interactive audiovisual content to support traditional opera formats, and **explore novel audiovisual operatic and art representation formats**.

At the same time, TRACTION will define and implement a **community-centred methodology** to conduct an effective dialogue with, within and between heterogeneous communities. This will be based on clear ethical principles, drawn from international experience and reflecting the best values of European culture to create an approach to co-



creation that always defends respect for human rights, dignity and autonomy. Thus, the methodology will guide not only what is done, but how and why it is done. These principles will equally be integral to the workflow defined by the TRACTION toolset. The toolset-driven procedure will guarantee the accomplishment of the workflow defined by the methodology, ensuring a community dialogue that will be **sustainable, capable of evaluation and replicable** for other art disciplines and communities.

The **outcomes** of TRACTION will be **multi-dimensional**. The areas of most confidence relate to the **social outcomes for community participants**: new skills, capacity and confidence, enhanced social networks and integration; better access to education and employment; increase in well-being, mental health and quality of life; stronger NGOs and community organisations. There will be similarly **profound change for the opera artists** and other professionals, who will develop a range of new ideas, resources and methods in relation to working with the community and co-creation. There will be a significant impact on opera creation methods and the language of the form itself, that will have a lasting influence on the future work of the organisations involved. Finally, there will be an important **impact on the relationship between opera and digital technology**, as new tools and technologies are developed, piloted and enhanced. This will certainly create valuable new knowledge and it has the potential to enrich market opportunities in different fields.

In order to gather all the necessary background and expertise to achieve the objectives of the project, the Consortium is formed by three artistic organisations, each one leading a specific trial (**LICEU** Barcelona Opera House, **INO** Irish National Opera, and **SAMP** Arts School in Leiria), a prestigious international referent in community and participatory art (**François Matarasso**), a company that produces immersive 360-degree formats (**VRI**), two technology-driven research institutes (**VICOM** and **CWI**) and two universities (**DCU** providing technological and scientific contributions and **UAB** focusing on a human and community-centric approach). Moreover, the project will have a core Expert Advisory Board in close collaboration with the project partners, influencing the trials and the TRACTION toolset, with organisations like **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**, **Opera Birmingham Company**, **Ópera XXI** and **Fondazione Teatro Grande Brescia**. In addition, TRACTION has a large number of organisations that support the project and the different trials, such as the city hall of Barcelona, Generalitat de Catalunya, Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports or Fundació Tot Raval in the case of Barcelona, the Leiria youth prison and city hall in the case of Portugal, or the democratic forum for the Irish-speaking community or the Civic Theatre in Ireland, or will promote cross-trial activities, such as **Opera Europa** or **OLA** (Ópera Latinoamérica).



Objectives and scope

2

TRACTION will create a bridge to promote a **community dialogue** between opera professionals and people at risk of exclusion through the co-creation of opera representations, delivering a web-based **collaborative and participatory production toolset**, which will be based on a **community-centric methodology**. This approach will ensure a sustainable and resilient transformation both in the diverse communities that participated in the co-creation and in the audience, and will make possible the replication of the methodology with other communities and art disciplines, through the deployment of the novel toolset.

Five specific objectives need to be addressed to demonstrate the feasibility of this novel approach:

O1: Promote, through their empowerment, a transformation of communities at risk of exclusion. The project will actively involve individuals and collectives that are currently not sufficiently integrated with cultural heritage experiences such as opera, whether because they do not know it, believe it does not represent them, or face economic barriers, to work together with opera professionals in a co-creation and co-design process. TRACTION will accompany those communities through social facilitators towards a learning by training approach in the diverse job profiles involved in an opera, fostering their integration in the job world and cultural heritage that will remain once the project finishes.

O2: Establish an effective collaborative and participatory production workflow for the co-creation and co-design of art representations. The project will research, design and provide a collaborative and participatory production toolset that will enable an effective community dialogue between opera professionals and other communities, covering the different stages of the co-creation of an opera. It will include a front-end that provides conversational support to invigorate the community dialogue; tools for user generated richmedia capture, such as audiovisual content or immersive 360 videos; the integration of semi-automatic accessibility services and tagging mechanisms, such as automatically generated captions/subtitles or face/object/scene detection to add metadata; smart editing technologies; narrative engines and algorithms for content summarisation and for the definition of interaction workflows; and adaptive media distribution technologies.

