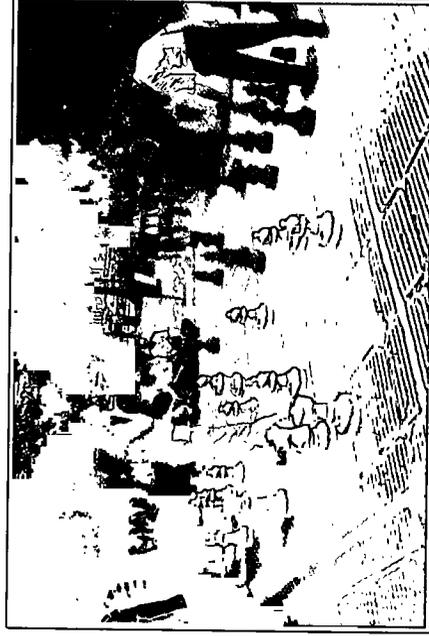




A WORLD BANK COUNTRY STUDY

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Local Level Institutions
and Social Capital Study



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and Social Capital Study*

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iv
Introduction	1
Conceptual and Policy Context	2
The Study's Operational Definition of Social Capital	2
Specific Objectives of the Study	2
Methodology	3
Organization of the Study	3
Part I. Interpersonal Trust, Social Cleavages and Formal Institutions	5
A. Decline and Changes in Interpersonal Trust	5
B. Social Cleavages and Population Movements	10
C. Social Cleavages and Social Welfare System	16
D. Fragmentation of Local-Level Institutions	21
Part II. Attitudes toward Local-Level Institutions, and Forms of Collective Action	27
A. General Assessment of Public Services and Formal Institutions	27
B. Relationships between Citizens and Local-Level Institutions	33
C. Relationship between Citizens and Formal Voluntary Associations	39
D. Forms of Collective Action Related to Local Public Services	47
Conclusions and Recommendations	54

Acknowledgements

This study on *Local Level Institutions and Social Capital* in Bosnia and Herzegovina was conceived to aid in the elaboration of a full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, currently being carried out by the Government, as well as other Bank sector projects. The study supports the CAS objective of developing strategies and policies to promote inclusion through dissemination of public information, community-based activities, and strengthening of the local NGO sector.

The qualitative part of this research, based on focus group discussions and interviews with key informants, was carried out in April and May 2001 in six selected municipalities (Tuzla, Banja Luka, Bihac, Zvornik, Brcko, Gornji Vakuf). A total of 25 focus group discussions and 67 face-to-face interviews were conducted during that period. A nationwide opinion survey to check the validity of the qualitative findings was carried out in June 2001, shortly after the end of the field work. The opinion survey was based on a representative sample of 675 persons.

The research was carried out under the leadership of Patrizia Poggi. The field work was carried out by PRISM Research, a Sarajevo-based survey agency. Mirsada Muzur, Dino Djipa, and Snjezana Kojic-Hasanagic conducted the field work and the first data analysis. Xavier Bougarel designed the questionnaire and conducted most of the face-to-face interviews, carried out the literature review, and wrote the first draft of the report. Esad Hecimovic provided valuable information and contacts. Deborah Davis edited the first draft. Paula F. Lytle helped in the last phases of the work to sharpen the main messages. Thanks also go to Xavier Devictor, Christiaan Grootaert and Colin Scott (Peer reviewers). Alexandre Marc and Simon Gray provided comments and direction throughout the research and kept on soliciting this report.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABiH	Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<i>Armija Bosne i Hercegovine</i>)
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CCI	Center for Civic Initiatives (<i>Centar za Civilne Inicijative</i>)
CIPP	Legal Aid and Information Center (<i>Centar za Informativnu i Pravnu Pomoc</i>)
CRPC	Commission for Real Property Claims
ESI	European Stability Initiative
HDZ	Croat Democratic Community (<i>Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica</i>)
HVO	Croat Council of Defense (<i>Hrvatsko Vijece Odbrane</i>)
IBHI	Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEBL	Inter-Entity Border-Line
IPTF	International Police Task Force
JOB	Unified Organization of Veterans (<i>Jedinstvena Organizacija Boraca</i>)
KM	Convertible Mark (<i>Konvertibilna Marka</i>)
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
MZ	Neighborhood Committee (<i>Mjesna Zajednica</i>)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDP	Party of Democratic Prosperity (<i>Partija za Demokratski Prosperitet</i>)
PEIR	Public Expenditure and Institutional Review
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RRTF	Return and Reconstruction Task Force
RS	Serb Republic (<i>Republika Srpska</i>)
SCAT	Social Capital Assessment Tool
SDA	Party of Democratic Action (<i>Stranka Demokratske Akcije</i>)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (<i>Socijaldemokratska Partija</i>)
SDS	Serb Democratic Party (<i>Srpska Demokratska Stranka</i>)
Sfor	Stabilization Force
SNSD	Party of Independent Social Democrats (<i>Savez Nezavisnih Socijaldemokrata</i>)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VRS	Army of the Serb Republic (<i>Vojska Republike Srpske</i>)

Introduction

This study evaluates social capital and local-level institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina six years after the end of the war, which caused the death of about 200,000 people, the displacement of more than 50 percent of the population,¹ and a profound disruption of the country's social, institutional, and economic fabric. Although the violence and ethnic cleansing formally ended in December 1995, the progress toward lasting peace has depended on the close involvement of international actors and on large infusions of international aid. The country still faces many difficulties, including massive poverty and unemployment, shattered and neglected infrastructure, deteriorated public services, organized crime, corruption in public institutions, and a pervasive lack of trust not only between citizens and public institutions, but also among different ethnic groups, as shown by the relatively low level of minority returns.² This lack of trust—a central element of social cohesion, or social capital—is one of the main constraints to recovery and development, as Bosnia-Herzegovina undergoes the double transition from war to peace and from a centrally planned to a market economy. **The purpose of this study, therefore, is to analyze the nature of social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and how it relates to the functioning of local-level institutions, which are critical for actors in conflict resolution, effective public service delivery, and sustainable development.**

This study is part of the World Bank's current program of analytical work on Bosnia-Herzegovina, which also includes (1) a Poverty Assessment; (2) a Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (PEIR), to assess fairness and effectiveness in the use of public resources; (3) a Local Government Study, to assess local governance and financial and institutional capacity; and (4) a Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), to provide a broad view of poverty and social indicators. In addition, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently formulating a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). All of these studies are being carried out in parallel in order to set the stage for a comprehensive development program, the design of which will benefit from this study's findings on how Bosnian citizens and institutions act at the local level. The study also supports the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)³ objective of developing strategies and policies that promote inclusion through community-based activities, strengthening of formal voluntary associations, and dissemination of public information.

Conceptual and Policy Context

Social capital—broadly defined as the *networks, norms, and values that enable people to act collectively to produce social benefits*—has been increasingly recognized as an essential element of peacebuilding, reconstruction, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. The literature distinguishes three types of social capital:

- **Bonding social capital** refers to kinship and other intra-group networks or formal associations. It serves as a collective coping and risk-management mechanism when money, physical resources, and social safety nets are absent, and helps reduce violence and other problems by reinforcing group values. However, bonding social capital can lock the poor into long-term poverty by acting as a barrier to outside

¹ In 1991, Bosnia-Herzegovina had about 4.4 million inhabitants. During the war, 1.2 million became refugees abroad, and 1.3 million became displaced persons (IDPs) in Bosnia-Herzegovina itself.

² Since 1996, the UNHCR has registered about 700,000 returns of refugees and IDPs in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole, but only 150,000 returns of refugees and IDPs to areas where they are not of the local ethnic majority (so-called minority returns).

³ World Bank, 2000b.

opportunities and resources, can deepen social cleavages and conflicts, and thus can perpetuate exclusion and undermine development.

- **Bridging social capital**, on the other hand, refers to those networks or formal associations linking individuals and groups beyond major social categories and cleavages. It provides the poor with the potential to leverage new resources, and fosters generalized trust and reciprocity. Thus bridging social capital plays an important and long-term role in sustainable development.
- **Linking social capital** refers to the links people have with higher levels of decision-making and resource allocation, and thus provides the poor with potential access to additional resources and political voice.

The Study's Operational Definition of Social Capital

While many studies of Bosnia-Herzegovina have analyzed social capital through a general assessment of interpersonal trust and confidence in public institutions, this study extends the concept to include civic engagement—as reflected by membership in formal voluntary associations—and examines the influence of social capital on the capacity of Bosnian citizens to act collectively and bring about positive change in the delivery of public services. Therefore, it focuses not only on the interactions among several constitutive and related elements of social capital, but also on how interpersonal trust, civic engagement, and confidence in public institutions influence the frequency and scope of collective action and, conversely, are influenced by its practical forms and results.

The study's emphasis on collective action as an outcome and source of social capital can, at the most basic level, help identify ways to rebuild trust and cooperation within and across groups where they have been diminished, as in societies that continue to suffer from the aftermath of conflict. In terms of operations, this approach allows us to draw a number of tentative conclusions and recommendations for policy dialogue, which could lead to the identification of projects in municipal and community-driven development, health, governance, public services, and other areas affecting poverty, social and political stability, and quality of life.

Specific Objectives of the Study

To this end, the study aims to describe the practical behaviors of Bosnian citizens and institutions and analyze interactions at the local level. Its three main objectives are to:

- qualitatively assess the nature of **interpersonal relations** in Bosnia-Herzegovina—levels of trust, forms of cooperation, and forms of conflict among individuals and groups, such as ethnic groups, poor and rich, urban and rural residents, locals and internally displaced persons (IDPs) or minority returnees;
- identify the **local-level institutions**, both formal (municipalities, neighborhood committees—MZs,⁴ citizens' associations, non-governmental organizations⁵) and

⁴ Neighborhood committees (*mjesne zajednice*, MZs) are the smallest administrative unit in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They can encompass an urban neighborhood, a large village, or a few small villages, with a population ranging from 500 to 4,000 inhabitants. On the legal status of MZs, see Part IIB.

⁵ In Bosnia-Herzegovina the term "citizens' association" (*udruzenje gradjana*) refers most often to state-subsidized formal associations dating back from the Communist period or linked to the nationalist parties; and the term "non-governmental organization" (*nevladina organizacija*) to the new formal associations funded by the international community. See Part IIC.

informal (personal connections with local leaders), to which people turn to cope with poverty and improve their access to local public services;

- identify the frequency and forms of **collective action**—that is, self-organization and public protest—used by people in relation to local public services; and analyze their social and institutional determinants.

Methodology

In accordance with the Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT), this study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Qualitative Work: The fieldwork was carried out in April and May 2001 in a representative sample of six sites, which provided a wide range of social and political situations: Bihac, Gornji Vakuf, and Tuzla in the Federation; Banja Luka and Zvornik in the Serb Republic; and Brcko, a district with special status.

Depending on the local political context, three or four basic focus groups were held at each site, taking into account the ethnic and urban/rural cleavages. In addition, some specific focus groups were held with vulnerable groups such as IDPs living in collective centers and Serb refugees from Croatia; veterans, who have a strong collective identity and a high potential for collective mobilization; and young people, whose participation in local life is particularly important for the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In all, 25 focus groups were conducted. As part of the qualitative work, the team also carried out 67 in-depth interviews with key informants, including, in all sites:

- the mayor or one of his close associates (except in Banja Luka),
- representative of the local ethnic minorities,
- representatives of neighborhood committees (MZs),
- representatives of formal voluntary associations,
- local representatives or field officers of international organizations.

Quantitative Work: The quantitative work consisted of an opinion survey carried out in June 2001, based on a representative sample of 675 persons covering all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The survey documented:

- the evolution of interpersonal relations at the local level,
- the assessment by Bosnian citizens of public services and local-level institutions,
- forms of collective action related to local public services,
- participation in formal voluntary associations.

Organization of the Study

Part I of the study, *Interpersonal Trust, Social Cleavages and Formal Institutions*, describes the general evolution of social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina, at both the micro level (bonding and bridging social capital) and the macro level (linking social capital). It also describes the links among these different kinds of social capital. It explores the way interpersonal trust and social cleavages (micro-level of social capital) have been affected by the population movements of the war and post-war periods, and how formal institutions such as new property laws, social protection and social assistance mechanisms, and local level institutions, are now affecting trust and social cohesion. Part I is divided into four sections:

- A. *Decline and Changes in Interpersonal Trust* describes the decline in social capital (especially bridging) over the last decade, and its uneven distribution among ethnic areas and social groups (urban-rural, high versus low income);
- B. *Social Cleavages and Personal Movements* describes the main social cleavages in post-war Bosnian society, fed by conflicts over scarce resources;
- C. *Social Cleavages and Social Welfare System* discusses the disappearance of the social safety net and shows that international donations tend to perpetuate the social cleavages created by the war; and
- D. *Fragmentation of Local Level Institutions* shows how ethnic fragmentation is related to the behaviors of municipal authorities and imbalances in the distribution of public infrastructure.

Part II of the study, *Attitudes toward Local-Level Institutions, and Forms of Collective Action*, describes relations at the local level between citizens and formal institutions, in a context of impoverishment and decline of social capital. It explores the practical attitudes of Bosnian citizens (resort to private connections and bribery, membership in voluntary associations, participation to local collective action), and how this behavior influences the evolution of social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Part II is divided into four sections:

- A. *General Assessment of Public Services and Formal Institutions* shows that Bosnian citizens have a generally negative assessment of public services and formal institutions, but have a nuanced understanding of the causes;
- B. *Relationships between Citizens and Local-Level Institutions* shows that informal practices (private connections, bribery) are reinforced by the disintegration of the main institutional forms of mediation and participation;
- C. *Relationship between Citizens and Formal Voluntary Associations* describes the decline in associative life, but underlines the fact that both traditional and new types of voluntary associations can contribute to the creation of social capital; and
- D. *Forms of Collective Action Related to Local Public Services* discusses the main forms of collective action (infrastructure projects, clean-up actions, collective protests), and the segments of the population that are more likely to participate in each.

Part I. Interpersonal Trust, Social Cleavages and Formal Institutions

A. Decline and Changes in Interpersonal Trust

Main Changes in Micro-Level of Social Capital

Changes in social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the prewar period are apparent in the level of interpersonal trust and the related practices of socialization and mutual help. These changes vary by ethnic area. In the survey, 43.9 percent of the residents of Bosniac majority area said there has been no decline in socialization with old neighbours of different nationality, showing a relative high level of bridging social capital. The opinion survey shows a greater decline in social capital among the poor and IDPs, as measured by invitations and material assistance, due to a decline in interpersonal trust (micro-level of social capital). This, in turn, affects formal institutions and civic values (macro-level of social capital).

Decline in Bridging Social Capital

In focus groups, nearly all participants say that Bosnia-Herzegovina is characterized by a low level of interpersonal trust, due largely to the uncertainties and disappointments of the war and post-war periods. This has led to a decline in socialization and mutual help:

As far as I can remember before the war people spent more time together and cared more about the problems of others. – representative of the Center for Civic Initiatives, Tuzla

The results of the opinion survey show that socialization has declined much more among colleagues (35.12 percent) and neighbors—especially those of another nationality (47.4 percent)—than among relatives (15.5 percent) and closest friends (19.1 percent). This withdrawal to a limited number of close personal relationships means bridging social capital has been more affected than bonding social capital by the events of the past decade.

Different Impact of the War and the Post-War Periods

Focus group participants and key informants note important differences between the war and the post-war periods. War has, first of all, affected interpersonal trust between members of different ethnic groups (bridging social capital). At the same time, war has often reinforced trust between people belonging to the same ethnic group, the same place, or the same family (bonding social capital). The war period is remembered, in part, as a time of closeness and solidarity:

When I look at my building, my neighbors, we all spent days together in the cellars and the only important thing was whether you would survive. It was different, we were together non-stop. – representative of the Center for Civic Initiatives, Tuzla

The new circumstances of the post-war period—the growing importance of material preoccupations, and the emergence of new inequalities—have contributed to a general climate of jealousy, competition, and selfishness:

Now people have turned to themselves, generally everyone is looking out for their own interests. The difference between the rich and poor keeps growing. The whole society is moving toward people being valued for what they have, what they own materially and not on their own personal values and qualities. – president of local NGO, Tuzla

Poverty and housing problems, unemployment or double occupation have also rendered socialization and mutual help more difficult, leading to a further narrowing of personal relations, and endangering even relations with closer friends and relatives (bonding social capital). The opinion survey shows that while the decline of socialization with neighbors of different nationality can be directly related to the war and ethnic cleansing, material difficulties play a more important role in the case of relatives and closer friends.

Spatial Differences in Amount of Social Capital

Social capital has been differently affected in the country's three ethnic areas. The Bosniac majority area seems to have kept the highest amount of bridging social capital; more residents of this area say there has been no decline in socialization with old neighbors of different nationality (44 percent, compared to 31.3 percent in the Croat majority area and 30.2 percent in the Serb majority area); and fewer mention intolerance as the main reason for decline in socialization (4.1 percent, compared to 6.6 percent in the Serb majority area and 19.5 percent in the Croat area). Bonding social capital appears slightly more resistant to decline in the Croat majority area (90.6 percent say there had been no decline in socialization with relatives, compared to 85.5 percent in the Bosniac majority area and 78.9 percent in the Serb majority area).

These differences can be seen in the readiness to assist other people: residents of the Bosniac majority area are more ready to help other people, while those in the Serb and Croat majority areas are less likely to do so.

In some places, bridging social capital seems not to have declined, particularly in the Bosniac majority area, where ethnic cleansing was less systematic. In Tuzla, for example, the non-nationalist municipal leadership strove to preserve local inter-ethnic relations; while in Bihac, inter-ethnic tensions were overshadowed by fighting among Bosniacs. On the other hand, the higher level of bonding social capital in the Croat majority area is probably due to its better economic situation and its strong political and religious cohesiveness. The Serb majority area, for its part, is characterized by an almost complete ethnic homogeneity, a lasting institutional and political crisis, and a particularly difficult economic situation.

