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New international borders – old social spaces: Transnational migrant networks across the boundaries of post-socialist Croatia

Saša Božić · Simona Kuti

Abstract The dissolution of Yugoslavia resulted in the emergence of new national containers, new international borders, pervasive politics of belonging and the political exclusion of a significant part of the population. New state-building and new citizenships made prewar migration within the Republics of former Yugoslavia socially and politically "visible" by producing new "aliens" and "international" migrant groups. Due to methodological nationalism, the social sciences neglected the social ties and networks between migrants in their countries of immigration and across former Yugoslavia in general, while a new transnational turn in migration research in the West produced an approach which overlooks migrant social spaces across and especially within internal borders before the emergence of new nation-states. Therefore the aim of this paper is to discuss a neglected social phenomenon – the development of the transnational social spaces of migrants across Central and Southeast Europe, using the example of migrant social ties beyond Croatian borders. We represent the emergence of migrant pluri-local social spaces and later transnational social spaces across Croatian borders and discuss processes which enabled their formation and expansion.

Keywords Transnational social spaces · Croatia · Former Yugoslavia · Migrant networks

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Neue internationale Grenzen – alte soziale Räume: Transnationale Migranten-Netzwerke über die Grenzen des post-sozialistischen Kroatiens hinweg

Zusammenfassung Der Zerfall Jugoslawiens hatte die Entstehung neuer nationaler „Behälter" zur Folge, neuer internationaler Grenzen, mit einer allgegenwärtigen Identitätspolitik und mit dem politischen Ausschuss eines wesentlichen Teils der Bevölkerung. Neue Staatsbildungen und neue Staatsbürgerschaften haben die Vorkriegsmigration zwischen den Republiken des ehemaligen Jugoslawiens sozial und politisch sichtbar gemacht und die neue „Fremde" und „internationale Migranten" hervorgebracht. Wegen ihres methodologischen Nationalismus vernachlässigten die Sozialwissenschaften die sozialen Beziehungen und die Netzwerke der Migranten in den Immigrationsländern und in den Nachfolgestaaten des ehemaligen Jugoslawiens allgemein. Der transnationale Umschwung in der Migrationsforschung im Westen schuf außerdem einen Zugang, der die sozialen Räume der Migranten innerhalb der internationalen Grenzen vor der Entstehung der neuen Nationalstaaten übersieht. Dementsprechend diskutiert dieser Artikel ein vernachlässigtes soziales Phänomen – die Entstehung der transnationalen sozialen Räume der Migranten in Mittel- und Südosteuropa am Beispiel der sozialen Beziehungen der Migranten über die kroatischen Grenzen hinaus. Wir erläutern die Bildung der pluri-lokalen sozialen Räume der Migranten und später der transnationalen sozialen Räume über die kroatischen Grenzen hinweg und erforschen die Prozesse, die die Formierung und Expansion dieser Räume ermöglichten.

Schlüsselwörter Transnationale soziale Räume · Kroatien · Ex-Jugoslawien · Migranten

1 Introduction

The dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991 resulted in the emergence of new national containers, new international borders in Central and Southeast Europe, pervasive politics of belonging and the political exclusion of a significant part of the population. New state-building and new citizenships made prewar migration within the Republics of former Yugoslavia socially and politically "visible" by producing new (il)legal "aliens" and "international" migrant groups. The indiscernible and politically "unproblematic" internal migration during the socialist period was politically transformed into discernible and intricate international migration. In addition, forced migration during the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo increased the size and visibility of migrant populations within new nation-states. War-related emigration also increased the size and visibility of migrant groups from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia to "traditional" destination countries, i. e. Germany, Austria and Switzerland but also Sweden, Norway and overseas countries. The public and the academic community in both Western and post-Yugoslav countries (re)problematised migration and the issues of migrant integration in national so-

cieties by ignoring migrants' long-distance relations and specific pluri-local social arrangements, as well as new forms of mobility across old and new borders.

Migrant networks were completely out of focus of mainstream social science in ex-Yugoslav countries, still entrenched in research on "migration flows" and "transition" problems of post-socialist societies – particularly high emigration rates, the depopulation of specific micro-regions as well as the enduring and increasing (e)migration potential at a national level. Due to methodological nationalism[1], the social sciences neglected the social ties and networks between migrants in their countries of immigration and across former Yugoslavia in general, while a new transnational turn in migration research in the West produced an approach which overlooks migrant social spaces across and especially within internal borders before the emergence of new nation-states. We shall thus discuss a neglected social phenomenon – the development of the transnational social spaces of migrants across Central and Southeast Europe, using the example of migrant social ties beyond Croatian borders. We shall represent the emergence of migrant pluri-local social spaces and later transnational social spaces across Croatian borders and discuss the processes which enabled their formation and expansion. Firstly, we shall describe the political control of the territory of former Yugoslavia which set the political preconditions for new migration waves and highly influenced the range of pluri-local social spaces. Following that, we shall describe migration waves and the extension of social spaces across Croatian boundaries before the country's independence. We shall demonstrate that the pluri-local ties between the immigrants in Croatia and their families and communities of origin developed since the 1970s. These ties became a facilitator of future migration and the future development of transnational social spaces during the wars in former Yugoslavia and particularly after Croatia's independence.