O3: Lay down a community-centric methodology to conduct an efficient and measurable community dialogue that will last in time and be replicable. The project will define a methodology to conduct an effective conversation between communities, placing the collaborative production toolset in the middle as a facilitator to follow and implement the methodology. This will make possible the replication of the methodology with other communities and art disciplines, as well as guaranteeing that the life-cycle of the art representation will last in time, addressing the resilience of both the communities and the audience.

O4: Explore novel audiovisual formats based in European cultural heritage, such as opera. The project will investigate how to shift opera representations towards the recognition of multiple identities and voices that are at the moment not sufficiently integrated in cultural heritage experiences, through novel formats combining fully digital



immersive and interactive media experiences for HMD (Head-Mounted Displays) with digitally enriched on-site traditional representations. Those novel approaches will reach new spectators, further than traditional audience in opera houses, actively engaging the audience and bringing opera to depopulated areas, hospitals, prisons or schools. Therefore, TRACTION will foster the inclusiveness of opera overcoming economic, social and educational barriers through novel co-created opera representations and digital capsules.

O5: Maximise the social and market impact of the TRACTION results. The consortium will ensure that the project has a determining impact on the European and global opera houses and theatres, democratising the access to opera and reaching new audiences, as well as exploring the impact in other art representations, in the cultural and creative industries, or across other sectors. The project will also pursue a sustainable social impact, where the promoted transformation will last in time and

Roundtable “Cultural Heritage and Digital Media. Building Synergies among H2020Projects”: Marc Hernández Güell (TEMP); @hernandezguell; marc@latempesta.cc

Project acronym:	SO-CLOSE
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Project title:	Enhancing Social Cohesion through Sharing the Cultural Heritage of Forced Migrations
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Funding Scheme:	H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019 (DT-TRANSFORMATIONS-11-2019, Collaborative approaches to cultural heritage for social cohesion)
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Project Duration:	2020/01/01 – 2022/12/31 (36 months)
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Coordinator:	UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA (UAB)
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Associated Beneficiaries:	LUNDS UNIVERSITET (ULUND) STOWARZYSZENIE WILLA DECJUSZA (VDA) FONDAZIONE SCUOLA DI PACE DI MONTE SOLE (MONTE) CONSORCI DEL MUSEU MEMORIAL DE L'EXILI (MUME) ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS (CERTH) ENGINEERING – INGEGNERIA INFORMATICA SPA (ENG) TEMPESTA MEDIA SL (TEMP) ELLINIKO FOROUM PROSFIGON (GFR)
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SO_CLOSE in a few lines

The ambition of the SO-CLOSE project is to contribute to social cohesion and fight refugee marginalization or exclusion by facilitating the encounters between similar life stories, through the mediation of innovative digital and artistic tools. Based on theories of cultural heritage-making, exposing the commonalities of past and present experiences, listening to the target groups' needs and through the development of a methodology template of co-creative design of replicable digital tools and cultural products, SO-CLOSE will improve social cohesion and promote mutual understanding between refugees and their local communities.

The resulting data and methodology will be used to develop several digital applications, for which purpose we have in our consortium strong technological partners with experience in this field. Working at the intersection of history, sociology, cultural studies, art and computer science.

SO-CLOSE will design educational and cultural tools based on personal memories and storytelling and an online platform, named Memory Center, built as a content aggregator and services platform.

SO-CLOSE development will be implemented in four different pilot locations, selected due to their similarities with the present and for the actual existence of memory and intangible cultural heritage:

- VDA, Krakow (Poland)
- Trikeri Island Concentration Camp (Greece)
- MUME de l'Exili (Spain)
- MONTE Marzabotto (Italy)

SO_CLOSE in a few lines

Designing new cultural experiences based on the cultural heritage of refugees addressing to generate social awareness.

As stated in the GA, the project will achieve this aim through the creation and implementation of innovations in three fields:

- **methodology** (participatory and collaborative design),
- **technology** (digital cultural heritage tools/applications) and
- **content** (locally-created narratives that mix past and present experiences of forced migration).



Tool's categorization

One of the key issues that needed to be addressed has been the generic use of the concept "tool". It creates confusion when used as a generic term without adding further qualifiers to distinguish when and for what purpose it's meant to be applied. Therefore, a special focus was put upon the categorization of the different tools, defining the purpose and moment of their use, the input they will receive, the output they will produce, who's going to use them and the audiences they will serve, the type or form it'll finally have, the scenario where it'll be displayed and, finally, their inherent qualities to serve SO-CLOSE's objectives.

On that basis, we also clarified that the concept of "tool" embodies not only the technological means but also the "methods" of co-creation.