Invitations and Material Assistance as Indicators of Social Capital

Invitations and material assistance are concrete forms of socialization and mutual help, and thus interpersonal trust—and these remain frequent occurrences in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Uneven Distribution of Social Capital

The frequency of invitations and material assistance shows clearly that the poor have less social capital than the rich. Many more poor respondents do not invite relatives (44 vs. 7 percent for high-income respondents), friends (43 vs. 20 percent), colleagues (80 vs. 46 percent), old neighbors (same nationality: 65 vs. 36 percent; different nationality: 74 vs. 57 percent), and new neighbors (same nationality: 74 vs. 50 percent; different nationality: 82 vs. 63 percent). Thus, the poor have fewer possibilities of developing new personal relationships, and much more difficulty maintaining closeness even with their relatives (bonding social capital).

Reshaping of Social Capital

War and ethnic cleansing have not completely destroyed personal relations between members of different ethnic groups (bridging social capital). In the three months preceding the opinion survey, more than one in five respondents (22.2 percent) had invited to their home, and one in eleven (8.6 percent) had assisted an old neighbor of a different nationality. Focus group participants also mention that the practice of “good neighborliness” (*komsiluk*) still exists:

I live near Cerik, an orthodox Serb village, while over here we are Catholics. Now we associate normally. Those who were expelled and are now returning home, and we want to help them a bit more until they get settled, and then we will all live the same, we will visit each other, we will go hunting—we already went hunting together, and that is a lot of trust for five Serbs and three Croats to go hunting together. – informal representative of MZ Dubrave, Brcko

On the other hand, many minority returnees complain about the lack of interpersonal trust and personal relations with members of the local ethnic majority:

This is something that needs time to heal, but I think that things will never be the way they were. – woman, Brcko

The opinion survey also finds that an intense process of creating new personal relationships is taking place along ethnic lines, within each ethnic group and ethnic area (see Table 1).

Table 1. Do you socialize with those people to the same degree as before, more than before, or less than before ? If you socialize less than before, what is the main reason ? *

	Relatives		Closest friends		Work colleagues		Old neighbors / same nationality		Old neighbors / other nationality		New neighbors / same nationality		New neighbors / other nationality	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
We associate a lot / more than before	37	5.48	45	6.67	19	2.81	17	2.52	8	1.19	42	6.22	6	0.89
We associate enough / to the same degree as before	532	78.81	501	74.22	360	53.33	432	64.00	241	35.70	243	36.00	168	24.89
We associate little / less because we do not have enough time/money	48	7.11	65	9.63	87	12.89	69	10.22	47	6.96	47	6.96	38	5.63
We associate little / less because we do not live and work in the same place	36	5.33	31	4.59	59	8.74	64	9.48	67	9.93	8	1.19	9	1.33
We associate little / less because we do not know one another well enough	-	-	1	0.15	11	1.63	6	0.89	11	1.63	149	22.07	110	16.30
We associate little / less because there is no desire for this	3	0.44	10	1.48	13	1.93	19	2.81	67	9.93	27	4.00	67	9.93
We associate little / less because of political / ethnic intolerance	3	0.44	6	0.89	6	0.89	8	1.19	53	7.85	7	1.04	40	5.93
We associate little / less for some other reasons	15	2.22	16	2.37	61	9.04	41	6.07	75	11.11	62	9.19	94	13.93
Don't know / didn't answer	1	0.15	-	-	59	8.74	19	2.81	106	15.70	90	13.33	143	21.19
Total	675	100.00	675	100.00	675	100.00	675	100.00	675	100.00	675	100.00	675	100.00

* Question in regard to new neighbors : Do you socialize with those people a lot / enough / a little ? If you socialize a little, what is the main reason?

IDPs More Affected Than Locals

The decline in interpersonal trust is most pronounced in the case of IDPs, who have been affected by violence, change of place and environment, loss of job, and loss of housing. Many IDPs complain about the hostility of locals:

If you say that you are a refugee there is no chance that [locals] will help you with something. – man, Tuzla

Conversely, locals accuse IDPs of disturbing interpersonal trust in their neighbourhoods:

Urban people, born in Banja Luka or raised in the city, prefer to withdraw from the influx of such people, who are uncivilized. They have come onto the asphalt and forced on us their traditions, their way of life. Those people who have come here from somewhere else are now more powerful than the locals, than the city folk. – woman, Banja Luka

Even for IDPs, however, the loss in social capital is only partial. IDPs from one place are frequently concentrated in the same municipality or region, and thus can maintain their former relationships and networks. They also tend to compensate for the loss of social capital due to exile by developing new relationships in their new place of residence, mostly with people from the same ethnic group. The integration of IDPs into their new place of residence depends on their own will to settle there or return, their former acquaintances and networks, and their material situation.

The bonding dimension of new social capital created by IDPs can be seen in the case of those living in the collective center of Mihatovici (Tuzla),⁶ or collectively settled in the suburb of Klanac (Brcko) or the village of Krizevici (Zvornik), where common local origins, similar war experience, material difficulties, and indifference or hostility of the local environment have led them to develop a strong feeling of community:

[In 1996, people came from] Kakanj, from Vares, from Ilijas—there were a whole lot of these people that I did not even know, but we got to know each other because our life problems united us. We grew close and as they say, we breathed as if with one soul, and still today that is the way we are, a compact, strong community that nobody can split. Even today we have remained united in our intention. – president of the Serb MZ board, Klanac, Brcko

Local Factors Influencing the Reshaping of Social Capital

Where most people belong to the same ethnic group, the balance between locals and IDPs appears to be the central factor influencing the type and amount of social capital. The bonds of trust among IDPs are more intense than among the locals, but are based on a situation that is expected to be temporary. In neighborhoods where population changes have been more limited and pre-war social identities and networks preserved—such as the central neighborhood of Slatina (Tuzla) or the worker suburbs of Sicki Brod (Tuzla) and Ada (Banja Luka)—the locals seem to have retained a higher level of interpersonal trust and interpersonal relations. A durable feeling of community is also present among minority returnees who share the feeling of being stuck between two hostile environments—their place of exile and their place of return.

⁶ The collective center of Mihatovici is one of the most important in Bosnia-Herzegovina: it is located in the MZ Sicki Brod, was opened in 1995, and gathers about 1,300 Bosniac IDPs from Eastern Bosnia.

Informal Practices of Material Assistance and Cooperation

These changes and differences in interpersonal trust have implications for material assistance and cooperation. These practices remain common among relatives and closer friends, but have sharply declined between neighbors and colleagues. The importance of material assistance is clear from the fact that many more respondents say they would turn to personal acquaintances than to formal institutions for help. Informal practices of material assistance contribute not only to the survival of the poorest, but also to the functioning of the community by softening tensions and creating interdependencies.

Main Forms of Material Assistance

There are main categories of assistance: monetary assistance, donation of food and commodities, sharing of collective charges according to income.

Monetary assistance is most often related to traumatic events such as fire, illness, accident, or death. Neighbors and colleagues help to cover the cost of the rehousing, the hospital, the burial ceremony. This practice dates from the pre-war period, but is more limited in the post-war period:

People do not have money, and we all know that the basic thing in life is financial existence. I will help my neighbor, but I cannot buy her lunch with my money because I have to take care of my mother. – woman, Bihac

Donations of food and commodities are linked to the impoverishment of the post-war period. Neighbors give money, food, clothes, to the poorest members of the community, such as single mothers, pensioners, or IDPs. Most of this assistance is self-organized, although some comes from remittances and loans from the diaspora:⁷

I have this one old woman, her husband died and she is left alone, no children. Every month I take her 200 to 300 dinars, whatever I can. It is not only her, this is how we help each other if we are able to. – woman, Zvornik .

Sharing of collective charges can be found in apartment buildings and collective centers for the payment of taxes and utilities; the share of each resident is calculated according to his income, or the better-off pay for the poorest. But this can lead to tensions between the poor and the better-off:

Those who have incomes cannot constantly be our donors, we cannot always ask of them, give, give. – man, Tuzla

Cooperation in Building and Repair of Houses

People living in villages or residential suburbs help each other to build or repair their houses. Such reciprocity is traditional in Bosnian society, and involves neighbors, friends, and nearby relatives.⁸ It seems to be well developed among IDPs and returnees, in areas where houses have been destroyed:

I have never been a manual worker but I installed the electricity for a relative, and then he would come and help me. I clearly remember 1996 when there was never a

⁷ In the 1999 *Social Assessment*, nearly 10 percent of the households interviewed mention remittances of the diaspora as a source of income (see World Bank 1999a, p. 12). The UNDP's *Early Warning System* notes that "more people receive financial support from cousins [relatives] living abroad than are helped in the various ways by the state" (see UNDP 2001, p. 36).

⁸ See Bringa, Tone 1995.

worse winter. In all that suffering we helped each other out and solved problems. –
president of the Serb MZ board, Klanac, Brcko

An important difference from the pre-war situation is that collective works no longer involve neighbors of various nationalities: Serbs in Brcko and or Bosniacs in Gornji Vakuf do not help minority returnees to rebuild their houses. Similarly, people no longer participate in building places of worship of other ethnic groups, as was usual before the war. The only exception was found in the village of Dubrave (Brcko), where Croats are helping Serb returnees to rebuild their houses.

Cooperation in Maintenance of Apartment Buildings

Smaller collective works are organized in apartment buildings around the regular cleaning and repair of common areas (stairwells, parking lots, green areas, etc.). These practices are closely related to the existence of condominium councils, which were part of the Yugoslav self-management system and played an important role during the war (civil protection, distribution of humanitarian aid). Many have disappeared in buildings where significant population changes occurred.

Links between Micro and Macro Levels of Social Capital

Collective works related to house building and repair, and to maintenance of common areas in apartment buildings, clearly show the impact of interpersonal trust on the frequency and scope of collective action. Many focus group participants perceive negligence of common areas as a consequence of declining civility:

Some people are not from the city, they have not been raised to care whether the entrance where they live is painted or not, or whether there is rubbish in front of their door, and these are the small things that create an entire lifestyle. – woman, Banja Luka

B. Social Cleavages and Population Movements

Ethnic cleavages, while still important, have decreased in the few last years. But the cleavage between rich and poor has been reinforced by the war and post-war periods. At the local level, the most pervasive cleavages—among locals, IDPs, and minority returnees—are have a strong socioeconomic dimension, but are perceived in terms of cultural, moral, or political categories. Willingness to return and sustainability of return are closely linked with socioeconomic issues such as employment and access to public services.

Main Social Cleavages in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The 1999 *Social Assessment* (World Bank 2000) found that the main causes of social cleavages in Bosnian society were ethnicity, area of origin, war experience, and income level. The cleavage between poor and rich seemed to be even more acute than the one between ethnic groups.⁹ The present study confirms this general picture.

Evolution of Ethnic Cleavages

Ethnic cleavages are difficult to assess at the local level: key informants and participants may downplay them as a matter of courtesy or self-censorship, especially in focus groups with

⁹ In the *Social Assessment*, 38 percent of the respondents reported high social distance between rich and poor, and 32 percent reported high social distance between members of different ethnic groups.

members of local ethnic minorities.¹⁰ Bosniacs, in particular, tend to deny any serious ethnic conflict at the local level, but insist on the tensions between people who were on different sides of the front line, though these two types of cleavages amount largely to the same thing. Young people in Tuzla, for example, praise “our” Serbs—those who remained—as a symbol of the tolerant spirit of the town, but denounce those—a large majority of the local Serbs—who left during the war.

Impact of War on the Rich-Poor Cleavage

Many participants denounce those who got rich during the war. Other state that only poor did the fighting, while the rich and the intellectuals escaped mobilization:

Of the 1,340 military war invalids in the area of the municipality of Bihac, there is only one with a masters degree and 17 with university education. That says it all. – man, Bihac

Among Bosniac participants, there is animosity between those who stayed during the war and those who went abroad and have now returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina:

Instead of helping us because we are the ones who ensured their return, they have come back with bags full of money, buy apartments, buy jobs. – man, Bihac

Impact of Economic Crisis on the Rich-Poor Cleavage

Unemployment and poverty are perceived as the most important problems of the post-war period. Lack of housing is also a central concern, and contributes to a general feeling of insecurity. This widespread feeling that the economic situation has worsened since 1995 is due to the weakening of the social safety net inherited from the Communist system (see Part IC), and to the centrality of material problems in post-war everyday life:

In the war we knew that it was war, it was hard for everyone. but now this is harder to deal with. – man, Bihac

As shown in the *Voices of the Poor* study (World Bank 1999), the general impoverishment of the population and the emergence of visible and illegitimate inequalities after the war have resulted in strong feelings of injustice, and exacerbate the hostility against “war profiteers” and “thieves” (*Iopovi*). Moral accusations against the rich are apparent in the Serb majority area, where participants insist on the opposite moral values associated with rich and poor:

If you seek help among the poor, they will help one another as best they can in some way, but the rich do not see anyone. – man, Brcko

Population Movements and Local Social Cleavages

At the local level, the most pervasive cleavages are the result of forced population movements during the war. In urban settlements, locals (including minority returnees) and IDPs are in competition for scarce resources such as housing and jobs—with differing results. Nearly twice as many locals as IDPs have a stable and formal job, while more than a third of IDPs, as a compared to less than a quarter of the locals, are unemployed.

¹⁰ The tendency of members of local ethnic minorities to downplay ethnic cleavages also appears in the opinion survey: only 1.1 percent of them say that they socialize less with old neighbors of another nationality because of ethnic or political intolerance, as compared to 8.9 of respondents belonging to the local ethnic majority.

The ongoing process of restitution of houses and flats to their pre-war owners, and the eviction of illegal occupants, is probably the most important source of tensions among locals, IDPs, and minority returnees¹¹:

A fundamental cause of distrust [between people] is certainly the opposite legal status of those who wish to regain their property and those who are occupying someone else's property and have nowhere to go. – deputy mayor, Brcko

IDPs and Minority Returnees

The conflicting interests of IDPs and minority returnees are very apparent, since the return of the former depends largely on the eviction of the latter (UNDP 1999). Many IDPs are concerned about possible eviction, and have a strong feeling of social downfall linked to the loss of their pre-war assets and jobs:

I had property and everything, but here I am a refugee and I literally do not have a dinar. – woman, Zvornik

Minority returnees, for their part, are pleased to again be in a house of their own. However, in most cases, the restitution of pre-war accommodations is not accompanied by a restitution of pre-war jobs.

Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity can be felt most in relation to employment, where the structure is de facto mono-ethnic. – three ombudsmen's regional officers, Bihac

Locals and IDPs

Locals complain that IDPs are better protected by the new property laws, while IDPs accuse locals of escaping eviction by using their connections with local politicians and civil servants.¹² Both groups also accuse each other of monopolizing jobs:

In 1993, a law was passed giving refugees in this region priority in employment. If refugees have such status, how can any local resident accept them when they can get jobs but locals cannot? – president of a local NGO, Banja Luka

These tensions explain why many IDPs feel rejected by locals, despite belonging to the same ethnic group. Some locals would rather have their former neighbors, even those of different ethnicity:

People [in Zvornik] say bring me back my neighbors, no matter what ethnicity, the only important thing is that we lived better with them. – man, Zvornik

Minority Returnees and Locals

Minority returnees often praise the behavior of locals while acting distant to IDPs:

We have contacts with the pre-war locals regardless of their ethnicity. Of the refugees we don't know them and so it is just a cursory greeting. – man, Brcko

¹¹ Eighty-two 82.4 percent of locals and only 15 percent of IDPs own their present accommodation; 3 percent of locals and 15 percent of IDPs rent their present accommodation; and 10 percent of locals and 68 percent of IDPs occupy someone else's property.

¹² In the opinion survey, many more IDPs than locals say that the main problem related to housing for IDPs and returnees is discrimination (14 vs. 4 percent) or corruption (16 vs. 8 percent).

However, some locals occupy houses and flats of minority returnees, and many of them do not welcome the return of their former neighbors:

You have to keep your head bowed in order for your neighbor not to recognize you. – man, Tuzla

Variety of Local Situations

Cleavages among locals, IDPs, and minority returnees are intricate, and vary from place to place. In the village of Krizevici (Zvornik), Bosniac minority returnees seem to have better relations with Serb IDPs from Sarajevo in their village, than with Serbs living in the neighboring village of Kitovnice. Bosniac returnees mention the common experience of exile as the reason of their good relations with Serb IDPs:

There have not been any arguments—really, nothing. We go to their houses, they come to ours, we sit together, drink together. We drink, barbecue meat. We understand each other. – man, Zvornik

At the same time, Bosniacs are quite hostile to their former neighbors, whom they suspect of having participated in the killings in 1992:

Our former neighbors brought genocide, but from their talk they did not. A hundred civilians from this MZ are missing, but nobody wants to say 'Neighbor, I saw this person, I buried him there.' All of the evil deeds came from them but they keep saying that people from Serbia came and did it all. – man, Zvornik

Socioeconomic Dimensions of Local Social Cleavages

The high level of poverty and unemployment is exacerbating the conflicts between IDPs and minority returnees over restitution, by lessening the spatial mobility of IDPs and thus reinforcing their will to resist eviction. These conflicts are most often conflicts among the poor.

Socioeconomic Dimensions of the Restitution Process

IDPs with better material resources, professional skills, and private connections more often succeed in resolving their housing problems, and are less exposed to eviction. Nearly 80 percent of IDPs with a minimal level of income occupy someone else's property, as opposed to only 40 percent those with a high level of income.