2 Shifting boundaries and the political reorganisation of social spaces within and across former Yugoslav territories

Since the beginning of nation-building in Central and Southeast Europe, social spaces and fields as "relatively dense and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts" (Pries 2001, p. 5), which develop plurilocally, as well as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, p. 1009), did not correspond to the boundaries and the organisation of emerging national containers and territories.[2]

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[1] Although the term "methodological nationalism" was invented and discussed already in the 1970s (Martins 1974 in Chernillo 2007) the contemporary discussion about the reification of "national societies" in the social sciences (re)started at the beginning of the 21st century (e. g. Beck 2000, Urry 2000), due to increased visibility of new ties and transactions beyond nation-states. The consequences of "methodological nationalism" are particularly salient in migration studies (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003; Kuti and Božić 2011a) where a transnational perspective developed as an alternative.

[2] The concept of "pluri-local social spaces" has been used by Ludger Pries (2001) in order to emphasise the possibility of their national vs. transnational dynamic.

The ethnic and social tapestry of the Balkans was too complex to fit nationalist projects aimed at the formation of culturally unified and territorially limited national societies. Nationalist geographic and cultural designs did not envisage the intersecting of ethnic and cultural groups, nor the extension of social ties beyond the culturally homogenous national societies clearly demarcated by international borders. The Yugoslav national project was not only a similar assimilationist and unifying (yet multiethnic) version of a design which demands the overlapping of societal space, culture and polity, but also an elitist project with limited support of the populations within political entities such as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The first victims of the societal and territorial reorganisation in Central and Southeast Europe were sections of ethnic groups which did not fit the new political paradigm,[3] as well as many social spaces which were abruptly divided by the heavily guarded borders of the new national and political entities formed since the end of WW I (particularly in Styria, Carinthia, Istria, Baranya, Dalmatia, Macedonia etc.). The attempts to produce ethnically homogeneous and societally fully bounded nation-states peaked during WW II with genocides or attempted genocides (e. g. of Serbs, Jews and Roma by the Croatian Ustashe and of Bosnian Muslims and Croats by the Serb Chetnicks in Bosnia), mass expulsion (e. g. of Slovenes in Southern Styria and Carinthia from the German Reich, Serbs from Croatia etc.), and ethnic engineering (e. g. "conversion" of Bosnian Muslims into Croats with Islamic faith). Territorial reorganisations and the politically induced emigration of politically and ethnically "suspicious" populations after WW II produced new political (sub)entities which were deprived of a considerable number of inhabitants and social groups (e. g. some 250,000 Italians, Germans and others left Croatia by 1948 [Nejašmić 1990, p. 517]). Social ties and networks, as well as other types of ties, were considerably disrupted and their reach beyond the borders of Yugoslavia diminished during the years of conflict with Stalin and the countries of the Eastern block from 1948 till the mid 50s (Bekić 1988), as well as during the Trieste crisis with Italy and the West in 1953 (Vukas 2007).

Post-war Yugoslavia was initially designed as a nominally federal state with a unified society but gradually evolved into a confederation of six[4] federal entities, which by the late 1960s developed their own core national societies within the existing internal boundaries between constituent republics. However, these boundaries did not pose a barrier for the development of multiple and interlocking social ties and pluri-local networks. Unlike in other communist ruled countries, political institutions and a specific type of mixed socialist economy enabled the emergence of a unified and relatively open market (Horvat 1968), while administrative borders between the republics and other possible administrative obstacles did not impede

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[3] E. g. Ottoman Turks and Albanians after the establishment of the Serbian state leaving Central Serbia (Malcolm 1999); more than 100,000 Hungarians, Italians, Czechs, Germans and others leaving Croatia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after WWI (Nejašmić 1990, p. 517).

[4] After the introduction of a new constitution in 1974, the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo within Serbia were also enabled to develop state-like institutional frameworks which facilitated Albanian demands for a seventh republic within SFRY and fostered the development of a new national society.

internal migration[5] which resulted in extended family and ethnic networks across former Yugoslavia. The communist party actively fostered ties between different ethnic groups and facilitated social ties among the youth in all republics, within and across the republics' borders, using the ideology of "brotherhood and unity". Social spaces across the borders of the republics developed particularly among members of the same ethnic group, e. g. between Croats in Herzegovina and Dalmatia, Bosniaks in the Sandžak area of Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia, Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo, Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. These social spaces remained thriving networks and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts (Pries 2001). They were and partially still are enduring networks of exchange and support regardless of state boundaries.