“Methods” vs” methodologies”:

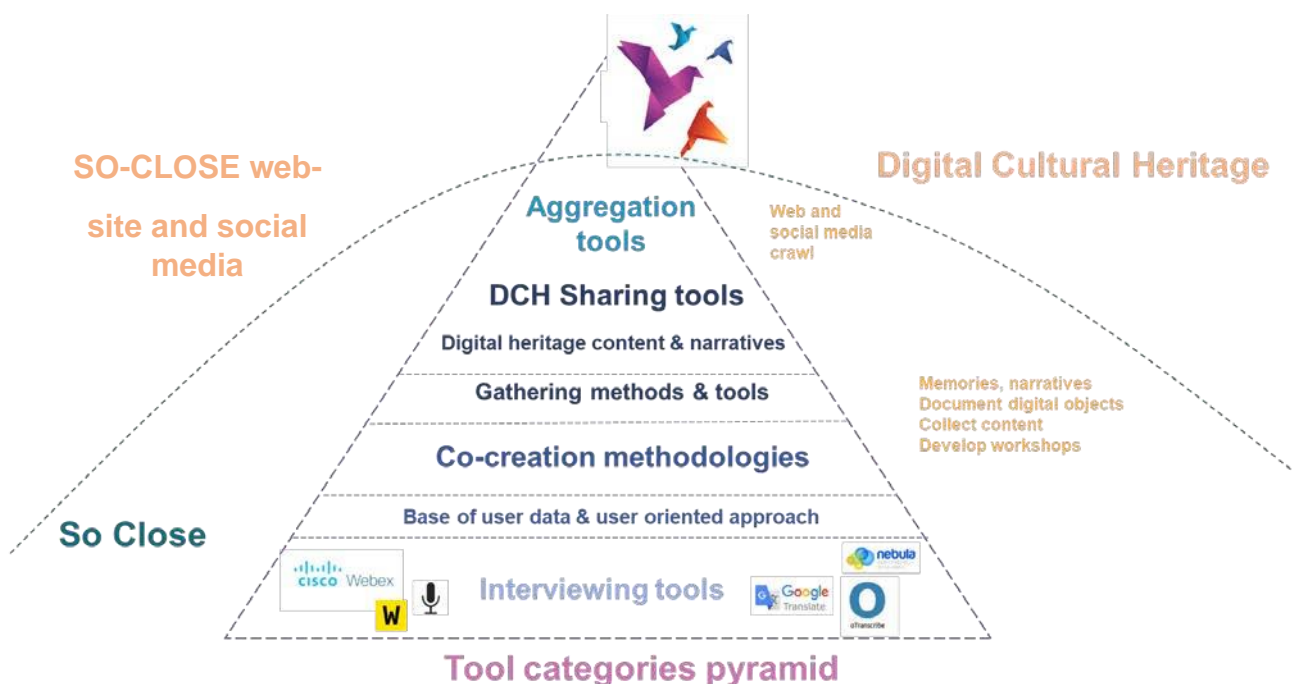
- A methodology (participatory,...) is the rationale for the research approach
- A method (storytelling, role play,..) is simply the tool used to answer your research questions — how, in short, you will go about collecting your data

With one methodology, you can apply several different methods to support or reject the research hypothesis (Brookshier; [read more](#))

The methodology of the tools categorization has thus been based on the operational needs of the project and attempts to establish a conceptual and practical framework for the analysis and development of the different tools linked with So-Close.

The four categories of tools and their respective functionalities are:

1. Interviewing tools; Managing qualitative interviews to produce audio/views of the sessions, transcriptions and translation files.
2. Content gathering methods & software tools; Supporting the co-creation workshops at the gathering of empirical material and cultural content, narratives, and experiences by transforming them into digital items/files using AV devices and software.
3. Digital Cultural heritage sharing tools; Developing replicable heritage tools that display and disseminate storytelling narratives on past and present forced migrations and displacements.
4. Aggregation tools: Creating an open access repository containing the rich DCH material to be produced by So Close, and all the social media /web crawlers and projects that feed the Memory Center Project.