Due to the strong socioeconomic dimension of the restitution process, municipalities willing to implement the new property laws face high social tensions and dramatic individual situations. The lack of alternative public accommodations, the high price of private housing, delays in property restitution, and the scarcity of donations for repair and reconstruction also mean that many evicted IDPs have to go back to collective centers or destroyed houses—a situation that often reminds them of their first exile. Such problems lead many municipal authorities try to slow the pace of evictions. Even voluntary associations that support the restitution process believe that only an increase in local housing will permit rapid and peaceful implementation of the new property laws:

If one Bosniac or Croat needs to come back, but in that space there is an entire family that may have been expelled from Bosniac or Croat territory, then a solution needs to be found. The worst solution is for the people to be thrown out onto the street. Tragic situations need to be avoided. – president of local NGO, Banja Luka

Socioeconomic Dimension of the Return Process

Several studies¹³ have found differences in the attitude toward return of Bosniac, Serb, and Croat IDPs. About 80 percent of IDPs living in the Bosniac majority area, 50 percent of those living in the Croat majority area, and less than 30 percent only of those living in the Serb majority area say they are willing to return. These decisions are influenced by factors of employment, age, housing status, and level of education.

In the focus groups, many IDPs mention loss of job and fear of unemployment as the main reasons they do not want to return. In the opinion survey, the main factors are age and level of education. Young people, who are more educated, more often do not want to return, while older people, mostly of rural origin and with a low level of education, want to return because they had difficulty adapting to their new environment.

There is also a link between housing status and will to return. In the focus groups, some minority returnees are IDPs who have been evicted or were threatened with eviction. In such cases, return is experienced less as a free choice than as a constraint and a new exile. At the same time, poverty and unemployment endanger the sustainability of return:

They say: go back, but nobody cares what it is like for someone my age here. – man, Brcko

The preoccupation of IDPs and minority returnees with economic issues shows a change in attitude since 1999, when participants in the *Social Assessment* considered personal insecurity as a main obstacle to return.¹⁴

Interpretations of Local Social Cleavages and Impact

While cleavages among locals, IDPs, and minority returnees have a strong socioeconomic dimension, they are interpreted mainly in terms of cultural, moral, or political categories.

Cultural Prejudices between Locals and IDPs

The cleavages between locals and IDPs, for example, are reinforced by prejudices between the urban and rural populations.

Only city folk used to live here—urban Orthodox, Muslims, and Croats. These people that have come here are all uncivilized. – woman, Banja Luka

Urban residents accuse rural IDPs of breeding animals in their bathroom and on their balcony, throwing refuse out the window, relieving themselves in common areas. They attribute these behaviors to primitiveness and lack of culture. At the same time, they also say that IDPs do not want to return to their former place of residence because they are accustomed to the urban way of life. In reality, many IDPs are of urban origin, and those of rural origin often wish to settle in urban areas because they have better access to basic public services.

The hostility of the urban population toward rural IDPs is also fed by the feeling that villagers were less affected by the war and economic crisis:

They have the ability to supply themselves with food, they do not have problems with evictions, they are secure where they are, while people living in the city do not have the basic conditions for existence. – woman, Tuzla

¹³ In the *Social Assessment* (World Bank 1999), 74 percent of Bosniac IDPs, 29 percent of Croat IDPs, and 19 percent of Serb IDPs state that they wish to return to their pre-war place of residence.

¹⁴ In the *Social Assessment* (World Bank 1999), 68 percent of IDPs mention personal and property security as the main preconditions for return.

Moral and Political Grievances between IDPs and Minority Returnees

There is widespread agreement that illegally occupied private properties must be returned to their pre-war owners. This consensus shows that the new property laws enforced by the UN High Representative, and the information campaigns organized by international organizations and local NGOs, have been effective. At the same time, however, many criticize the criteria by which evictions are decided and alternative accommodations allocated, and deplore the fact that even vulnerable persons, including war veterans and invalids, are evicted from properties which then remain empty or are sold by former owners and beneficiaries:

In Tuzla at a [municipal] assembly, I asked what was the purpose of evicting a soldier who was four years in the war, who has nowhere to live and then the apartment remains empty. – president of the Unified Organization of Veterans (JOB), Tuzla

Widespread corruption and clientelism in the implementation of evictions and assigning of alternative accommodations also contribute to the mutual grievances and the general feeling of injustice related to the restitution process:

At the municipal level, problems are resolved only for those who have the money to give. The needs of the family of a fallen soldier, or an invalid, or whatever—none of that makes any difference. I know a man who gave 15 thousand marks and he was given a two room apartment. – man, Zvornik

Other complaints about the restitution process are more closely linked with ethnic and political conflicts. Serb IDPs, for example, consider that minority returnees have more rights than they have, and accuse international organizations of encouraging return only for political reasons:

Our people are being thrown out onto the streets while [Bosniacs and Croats] return to their homes peacefully. – man, Banja Luka

Bosniac minority returnees, for their part, criticize the fact that Serb IDPs get their pre-war property back without having to return to their place of origin, and at the same time obtain plots of land or public apartments in their new place of residence. Bosniac minority returnees also accuse Serb authorities of trying to consolidate the results of ethnic cleansing:

They give 5 million marks for the Serbs to remain, but in the Federation I cannot get one square meter of land, they push me out, and tell me to get away from them. – president of the MZ board, Krizevici, Zvornik

Recognition of Conflicting Interests and Practical Compromises

The political use of displaced populations is indeed one of the main problems of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, and has been denounced in many studies and reports. In Brcko and Zvornik, for example, public protests against return or violent attacks against returnees have been encouraged by nationalist forces. But, even in such cases, informal and formal compromises have led to a progressive depoliticization of the return process, and to a more or less peaceful coexistence between IDPs and minority returnees, as illustrated by the case of Klanac, a suburb of Brcko (see Box 1).

Box 1. Klanac: From Confrontation To Compromise

From June 1998 to April 2000, the impending return process in Klanac led to a direct and violent confrontation between the two groups: Serb IDPs organized demonstrations and road blockades, preventing Bosniac pre-war residents from recovering their houses and demanding the allocation of plots of land so they could build their own houses. In May 2000, discussions among the Office of the High Representative, the District authorities, and the two MZ boards led to an agreement: one hundred plots of land were allocated to Serb IDPs in the suburb of Ilacka, on which one hundred four-flat houses are expected to be built. In exchange, the Serb IDPs agreed to allow the return process, and to return occupied houses to their owners as soon as they have the possibility of settling in Ilacka. Finally, in order to prevent the creation of a monoethnic settlement in that suburb, one hundred plots of land will also be allocated to Bosniac families, and one hundred to Croat families.

This pragmatic approach has made it possible to have a peaceful return process in Klanac, and has helped to change relations between Serbs and Bosniacs. The two MZ boards meet regularly, and jointly exert pressure on the District for rapid implementation of the agreement.

In the clashes of interest among locals, IDPs, and minority returnees, opposite war experiences and widespread prejudice reinforce each other. General mistrust among these groups contributes to each feeling neglected, and accusing the others of being dishonest and having hidden agendas. Such interpretations reflect the low level of bridging social capital in post-war Bosnian society, and diminish its capacity to manage conflicts. At the same time, the positive changes taking place in the relations between Serb IDPs and Bosniac minority returnees in Klanac (see Box 1), and, more generally, the changing role of the IDPs associations in Brcko (see Part IIC), show that the recognition of conflicting interests can facilitate practical compromises, and help to transform bonding social capital into bridging social capital.

C. Social Cleavages and Social Welfare System

Ethnic and Statutory Fragmentation of the Social Welfare System

Social cleavages in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina are influenced not only by population movements, but also by the social welfare system, the fragmentation of which perpetuates the main social cleavages.

Perpetuation of Ethnic Cleavages

The best illustration of this problem is the spatial and ethnic fragmentation of local social insurance, which leads to various types of discrimination and explains why minority returnees often are not affiliated with the health insurance or pension fund of their place of return. Most Bosniac returnees living in Krizevici (Zvornik), for example, are insured in the Tuzla canton, and most Serb returnees living in Martin Brod (Bihac) are insured in the Serb Republic. Even in the Brcko District, where a unified health insurance has been created, pensions remain within the competence of the entities, and inhabitants have to choose between the pension funds of the Federation and the Serb Republic.

The perpetuation of ethnic cleavages by the social welfare system also takes indirect forms. For example, donations for repair and rebuilding of houses are a contentious issue between IDPs and minority returnees. In Krizevici (Zvornik), each group accuses the other of being favored by the international community:

Serbs get the key in the hand [a completed house], but Muslims get only building material. – Bosniac president of the MZ board, Krizevici, Zvornik

[Bosniac] returnees get everything imaginable from the international community, but we [Serb] families get not a single load of firewood. – man, Serb DP, Zvornik

Such remarks point to the possible counter-productive effects of donation policies based on political objectives or legal categories, and not actual social needs. The priority given by donors to minority returns is often perceived as implicit discrimination by members of the local ethnic majority, and can indeed result in discriminatory practices:

USAID immediately asked us whether it is a purely Croat village, because they primarily support minority returns. I said to him, I'm sorry, sir, but it is not our fault that our village does not have Bosniacs or Serbs, there were none before the war either. Now because we have none, we do not get help. – president of a rural MZ board, Brcko

Perpetuation of Wartime Social Cleavages

One striking feature of all focus groups is that every participant, no matter his or her social identity and legal status, claims to be a member of the “most vulnerable category.” This is linked with the fact that donations perpetuate the social identities created by the war:

Refugees have used all the possibilities of humanitarian organizations. The next part of their job is [getting more aid] upon their return. It is part of their business now. – man, Tuzla

Veterans have similar grievances about the social benefits and donations given to war invalids and families of fallen soldiers. Some veterans consider themselves to be more vulnerable than members of these two groups:

What hurts most is that they try to differentiate by saying that families of fallen soldiers are in the hardest position and so they help them more than invalids, and they help invalids more than other demobilized soldiers. If I cannot get medical care for my children, then my child is in the same position as the child of my brother who was killed—neither he dead nor me alive is able to do anything. – man, Zvornik

Withering of the Comprehensive Social Safety Net

The growing importance of legal and statutory cleavages in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina reflects the general impoverishment of the population and disappearance of the social safety net. The decline in humanitarian aid, which during the war represented a kind of minimal social assistance mechanism, contributes also to the withering of the social safety net:

During the war we were somehow the same on this issue, there were a lot of [public] kitchens, there were humanitarian aid parcels, it was easier then. Now they give only according to some kind of social categories. – woman, Tuzla

Exclusion from the Social Protection and Social Assistance Mechanisms

The withering of the social safety net means that large parts of the population are excluded from the remaining social protection and social assistance mechanisms. Focus group participants who are unemployed, or working for enterprises that do not pay their social security contributions, complain about being excluded from health insurance:

Even though I am employed I do not have health insurance. I spoke to the director, he said there is no money. So I went to beg at the Center for Social Work and they

said to me, you are capable of working so we cannot give you any assistance. – man,
Banja Luka

In the opinion survey, social assistance is the local public service most often considered to be nonexistent, an opinion shared by more than one third of all respondents, and half of those belonging to local ethnic minorities. In case of a serious financial crisis, very few respondents would turn for help to any formal institution, and even Centers for Social Work are rarely seen as a source of help. The ability of each local Center for Social Work to carry out its mission depends heavily on how much money it succeeds to get from the municipal budget:

The work of each Center depends on how much its management is able to fight for its status in the municipality, in the municipal budget, how much it can fight for the resources that the municipality is obliged to earmark for social protection. – representative of the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues (IBHI), Banja Luka

At the same time, local offices of the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons try to transfer responsibility for these categories to the Centers for Social Work:

By law, refugees and IDPs should be the worry of the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons. However, people also turn to the Centers for Social Work, and those from the Centers for Social Work send them to the Ministry. The Ministry is not able to meet all of their needs, but sends them back to the Centers for Social Work in the hope they will be able to realize at least some of their rights there, and so on. The responsibilities of each agency are still not clearly defined, given that the new law on the social protection has not been brought down. – representative of the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues (IBHI), Banja Luka

Most people would rather turn to relatives, friends or, to a lesser extent, colleagues and neighbors—a finding that confirms the importance of informal forms of material assistance (see Part IA), and the predominance of private connections and informal networks as opposed to formal institutions (see Part IIB).

Respondents with a minimal level of income are more inclined to turn to Centers for Social Work; those with a low level of income to humanitarian or non-governmental organizations; and those with a high level of income to closest friends and influential persons. This confirms that the poor have less social capital than the rich (see Part IA), and suggest that Bosnian citizens turn for help to formal institutions only when they lack private connections to wealthy and influential persons (see Part IIB).

Reversal of Vulnerability Factors

The lack of a comprehensive social safety net means that benefits or donations for specific groups or legal categories have a disproportionate importance, since they are used as a kind of substitute social assistance mechanism.¹⁵ Where a majority of people are unemployed or receive their salaries after long delays, this leads to the paradoxical situation that locals or healthy adults can appear to be the most vulnerable, since they do not get any specific social benefits or donations:

[Humanitarian] organizations give medication free of charge only to displaced people, while the local population remains at risk. – president of local NGO, Tuzla

¹⁵ In the Brcko District, for example, the budget for the year 2001 foresees a total of 5.2 million marks in individual grants for vulnerable persons. Of this, 4.5 million marks (86 percent) are individual grants related to the housing of IDPs and minority returnees, compared to 420,000 marks (8 percent) related to social work and 200,000 marks (4 percent) related to education.

[The most vulnerable are] *those people who have been left without employment but do not meet the requirements of age or years of work to receive a pension. These people are in a position of social need, but we cannot provide them with social assistance.* – deputy director of Center for Social Work, Bihac

Institutional Fragmentation and Financial Exhaustion

Social benefits and donations are handed out by a broad spectrum of formal institutions, including state administrations, municipalities, MZ boards, international and local NGOs, IDPs' and veterans' associations, and political parties (see Part IIC). This fragmentation weakens state institutions, prevents the restoration of any comprehensive social safety net, and makes the system for allocating social benefits and donations extremely complex and unclear. The scarcity of financial resources in comparison with the actual needs of the population further exacerbates this fragmentation, and has negative effects on social cohesion and interpersonal trust.

Partial and Belated Implementation of Legal and Social Rights

The financial exhaustion of the social welfare system means that the legal rights of various groups by far exceed available public budgets, and thus are not implemented. Many veterans, in particular, denounce the fact that their rights are only "dead letters on paper," which feeds their grievances and frustrations (see Box 2).

Box 2. Veterans: Between Collective Frustration and Individual Violence

Veterans are one of the most important social groups created by the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In focus group discussions, however, they denounce the fact that some of them are evicted and become homeless, their legal rights are not respected, their cash benefits are low and payments are delayed. All these material frustrations feed an intense feeling of injustice and social downfall:

While the war was on I could walk in [to the municipality] with a gun and stamp my foot and say that my child has no bread to eat. For soldiers there was flour and oil, everything could be found. We were somebody then. Now we are of no use to anyone. – man, Zvornik

Some veterans have taken part in demonstrations organized by veterans' organizations against delays in the payment of social benefits, or evictions of veterans and war invalids. However, many accuse veterans' associations of being politicized and corrupt (see Part IIC), and share the skepticism of many Bosnian citizens about the effectiveness of collective action. In Bihac, where the number of veterans and war invalids is especially high, one official says that:

Veterans and pensioners are two of the most unsatisfied categories. These are people whom life has disillusioned, life has destroyed their expectations. They try hard, knock on a lot of doors, they draw attention to their problems, but to little effect. – director of the Department for General Administration and Social Affairs, Bihac

Many veterans share the resignation and passivity of the population. But some are tempted to resort to individual violence (see also Part IID):

I will not allow them to throw me out of my apartment. I know how I am, I will ignite. – man, Bihac

Lack of Continuity and Balance in International Donations

Institutional fragmentation and financial exhaustion also affect the policies of international donors. International organizations frequently change their priorities, and often support only small and short-term projects. Many projects financed by international donors encompass a limited number of beneficiaries, creating tensions among the local population:

One part of our village has electricity and the other does not. I do not know what kind of game is being played here, which Dutch organization works only for five houses and not the rest. – man, Zvornik

Negative feelings about donor policies are exacerbated by the fact that criteria used for allocating donations are not clear. There are also complaints about clientelism and corruption:

Citizens have no insight into the way those donations are spent, how and why. – man, Zvornik

If you give 500 or 1,000 marks, you will get material to build your house, but if you don't offer anything, then it is as if you never applied. – man, Bihac

The most frequent demand expressed by participants with regard to social benefits and donations is the adoption of clear, comprehensive criteria for allocation.

Role of Local-Level Institutions in Social Policy Implementation

While some participants say that international donations do no good, others want donors to establish direct contacts with local-level institutions such as parishes or MZ boards. The higher level of confidence in these small and parochial formal institutions, in terms of material assistance, is also clear from the opinion survey.

Some MZ boards try to soften the tensions that can arise from the allocation of international donations. In Krizevici (Zvornik), the MZ board organized a citizens' gathering (*boor grad Jana*) to share donations among the villages of the MZ. The board gave a part of the humanitarian aid it got from the Tuzla canton to the group of Serb IDPs living in Krizevici. The Bosniac MZs in the municipality of Zvornik barter among themselves the construction materials they get from international organizations.

At a higher level, the municipality of Tuzla has launched a project that aims to overcome the institutional fragmentation and financial exhaustion of the social welfare system. Municipal authorities are establishing a comprehensive social map (*social carton*) of the local population, in cooperation with the Center for Social Work, the Red Cross, and the MZ boards, in order to better coordinate the activities of the various agencies and NGOs dealing with vulnerable populations. The MZ boards are also mobilizing all available forms of material assistance, including informal and interpersonal assistance (see also Part IA):

In one MZ, they collect donations in cafes, from small firms, well-off individuals, they discreetly tell which professor does not have enough to eat from his pension, they have a retired nurse who visits the sick. They develop that solidarity among neighbors through their own efforts. This initiative has opened our eyes to the fact that certain things can be resolved outside of the budget, pensioners can help pensioners, professors help professors, neighbors help neighbors when we get well organized. – the mayor, Tuzla

Limits of Social Policy in a Context of Massive Poverty and Unemployment

The Tuzla case also illustrates the difficulties and limits of social policy in a context of massive poverty and unemployment. Many understand that the deficiencies of the social welfare system are a consequence of the country's economic problems, but say that, more than social benefits or international donations, they really want jobs and higher salaries:

I don't need the international community, all I need is one good employer who will give me a job and a salary and nothing more than that. – woman, Bihac

A stable job and sufficient salary are perceived as the only way to recover individual autonomy and dignity, achieve a positive social identity, and restore some sense of justice, since work is considered the only legitimate source of income by a large majority of participants.