Political, territorial and ethnic engineering had a great impact on the composition of former Yugoslavia's population, on mobility and on a range of social spaces. However, economic development influenced both internal and external migration as well as the composition of pluri-local social spaces within and beyond Yugoslav borders. The emergence and development of pluri-local social spaces in and beyond Croatia was probably more noticeable than in other parts of former Yugoslavia due to intensified emigration but also due to immigration and the establishment of immigrant networks, particularly among Bosniak and Albanian immigrants. Therefore we shall represent the types of migration and of pluri-local social spaces across the borders of Croatia before its independence as well as new types of migration and transnational social spaces after independence. The most important migration waves between the former Yugoslav Republics which enabled the formation of migrant pluri-local social spaces were Bosniak labour migrations towards Croatia and Slovenia and the mobility of Albanian small entrepreneurs from Kosovo towards industrial centres in the northern Yugoslav Republics and coastal towns. There were, however, understudied migration waves within former Yugoslavia such as the migration of Serbs from Croatia towards Vojvodina and Belgrade, which also enabled the emergence of pluri-local social spaces which connected towns in Croatia as well as Serbia. Finally, the most relevant migration wave which facilitated the formation of transnational social spaces across Croatian boundaries was the labour emigration towards developed European countries, particularly Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Sweden.

3 Migration and pluri-local social spaces in and beyond Croatia before independence

3.1 Immigration from former Yugoslav Republics and the emergence of pluri-local social spaces

The first internal migrations in former Yugoslavia after WW II, which continued throughout the second half of the 20th century, were primarily ethnic migrations of

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[5] Many other communist ruled countries, particularly the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Romania had relatively low internal migration rates (Fallenbuchl 1977, p. 325).

Croats from Bosnia and Serbia towards Croatia, and Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia towards Serbia, but there were also strong rural-urban migrations towards developing industrial centres (Raduški 2002; Mežnarić 1986). Internal Yugoslav labour migration within and between the republics grew after post-war industrialisation because of the growing economic gap within and between the republics. However, in the period 1953–1961 only a smaller part of internal Yugoslav migration was between the republics (Mežnarić 1986). The social and economic development in former Yugoslavia was becoming regionally and generally more uneven from the 1960s onwards. The industries and economic sectors which provided relatively high incomes and hard currencies were mainly concentrated in Slovenia, Croatia and parts of Serbia. The gap between the prosperous Slovenia and Croatia and the less prosperous Bosnia, Macedonia and Serbia grew even more from the late 1960s till the 1980s. The prosperous republics' GDP was several times higher than the GDP of e. g. Kosovo (Schaeffer 2003, p. 316). While international migration towards Germany and Austria started with skilled workers, mainly from Slovenia and Croatia and later with workers from all parts of Yugoslavia, internal Yugoslav migration towards developed republics since the 1960s consisted mainly of less skilled migrants. After the closure of labour markets in Western Europe in 1973/1974, internal migration was dominated by skilled workers towards the more developed republics of Yugoslavia (Mežnarić 1986).

In the period from 1976 to 1978, over 60,000 Bosnians (mainly Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks) were permanently employed in Croatia, particularly in industrial centres, i. e. Zagreb (41.6% of all workers from Bosnia employed in Croatia), followed by Rijeka, Slavonski Brod, Sisak, Dubrovnik and Split (Milojević 1986). Muslims (Bosniaks) from Bosnia and Herzegovina in that period migrated mostly to Croatia (49%), followed by Slovenia (34.8%). They were predominantly skilled workers (83.9%), and 50% of all labour immigrants were construction workers (Milojević 1986).

The organisation of labour migration in former Yugoslavia was delegated to special bodies which had to detect the need for employing and settling the labour force. The so-called Self-governing Communities of Interest[6] were in charge of employment, accommodation, travel expenses etc., and individual employment and migration were also legal. Yet in most cases, migration was not institutionally organised. Relatives, individual initiative and agents played an important role in the whole process. The family reunion procedure would have been activated upon employment (Milojević 1986, p. 103). In research conducted on immigrants in Croatia, Bosniak interviewees would recall that whole villages were mobilised and resettled through migrant networks and particularly engaged migrants who acted as mediators and recruiters between several locations in Bosnia and Croatia (Kuti et al. 2013; Kuti and Božić 2016).

Research on the migrant networks and social spaces of Bosniaks in former Yugoslavia was scarce, mainly because of methodological nationalism which underpinned migration studies during the 20th century. Internal migration was mostly considered to be a normal part of the modernisation process. Furthermore, emigra-

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[6] Samoupravne interesne zajednice (SIZ) in Croatian.

tion and the opening of Yugoslav external borders as well as a unified Yugoslav labour market were part of the official policy of the ruling Communist party. Questioning and researching the social consequences of such policies was not prohibited, but social scientists had to be careful with how they formulated their research questions and/or hypotheses. However, based on previous research by Silva Mežnarić (1986) and Vjeran Katunarić (1978) as well as the statements of the interviewees in our research (Božić and Kuti 2012, 2016), one can infer that since the 1970s Bosniak migrants in Slovenia and Croatia developed extensive networks with migrants and nonmigrants, mainly wider family members as well as with members of local communities from which they emigrated. These networks would sometimes include Bosniak emigrants in Austria, Germany, Sweden, Turkey and other countries. The members of these networks exchanged resources, sent considerable remittances, facilitated migration, built houses in Bosnia, supported local communities and generally felt loyal towards family and/or community members wherever they resided. Their daily lives were partially structured by the needs and activities of family members in emigration localities and vice versa. The evidence from previous research does not allow us to conclude that Bosniak migrant networks obtained the characteristics of fully developed (transnational) social spaces, which are comprised of specific intensified and interlocking practices in multiple localities on a daily basis and which could be found in e. g. Chinese entrepreneurial circuits across Central and East European countries nowadays (Nyíri 2002; Kuti and Božić 2011b). Nevertheless, Bosniak migrants in Croatia did create "relatively dense and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts" (Pries 2001, p. 5) which developed pluri-locally, as well as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, p. 1009). The intensity of such an exchange and transformation was short of contemporary interlocking migrant networks' development only because of the missing advanced communication technologies which would have enabled them to coordinate activities more frequently and participate in daily routines in several localities.

