

## Class and spaces of peace: Stories from post-war and post-socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina

One can find countless examples of Bosnianness in everyday conversations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) such as the references to Bosnian humour, Bosnian interconnectedness and mixing (bosanski lonac, which refers to a stew that is a mixture of many different ingredients), Bosnian coffee, Bosnian house, Bosnian way. Aside of territorially, the peoples of BiH have also been united linguistically using dialects that belong to the same South Slavic group of languages, and are more importantly mutually intelligible. Similarly, they have also developed a common culture based on the system of meanings that has evolved through the daily interactions with one another.

However, the hegemonic framework used both for policymaking and analysis not only of the war in BiH, but also of the post-war period, remains one driven by the logic of 'groupism'. The term refers to the tendency to approach groups, including ethnic groups, as the basic units of analysis and main protagonists in social life, with interests and agency as their attributes. This underlying logic was reflected in the Dayton Agreement, which concluded the war. The Constitution of BiH, adopted as part of the Agreement, stipulates that the country has three constituent peoples, those being the three ethnic groups (Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats), which share the political power. The key identity marker used in distinguishing the ethnic groups is believed to be religion, whereby each of the three is associated with a different religion. This has set the basis for ethnicity, and relatedly religion, to become the single most important category in the Bosnian society. Ethnicity is currently the dominant centre of power, superior even to the state. As a result, we witness a process of spatialisation of ethnicity and (re)creation of ethnically conceived spaces that are not only geographical, but also linguistic and socio-cultural, and that further the divisions.

Through the analysis of different intersubjectivities, notably of people living with (*komšiluk*) and beside each other (citizens' plenums), this paper moves beyond the ethno-national discussion and focuses on issues of socio-economic status and historical structures of class. The role that socio-economic issues play in the post-war and importantly the post-socialist period has not received much scholarly attention. This is particularly so due to the dominant assumption in conflict analysis being that the war wiped everything clean, including class differentiation. Situated in the critical peace and conflict studies literature, the paper addresses the question of what impact class relations have on the creation of spaces of peace in the aftermath of a war.

Evidence suggests that conflict in actuality accelerates class formation and social strata differentiation. The paper thus argues that these processes and issues of class can, in fact, contribute to the creation of spaces of peace, that is, spaces where peace processes, as conceptualised by the local population, can take place at the grassroots level. Analysing everyday predicaments and lived experiences, drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork, the paper provides examples of such venues.