D. Fragmentation of Local-Level Institutions

Impact of War on Local-Level Institutions

In addition to the social welfare system, all other formal institutions and public services were also divided along ethnic lines during the war. The most obvious aspect of this ethnic and spatial fragmentation was the creation of entities and cantons, but it is also clearly perceptible at the local level.

Divided Municipalities and Neighborhood Committees

In 1991, Bosnia-Herzegovina had 109 municipalities; 10 years later, there are 145, plus a few unofficial split-municipalities such as the Croat municipality of Uskoplje (the Croat part of Gornji Vakuf). Most new municipalities are located along the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. In the Federation, some new municipalities have also been created along the former front line between the Bosnian army and the Croat Council of Defense (HVO), or according to ethnic criteria. This split of pre-war municipalities implies a corresponding split of public infrastructure and services. In Gornji Vakuf, the police and the judiciary were reintegrated in May 2001, but all other public services are duplicated: each part of the split-municipality issues its own official documents, and manages its own health care centers, and schools.¹⁶ And each is connected to different water, electricity, and phone networks.

Similar situations can be seen at the MZ level. During the war, numerous MZs split into separate ethnic MZs. In Brcko, the number of MZs increased from 24 in 1991 to 83 in 1996. Since December 1999, the Statute of the Brcko District defines it as a indivisible administrative unit (see Box 3) and, therefore, does not recognize the existence of MZs, but they still exist and have semi-legal status.¹⁷ The so-called double MZs, often located in urban suburbs (about Klanac, see Part IB, Box 1), also remain ethnically divided:

With the establishment of the District, we now have double MZs that lay claim to the same territory, that deal with issues in this territory, but that represent the interests of different ethnic groups. – director of department in charge of cooperation with MZs, Brcko

Duplication of MZs often results in conflicts about public infrastructure. In Brcko, for example, a Serb MZ board refuses to share its building with its Bosniac counterpart.

Persistence of Parallel Municipal Institutions After the War

The ethnic fragmentation of local-level institutions can also be seen in the persistence of parallel municipal institutions. Officially, municipalities in exile¹⁸ created during the war,

¹⁶ Three primary schools and one secondary school are under the control of the Bosniac split-municipality; and one primary school and one secondary school under the control of the Croat municipality.

¹⁷ Since the Brcko District has not its own law on local self-management, MZs in Brcko still implement the law of the entity they belonged to before the creation of the District in March 1999.

¹⁸ During the war, municipal counselors belonging to local ethnic minorities had to flee with the people they were representing, and created “municipalities in exile.” These were abolished after the first post-war municipal elections in September 1997.

mainly to support territorial claims, have been abolished. But IDPs and minority returnees are still linked to parallel municipal institutions of some kind, or to informal networks of municipal councilors with the same ethnic background. This is due primarily to the fact that local ethnic minorities still suffer discrimination and are not well integrated in their current place of residence.

Lasting Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities

In many municipalities, representatives of ethnic minorities are still marginalized in municipal bodies, despite strict monitoring by the Office of the High Representative (OHR)¹⁹ and the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE):

There are ever fewer cases of open discrimination but more and more of subtle discrimination. – three ombudsmen's regional officers, Bihac

Due to persistent, if subtle, discrimination, contacts between local ethnic minorities and municipal authorities are rare. In Martin Brod (Bihac), the informal representative of the Serb minority returnees has fewer contacts with the municipality of Bihac than with the neighboring municipality of Drvar, whose municipal council is dominated by Serb political parties.²⁰ In focus groups, members of local ethnic minorities complain:

Our representatives in the municipality say that they are only puppets here. – woman, Brcko

Limits and Paradoxes of the Return Process

The permanency of parallel municipal institutions is also due to the fact that only a small number of IDPs have returned to their pre-war place of residence, and that, in many cases, municipal councilors and leaders of IDPs' associations did not follow. Bosniac minority returnees, in particular, complain that their representatives have settled in the Federation, bought plots of land and built new houses, while at the same urging people to return to the Serb Republic:

But very few of them will return here from the city. They have grabbed a good, comfortable position in Tuzla and things are rosy for them. – man, Zvornik

In many cases, return is only partial, with some members of the family staying behind. Most often, men go back to repair the houses, while women remain where children can go to school.

Returnees can also use institutional fragmentation to their own advantage. In Bihac, for example, refugees coming back from Croatia try to keep their affiliation with Croat social insurance.

Competition between IDPs and Locals

The persistence of parallel municipal institutions also reflects the lasting cleavages between IDPs and local residents of their place of exile.

Prior to the war there were around 120,000 people in Banja Luka. Currently there are more than 250,000 people, and this results in intense pressure on communal infrastructure. – president of the local Eco-Movement, Banja Luka

¹⁹ The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is the international agency tasked with implementing the civilian aspects of the General Peace Agreement.

²⁰ About Drvar, see footnote 53.

As a result, municipal authorities often reserve their infrastructure and services for the locals, and hand over the care of IDPs to international organizations. At the same time, some parallel municipal institutions still channel international aid to their own populations. In the collective center of Mihatovici, some IDPs who spent the war in Srebrenica criticize its municipality in exile for having distributed international humanitarian aid only to the pre-war residents of Srebrenica, and not to survivors of this former enclave who arrived during the war, fleeing from other eastern Bosnian municipalities taken by the Serb forces. Such institutional divisions between locals and IDPs can feed their mutual grievances and rivalries.

Parochialism as an Obstacle to Institutional Reintegration

Another factor in the continuing fragmentation of local-level institutions is the traditional parochialism of Bosnian society, a clear sign of the primacy of bonding social capital over bridging social capital.²¹ This can be seen in the mutual resentments between urban and rural populations, and more generally, toward outsiders. This attitude is typical for rural societies, but it can also be found among urban residents.

Parochial attitudes are also perceptible among people living in different MZs of the same municipality. Urban residents complain that municipal bodies are monopolized by people coming from the surrounding villages:

In Bihac, people in power are not from Bihac. They are most often people from smaller places. – man, Bihac

Villagers and inhabitants of peripheral suburbs, however, say that municipal structures are controlled by people from the city center, who are only interested in the problems of that limited area:

Before, it was better because the municipal assembly was structured so that every MZ had to have a representative in the assembly.^[22] Now it can happen that all municipal counselors are from the center, so that some small place [outside of the center] is not at all represented in the assembly. – man, Banja Luka

Institutional Impact of Parochialism

Parochialism influences the way Bosnian citizens conceive of political representation and citizenship. Many complain that the taxes they pay are not directly used in their MZ, or that enterprises settled there are employing people from outside. Many Bosnian citizens believe that the only way to solve local problems is to turn their village or neighborhood into an MZ or municipality of their own. In Brcko, for example, some MZs encompassing only Croat villages have split into several MZs because the villages could not agree about the maintenance of common infrastructure.

The issue of parochialism illustrates how different kinds of social capital influence each other. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, trust among people living in the same place (bonding social capital) takes precedence over trust toward people from outside (bridging social capital), and this, in turn, affects a range of civic values and confidence in formal institutions (linking social capital).

²¹ Many social scientists consider parochialism to be a central characteristic of all Balkan societies, and some have been interested in the way Yugoslav federalism and self-management have reinforced this traditional feature during the Communist period.

²² In the Communist period, each MZ sent a delegate to the Chamber of the Neighborhood Committees (*Vijeće mjesnih zajednica*), one of the three chambers forming the municipal assembly.

Spatial Imbalances in the Allocation of Resources

This relationship, of course, is two way, and the desire of Bosnian citizens to withdraw into small-sized local committees is also a result of the behavior of municipal authorities and of inequities in the distribution of public infrastructures and services. Many perceive the role of informal networks, private connections, and face-to-face relations in the work of municipal authorities:

We do not have anyone of our own in the [local] government that could push [for our interests]. I see this in other MZs, where they have people in the government, and they direct donations toward their own MZ. – man, Gorni Vakuf

There is also a clear deficit in public infrastructure and services in rural areas (see Part IIA):

There are vast differences in the level of development of areas that are within a few kilometers of each other. You have a highly urbanized area where there is electricity and water, and a few kilometers away there is no electricity or water. – former leader of UNDP Progress program, Banja Luka

Attempts of Institutional Reintegration at the Local Level

Parochial attitudes and clientelistic practices make efforts to reintegrate local-level institutions more difficult. At the same time, unbalanced or excessive intervention by international organizations in local public life can reinforce these features of Bosnian society and thus perpetuate the fragmentation of local level institutions.

International Mediation between Minority Returnees and Local Authorities

Minority returnees often ask the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the OSCE, the International Police Task Force (IPTF), and, in Brcko, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to mediate between them and local authorities. These organizations also play an important conciliatory role when minority returnees have problems with the local population, and influence the allocation of international donations and the work of international NGOs. These mediating and substitutory functions of international organizations are essential to the success of the return process. In the long term, however, they can perpetuate fragmentation and feed the grievances between locals and minority returnees. In Bihac and Zvornik, for example, representatives of minority returnees have more contacts with UNHCR and OSCE than with municipal authorities. These authorities complain that they are not informed about infrastructure projects financed by international donors and implemented by international NGOs in the areas of return.

International Monitoring and Reintegration of Municipalities

International organizations are involved in various efforts to reintegrate divided municipalities. The OSCE and the IPTF are monitoring municipal authorities and local police forces, with emphasis on inclusion of local ethnic minorities, and the OHR has facilitated several agreements on shared use of school buildings. In some cases, the OHR has used more direct means of pressure: several local politicians and public servants have been dismissed by the High Representative, and some divided or sensitive municipalities have been put under international tutelage. The most ambitious attempt to reintegrate local-level institutions has been in the Brcko District, created in March 1999 (see Box 3).

Box 3. The Main Stages of the Institutional Reintegration in the Brcko District

In February 1997, the High Representative put the Serb municipality of Brcko under the tutelage of an international Supervisor, to enforce the creation of a multi-ethnic local police and facilitate minority returns. In September 1997, local elections took place, and a new multi-ethnic municipal assembly was elected. In March 1999, the whole pre-war municipality of Brcko was declared a unified and neutral District, and was placed under strong international tutelage. The Statute of the Brcko District was adopted in December 1999, and a provisional assembly (29 members) and a government (11 members) were appointed by the Supervisor in March 2000. The Mayor of the Brcko District is a Serb, its Deputy Mayor is a Croat, and the president of its assembly is a Bosniac. Special commissions that include local and international experts are in charge of elaborating a new common legal system (*Brcko Law Revision Commission*) and monitoring the finances of the District (*District Management Team*).

By May 2001, several public services had achieved reintegration, but elementary and second education remained a sensitive issue. Until 2001, pupils belonging to different ethnic groups attended separate schools with different curricula. As part of the reintegration, two educational boards for primary and secondary education were created to work on a new education system for the school year 2001 / 2002. The activities of the board were focused on harmonization of the three existing curricula, work with parents and pupils, and public information. The new Education Law ensures equal usage of languages and alphabets, as well as the use of a common curriculum for the whole District. Separate classes are maintained for so called "national subjects" (mother tongue, history, musical culture).

Limits of Top-Down Approach to Institutional Reintegration

The Brcko case shows that authoritative measures are sometimes necessary to overcome deadlocks and deliberate obstructions. However, a top-down approach to reintegration can also ruin opportunities to develop cooperation at the local level. In 1999, during the discussions about the Statute of the District, MZ board leaders of the three Serb, Bosniac, and Croat split-municipalities had reached a tentative agreement, and were actively cooperating to preserve their legal existence and financial autonomy (see Part IIB). This common initiative was not taken into account in the final version of the Statute, creating a great deal of bitterness.

After the adoption of the Statute in December 1999, MZs ceased to have a legal existence in Brcko, and District authorities at first tried to circumvent ethnic MZ boards in the resolution of local problems. However, they have had to recognize the legitimacy of existing MZ boards, and the conflicting interests they were representing, in order to prevent violent incidents. District authorities now encourage cooperation among ethnic MZ boards with regard to practical needs and public infrastructure projects:

We decided to continue to work with MZs. The instructions we have from the Assembly of the Brcko District are to respect and cooperate with double MZs, while working to soften the relations among the MZs. This means a common use of public infrastructure, to force them to recognize problems together and approach the government of the Brcko District together, as such common requests will be resolved more quickly. In this way we soften the situation and bring them closer together. – director of department in charge of cooperation with MZs, Brcko

Consensual Definition of Infrastructure Needs

In several municipalities of western Bosnia, the UNDP Progress program (1996-1999)²³ has also tried to use infrastructure projects as a mean to encourage reintegration and cooperation among ethnic groups. There are, however, difficulties with this consensual approach:

In Drvar, there were representatives of the Croat and Serb populations. [We told them,] you're the ones who want to live here—we will try to assist but you have to reach an agreement. But they did not manage for one year to agree on a single small project worth a hundred marks, although we had meetings with them every seven days. Finally they were able to reach a consensus about a water supply project. They said O.K., the water supply is in a Serb MZ but also in the part [of the town] where Croats live, so they were able to reach an agreement. – former leader of the UNDP Progress program, Banja Luka

Spontaneous Reintegration or Cooperation at the MZ Level

Institutional reintegration and cooperation among ethnic groups takes sometimes place without international pressure. In a few MZs, a common MZ board was elected after the war; and in Krizevici (Zvornik), the Bosniac MZ board plays a mediating role between international NGOs and some Serb inhabitants of the neighboring MZ Kitovnice. With regard to public infrastructure, Croat locals and Serb IDPs in a suburb of Banja Luka together maintain streets and canalizations. In Bihac, Serb minority returnees living in Martin Brod and Bosniac majority returnees living in Kulen Vakuf have common projects for public infrastructure (roads, electricity distribution) and local economic development (trout farms along the Una river). And in Krizevici (Zvornik), Bosniac minority returnees are supported by the surrounding Serb villages in their demand for the renovation and reopening of the local elementary school. In these cases, spatial proximity and common interests have helped to overcome institutional fragmentation and ethnic cleavages, creating new bridging social capital.

²³ The UNDP Progress program, funded by the Japanese government, was established in April 1996 and lasted until November 1999. It covered seven municipalities of western Bosnia (four in the Federation and three in the Serb Republic). Its main objectives were capacity building and support for local governments structures, as well as the implementation of infrastructure rehabilitation projects identified through a participatory, consensus-based approach.

Part II. Attitudes Toward Local-Level Institutions, and Forms of Local Collective Action

A. General Assessment of Public Services and Formal Institutions

Assessment of Public Services

Bosnians perceive that public services have declined since the war, that infrastructure (roads, transport, water and sewerage) has deteriorated, and that corruption is a major problem with respect to health care, public security, issuance of official documents, housing for IDPs and returnees, and social assistance. These findings confirm some of the results of earlier studies.²⁴

The situation in the six sites illustrates the poor condition of infrastructure and the non-existence of some public services. The city of Tuzla has had drinking water shortages for decades, and all municipalities have leakages in their water and sewerage systems. Poor quality water was the cause of a hepatitis outbreak in Bihac shortly before the beginning of the fieldwork. Garbage collection is insufficient in most municipalities, and illegal dumps have appeared in many rural areas.

In all six sites, youth policy is limited to leisure activities supplied by a few NGOs (see Part IIC). Most public infrastructure dedicated to youth activities was destroyed during the war, or is now used for other purposes,²⁵ so young people now spend the main part of their free time at home, in cafés, or in the street.²⁶ As a consequence, alcohol and drug consumption are increasing²⁷:

There is nothing for young people. They sit and drink coffee all day long. – woman, Tuzla

We go and get drunk. We walk through town, sit at someone's house, play cards, sometimes we go to the movies. – young man, Brcko

The situation is more diverse with regard to cultural activities: the city of Tuzla has still a relatively rich cultural life, and in Bihac, municipal authorities are trying to revive some pre-

²⁴ The *Social Assessment* (World Bank 1999) found that the quality of public services such as running water and electricity had declined in comparison with the pre-war period, and that health care and leisure activities were available only to urban residents. The *Social Assessment* noted complaints about the lack of equipment and quality in health care and education, and about high prices and corrupt practices in health care. The *Anti-Corruption Study* (World Bank 2001) found that corruption was a common practice in Bosnia-Herzegovina: one-fifth of respondents who tried to access public services had to pay a bribe—most frequently to health care workers and the police. According to that study, corruption was more widespread in the Croat majority area than in the Serb and Bosniac majority areas.

²⁵ In Brcko, the cultural center was been destroyed during the war. In Banja Luka and Bihac, the former municipal youth centers have been turned into office buildings and rented to private businesses. In Zvornik, former municipal sport infrastructures are controlled by a nationalist youth association, the Serb Falcons (*Srpski sokolovi*).

²⁶ In the UNDP *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2000), the collective leisure activities most often mentioned by young people as frequent or regular are: bars and discos (63 percent), parties (38 percent), sports (32 percent), outings (16 percent), cinema (15 percent), religious meetings (12 percent), and courses (10 percent).