The same could be inferred for the Albanian migrants from Kosovo in Croatia since the 1960s. More so, Albanian migrants became even more mobile and interconnected than Bosniak migrants because of the structure of their entrepreneurial activities and families. Kosovo was the least economically developed part of former Yugoslavia. It also had the highest birth rate and the largest families (Flere and Klanjšek 2013). The lasting patriarchal structure of the Kosovo Albanian family did not facilitate large scale emigration as early as from other parts of Yugoslavia. Intensified mobility and pluri-local entrepreneurial strategies of Albanian migrants within former Yugoslavia were rather a consequence of late modernisation, lacking opportunities and exclusion, than the consequence of organised employment in the construction industry, mining and tourism in the more prosperous republics.

Nevertheless, many Albanians who built their own independent small businesses, particularly confectioners, bakers, goldsmiths and their families saw their business opportunities in bigger towns and cities as well as in coastal resorts (Božić and Kuti 2012). The development of mobile small businesses in cities resulted in the

formation of pluri-local families and entrepreneurial circuits (Faist 2000). The daily lives of many Albanian families in several locations were structured by the demands of their business and many adopted strategies which included fast relocation if necessary, as well as seasonal mobility (Kuti and Božić 2016). Albanian small entrepreneurs acted as facilitators of migration because they created jobs in new destinations, not only for their family members but also for the members of the local communities of origin. Wide Albanian migrant networks emerged as a consequence, and pluri-local social arrangements became a common feature of the everyday lives of many Albanian families. There is no reliable data on the reach of those networks nor about possible transnational arrangements with Albanian emigrants in other countries before the 1990s, particularly Germany, Switzerland and Italy, which were the typical immigration countries for Albanian migrants, but it is quite possible that many large yet closely knit families kept strong ties across the borders of several states.

3.2 Emigration from Croatia and the emergence of pluri-local and transnational social spaces

The pluri-local social spaces which were overlooked by contemporary migration and social space studies were social spaces built by Serbs from Croatia. Significant numbers of Serbs, Croats and others were relocated after WW II from underdeveloped, mainly karst areas to more fertile parts of Croatia and Serbia. Estimations of the number of Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia who settled in Vojvodina vary from 162,000 (Gaćeša 1984, p. 347) to 250,000 (Raduški 2002, p. 340) after more than 300,000 Germans were forced to leave (Raduški 2002, p. 341). The capital of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, was also a popular destination for Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia since the formation of Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that a large number of Serbs who migrated towards Slavonia, Vojvodina and Belgrade did not cut off their ties to members of their communities of origin and family members, the phenomenon was not investigated closely. The scope and intensity of these ties could have been substantial. Many Serb refugees from Croatia in 1995 relied greatly on the help from previously settled Serb migrants in Vojvodina and Belgrade. This is probably a good indicator that the ties between family members and (former) local community members in Croatia and Serbia were well developed. However, only a future study might fully confirm such inference.

The most important political and economic change that enabled the emergence of migrant transnationalism and later transnational social spaces took place in the 1960s and was related to changes to the external border regime. Labour emigration from former Yugoslavia and Croatia in particular, started after the communist leadership realised that sections of the population could not be integrated into the labour market, opening the borders for hundreds of thousands of emigrants.[7] The

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[7] The unemployment rate rose from 5.5 in the early sixties to 8 per cent in the early seventies and it continued to rise by the beginning of the eighties, mainly due to the slowing down of emigration and the integration of the Yugoslav workforce in the West after the oil crisis in the early seventies (Tyson 1980).

emigration wave reached its peak in the late 1960s and the beginning of 1970s.[8] Despite the "Gastarbeiter" migrant policies of the immigration countries, particularly Germany and Austria, many Croatian migrants settled permanently in their new destinations,[9] yet never cut off their ties to friends, family and respective communities, regularly sending remittances, facilitating migration and remigration and even regularly visiting localities of origin. An important part of the social practices of Croatian migrants in the 1970s and the 1980s resembled closely the practices of transmigrants (Glick Schiller et al. 1992) as described in contemporary literature on "transnationalism". These practices even had elements of "narrow transnationalism" (Itzigsohn et al. 1999) because they included constant personal involvement and regular travel across the boundaries of the nation-states, sometimes even on a weekly basis. Migrant network building and sustaining thus proved to be an important part of the transnational activities of Croatian migrants which had an important impact on many localities which were interconnected through migrant daily activities (see Katunarić 1978). Great numbers of Croatian migrants in the industrial centres of Central and Western Europe, as well as their extensive transnational activities, enabled the emergence of transnational social spaces as "combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations and networks of organizations that reach across borders of multiple states" (Faist 2000, p. 191).