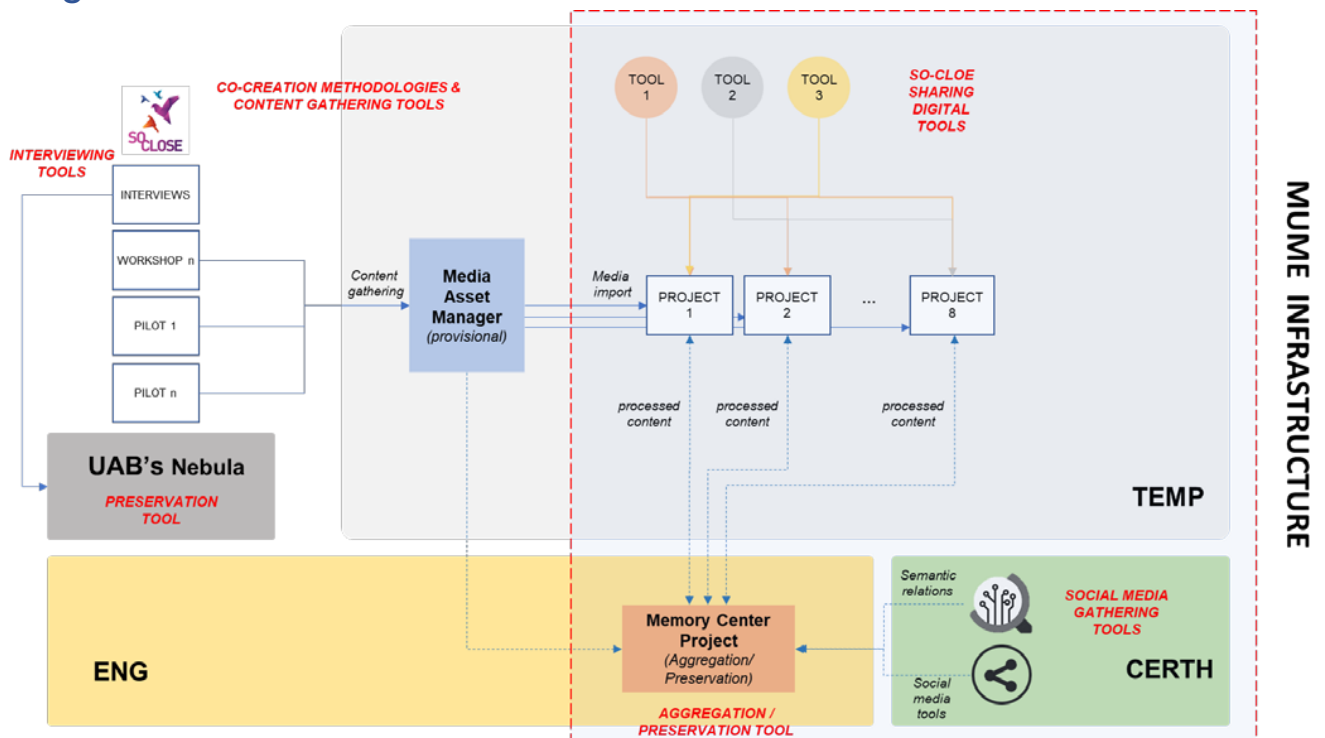


Tool's categorization table

So-Close Tool categorisation

	Interviewing tools	Content gathering tools & methods	Digital sharing tools	Aggregation tools
	Conduct qualitative research to define co-creation methodologies	Gathering of multi-modal refugee and local communities cultural content	Develop web-based digital tools to reach targeted audiences	Create open access repository to aggregate, recombine, share and preserve So-CLOSE DCH
Inputs	Interviews.	Workshop mediation & co-creation methodologies (arts, storytelling, role play, mind maps, ...)	Digital cultural heritage content gathered during Workshops and Pilots.	Atomic and complex content. Social media and web crawlers
Tools functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record Transcribe Post-edit Translate Data storing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop workshops Develop methods (arts and audiovisuals, roaming camera,...) Collect cultural heritage content Co-create narratives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital narratives Display DCH Disseminate DCH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web and social media crawl Preserve DCH Aggregate, recombine and share content Digital preservation
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Interview's recordings ✓ Transcription files ✓ Translations ✓ Preliminary target groups needs and demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DCH content, narratives, experiences, memories and life stories • Digitised documents Cookbooks, letters, paintings. • Photos; Videos and 3D objects. • Metadata • 360o immersive AV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DCH content into sharing tool types • Web docs • Virtual expos • Interactive visuals • Serious games ✓ Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ENG Memory Centre Project ✓ CERTH technology (data mining, semantic integration and reasoning, video retrieval)
	UAB's Nebula	MUME Infrastructure		

High level architecture



Fundamental criteria

Fundamental criteria for the DCH sharing tool types assessment as following:

Storytelling and immersive digital narratives

The diverse digital resources, provided by innovative technologies, and their field applications, create new ways of representation and meaning-making. Typically, digital storytelling media can offer alternative non-linear narration practices allowing multiple interpretations, the involvement of the user in the information flow, as well as inclusion of a great variety of media. Digital storytelling media are also considered to be carriers of a democratization potential, as they open up the possibility of expressing and disseminating personal and collective narratives to a wide non-expert public (Hartley & McWilliam, 2008)

So Close project needs to make use of the expressive capabilities of digital media to be able to reflect and express the multi-layered narratives that are encompassing. Different locations, historical moments, personas, and resources can be combined through digital storytelling means, serving the program's central aim, to bring closer the different life stories. Namely, digital means that can be combined are text, still imagery, audio-visuals, hypertext connections, interactive features, enhancing the user's experience, and the story's impact (Ioannidis et al., 2013).

Engagement and social transformation

Another highly valued quality for the tools to be selected is their capacity to engage the users. Engagement is achieved when the tool can maintain the interest and attention of the user, through a user-centered architecture, attractive and intuitive design, and cohesive content. Being a result of different components, engagement is closely related to other aspects of digital tools platforms, especially the user-platform interactivity.

Hybridization

The hybridization of formats refers to the capacity of creating tools that combine different types and forms of sharing formats, that interact in a complementary way, enhancing their range and spectrum and the performed functions.

Interoperability

Interoperability refers to the interconnection of systems that are capable to exchange data and feed each other mutually. Although a technical term, referring to software interoperability we refer to the need that the different So Close tools communicate with their respective repositories, establishing interaction paths. Technically, the optimal way to accomplish and guarantee interoperability between the tool types in So-Close is to develop web-based tools.

Adaptability

In the project's framework, adaptability means to be able to adapt the tools to different cultural contexts, besides the scope of the So Close project. As described, although the content of each shared experience is local, the tools generated will have to be replicable and scalable to different needs and heritage related practices.

Sustainability of the tools

The sustainability of the tools to be generated is one of the greatest challenges that the program has to face, to guarantee further usage of the tools by potential future users. Sustainability also requires selecting and developing the tools that respond directly to the project's aims without overwhelming them keeping in mind an unattended usage.

Foster co-creation

The So Close tools must not only enable the sharing of cultural heritage but also be aligned with the co-creation methods that will be applied to create new DCH content.

Accessibility

Web Accessibility is defined by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

Findings and recommendations

Although each tool category has been treated separately, the general conclusions drawn from the study and the respective recommendations are the following:

Findings	Recommendations
I) There is a plethora of different digital tools, software, and devices that have to be implemented in So-Close to accomplish the program's objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Tool's qualities and inherent strength to serve the project's needs and objectives have to be paramount content gathering. ☑ Don't focus on technology rather than in a user-centered design and program's needs.
II) The available technologies offer a wide spectrum of advanced tool types possibilities, so focusing on gathering (AV,3D) and sharing (web-based) tools will help in advancing towards So-close's objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We recommend diversifying tools of co-creation techniques and methods (arts, storytelling, role play, mind maps, ...) to be able to, later on, adapt the material into hybrid forms of sharing tools.
III) Defining user-centered co-creation methodologies is central to So-Close objectives. These methodologies involve facilitation and representation methods/ techniques using cultural and artistic disciplines and forms. Gathering tools are supporting the methods meant to apply these methodologies in the creation of digitized and shareable content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Mobile driven tools are generally recommended for participatory activities. ☑ Having in mind optimal DCH sharing tools types can lead to better methods and gathering content definition also resulting in better project alignment and fulfillment of So-Close objectives.
IV) In the specific fields of cultural heritage and social integration, we evidenced the spreading use of VR applications, serious games, and specialized chatbots, by projects promoted by the EU and also international institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ That said, we suggest focusing on alternative web-based DCH sharing tool types that can benefit So-Close program interest and differential value. ☑ Hybridization of the DCH sharing tools types can also be a more innovative approach in SO-CLOSE toolbox.
V) Open Access and interoperability are narrowly linked with web-based technologies, not conditioned by technical or installation requirements, and easier to design as a sustainable tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ We recommend developing the DCH sharing tools under web-based technologies to be able to reach a wider audience, be compliant with So-CLOSE's Quality Criteria (accessibility, sustainability,...) and to allow SO-CLOSE architecture to fit and work properly.
VI) The Consortium know-how and the resources available are decisive factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ To overcome limitations, the tools to be developed must be aligned with the partner's expertise and incorporate previous experiences and research conducted in specific fields by the participant centers.