²⁷ In the UNDP *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2000), 46 percent of young people say they smoke often or regularly, 11 percent say they drink alcohol often or regularly, 2 percent say they take marijuana often or regularly, and 1 percent say they take often stronger narcotics.

war cultural activities (the yearly summer festival) and institutions (museum, art gallery, cinema). In the Brcko District, however, cuts in public subsidies have compounded an already bleak situation:

There were a good number of painters in Brcko. We had a very active gallery, which barely survives. We had a very strong and respected amateur theatre, which is now dead.. – representative of a local NGO, Brcko

High Prices of Basic Public Services

In the opinion survey, **high prices** are frequently mentioned as the main problem in relation to health care, public transport, official documents and, to a lesser extent, education. In the focus groups, health care, in particular, is denounced as an expensive and corrupt public service:

My father was in the hospital for three months. Finally he went to a private practice, paid the doctor, and right away was given a cell phone number to call to secure a place, a bed, and was given a date when he would be operated on. – woman, Tuzla

Another problem is the high cost of water, electricity, and telephone. Prices have increased and salaries are irregular, yet the non-payment of bills can lead to immediate sanctions:

We have negligible earnings, but we have electricity at European prices. They let pensions run six months late, but you have to pay for electricity within a month. – man, Banja Luka

High prices and strict deadlines for payment create additional material difficulties for an already impoverished population, and social services no longer have sufficient budgets to provide subsidies.

They disconnect telephone, electricity, they cancel contracts for the supply of these services without any court proceedings.

The local electricity distribution company asked us to provide a list of [socially vulnerable] cases. But when they saw how long the list was, they said that they could not give free electricity to so many people. – deputy director of the Center for Social Work, Bihac

Corruption and Discrimination in the Access to Public Services

Corruption is frequently mentioned as the main problem in relation to health care, issuance of official documents, public safety, housing for IDPs and returnees, education and social assistance (see Table 2). IDPs are more likely to mention corruption than locals. Bosnians also resent the need to have private connections and to pay bribes:

If you don't have a connection, then you have to bribe someone. – man, Zvornik

Discrimination is less of a problem, since most Bosnians now live in the area dominated by their own ethnic group. Members of local ethnic minorities are more likely to mention discrimination as the main problem, especially in relation to education. They are also more likely to consider that social assistance (50 percent), 'cultural activities (35 percent) and housing for IDPs and returnees (30 percent) are not available. However, members of these minorities say corruption is a greater problem than discrimination.

Table 2. Main problem in relation to the provision of public services (most frequent answers)

Type of service	Type of problems (percentage)
Public security	Low quality (16.7), Corruption (11.4), Non-existence (8.1)
Issuance of official documents	Low quality (15.0), High prices (14.1), Corruption (11.7)
Social assistance	Non-existence (34.8), Low quality (18.5), Corruption (6.8)
Housing for IDPs and returnees	Low quality (23.4), Non-existence (18.7), Corruption (9.5)
Public transport	Low quality (34.4), High prices (16.0), Non-existence (7.4)
Roads	Low quality (66.1), Poor condition of infrastructure (8.0)
Water supply and sewage	Low quality (36.1), Poor condition of infrastructure (16.1), Non-existence (8.9)
Garbage collection and street cleaning	Low quality (34.1), Non-existence (11.3), Poor condition of infrastructure (6.1)
Healthcare	Low quality (22.4), High prices (20.4), Corruption (12.6)
Education	Low quality (16.0), Corruption (8.4), High prices (7.0)
Cultural activities	Non-existence (27.9), Low quality (27.9)
Youth activities	Non-existence (32.9), Low quality (23.1)

More Nuanced Assessments of Police and Education

Differences appear in the assessment of each public service. The least problematic public services are public safety, education and, to a lesser extent, issuance of official documents and garbage collection / street cleaning. The most problematic services are roads, social assistance and housing for IDPs and returnees.

In focus groups, participants give contradictory assessments of police. Some praise its work, but others say insecurity has increased, and criticize policemen and judges for being unmotivated and corrupt, or for protecting criminals:

The police and courts do not work in a synchronized manner, everyone takes as much money as possible for himself. – man, Banja Luka

Bosnians also have contradictory views of the education system. Some consider that elementary and secondary schools work relatively well, while others deplore the backward teaching methods and the disappearance of extracurricular activities:

Children in primary school have nothing. Now they go to school and go home, there is no possibility to socialize, nothing happens for them. – woman, Banja Luka

We have entered the third millennium and we are still using chalk and blackboard like in the middle ages. – mayor and two of his close associates, Tuzla

Spatial Differences in Access to Public Services

The assessment of public services also differs by ethnic area. Inhabitants of the Serb area are most likely to mention corruption as the main problem, while inhabitants of the Croat area are least likely to do so.²⁸ Inhabitants of the Bosniac majority area seem to be more satisfied with public services, while inhabitants of Serb and Croat majority areas are more likely to feel that

²⁸ This finding partly contradicts some data in the *Anti-Corruption Study* (World Bank 2001), according to which, "the percentage of respondents who report that they were asked to make unofficial payments for public services is highest in Croat areas."

some public services are not available. This difference is related to the fact that the Bosniac majority area is more urban, and the Serb and Croat majority areas more rural.

Many in rural areas complain about the lack of collective facilities such as medical units, schools, kindergartens, and post offices, or about the bad condition of roads, water and sewerage systems, and electricity and phone lines. Residents of peripheral suburbs have similar complaints:

In the 1980s there was a cinema, a pool, parks, nice buildings, but now we have nothing. The only thing that survives is the Miners' house, where they organize a disco, women organize social evenings. A sand producer has taken over the pool for rinsing the sand. – two members of the MZ board, Siki Brod, Tuzla

New spatial imbalances in access to public services appeared during the war and the post-war periods. In Bihac, Brcko, Gornji Vakuf, and Zvornik, some villages and suburbs located on the front line still have not rebuilt their collective facilities or connection to water and electricity distribution systems. Spatial imbalances can also be exacerbated by international aid. In Banja Luka, for example, the inclusion of a few elementary schools in international experimental programs has led to differences in educational methods and equipment, and therefore to a sudden rise in the number of pupils:

A large number of pupils want to attend the school. Parents from other areas drive their children to school here. – director of the elementary school Borislav Stevanovic, Banja Luka

Spatial imbalances in available public services also compound the problem of public transport, since people from suburbs and villages need to travel to town centers to access basic services such as health care and issuance of official documents.

Assessment of Formal Institutions

The widespread dissatisfaction with public services influences people's view of formal institutions. Nearly half the survey respondents believe that local politicians do not serve citizens' interests, and the focus groups criticize local politicians for their lack of accountability.

Responsibility of Local and Higher-Level Institutions

Municipal authorities complain about the low level of financial resources and, in order to respond to citizens' needs, want to regain their former responsibilities and the corresponding budgets. In Bihac, the municipality regained management of the Center for Social Work in January 2001; in Tuzla, the mayor is trying to recover responsibility for the management of social policy and the maintenance of elementary schools.

In the budget there is not enough money for social policy, nor is the municipality responsible for this, but they are my citizens and I have to worry about them. – the mayor and two of his close collaborators, Tuzla

Citizens turn to the head of the municipality with problems that are, in reality, of an economic nature. – the mayor, Zvornik

Bosnians, especially in rural areas, tend to agree that lack of financial means are the cause of many problems. On the other hand, Bosnians still consider local politicians and civil servants to share responsibility for these problems: almost half say that local politicians do not serve the interests of the citizens, and more than a third say that civil servants are not professional enough. People with a low level of education, IDPs, rural residents, and those who do not

belong to a voluntary association tend to put more blame on civil servants, while those with a higher level of education, locals, urban residents, and members of voluntary associations tend to put more blame on local politicians.

Perception of Politicians and Political Parties

The focus group discussions give a somewhat different picture of how Bosnian citizens perceive formal institutions in general, and local institutions in particular. While some participants say they understand the difficulties of municipal authorities, others believe that corruption is present at every institutional level:

The international community is trying to do something with independent courts, but they do not take action for five or even ten years on cases of directors who embezzle money. – man, Zvornik

In Tuzla, in the Federation, the municipality has been controlled by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) since 1990, and political parties are mentioned only in relation to the electoral blackmail exerted by the nationalist Party of Democratic Action (SDA):

There was a threat from the SDA in the cafes that if we do not vote for the SDA, then Tuzla won't get money [from the canton and the Federation], but will be left out in favor of other parts of the country. – man, Tuzla

In Bihac, also in the Federation, where hegemony of the SDA remained almost uncontested until the last municipal elections in April 2000, residents complain about the importance of party affiliation and ideological conformity for gaining access to jobs, accommodations, and public services:

To be some ten percent better off, people have to get involved in the dominant political structure, even if it means being something they are not. To go and pray in the mosque, to go to church and cross yourself. – man, Bihac

In Banja Luka and Zvornik, both in the Serb Republic, residents also note the importance of party affiliation, but tend to describe political parties as empty institutions hiding clientelistic networks dominated by a few cliques of powerful people:

New parties come, new governments, new management boards, but the same people always remain. – man, Zvornik

If you want to become a member of a political party then you have to be university educated, have a good background, well-standing parents, a pedigree. If my father was a doctor and I am a doctor, then that is known in Banja Luka. – man, Banja Luka

Participants from the Brcko District share the general distrust of politicians. Since the local assembly was appointed by the international Supervisor and there has not been a local election since 1990, many feel very distant from local institutions:

Members of the Assembly were placed there by the OHR on the basis of proposals by the political parties. It is illusory to talk about better relations between the government and the population without fair elections. – woman, Brcko

Perceptions of Public Employees

Bosnians have differing views of public employees. Many characterize them as too highly paid, lazy, careless, and rude:

A cleaner at Telekom has the same salary as a doctor of sciences, as a university professor. That is absurd. – man, Zvornik

I often go to the municipality and the local police. Their functioning depends largely of the people who work there, on their moods. – woman, Banja Luka

Others are willing to excuse the behavior of civil servants—especially policemen, teachers, and doctors—by the fact that they are not paid enough:

When teachers have to trade black market at a stall and also teach children, of course they cannot devote themselves to their work. – man, Zvornik

How can you expect a police officer to risk his life for 300 marks when everyone has a gun? – woman, Gornji Vakuf

In Brcko, however, where District authorities decided to increase the salaries of civil servants precisely to increase their motivation and reduce corruption, that decision was met with irony and bitterness:

As you know there was a war here, and many people do not have enough to live on.
– man, Brcko

The salaries in institutions here are enormous, but there is no program of social protection for the unemployed. – man, Brcko

Consequences and Benefits of Institutional Confusion

The frequent legal changes characterizing post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina have led to confusion about how responsibilities are shared among various administrations and services. Many citizens say that political leaders and civil servants use this confusion to avoid responsibility or to mask ethnic discrimination or illegal enrichment:

When I worked with municipalities the question was raised about what could be the cause of their inefficiency. Was it lack of skills, poor technical resources, or is it that if someone wants to engage in criminal or illegal activity, then it is the best to do this in a flawed system where rules are not clear? – former leader of the UNDP Progress program, Banja Luka

Positive Examples of Local Institutions

The few formal institutions and civil servants that are widely respected are those that respond to citizens' complaints, and help them understand the legal and administrative labyrinth of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. The best example is three institutions in Bihac: the cantonal Ombudmen's Office (see Part IIB, Box 4), the municipal Department for General Administration and Social Affairs, and the Center for Social Work. These institutions are accessible to all people regardless of ethnic background, local origin, or legal status, and their employees use the institutional confusion not to escape their responsibility, but to act beyond their strict domain of competence:

We listen to people, open our doors and give them the chance to talk about their problems, direct them to the place where they can realize their rights. We put

together lists for the distribution of humanitarian aid, and for beneficiaries of pension funds. –deputy director of the Center for Social Work, Bihac

Trust in these institutions seems to have survived in the post-war period because their autonomy and professionalism during the war constituted an important counterweight to the hegemony of the SDA.

Perception of International Organizations

Many in both the Federation and the Serb Republic believe that only international organizations are capable of restoring the rule of law, and hope they will strengthen their control over Bosnian institutions or replace them completely. However, in Brcko, where the influence of international organizations is more direct and pervasive, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) is criticized for lack of transparency and an undemocratic way of working:

It is necessary to break up that centralistic government inside the Brcko District, in the OHR that is killing the will to do anything. You can start a thousand initiatives but if the OHR does not approve, nothing can come of them. There is a joke that it is cloudy, but only the High Representative decides whether the rain will fall. – man, Brcko

B. Relationships between Citizens and Local-Level Institutions

Individual Attitudes toward Formal Institutions

General mistrust toward formal institutions influences the way Bosnian citizens try to resolve their disputes in relation to public services. Reactions range from disengagement to threats of violence, as well as bribes.

Lack of Trust in the Local Justice System

Most Bosnians are reluctant to appeal to the local justice system, because they fear reprisal, consider it corrupt, or cannot afford to hire a lawyer. Even key informants involved in legal help and information seem to share this skepticism toward judicial proceedings:

It is very difficult to tell someone to look for redress through the courts because this leads to costs that he cannot afford. So he figures it is less costly to pay for something, even when he should not have to. – three regional ombudsmen's officers, Bihac

In Bihac and Tuzla, however, many citizens resort see the regional ombudsmen's office as a valuable alternative to judicial proceedings (see Box 4).

Box 4. The Ombudsmen's Field Offices: An Imported Institution Takes Root

The ombudsmen's role is to defend the rights and liberties of Bosnian citizens, according to the Constitution, the European Convention of Human Rights, and other international agreements annexed to the General Peace Agreement. They investigate complaints against public institutions, and recommend appropriate measures. Public institutions have the duty to facilitate the ombudsmen's investigations and respond to their questions and recommendations.

In the Federation, ombudsmen's field offices have existed for several years, and play an important role in mediating disputes between citizens and local-level institutions. Ombudsmen can also put pressure on local politicians and public servants by passing on their recommendations to international organizations:

[Local authorities] would rather we did not exist. It is easier for them with foreigners who are not familiar with certain facts, but with us here it is harder for them.

The independence and effectiveness of ombudsmen can lead other institutions to use their recommendations to overcome the resistance of influential individuals:

It is easier for government officials if we have recommended a certain concrete action. An example is the eviction of a powerful person, where they use our finding to say, "We would not, but the ombudsman has written. . ."

Ombudsmen's field officers can also play a mediatory role in collective protests. In Tuzla, for example, the water distribution company promptly improved the quality of water in an MZ, after its inhabitants sent a collective complaint to the regional ombudsmen's office.

Extreme Attitudes: Renunciation or Resort to Violence

The difficulties citizens face in resolve disputes with formal institutions can lead some people, especially women, to avoid contact with these institutions altogether, at the expense of their own rights:

Whatever I have attempted in a nice way, in accordance with the law, has come to nothing. I am so bitter that I will not even try anymore. It is better to stay quiet and let things go the way they are. – woman, Bihac

Men, and especially veterans (see Part IB, Box 2), are more likely to resort to violence in order to access public services:

I go the health center quite often and have to pay for everything. Once they said they would not take my child because I did not have the money to pay. However, when I took out my gun, then they took my child in. –man, Zvornik

Use of Private Connections and Bribery

Most often, however, Bosnian citizens try to solve their disputes with formal institutions by using private connections or bribery. While few admit to having paid a bribe, many said that bribes and the use of private connections are common²⁹:

Nobody talks about bribery. We ask people which judge they bribed, [and they respond] "Don't ask me that!" There are wealthy people I advise to make a criminal

²⁹ The Anti-Corruption Study (World Bank 2001) found that 60 percent of Bosnians believe corruption is widespread, but only 17 percent admit to having paid a bribe.

report and they say to me: "I'm not crazy – I will need that judge again at some point." – three regional ombudsmen's officers, Bihac

Their desire to directly access the very people they are denouncing as corrupt reflects the importance of clientelistic practices, and the fact that normal mechanisms of participation and mediation between citizens and formal institutions do not function. One reason is that municipal authorities face the growing needs of the population with reduced financial means, and thus turn a deaf ear to some demands. At the same time, the main institutional form of participation and mediation at the local level, the neighborhood committees, have lost most of their legal authority and material means and, in many cases, have ceased their activities.

Declining Role of Neighborhood Committees

During the Communist period, elected MZ boards were responsible for some local infrastructure (roads, parks, water and sewerage systems) and public services (day care centers, youth clubs, medical units), and played an important role in the organization of collective works. During the war they organized civil protection and distributed humanitarian aid. After the war, however, MZs in most municipalities lost the right to own buildings, hold a bank account, initiate infrastructure projects, and finance them through compulsory financial contributions. Although they still play an important role in various forms of collective action (see Part IID), their main function at the present time is to forward infrastructure demands to municipal authorities or public companies. Priority projects are included in the municipal budget, and are transmitted to the various municipal administrations for implementation.

This new way of dealing with local infrastructure needs represents a clear loss of autonomy for MZ boards, and MZ leaders complain about their increased dependence on the decisions and budget allocations of municipal authorities:

Now the MZ mainly initiates contact with the municipality on certain problems, but there is no significant chance they will be resolved. – two members of the MZ board, Siki Brod, Tuzla

Moreover, the nationalization of infrastructure built with the financial contributions or voluntary work of citizens (see Part IID) and formerly owned by the MZs is resented as an injustice, especially in cases where such infrastructure produced revenue for the MZ:

All of the infrastructure in this area, that means roads, telephone and electricity lines, was built with contributions from the residents of this MZ. But it all became state property under the same law that took enterprises away from workers. – two members of the MZ board, Siki Brod, Tuzla

[People in rural MZs], with their own contributions, built the water supply system, the sewerage system, the MZ building, and now by decision of the [District] government this belongs to the District and no longer to the citizens. There is quite a lot of anger. – president of a rural MZ board, Brcko

Loss of Judicial and Administrative Functions

Under the Communist system, citizens elected peace councils to resolve interpersonal conflicts and minor infractions such as illegal dumping and unauthorized building. These peace councils have been suppressed by the new laws on local self-management, so the presidents of MZ boards may be asked to help resolve minor conflicts between neighbors.

MZ boards can also play an important role in mediating conflicts between IDPs and minority returnees (see Part ID, Box 1). But because of their overall loss of influence, conflicts are now usually heard by regular courts, which means they are settled only after considerable delays.