Finally, Croatia's independence in 1991[10] enabled the emergence of new transnational social spaces which were constructed by Croat migrants in the West and by the politically mobilised ethnic majority in Croatia, but also by the immigrants and their descendants in Croatia, primarily labour migrants from Bosnia and small entrepreneurs from Kosovo. Although Bosniak and Albanian networks' long-distance ties and pluri-local arrangements started developing already in the 1960s, several factors, including the emergence of new international borders, war-related emigration from different parts of former Yugoslavia, the necessity to increase support and resource allocation within the networks, facilitated their development into transnational social spaces in the 1990s.

4 Migration and transnational social space over Croatian borders after independence

The war in Croatia (1991–1995) and other successor states of Yugoslavia intensified the formation of transnational social spaces, not only by scattering new migrants and refugees across different locations in several nation-states, through mobilisation of all resources within the networks, but also by reinforcing transnational circuits

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[8] From 1968 till 1981, 293,000 inhabitants of Croatia emigrated temporarily or permanently to European destinations (Nejašmić 1990, p. 522) and the net emigration from 1948 till 1981 was 354,200 persons (Nejašmić, 1990 p. 523).

[9] According to some estimates, no more than 20% of all Yugoslav "Guest workers" actually returned to former Yugoslavia (Schierup 1990).

[10] The wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo temporarily cut off many ties across the borders of former Yugoslav political entities, but also reinforced the networks of support on micro and meso levels enabling many families and local communities to survive the hardships of war and economic decline.

and transnational communities (Faist 2000). The level of engagement within Croat migrant networks and homeland-oriented organisations, which fit the definitions of diaspora as a category of practice (Brubaker 2005), reached its peak in 1991. According to Tölölyan (2001), a relatively integrated sum of a territorialised state sector in the homeland, a quasi-state sector in the contested neighbouring regions occupied by the ethnic minority of the same origin, and a diasporic sector can form a transnation. This definition of a transnation is also applicable to the Croatian case, but such transnational social and territorial arrangement did not last for long (Božić 2005). The remnants of a Croatian transnation are still visible in the system of political representation since the diaspora is represented in the Parliament (Sabor) through a special electoral unit which covers the whole world. Today, the Croatian transnation is not a politically organised transnational community but an imagined "regime" (Laguerre 1999, p. 640) in which the diaspora is not a separate entity, but a part of a nation which outgrew the state. In reality, only a small section of the diaspora utilises this political arrangement, votes in elections and engages in transnational political activities.

However, new economic emigration from Croatia and its generally high migration potential (Božić and Burić 2005)[11] might reinforce the transnational social arrangements of Croatian migrants in Europe and overseas. The lasting recession in Croatia and Croatia's admission to the EU in 2013 facilitated new labour emigration, especially to those developed EU countries which did not impose the "transitional arrangement" (one to seven years) and did not suspend Directive 2004/38/EC of the free settlement of EU nationals. The new migration wave builds strongly on existing relations within networks of families and friends who settled in EU countries in previous decades, specifically in Germany, Austria and Sweden, but also stretches to new destinations such as Ireland and non-EU countries (e. g. Norway).[12] It is quite reasonable to assume that even new individual migrants will develop transnational social spaces, at least in the form of transnational families, not only because this is already an observable pattern among previous generations of Croatian migrants, but also because new migrants use new technologies of communication on a daily basis in order to participate in the everyday lives of their friends and family in Croatia and elsewhere. Besides, they are inclined to utilise their social capital in order to give or receive any form of support in their countries of immigration and in Croatia.

New transnational patterns of mobility and family relations are already visible in many localities in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Western Europe. Transnational migrant families combine family resources and citizenship in order to expand their opportunities for a satisfying quality of life. It is not uncommon for Croatian migrants in Germany and Austria to buy and rent houses on the coast to tourists regardless of whether they emigrated from the coastal regions of Croatia or other

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[11] The data acquired by Božić, Burić and Kuti in 2013 confirmed the growth of Croatia's migration potential following Croatia's accession to the EU.

[12] According to data obtained by Božić, Burić and Kuti in 2013 on Croatia's contemporary migration potential Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand are still among the top destinations of Croatian migrants, yet the role of transnational migrant networks overseas plays a smaller role in relocating and settling than in EU countries. Migrating overseas is more of an individual endeavour than migrating to European countries because they are traversed with Croatian migrant networks.

parts of Croatia (and/or Bosnia and Herzegovina). They engage close relatives and family members to maintain their newly acquired assets, but also to take care of their children and migrate seasonally between Western or Central Europe, Croatian coastal towns and "home towns" in other parts of Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. These houses are also expected to secure an income in old age or after early retirement. These properties are becoming new hubs of transnational family and business arrangements.

Croatia's integration in a new supranational European social, economic and political formation increased activities within the transnational networks of Croatian migrants and nonmigrants and a widespread use of new communication technologies[13] enable the strengthening and widening of long-distance, pluri-local interlocking networks across international borders which demands the close attention of social scientists and international migration organisations. Yet, one should not forget that Croatia's independence strongly influenced the development of transnational social spaces even before its accession to the EU. The internal borders of former Yugoslavia became international borders by 1992 and the politics of belonging changed. Suddenly, prewar migration towards Croatia became more problematic and immigrants became more "visible" as aliens and new ethnic minorities. In addition, forced migration during the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo increased the size and visibility of migrant populations within new nation-states. Although Croatia was only a route for more than 500,000 Bosniaks (Kostović et al. 2001) on the way to the West and overseas, many stayed in Croatia. They were benefiting from the help and the existing infrastructure of Bosniak prewar communities in Croatia. The Bosniaks in Croatia in the 1990s developed a sense of belonging to a specific ethnic community within Croatia, but also kept strong ties to family members and Bosniak communities all over the world. The change of status of Bosniak and Albanian ethnic groups in the Croatian political system strengthened their position in public but also helped foster transnational institutional ties to other Bosniak groups and networks. Bosniaks and Albanians gained the official status of an "autochthonous national minority" which gave them the right to be represented in the Parliament (Sabor) as groups and secured a stable arrangement for identification. It also secured the financial stability of their institutions which helped their transnational activities. The first research on the transnational social spaces of migrant groups within and across Croatian borders focused on three migrant and/or minority groups: Bosniaks, Albanians and the Chinese (Kuti and Božić 2016). Those groups were selected for the research because of their activities and social networks, which in many instances have a transnational character – e. g. forms of transnational entrepreneurship in the cases of Albanian and Chinese immigrants, or transnational families in cases of Bosniak labour migrants in Croatia. In addition, the different types and contexts of the migration of these selected groups enabled the assumption that their members would represent quite diverse forms of transnational social

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[13] Facebook is especially popular among young emigrants and potential emigrants. It gives a platform for building support groups and networks which provide information on where and how to emigrate, how to utilise legal arrangements and how to integrate, but it also gives direct social and legal support upon arrival.

spaces, or at least transnational activities in different social spheres (Kuti and Božić 2016).

The research employed a qualitative research strategy, including semi-structured interviews. The research material was obtained in two phases: an exploratory phase including expert interviews, and interviews with other members of the selected migrant groups in the second phase. 42 interviews were undertaken over 11 months (2009–2010). The fairly open interview protocol allowed for the flexibility to discuss different aspects of transnational activities, social networks and identities, while expert interviews included additional themes concerning expert knowledge about other members of a selected migrant group (Kuti and Božić 2016).[14] In some cases experts had a gatekeeper role in securing access to other members of a migrant group, while in others the researchers looked for alternative contacts, avoiding possible snowball sampling bias. In order to capture different experiences, selecting interviewees was additionally guided by the principle of maximum variation (Miles and Huberman 1994) in characteristics such as age, gender, level of education and profession. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in different parts of Croatia, taking into account the regional distribution of different migrant groups (Zagreb, Zadar, Pula, Split).

Concerning their rich immigration tradition, political status, as well as the fact that the migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina represent the most numerous immigrant group in Croatia today (Kuti 2014), it was possible to assume that Bosniaks in Croatia create and maintain transnational social spaces with members of the same group in different locations. According to the Population Census (2011), there are 31,479 members of the Bosniak national minority in Croatia. When it comes to more recent immigration flows, official immigration statistics register 13,628 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Croatia in 2011 (Župarić-Iljić and Gregurović 2013), which represents 38.4% of all foreign nationals, placing them at the top of the list (Kuti 2014). Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina represent the most numerous population of foreign workers in Croatia (Božić et al. 2013), continuing migration patterns which have existed long before the breakup of Yugoslavia. Even though official immigration records do not contain information on ethnic affiliation, it is possible to assume that most immigrants holding Bosnian citizenship are Bosniak, due to the fact that a majority of Bosnian Croats already claimed Croatian citizenship and that Bosnian Serbs have avoided immigrating to Croatia due to political reasons. Bosniak families are quite extensive in a numerical, but also in a geographical sense. Transnational familial networks of Bosniak interviewees who participated in our research extended across 18 nation-states (Kuti and Božić 2016) and several continents.

The war in Bosnia caused a worldwide dispersal of Bosniaks connecting disparate locations such as Australia, the United States and even Brazil, while the majority of our interviewees described having active social contacts with family members in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway and Sweden. Unlike the other two migrant groups included in the research (Albanian and Chinese), it is more difficult to single

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[14] The interviews were transcribed verbatim, sequentially coded combining deductive and inductive coding techniques, and analysed using MAXQDA 2007 software.

out a typical profession or trade of Bosniaks in Croatia, since they do not represent a form of ethnic entrepreneurship. However, a significant proportion of foreign workers in Croatia hold work permits in the construction sector – 72.86% (Božić et al. 2013) –, making it possible to infer similar conclusions, at least for a part of recent labour migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our Bosniak interviewees described strong and numerous family relations, connecting persons in Croatia with their family members in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere. Contact is maintained through (mobile) phones, Skype, MSN and Facebook, particularly among younger interviewees. Unlike the other two groups (and especially the Chinese), the geographic proximity of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enables frequent mobility and visitation, facilitating strong family ties. Transnational social spaces in the form of Bosniak kinship groups are maintained through social mechanisms such as familial obligations (particularly in crucial life moments such as births, weddings, deaths etc.), reciprocity and focused solidarity (cf. Faist 2000). In the case of Bosniak migrants from our research, transnational relations extend temporarily as well, including many members of the second generation who are quite active in maintaining social and symbolic ties (Kuti et al. 2013).