MZ boards have also lost the authority to deliver official documents such as birth and death certificates, driving permits, and identity cards. This change is most perceptible in Brcko, where MZs have lost all legal status, making it necessary for people living in rural areas to travel to town centers to get official documents. This causes great anger among rural residents, and even some nostalgia for the former split municipalities:

The District government has taken the seal of the MZ. Now I make the document and then they have to go to Brcko for it to be made official with a stamp. It is that way for every document. – presidents of the MZ boards, Rahic and Maoca, Brcko

Lack of Material Means and Volunteers

According to MZ leaders, lack of material means is the main reason for the MZs' institutional decay. MZ boards are overloaded with the complaints and requirements of the local inhabitants, but unable to do anything concrete. Financial costs, physical exhaustion, and moral discouragement explain the low number of people willing to serve on MZ boards or attend citizens' gatherings:

Being the president of a MZ is harder than being the president of the state. The people are all your neighbors, but your ability to fulfill the wishes of your neighbors is very difficult. –member of a rural MZ board, Brcko

Tendency to Transform MZs into NGOs

Some former MZ leaders have left MZ boards and created non-governmental organizations, which they believe can more easily put pressure on municipal authorities, and get international funding for local activities or infrastructure projects.

Most MZ leaders, however, are very hostile to the long-term project of some municipal authorities to transform MZs from official sub-territorial units – which represent all its inhabitants and are entitled to receive public money for salaries and expenses – into NGOs, which might have even less influence on local issues. They insist on the need to keep the MZ boards alive:

MZs are the basic cell of every society. Cooperation and contact at the grassroots level happens through the MZ. – president of the Serb MZ board, Klanac, Brcko

Some municipal authorities seem to have rediscovered the importance of the MZs for their relationships with citizens. In Bihac and Zvornik, municipal statutes enacted in 2001 gave back to the MZ boards the legal competences and financial means they had lost a few years before:

The need for the MZ to be strengthened became obvious. During the war, the MZ played a big role, there was nothing that it could not do. Now [we need] for the MZ to function again. – director of the Department for General Administration and Social Affairs, Bihac

Perception of MZ Boards by Bosnian Citizens

Bosnians are divided in their assessment of the work of their MZ boards. In the survey, only 9.9 percent of respondents claim to be satisfied, while nearly 40 percent say either that their MZ board does not exist or that it only serves the interests of a few people. Forty percent also agree with the MZ leaders that their MZ board does not work properly because it lacks the legal and financial means (see Table 3).

Table 3. How would you evaluate the work of your MZ board ?

	Urban settlements		Rural settlements		Bosniac majority area		Croat majority area		Serb majority area		Total sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Does not exist at all	73	16.90	47	19.34	48	15.05	28	21.88	44	19.30	120	17.78
Functions poorly as it does not have adequate legal competences, staffing and material means	154	35.65	114	46.91	130	40.75	49	38.28	89	39.04	268	39.70
Functions but only serves the interests of a few citizens	90	20.83	41	16.87	60	18.81	23	17.97	48	21.05	131	19.41
Functions poorly as citizens do not wish to participate in its work	28	6.48	16	6.58	19	5.96	7	5.47	18	7.89	44	6.52
Functions well and works for the benefit of all citizens	56	12.96	11	4.53	48	15.05	7	5.47	12	5.26	67	9.93
Don't know / didn't answer	31	7.18	14	5.76	14	4.39	14	10.94	17	7.46	45	6.67
Total	432	100.00	243	100.00	319	100.00	128	100.00	228	100.00	675	100.00

The survey reveals some interesting spatial differences. Inhabitants of the Bosniac majority area are more likely to be satisfied with the work of their MZ board, and more likely to identify MZ leaders as the main initiators of collective actions related to local public services. Urban residents are more likely to think either that their MZ board works well and for the well-being of all citizens, or that it only serves the interest of a few citizens; while rural residents more often believe that their MZ board lacks legal and financial means or that it does not exist. However, more rural residents (15 percent) than urban residents (10 percent) attend citizens' gatherings. This suggests that MZ boards play a more important role in rural areas.

Political Allegiances and Private Connections

Many Bosnians view MZ as controlled by political parties:

The representatives are imposed by a certain party but they do not suit the majority of people. In the earlier system we selected people who had some affinity with the struggle for resolution of utility problems. We don't have that now. – man, Tuzla

Bosnians also believe that the achievements of their MZ board depend largely on the political affiliations or private connections of their president³⁰:

If the president [of the MZ] is in the ruling party then he can manage to pull something out, but if he is not then there is nothing. – man, Banja Luka

In every organization that he [our MZ president] went to, people openly said to him – you are a president but you do not have the money to pay for lunch, what kind of a president are you? – man, Zvornik

New Mediation and Participation Mechanisms

In Communist Yugoslavia, the MZs were—along with state enterprises and political organizations—one of the basic elements of the delegation system on which self-management was based. Each MZ sent a delegate to the Chamber of Neighborhood Committees, one of

³⁰ In Zvornik, the Bosniac president of the MZ board in Krizevici explains that this MZ no longer receives material support from the "municipality in exile" located in Tuzla and controlled by the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), since the MZ board has a Social Democrat majority.

three chambers of the municipal assembly.³¹ MZs are no longer represented in the municipal bodies, but remnants of the former system can be found in some municipalities. In the Bosniac part of Gornji Vakuf, for example, delegates from the MZs still attend the sessions of the municipal assembly (without right to vote); and in Tuzla, the mayor meets once a month with all MZ presidents. At the same time, the disappearance of older forms of direct democracy, as well as the insistence on local democracy by international organizations such as OSCE and the Council of Europe, have led municipal authorities to develop new forms of mediation and participation.³²

Transparency and Accountability

Municipalities are trying to improve citizens' access to local public services by increasing and publicly announcing the reception times of each department, publishing the organizational chart of the municipality, opening complaint books, or creating special departments to register complaints (*Odeljenje za žalbe i pritužbe*).³³ In addition, the municipality of Tuzla and the Brcko District have adopted a code of behavior for their employees, and have organized training courses for them on the concept of public service and the relationship between civil servants and citizens.

Citizen Initiatives and Consultative Bodies

Some municipal statutes mention citizen initiatives, whereby citizens can petition municipal authorities, who are required to give them an answer. In Tuzla, the municipality has received more than 2,000 petitions in the year 2000, and the municipal assembly or the competent department must answer each petition within 60 days. In some municipalities, monitoring and consultative bodies have also been created by municipal authorities or local NGOs.

Limits of the New Mediation and Participation Mechanisms

Most new participation mechanisms were introduced in 2000 or 2001, and their operations and achievements are thus difficult to assess. In Brcko, a field officer with an international organization considers the new requirements for written communication or formal mechanisms of mediation and participation may be appropriate for a small urban and educated middle-class, but not for the majority of the population:

Villagers have always been treated as people on the margins and they do not feel comfortable knocking on the doors of institutions. [District authorities] have in fact built an invisible barrier between themselves and the citizens. – field officer of an international organization, Brcko

Many complain that municipal authorities in fact seldom answer petitions sent by citizens or MZ boards.

The Role of Other Local-Level Institutions

³¹ The two other chambers were the Chamber of Associated Work, where local worker councils and other economic organs were represented, and the Socio-Political Chamber, where the League of Communists and its mass organizations were represented.

³² Many international organizations present in Bosnia-Herzegovina give recommendations and organize training courses in order to improve access, transparency, and participation at the local level. Some have also set up their own pilot consultative bodies, such as the Municipal Development Committees created by UNDP or the Capital Planning Committees created by OSCE, but no such committees exist in the municipalities in the sample.

³³ Similar measures have been adopted by many public companies and state administrations.

The limitations of the MZs and of the new mediation and participation mechanisms may explain why other formal and informal institutions play an important role in local public life. In an survey conducted in 1999 in the Federation, less than 10 percent of the respondents mentioned the municipal assembly, and less than 15 percent mentioned citizens' gatherings as important places for advancing vital local issues, while 20 percent mentioned cafés, and more than 30 percent mentioned party meetings.

In some municipalities and MZs, especially in rural ones, religious institutions still exert a strong influence. In a village in Tuzla, for example, the local Islamic parish is the only link between local residents and IDPs living in the neighboring collective center. In a village in Gornji Vakuf, Croat minority returnees say that the priest works more than the entire municipality. And the former leader of the UNDP Progress program relates that in some municipalities, what the priest or the imam says is far more important than what local politicians say. In focus groups, however, several participants (especially in the Bosniac area) protest the growing influence of religious institutions, and more specifically the building of oversized and expansive churches and mosques.

The role of religious institutions in local public life has been institutionalized in the Brcko District, where representatives of religious committees participated in the working commission on education, and meet every month with the international Supervisor; and in Tuzla, where they take part to the Council of Citizens.

C. Relationship between Citizens and Formal Voluntary Associations

Bosnia-Herzegovina has two main types of voluntary associations: traditional citizens' associations, generally subsidized by the municipalities or cantons; and new non-governmental organizations, generally funded by the international community. Membership in citizens' associations is more common. During the war, most citizens' associations split on an ethnic basis, and nationalist parties created mass organizations representing new social groups such as veterans and IDPs. At the same time, the international community began to support a new generation of humanitarian and non-governmental organizations committed to universal values. After the signing of the Dayton Accords in December 1995, international programs supporting Bosnian civil society resulted in a rapid increase in the number and activities of these new local NGOs.

Two Main Types of Formal Voluntary Associations

Citizens' associations are devoted either to leisure activities or to the interests of a specific ethnic or social group. Non-governmental organizations are value oriented, and tend to be centered on service delivery and new kinds of educational and leisure activities for the younger generation.³⁴

This difference, however, should not be overstated. Many environmental associations closely resemble new NGOs in terms of type of activities and commitment to universal values, but often remain linked to municipal authorities and carry out collective functions such as yearly cleaning of streets or riverbanks (see Part IID).³⁵ Some NGOs are also not easy to categorize. While a majority of NGOs confine themselves to the delivery of legal help, material

³⁴ In the Federation, formal voluntary associations can have the legal status of citizens' association, humanitarian organization, or foundation. In the Serb Republic, the only existing formal voluntary associations with legal status are citizens' associations.

³⁵ In Banja Luka and Brcko, the Eco-Movement (*Eko-pokret*) is supported by municipal authorities; and in Bihac, the citizens' environmental association Una's Emeralds (*Unski smaragdi*), created in 1985, has become one of the most important local NGOs.

assistance, and public services, a few are directly involved in political life. Some leaders of the new NGOs are former activists from Communist trade unions, or youth or women's organizations.

Membership in Formal Voluntary Associations

Nearly one third of the respondents belong to some type of voluntary association. Membership is broken down as follows:

- **interest-based associations:** pensioners' associations, 5.5 percent; veterans' associations, 4.4 percent; trade unions, 3.4 percent; IDPs' associations, 1.6 percent;³⁶
- **leisure associations:** sports clubs, 4.9 percent; hunting and fishing societies, 4.3 percent; cultural societies, 3.1 percent; mountaineering clubs, 2.4 percent);
- **religious associations:** 5.2 percent; and local parishes, 4.3 percent;
- **political parties :** 4.7 percent;
- **community associations:** MZ board, 2.7 percent; school council, 2.4 percent; condominium council, 1.5 percent;
- **new NGOs:** environmental associations, 1.9 percent; women's associations, 1.8 percent; youth associations, 1.3 percent; human rights associations, 0.7 percent.

Higher levels of economic and cultural capital are associated with higher levels of membership in voluntary associations. This is especially true for leisure associations and new NGOs, with the latter, in particular, attracting members of the urban and educated middle class. The lower level of affiliation of IDPs with voluntary associations confirms that the social capital of this group has been more deeply affected by the war than has the social capital of the locals (see Part IA).

Overall Decline in Associative Life

Because the largest proportion of associative life is linked to traditional citizens' associations, the evolution of associative life—and of civil society more generally—cannot be measured by using the number of new NGOs as an indicator. Furthermore, this number has itself declined recently, due to maturation of the NGO sector and more selective international funding.

When we first established the new NGO sector, an enormous part of the donations was channeled exclusively through NGOs. Now more people are networking through common interests, to find a way to resolve common problems or realize common ideas. – former leader of the UNDP Progress program, Banja Luka

In Tuzla, of the more than 400 citizens' associations existing before the war, only 44 still exist. In Bihac, the leader of a sports club for war invalids says that sports clubs are being closed down because the canton's budget provides only 80 pfennigs per resident for sports activities, while before the war every citizen contributed 20 marks. Interest-based associations, for their part, seem to have lost most of the influence they had in the pre-war and the immediate post-war period, and several participants complain that they do not have the necessary resources to function. Veterans, in particular, resent the decline and marginalization of their associations, which goes hand in hand with their own loss of prestige (see Part IB, Box 2):

They have no influence, or only if they say, "He was a soldier, he was with me in the war, let's at least do something for him." – man, Bihac

³⁶ Twenty-four percent of pensioners belong to a pensioners' association, 14 percent of veterans to a veterans' association, and 8 percent of full-time wage earners to a trade-union.

The only citizens' associations that have more or less recovered their past activities and influence are hunting and fishing societies, since their financial resources come mainly from the sale of compulsory hunting or fishing permits, and their leaders are often wealthy and influential:

When they come to the municipality and say that they need 5,000 marks to throw young fish into the lake, people give the money and nobody asks any questions. All of these other associations that are supposed to work for the benefit of the people cannot get anything done. – man, Zvornik

Spatial Differences in Associative Life

In the survey, spatial differences appear in the percentage of respondents belonging to at least one voluntary association, in the kinds of associations they belong to, and in the main motivation for their (non-)membership, and in the level of social capital in the different ethnic areas:

- The **Croat majority area** has the highest percentage of membership in some kind of voluntary association. Inhabitants belong more often to leisure associations—a consequence of their higher living standard. They also belong more to political parties, religious associations, local parishes, and veterans' associations, all of which indicate bonding rather than bridging or linking social capital.
- Conversely, in the **Bosniac majority area**, which has the highest amount of bridging and linking social capital, a higher percentage of the respondents belong to the new generation of NGOs (environmental associations, women's associations), community associations, and pensioners' associations. Those belonging to some kind of voluntary association more often mention civic commitment than do residents of the Croat majority area.
- The **Serb majority area** has a much lower percentage of membership, which illustrates its deep social fragmentation. But the lower level of affiliation in this area can also be explained by a lower living standard (leisure associations), the traditionally low level of religious affiliation (local parishes, 2.6 percent; religious associations, 2.2 percent), and the breakdown of the dominant nationalist party (political parties, 2.2 percent). The only formal associations that seem more influential in the Serb majority area than in other ethnic areas are trade unions.

These differences in associative life and level of social capital have implications for how ready people are to help their neighbors (see Table 4).

Table 4. Readiness to help neighbors and local formal institutions (percentage)

	Ready to help neighbors in any case	Ready to help formal institutions in any case **
Bosniac majority area	38.6	Local parish (29.8), MZ board (28.2), humanitarian/non-governmental organization (23.5), citizens' association (22.3), trade union, (20.1)
Croat Majority area	24.2	Local parish (30.5), MZ board (8.6), humanitarian/non-governmental organization (7.0), citizens' association (6.3), trade union (6.3)
Serb Majority area	37.3	Local parish (27.6), MZ board (14.0), humanitarian/non-governmental organization (13.2), citizens' association (13.6), trade union (12.7)

Important spatial differences also exist at the local level. In Tuzla, where the local NGO sector is generally considered the strongest in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the associative landscape differs considerably from one neighborhood to the other:

- The **MZ Slatina**, a central urban neighborhood of educated middle class residents, has a network of community and interest-based associations dating from the pre-war period. It also has several active sport and leisure associations, with accompanying infrastructure.
- In the **MZ Siki Brod**, an industrial suburb inhabited by miners, the associative network from the pre-war period is in an advanced state of decay. Most condominium councils have disappeared, and among interest-based associations, only the pensioners' association, the women's action committee, and the veterans' association close to the Social Democratic Party are still active to some degree.
- In the **MZ Simin Han**, a residential suburb in which much of the public infrastructure was destroyed during the war, there are no visible remnants of the pre-war associative network. However, the strong presence of international NGOs in this MZ has led to new pedagogic and participatory practices in the elementary school, funded by international NGOs, and to a very active parent association based on the Western model.

Impact of International Funding

International funding has had broad impact on associative life. It has created an imbalance between the Serb Republic and the Federation:

Of the international donor resources, I believe that at least 90 percent has been directed to the Federation. In the Federation, non-government organizations developed at lightening speed, but not in the Serb Republic. – representative of a local NGO, Brcko

Foreign funding has also led authorities in Brcko District to reduce state subsidies to voluntary associations,³⁷ which can lead to a failure of these institutions:

The work of NGOs in Brcko is slowly dying because of the statute that requires them to be financed outside of the budget, with resources they collect through their activities. Eventually nobody will have any money, because among the organizations seeking donor support, even the Center for Legal Aid and the Youth Forum do not get anything, not to mention the associations of refugees, displaced persons, families of fallen soldiers, etc. – representative of local NGO, Brcko

It has also led to a stronger ethnicization of local associative life in some areas. In Brcko, the most active voluntary associations are now linked with religious institutions and cultural societies.

International funding decisions have also helped to shift the balance between traditional citizens' associations and new NGOs. Citizens' associations have difficulty elaborating projects and applying for international funding, while NGOs are much more skilled at such procedures and the related networks and connections. This can lead to a few well-established NGOs monopolizing international funding, thus endangering the survival of both older citizens' associations and small, nascent NGOs.

³⁷ The 2001 District budget foresaw only 82,000 KM of direct subsidies to formal voluntary associations (sports infrastructure 42,000 KM, health and social protection 20,000 KM, neighborhood councils – here defined as voluntary associations – 20,000 KM). The amount of services in health, social protection, education, and other areas contracted to formal voluntary associations does not clearly appear in the budget documents.

Some international donors try to encourage cooperation among voluntary associations by funding common projects and supporting NGO forums, but such initiatives are not always successful. In Tuzla, the regional NGO forum enables voluntary associations to plan and undertake common activities; but in Gornji Vakuf, the local NGO forum is seen as an empty institution. Limited funding of short-term projects and frequent changes in donors' priorities also lead to instability and lack of specialization in NGO activities, with stronger NGOs tending to turn into catch-all organizations.