The second researched group included members of the Albanian minority in Croatia. According to the latest available data from the Population Census (2011), there were 17,513 persons who declared themselves as members of the Albanian national minority in Croatia in 2011. Most Albanians in Croatia come from Kosovo or Macedonia, and when it comes to more recent immigration flows, there were 1879 citizens of Kosovo and 1876 citizens of Macedonia in Croatia in the same year (Župarić-Iljić and Gregurović 2013).[15]

According to expert interviews from our research (Kuti and Božić 2016), migration flows from Kosovo to Croatia are not as significant as in the 1960s and the 1970s. Most Kosovo Albanians moved to Croatia before its independence, while a significant number of migrants returned to Kosovo after the war (1998–1999) and after the establishment of the UN protectorate. Unlike the Chinese in Croatia who represent contemporary ethnic entrepreneurial forms, Albanians represent traditional ethnic entrepreneurship in Croatia as the most organised and also socially recognised group of ethnic entrepreneurs (Podgorelec and Kuti 2005, p. 6). Despite that, Albanian entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group. It is possible to distinguish two main groups of Albanian entrepreneurs in Croatia: Muslim Albanians, mostly originating from Macedonia and involved in trades such as bakers and pastry cooks, and Albanian Catholics from Kosovo. The members of the latter group own most of the goldsmith shops in the capital Zagreb and on the Croatian coast and islands (Podgorelec and Kuti 2005, p. 6).

According to Podgorelec and Kuti (2005, p. 6) Albanian families are characterised by firm family ties (even in the extended family), while their immigration has elements of a chain migration, including the informal organisation of the migration chain (with information passed in the form of an oral tradition), and in the help they

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[15] Official immigration records do not include more specific information on ethnic affiliation, which can be interpreted as another instance of methodological nationalism, implicitly presupposing majority national affiliation to all ethnic groups.

could most easily give to other members of the group if they were involved in the same field of work. Bearing that in mind, it was possible to expect to find remnants of their pluri-local social space across Yugoslav successor states in a transnational form after 1991.

Many of our interviewees described strong family ties connecting persons in Croatia to their family members in Kosovo but also Germany, Switzerland, Australia or elsewhere. Besides staying in touch with family members through new communication technologies such as (mobile) phones or Skype, an important part of maintaining contact occurs through visitation, particularly in crucial family moments (births, weddings, deaths etc.). Concerning elements of transnational entrepreneurship among Albanian business owners, our expert interviewees described similar patterns of moving or expanding businesses, as in the case of Chinese entrepreneurs. Namely, Albanian entrepreneurs in some cases move their businesses from one country to another (sequential strategy of transnational entrepreneurial mobility), while in others they expand their business ventures to other countries, at the same time maintaining shops in original locations (simultaneous strategy of transnational entrepreneurial mobility, cf. Kuti and Božić 2016).

Transnational social spaces across the borders of Croatia were largely developed out of "old" pluri-local social spaces constructed by Bosniak and Albanian migrants as well as Croatian labour emigrants in Central and West European countries. Croatia's independence, the emergence of new international borders, new politics of belonging and the spreading of new communication technologies facilitated the emergence of transnational social spaces across Croatian borders. However, the societal and political restructuring of national societies in Central and South East Europe also enabled the development of large new networks of entrepreneurial diasporas such as the Chinese. Well connected small entrepreneurs from China have developed their businesses since the 1990s all over Central and Eastern Europe starting with Budapest which became an important transnational hub for their activities (Nyíri 2002). This is why research on the transnational social spaces of migrant groups in Croatia (Kuti and Božić 2016, 2012) has included two "traditional" groups of immigrants (Albanians and Bosniaks) but also recently present Chinese migrants. Although traditionally an emigration country, and with immigrants mostly coming from ex-Yugoslav countries (Božić and Kuti 2012; Kuti 2014), Croatia has become one of South-East Europe's locations for Chinese migrants' transnational entrepreneurship activities, particularly in the years preceding the 2008 economic recession. The beginning of the millennium marked the most significant phase of Chinese immigration to Croatia, with Chinese small entrepreneurs moving or expanding their businesses from surrounding countries such as Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Romania, Austria and Italy (Kuti and Božić 2011b). According to official statistics, there were 1056 Chinese citizens in Croatia in 2011. Chinese immigrants were the 8th largest group of foreign nationals in Croatia and the only non-European immigrant group among the top 10 (Županić-Iljić and Gregurović 2013). However, before the effects of recession became visible, the estimates of numbers of Chinese migrants in Croatia reached 2000 to 3000 persons (Kuti and Božić 2016). Mobile and adaptable Chinese entrepreneurs used their family networks and ethnic entrepreneurial circuits to relocate their business and their families.

Most Chinese businesses in Croatia include trade (wholesale and retail) or catering. Even though the type of transnational social space most commonly attributed to Chinese entrepreneurial migrants are transnational business circuits (Faist 2000), Chinese entrepreneurs in Croatia very often rely on family networks. Most Chinese small businesses are run by family members who combine family trust with business connections, sometimes spanning several nation-states. Such a transnational social space is possible because of the Chinese family structure with some migrant extended families reaching up to 100 members, combined with frequent communication using new technologies (Kuti and Božić 2016). Even in cases when family members are not direct business partners, their help is provided in establishing new businesses, e. g. as a financial loan or a nonfinancial form of assistance (cf. Kuti and Božić 2016). The most successful entrepreneurs expand their businesses to surrounding countries (Kuti and Božić 2011b). Depending on the market situation and future estimates, an alternative transnational strategy includes moving businesses from one location to the other, instead of simultaneous expansion. In either case, the functioning of a transnational business relies on relatively frequent mobility and new communication technologies enabling pluri-local frames of reference influencing life-projects and plans (Pries 2005). Additional factors facilitating the expansion of Chinese (transnational) businesses in the countries of former Yugoslavia include linguistic and cultural similarities between those countries, combined with their geographical proximity. Such circumstances facilitate the adaptation of Chinese (transnational) entrepreneurs and easy mobility between those countries.

Members of all migrant groups in Croatia included in our research described their transnational relations and activities spanning borders of several nation-states. The most frequent and intense examples of transnational social spaces structuring migrants' daily lives included transnational business (familial) circuits in the Chinese case, and cases of physical separation of members of the immediate family (e. g. in cases of transnational marriages). Unlike the Chinese, Albanians and Bosniaks are among the 22 constitutionally recognised national minorities in Croatia, giving them higher political and social status. This fact also enables the institutional creation and maintenance of transnational social spaces in the form of cultural and political, social and symbolic ties with the homeland and/or diaspora members in other parts of the world.

5 Conclusion

Due to methodological nationalism, social scientists in Central and South-East Europe have largely neglected the development of pluri-local social spaces within nation-states, as well as the transnational social spaces of migrants. Macro-economic and societal factors, geopolitical arrangements and bilateral agreements have shaped the possibilities for migrants to move, get employed and legally settle. However, social support, firsthand information, exchange of different types of resources, loyalties within strong ties etc. have directly facilitated migration. Primary resources in social ties such as reciprocity, exchange and solidarity (Faist 2000, p. 195) have enabled migrants to organise and maintain new forms of long-distance social relations.

The case of pluri-local, long-distance social spaces across the borders of Croatia and within former Yugoslavia shows that transnational social spaces can develop for decades but also that the division between transnational social spaces and pluri-local social spaces within nation-states is to a certain degree artificial.

This division is a consequence of the circumstances in which migration studies developed and in which social scientists focused mainly on migration across internationally recognised borders of nation-states. The so-called internal migration was seen as unproblematic and accordingly neglected, regardless of its significant impact on the social and economic arrangements of substantial sections of the population. The international border regimes, national containers of social relationships and the politics of belonging affect the setting for migrants' strategic decisions. They constitute an important framework for the development of transnational social spaces, but they do not shape the depth and the width of migrant (and nonmigrant) social ties directly.[16] The international recognition of Croatia as an independent nation-state did not establish, but only facilitated the development of already existing Bosniak and Albanian pluri-local social spaces, as well as other long-distance ties of Croatian migrants in the West. It compelled Bosniak and Albanian migrants to regulate their political status, gave them the opportunity to organise as a recognised national minority with specific rights which in turn provided the new resources to strengthen the institutional but also informal social ties across Croatia's new international borders. It placed Croatia on the map of Chinese transnational entrepreneurs who saw a new opportunity for expanding their widely developed transnational business.

This is why we can conclude that the research on migration and the social ties of migrants, particularly in Central and South-East Europe and the successor states of the former Yugoslavia will have to take into consideration the interplay between migrants' autonomous actions and networking within and across borders on the one hand, and specific political, spatial and economic reconfigurations of national containers on the other. Further exclusive concentration on flows between societies conceived as containers can only oversee important trends in migration, mobility and association which challenge the notion of nationally regulated space. The next opportunity for social scientists in Croatia to research new transnational arrangements of dwelling, being and connecting across boundaries comes with the emergence of European "international retirement migrants" (King et al. 1998) on the Croatian coast and islands. Seasonal mobility, supranational political (and welfare) arrangements, daily struggles for well-being and transnational household strategies will again produce patterns of dwelling and being which could easily be overseen by the social sciences that are still preoccupied with counting people with foreign passports per container over a one year period and with the capability of those people to change their identities and modes of behaviour.

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[16] Only extreme political situations like the geopolitical isolation of former Yugoslavia in the late 1940s and the beginning of 1950s might cut off social ties and economic flows over the borders.

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