Attitude of Citizens toward Formal Voluntary Associations

Most Bosnians have a negative attitude toward voluntary associations. Traditional interest-based associations are seen, especially by veterans, as corrupt and linked with political parties, while the new NGOs are seen as distant creations of the international community:

The president of the veterans' association is a member of a certain party, the vice-president, and it is always the political party that is in power. An hour ago I saw two real veterans, war wounded, publicly call out to him: "Where have you been, war commander, how do you dare walk through town, aren't you scared the Serb people will kill you for the money you stole!" – man, Zvornik

I have not heard of any organization in the Serb Republic or in Bosnia-Herzegovina that was established locally and has managed to resolve a concrete problem. – man, Banja Luka

Membership and Actual Participation in Associative Life

Different kinds of voluntary associations have differing definitions of membership :

- Only **leisure associations** such as hunting and fishing societies, sport clubs, and mountaineering clubs, cultural, and artistic societies associate membership with payment of membership fees and active participation.
- **Interest-based associations** tend to consider a member anyone who belongs to the social group or legal category they claim to represent. Most have only a limited number of activists, but still control, as during the Communist period, a dense network of representatives at the MZ and workplace levels, who can be activated for general assemblies, solidarity actions, or collective protests.
- Many **new NGOs** talk less about members than about clients (when focused on service delivery) or about citizens (when involved in political life). Others include in their membership all people who have contributed to their activities at least once; some therefore claim they have thousands of members, when in fact they represent a few dozen volunteers gathered around a small remunerated staff or a charismatic figure.

Service Delivery and Material Assistance

In post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, the main link between citizens and voluntary associations is not one of active participation, but most often one of individual requests for public services and social benefits (see Part IC)³⁸:

Someone comes because he needs building materials. People are only interested in what they can get for themselves. Thus last year we made the decision that whoever

³⁸ A good illustration of this is the fact that, in focus groups, many participants mention the address of some NGOs and the kind of help they deliver, but do not even know their name.

does not pay the membership fee cannot approach us for such assistance. – representative of the local Bosniac association of war invalids, Gornji Vakuf

More Bosnians turn to a traditional interest-based association for help than to a new NGO. Urban residents, IDPs, and the poor turn more often to voluntary associations than do rural residents, locals, and the better-off. The poor turn more often to pensioner, IDP, and veterans' associations, whereas the better-off turn more often to trade unions and new NGOs. More local ethnic minorities turn to religious associations, while fewer turn to interest-based associations, and there is no indication that they turn more than others to the new generation of NGOs. This finding confirms the substitutory role of religious charity organizations in the provision of material assistance and public services to the local ethnic minorities (see Part ID).

Formal Voluntary Associations and Other Local Level Institutions

The role of voluntary associations in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina needs to be considered in relation to other local-level institutions. From this point of view, additional differences appear between traditional interest-based associations and new NGOs.

Formal Voluntary Associations and Political Parties

Traditional interest-based associations tend to have close ties with ruling political parties. In some cases, competing political influences can lead to internal conflicts and splits. In Tuzla, for example, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) has divided veterans and created its own associations by mobilizing narrow material interests:

They took invalids and gave them resources to get organized, then they took families of fallen soldiers and gave them the resources to get organized. Now there are four organizations: the Unified Organization of Veterans, the Organization of Families of Fallen Soldiers, the League of War Invalids, and the Organization of Demobilized Soldiers. – president of Unified Organization of Veterans, Tuzla

IDPs' associations have also been split on the issues of restitution and return process. In the Brcko District, the Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons encourages Serb IDPs to claim their pre-war properties and to return, but the association Staying is hostile to the return process, and insists that land or apartments be given to IDPs willing to settle in Brcko.³⁹ Similar splits exist on the Bosniac side.

New NGOs usually share the values of non-nationalist parties. But while a majority of them are not involved in politics, some of the most famous—such as the Citizens' Forum and the Helsinki Parliament in Tuzla—play an important role in Bosnian political life. In 1996, a few dozen NGOs even created an Alternative Citizens' Parliament in opposition to the ruling nationalist parties.

Formal Voluntary Associations and Municipalities

Traditional interest-based associations and new NGOs have different relations with municipal authorities, based on the presence or absence of institutional and financial linkages.

Interest-based associations often receive municipal subsidies and distribute government-funded social benefits and material assistance to the local population, including apartments

³⁹ The association Staying is a split-off of the Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons. It has chapters in each MZ of the former Serb municipality of Brcko, while the Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons is divided into seven clubs that gather IDPs of the same local origin (Sarajevo, Jajce, Travnik, Tuzla, Ozren Mounts, Orasje, Brcko-Federation).

and plots of land. Veterans' and pensioners' often have close links with MZ boards, and veterans' associations control jobs in former municipal service activities such as parking, street kiosks, and gas stations. The case of the veterans' associations in Tuzla also shows how interest-based associations attempt to continue the pre-war self-management and delegation system:

From the very beginning of our organization, we asked veterans to attend sessions of the municipal and cantonal assembly, serve on the boards of state enterprises, the commissions for privatization, social issues, housing issues, etc., because it is their fate that is in question. – president of the Unified Organization of Veterans, Tuzla

By contrast, most new NGOs do not have strong institutional links with municipal authorities, but are often members of the new local-level monitoring and consultative bodies (see Part IIB).

Changes in the Relations between New NGOs and Municipalities

Early in the post-war period, municipal authorities suspected NGOs of being anti-governmental organizations, and resented the fact that they were channeling a disproportionate share of international donations. NGO leaders contributed to this impression by circumventing municipalities in their projects and relations with international donors. More recently, there have been more pragmatic and cooperative relations between NGOs and municipalities. Some NGO representatives, however, have a more negative view of the relationship:

Associations that are initiated by citizens themselves, and aim at raising the civic consciousness of the population—such associations will not get any support because authorities do not support those who try to compel the government to function better. – representative of a local NGO, Brcko

Relations between New NGOs and Neighborhood Committees

Some NGO representatives have a very positive view of their relationship with MZs:

The representatives of MZs are very important to us when a meeting is being arranged or when we need information about a problem in the field. We have organized many such meetings with representatives of MZs where we invited representatives of international donor organizations as well. – president of the Legal Aid and Information Center (CIPP), Zvornik

MZ boards, however, often believe they have too little influence on the activities of local NGOs:

MZs have no material power, they have no direct influence on [the NGOs'] decisions. – president of the MZ board, Slatina, Tuzla

The former president of another MZ board has adapted to the loss of influence by creating a NGO to continue his work:

I was the president of the MZ board but they took away our seals, our premises, so we [found another way] to resolve our problems. – president of local NGO, Banja Luka

Social and Institutional Impact of Formal Voluntary Associations

The differences in associative life among ethnic areas shows that there is no simple or straightforward correlation between the percentage of affiliation and amount of social capital. Given the large range of voluntary associations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the variety of ways Bosnian citizens make use of them, it is also clear that bonding social capital cannot be attributed only to traditional citizens' associations, nor can bridging and linking social capital be attributed only to the new NGOs. In fact, several studies have shown that the overemphasis of many international organizations on new NGOs as the only representatives of an allegedly nascent civil society, as well as their tendency to use these NGOs as service delivery agencies—often at the expense of social service role of the state or traditional citizens' associations—has had negative long-term consequences for local civil society and social capital.

Interest-based associations, for their part, are often considered an embodiment of bonding social capital, since they represent the interests of specific social groups or legal categories and are often linked to nationalist parties. In reality, however, these associations also contribute to the preservation and production of bridging and linking social capital, by mediating between citizens and formal institutions and by taking part in various forms of mutual help:

We organized veterans in the coal mine, some 70 percent of the miners were veterans, and they all gave 5 marks to the veterans' organization. In this way 21,000 marks were collected for a man to take his child abroad for an operation. – president of the Unified Organization of Veterans, Tuzla

Leisure associations also keep alive a multiplicity of interpersonal relations and informal social networks, and contribute to the diffusion of basic values such as fair play, tolerance, and civility in urban life:

In Banja Luka, there is a strong fishing association with a few thousand members, and this organization urged all its members to join the Eco-Movement. – president of the local Eco-Movement, Banja Luka

All citizens cannot be fishermen or hunters, and all of us cannot be active in the protection of the environment, but individuals in these organizations will talk with others about how it is not good [to leave rubbish out in the open]. When they see someone dumping in places other than the rubbish dumps, they will stop him and that it is not nice for the rubbish to be left there and ask him to take it to the town dump. – private entrepreneur, member of a hunting association, Bihac

Formal Voluntary Associations and Institutional Reintegration

NGOs and traditional citizens' associations can also play a complementary role in the return process and the institutional reintegration of divided municipalities. New NGOs are committed to the principle of multi-ethnicity and are directly involved in efforts to reconcile local ethnic groups. These efforts tend to be more successful when they work with other actors, such as religious institutions or citizens' associations, rather than when they come in with overly ambitious and unrealistic projects.

Even mono-ethnic citizens' associations can contribute to breaking down ethnic barriers. In the Brcko District, with the support of international organizations and new NGOs, mono-ethnic sport clubs have reached an agreement about the shared use of the main sport infrastructures; mono-ethnic women's associations have formed a common round table; and trade unions and the anti-fascist veterans' association, which had been multi-ethnic before the war, have become reunified.

D. Forms of Collective Action Related to Local Public Services

The success of collective actions is linked to the mobilization of the entire local associative landscape, including leisure and interest-based associations close to the nationalist parties. Where there is low level of interpersonal trust, lack of confidence in formal institutions and an absence of civic values, collective action is less likely to occur.

Main Forms of Collective Action

Under Yugoslav self-management, municipalities and MZs could collect financial contributions and organize collective works in order to construct or repair some local infrastructure. These practices still influence collective action related to local public services.

Infrastructure Projects, Clean-Up Actions and Collective Protests

Collective actions related to local public services are relatively frequent. In the year preceding the survey, 30 percent of respondents had given a financial contribution, and 20 percent had taken part in some collective work related to a local infrastructure project. One in five took part in a clean-up action such as street cleaning, riverbank cleaning, or waste collection. Collective protests, which might include petitions, delegations, street demonstrations, road blockades, or complaining to the local media or an international organization, attracted considerably fewer participants.

Spatial Differences in Frequency of Collective Action

Money collections and collective works appear to be much more common in the Bosniac majority area than in the Croat majority area, while the Serb majority area has a rather high level of money collections, but a low level of collective works. These differences can be explained by the fact that MZ boards function better in the Bosniac area than in the rest of the country (see Part IIB). More respondents in the Croat majority say they have participated in collective protests, but it is likely that some of the protests had nothing to do with local public services, since the survey was carried out after several months of political protests organized by the Croat Democratic Community (HDZ) against the international community.⁴⁰

Rural residents are more likely to participate in money collection, collective works, and citizens' gatherings, while urban residents are more likely to participate in collective protests (petitions, street demonstrations) or complain to local media and international organizations. This difference can be explained by the fact that people in urban areas expect municipal services in exchange for paying their bills; while rural residents see themselves as responsible for improving the living conditions in their villages:

People in urban areas consider that because they have paid their bills the municipality should do all of the work for them. But rural MZs are very active in creating better living conditions in the village without the assistance of others. – private entrepreneur, Bihac

The frequency of local infrastructure projects in rural areas can also be explained by their stronger links to the diaspora:

⁴⁰ This hypothesis is supported by the fact that fewer respondents in the Croat majority area declare themselves ready to take part to a local collective protest against the opening of a waste dump or closure of a public institution.

Those from abroad will give 500 marks for the construction of some road and those here will work, dig channels, carry the shovels. – president of Bosniac mountaineering club, Gornji Vakuf

Collective protests related to local public services are an urban phenomenon, such as the street demonstrations against growing insecurity in Tuzla and Zvornik, after two murders. Only two organized protests were found in peripheral areas, in the worker suburbs of Siki Brod (Tuzla) and Ada (Banja Luka). In Siki Brod, local inhabitants have for years protested against air pollution, the opening of new dumps for industrial waste, security issues linked with the main road going through this MZ, and the generally poor condition of local infrastructure. In Ada, local inhabitants protest against the municipality's plans to open a cemetery on the only free ground of this MZ, and are instead demanding an elementary school, a health center, and sport facilities.

Sociological Differences in Participation in Collective Action

The level of participation to collective action is related to differences in gender, age, income, and education. Men take part more often in voluntary works, delegations, and street demonstrations, while women take part more often in money collections and clean-up actions. Middle-aged people participate more often in money collections and collective works, and old people participate more often in clean-up actions and citizens' gatherings. Young people are less involved in collective actions in general. Respondents with a higher level of income more often take part in citizens' gatherings and money collections, while those with a higher level of education take part more in clean-up actions. Those with higher incomes and education both participate more in collective protests, those with a low level of income are more likely to participate in clean-up actions, and those with a low level of education are more likely to participate in collective works.

In general, local residents are more involved in voluntary works than are IDPs, but important differences appear among IDPs themselves. Those willing to return to their pre-war place of residence often participate in money collections, collective works, citizens' gatherings, and petitions, whereas those willing to settle in their new place of residence are more likely to take part in street demonstrations and road blockades. It is difficult, however, to determine the extent to which these different behaviors are due to divergent mentalities, or simply to objective needs and opportunities. For example, when Serb IDPs from Sarajevo settled in Klanac and Krizevici in 1996, they organized collective works to repair the destroyed local infrastructure.

Participation in Collective Action and Type of Public Service

The readiness of various groups to take part in collective actions depends heavily on which public services are needed. Rural residents show more interest than urban residents in the repair of roads, water and sewerage systems, and school building, while urban residents are more interested in cleaning-up actions, repair of sport and cultural facilities, and opening of youth centers (see Table 5). Young people are particularly interested in the opening of a youth center, and IDPs in construction of a collective center for homeless people.

Table 5. In which of these local projects would you be most ready to participate ?

	Urban settlements		Rural settlements		Total sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cleaning-up action	187	43.29	72	29.63	259	38.37
Repair of roads / streets	91	21.06	75	30.86	166	24.59
Repair of canalizations	65	15.05	65	26.75	130	19.26
Repair of health center	112	25.93	64	26.34	176	26.07
Repair of school	81	18.75	58	23.87	139	20.59
Repair of sport / cultural facilities	51	11.81	9	7.82	70	10.37
Construction of collective center for homeless people	71	16.44	39	16.05	110	16.30
Opening of a youth center	87	20.14	36	14.81	123	18.22

The most frequent reasons for local collective protests seem to be environmental threats (industrial pollution, waste dumps, etc.), security issues, lack or poor condition of public infrastructure, rising prices of basic utilities, and power cuts due to delays in payment.

Limits in Number, Scope, and Achievement of Collective Action

Money collections and collective works have declined in number and scope due to breakdown of MZ boards and impoverishment of the population.

Before the war, workers contributed 3-5 percent of their income for the development of infrastructure. Now they are only looking for ways to survive. – two members of the MZ board, Siki Brod, Tuzla

Support from public enterprises has also declined:

Before, public enterprises were more prepared [to donate construction material or lend heavy equipment]. Now nobody is willing to give a dinar because of the move into privatization. – president of local NGO, Banja Luka

The decline in public funding for collective actions is compensated, to some extent, by funding and other assistance from international organizations, NGOs, and local entrepreneurs.

Petitions, Delegations, and Street Demonstrations

Collective protests are much less frequent than money collections and collective works. They are generally carried out by means of citizens' petitions to authorities channeled through the MZ board, or through delegations of people with common grievances who try to meet with the authorities directly:

We were all displaced people without accommodation, that is what bound us. When the head of the office for refugees and displaced persons said to us, "There is nothing I can do because the municipality will not allow me to evict," then some 20 of us went together to the municipality and asked to be seen. – man, organizer of delegation of homeless IDPs, Zvornik

There are also street demonstrations and road blockades, most often in reaction to threats to personal security. Residents of the MZ SICKI BROD (Tuzla) blocked the main road after a young pedestrian was killed by a passing car. IDPs living in the collective center of MIHATOVICI (Tuzla) did the same after the local electricity distribution company cut the power to indebted consumers. Road blockades are not repressed by the police, but most often answered by the opening of negotiations between local authorities and the leaders of the blockade.

Street protests can also be part of a well-considered strategy when officials do not respond to petitions and delegations:

We from the MZ sent letters, organized meetings at least twice a month about environmental issues, but nothing was done. Then citizens from this area went out and stood in front of those big trucks [transporting industrial waste] and would not let the trucks pass. – man, Tuzla

Even this kind of collective action, however, has limited results. In SICKI BROD, local authorities promised to turn the lakes used for industrial waste dumps into recreational facilities, but nothing has been done. In ADA, the new mayor has promised to reconsider the cemetery project, but no final decision has been made.

Lack of Responsiveness

The lack of responsiveness to all forms of collective protest has led to a sense of hopelessness among many Bosnian citizens. As a result, many more are prone to individual violence, private connections, or emigration—an exit strategy often favored by the younger generation (see Box 5). In fact, emigration is sometimes the only aim that can motivate collective action:

Three years ago, me and two friends got together and invested in a job. That job was to send one of us to America. We collected the money and sent one friend. Last year the second one went, and now they are sending money for me to go. – man, Zvornik

Box 5. Young People: Better Emigration than Collective Action

Many local politicians and representatives of voluntary associations complain that young people do not participate in collective action or voluntary activities, are passive and depressed, and preoccupied with finding a way to emigrate:

Young people do not organize themselves, they stay passive and say that it is best to go to America. – representative of the Youth Center, Gornji Vakuf

In the UNDP *Human Development Report* devoted to the situation of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only 7 percent of young people say they regularly participate in voluntary work, and 62 percent say they would leave the country if they had the opportunity (UNDP, 2000b, pp. 35, 95, and 99).

In focus groups, young participants acknowledge they have little interest in collective action:

The time of “brotherhood and unity” is in the past. I do not think any of us would participate in a youth work action – young woman, Brcko

Decline in Collective Action as a Reflection of the Decline in Social Capital

Beyond the negative influence of external factors such as impoverishment of the population or lack of responsiveness of formal institutions, the decline in collective action is linked to the decline in social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many, especially in the Serb Republic,

attribute the decline in collective action to the general mistrust of the post-war period. Others attribute it to mistrust toward formal institutions, which are often perceived as stealing international aid and contributions from local residents or people in the diaspora.

The decreased number and limited scope of collective actions also reflect a crisis of civic values in Bosnian society:

That is an effect of the war, a culture created by war. It came to be completely usual that you cannot pass in a street because of the rubbish. – president of the Bosniac mountaineering club, Gornji Vakuf

Local Factors Influencing Frequency and Achievements of Collective Actions

There is wide agreement that MZ boards are the most crucial factor for the success of local collective action. Those who say their MZ board functions well are more likely to participate in local infrastructure projects (70 percent) than those who say their MZ board does not exist at all (55 percent) or only serves the interests of a few citizens (55 percent). Conversely, those who see their MZ board as serving only the interests of a few citizens are more likely to consider that infrastructure projects are not their responsibility (12 percent).

Important spatial differences appear in the survey. The role of the MZ leaders seems to be especially important in the Bosniac majority area, but almost inexistent in the Croat majority area. In the Serb majority area, informal leaders such as private entrepreneurs and influential people play a more important role than do the MZ leaders.

Sociological Profile of Local Leaders

MZ leaders, as well as other leaders of local collective actions, are generally men with a higher level of income and education, some personal prestige, and a rich network of contacts:

Those who already have some source of income, who have some sort of status assured, have reached the level where they can start thinking about other things and pull others along. – field officer of an international organization, Brcko

In villages, clergymen, teachers, doctors are the most prominent citizens, the motivating force. – field officer of an international organization, Brcko

Pensioners play often a leading role in local collective actions, since they have more free time and a minimal guaranteed income. This is especially true when their former profession put them in contact with many local inhabitants. In Martin Brod (Bihac), the leader of the Serb minority returnees owned the only café in the village before the war; in the Dubrave (Brcko), the informal representative of the MZ is a former police officer; and in Ada (Banja Luka), the president of the MZ board receives a German pension, and has opened a hairdressing salon after returning from Germany.

Veterans, too, often play a leading role. The strong presence of veterans among leaders of collective protests is partly a reflection of the fact that most middle-age men participated in the war.⁴¹ Some former officers and veterans use also the self-confidence, personal prestige, and organizational skills they acquired during the war:

[I became the leader because] I am the most aggressive, I cannot bare injustice and I am free enough to tell it to people's faces. – man, informal leader of the IDPs living in the collective center of Mihatovici, Tuzla

⁴¹ In the opinion survey's sample, 54 percent of men are war veterans.

Another common feature of many local leaders is that they had acquired some organizational skills before the war, as activists in the League of Communists and its mass organizations, as members of MZ boards, or through their professional activities as engineers, school directors, social workers. Local leadership is clearly linked with associative experience: according to the survey, those affiliated with a voluntary association are much more likely to participate in a delegation than those who are not affiliated (10 versus 1 percent).

Influence of Formal Voluntary Associations and Local Media

The link between membership in a voluntary association and participation in local collective actions means that MZ boards are not the only formal institutions that play an important role in such actions. School councils and parent associations can also initiate infrastructure projects. In Tuzla, for example, parents secured the area around several elementary schools by repairing pavement, street lighting, and road signs.

The success of collective actions is linked to the mobilization of the entire local associative landscape, including leisure and interest-based associations close to the nationalist parties. In Western Bosnia, the Municipal Development Committees set by the UNDP include not only municipal authorities, but also representatives of MZ boards, youth associations, women's associations, and veterans' associations. In most municipalities, yearly street or riverbank cleaning actions involve not only environmental associations such as Eco-Movement in Banja Luka or Una's Emeralds in Bihac, but a large array of state institutions (elementary and secondary schools, municipal service agencies, local police stations, and military units) and leisure associations (scout movements, hunting and fishing societies, diving clubs). Even collective protests can involve a variety of voluntary associations. In Sicki Brod (Tuzla), the protests against the industrial waste dump were supported by the local veterans' association, beekeepers' association, and pigeon keepers' association.

Local electronic media can also facilitate collective actions by helping to mobilize local residents. In Banja Luka, the Eco-Movement has its own weekly TV program; and in Tuzla, the massive character of the street demonstrations in response to the murder of a young man were due to the fact that they were supported by a local independent radio station where the victim worked as a journalist.

New NGOs can also be an important factor in local collective actions. In Sicki Brod, for example, the Center for Civic Initiatives provided organizational help to inhabitants in their protests against an industrial waste dump, as a way to develop citizens' participation at the local level:

They started by asking citizens about the main problems in their area, and in this way they found that rubbish dump was what they should work on. – president of a local NGO, Tuzla

Mediatory Role of Formal Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations play a crucial role not only in mobilizing citizens, but also in mediating between them and formal institutions, and preventing violent protests. The mediatory role of voluntary associations means that, in places where associative life is weak, the risk of violent protests is higher.

IDPs' associations protect committees from unrest and violent incidents by keeping the displaced population well organized. – representative of a local NGO, Brcko

This risk seems particularly high in the Brcko District, where property restitutions, minority returns, and institutional reintegration have created a high level of tension at the same time that associative life has been weakened by the decline in state subsidies:

People gather together far more easily in some conflictual situation, around some political stupidity, in reaction to some bad decision of the government, than in reaction to rubbish containers that attract rats. – representative of a local NGO, Brcko

Impact of Collective Action on Local Social Capital

While a low level of associative life and collective action may increase the risk of violent outbursts, the contrary is also true. In all municipalities in the sample, a higher level of associative life and collective action encourages interpersonal relations, compromises among social groups, and communication between citizens and formal institutions. And concrete projects based on the interests and wishes of the population can lead to more involvement in collective action:

People come when they see that something is being done. Initially it is men who come, but when they get involved it is women who are far more active. – field officer of an international organization, Brcko

Collective action, in turn, helps to further develop associative life. In Banja Luka, the Eco-Movement's yearly clean-up action is also aimed at reactivating school and condominium councils. Such actions are facilitating the emergence, from the bottom up, of a new generation of voluntary associations based on common interests and local projects.

In several places, collective action appears to be an efficient means by which cooperation—especially between ethnic groups—is preserved or restored at the local level. In Tuzla, the predominantly Bosniac MZ Siki Brod and the predominantly Croat MZ Bukinje are closely associated in protests against environmental threats and demands for additional public investments. In Ada (Banja Luka), the local NGO Ada-Debeljaci-Vrbanja 2001 wants to develop common projects with the association of Bosniac women returnees in the MZ Vrbanja:

If we are in contact with Muslim associations, we believe that we can find solutions more quickly because they have better information about Muslim residents and we have more information about Serb residents. – president of local NGO Ada-Debeljaci-Vrbanja 2001, Banja Luka

Perhaps the most interesting example of collective action leading to renewed inter-ethnic cooperation is the MZ Klanac in the Brcko District (see Part IB, Box 1), where infrastructure projects help people to overcome both the material and the moral consequences of the war. In this MZ, Bosniac minority returnees cleaning their destroyed houses have given the rubble to Serb IDPs, who have used it to build a foundation for the road leading to their future settlement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions are meant to support the definition of the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to inform other Bank work.

Conclusion # 1. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, trust among people living in the same place (bonding social capital) takes precedence over trust toward people from outside (bridging social capital), affecting a range of civic values and confidence in formal institutions (linking social capital). This situation is aggravated by the fragmentation and parochialism along ethnic lines of social welfare and administrative structures. The labyrinth of Bosnia and Herzegovina post-war legal and administrative framework is therefore a source of distress and frustration, especially for the most vulnerable.

Recommendation # 1. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina should strive to harmonize its social welfare system. Additional efforts should be made to make Bosnia and Herzegovina's legal and administrative system more transparent, accountable and uniform. People are simply at loss regarding to which rule applies to any specific case, to whom they should turn to in order to get explanations or receive any given services and which is the appropriate authority. Due to this lack of information, people tend to direct their requests to the wrong recipient or address the highest level to which they have access, increasing the inefficiency of the system by overloading the wrong actor. The system, normally does not respond to such requests, increasing people's frustration and the vicious circle of a flawed administrative system. **Increasing communications strategy is key to improving citizen knowledge. Positive examples exist in certain municipalities on which a strategy could be built that uses in-country examples to build local ownership. In addition, it seems evident that a reform of the social welfare system is needed. Such reform should avoid reinforcing existing social cleavages, and could perhaps build on the results of the upcoming Poverty Assessment (i.e., benefits should be based on actual needs and not on political/social categories). Additional reforms could establish more clear-cut mechanisms of accountability.**

Conclusion # 2. Respondents considered the quality of public services as having declined, and in some cases were non-existent. Public services that are considered as having declined in quality include social assistance, issuance of official documents, health care, education. Non-existence was lamented more often for youth and cultural activities, housing for IDPs and garbage collection. Infrastructure is in poor condition.

Recommendation # 2. Sectors where the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the Bank, has been more active in the past years (such as health care and education) are still reported as problematic and of low quality, but at least they are recognized as existent. The new projects in waste management and road development should alleviate people's concern related to these services. A noticeable absence in this "black list" of bad public services are pensions – that used to be cited in former studies as very bad – probably thanks to the success of the Pension Reform project. **Sectors where the Bank has not been involved at all (such as youth and housing) are overwhelmingly reported as not only problematic but completely missing, and it is recommended that the Government and the Bank take appropriate action. Youth is a sector in which the Bank is getting increasingly involved, and where significant donor support could be raised. Housing needs should be given appropriate attention within the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, keeping in mind the implications on social cohesion of housing policy .**

Conclusion # 3. Respondents considered local politicians as not serving citizen interests, and the focus groups criticize local politicians for their lack of accountability. In focus groups, participants characterize employees of public companies as too highly paid, lazy, careless and rude.

Recommendation # 3. In addition to simplifying the administrative and political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **a massive education campaign on responsiveness should be carried out targeting local administrators. Report cards systems, ombudsman offices like the one in Bihac should be established everywhere around the country. Training workshops in public administration skills may also be useful, as well as training leaders to strengthen their civic engagement.**

Conclusion # 4. The local institution of the mjesna zajednica (MZ) is in decline, having lost financial and administrative autonomy. In some cases, MZs have transformed themselves into new style NGOs or citizens associations, but the government-societal link of the MZ is not clearly defined.

Recommendation # 4. MZs used to be the smallest territorial unit of Yugoslav federalism and self-management. They were responsible for some local infrastructure (roads, parks, water and sewerage systems) and public services (day care centers, youth clubs, medical units, provision of official documentation such as birth and death certificates, driving permits), and played an important role in the organization of collective works. After the war, however, the new laws on local self-management adopted in the Federation (January 1996) and the Serb Republic (November 1999) have abolished their compulsory character, and mention them only as a possible form of direct democracy, alongside with citizen initiatives and local referenda. Each municipality has thus to clarify in its own statutes the exact legal situation and practical role of MZs. **This situation multiplies the fragmentation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's legal and administrative system, as well as depriving citizens from a clearly recognizable and handy instrument to access public services and a vehicle for organizing collective work. A reconsideration of these laws would be highly recommended. This does not mean to restore MZs as they used to be, but to establish some form of local level institution which is consistent across boundaries and that provides a clear societal link among citizens.**

Conclusion # 5. The study detected a clear link between level of participation to collective actions and differences in gender, age, income, education, and rural/urban residence.

Recommendation # 5. The study provides a clear map of the interest of potential stakeholders (men take part more often in voluntary works, delegations and street demonstrations, while women take part more often in money collections and clean-up actions; respondents with a higher level of income more often take part in citizens' assemblies and money collections, while those with a higher level of education take part more in clean-up actions; rural residents show more interest than urban residents for the repair of roads, water and sewerage systems, and school building, while urban residents are more interested in cleaning-up actions, repair of sport and cultural facilities, and opening of youth centers; young people are particularly interested in the opening of a youth center, and IDPs in construction of a collective center for homeless people; etc). **In general, the study reveals that there is ample room for making more extensive and better use of collective actions and people mobilization to improve service delivery and accountability. Health care, education and environment seem to be sectors where people mobilization could be prompted easily. These findings should be accordingly integrated into Bank work, especially the Community Driven or Local Development projects.**

Conclusion # 6. The study finds that there is a decline in associative life and that Bosnians distinguish between two forms of voluntary associations: traditional citizens' association and new NGOs.

Recommendation # 6. Voluntary associations can play a mediatory role between citizens and formal institutions and serve as a vehicle for collective actions. However, many respondents in focus groups expressed negative attitudes towards voluntary associations, although one third of the survey respondents claimed membership in one. The mixed findings on voluntary associations suggest **the need for careful inquiry into the specific dimensions of civil society organizations prior to engaging in capacity-building efforts or when implementing projects in co-ordination with local organizations. At the same time, while so far NGOs and civil society organizations have been exclusively used to channel service delivery, the PRSP dialogue should strive to make them part of policy dialogue.**

Conclusion # 7. The study found that economic reasons as well as housing issues played a greater role in decisions by IDPs to return than personal security. This marks a change from earlier findings.

Recommendation # 7. The study has revealed a marked improvement in the sense of security enjoyed by people, especially IDPs and minority returnees. While this change has to be positively saluted, it also suggests that further **efforts should be directed into the creation of employment and the resolution of housing issues.**

Conclusion # 8. The study found corruption as the main problem in relation to the following public services: health care, issuance of official documents, public safety, housing for IDPs and returnees, education and social assistance. IDPs are more likely to mention corruption than locals.

Recommendation # 8. The findings of this study are pretty much in line with the ones of the "Diagnostic Surveys of Corruption" study. **While it is more appropriate for the "Corruption" study to deal with an appropriate set of recommendations, we would like to reinforce the need for an anticorruption strategy that empowers civil society to both design and monitor reforms, especially in sectors like health care and education.**

A more detailed presentation of the findings by sector is presented below:

Governance issues were raised from several dimensions. The low quality of public services, such as the difficulties in obtaining basic documents, was identified by focus groups. Obtaining basic documents was also seen as frequently affected by corruption as well. Difficulties in obtaining basic documents has also occurred due to the loss of authority by some MZs. Political parties were criticized for control over access to public services in some areas and for their role in MZ boards. Ethnic fragmentation of local level institutions has persisted, and divisions of municipalities result in conflict over public infrastructure. More efforts on reform of municipalities and improvement in municipal services seem to be essential.

Positive examples were found in certain municipalities of efforts to enhance transparency and accountability. Many hold regular mayor press conferences and have established their own print and electronic media. Others have organized public discussions about the budget, established special departments to handle complaints or held training courses for municipal employees. New NGOs have also contributed to these efforts through publishing brochures about the municipal governments and establishing local-level monitoring bodies.

Transportation: Survey respondents considered road infrastructure as of low quality and public transportation as of low quality as a service and the infrastructure in poor condition. However, some citizens in rural areas are still active in collective actions in connection with road repair, and members of the diaspora contribute financially. Rural residents also expressed more interest in participating in repair of roads.

Social Protection: Survey respondents considered social assistance as non-existent in many areas and that services were of low quality when present. Social service agencies no longer have sufficient budgets to provide subsidies for utilities. The social welfare system remains fragmented and has become limited. Centers for Social Work no longer have the means for material assistance, and some people are excluded because they are unemployed or work for enterprises that do not pay their contribution.

Tensions occur between ethnic groups on distribution of benefits based on political categories and not on actual need. Tensions among members of the same ethnic group occur due to IDPs receiving certain benefits for which local residents were not eligible. Social protection is one of the sector where public participation could be increased to help improving targeting as well as monitor reforms.

Environment: Twenty percent of survey respondents participated in some form of clean-up action in the past year and focus groups described this persistence of collective action in local clean-up actions. A local ecology-focused voluntary association in Banja Luka worked together with leisure organizations focused on fishing in their information campaigns and collective actions. Collective protests about air pollution and industrial waste dumping have occurred in Sicki Brod, outside of Tuzla. Environmental issues generate spontaneous people mobilization that should be channeled into policy and project design.

Education: Corruption was mentioned as the main problem, but focus groups were divided on how effective they considered the school system. In Banja Luka, inclusion of some schools in international experimental programs have lead to differences in educational methods and equipment, with the experimental schools receiving pressures on enrollment. In the survey, rural residents expressed interest in supporting through collective action by working on school building.

Electric Power and Other Energy: Focus groups described the burden of increased prices and strict deadlines for payment for electricity (especially in the context of delayed payment of wages), and criticized how bills are calculated. Meters are considered inaccurate. Subsidies provided by social services for utility payments are no longer available reliably.

Health, Nutrition, and Population: Survey respondents considered health services of poor quality and the associated infrastructure as in poor condition. High prices were mentioned as the main problem associated with health care, and focus group participants saw health care as marred by corruption. This is reflected in the survey findings as well. Rural focus group participants and key informants considered the lack of medical services a concern, a finding which echoes the results of earlier qualitative studies. Health is also a sector where increasing people participation (especially in monitoring corruption) could lead to improved services.

Water Supply and Sanitation: Survey respondents considered water supply and sewerage of poor quality and the associated infrastructure as in poor condition. Of the sites in which the study was conducted, all have leakages in the water and sewerage systems. Tuzla has a long-standing problem with drinking water shortages, and poor quality water caused a recent hepatitis outbreak in Bihac. Focus group participants complained that they are charged for losses due to leakages in water and sewerage systems and that meters are inaccurate. Some key informants and focus group participants perceive the nationalization of infrastructure consider the nationalization of infrastructure as dispossessing the local community since the residents had contributed with voluntary work or financial contributions. In the survey, rural

residents expressed more interest in supporting collective work in connection with the water and sewerage system. Conflicts over water infrastructure have occurred between IDPs and locals in Tuzla.



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