

30 YEARS AFTER DAYTON

30 GODINA OD DAYTONA

International Scientific Conference
30 Years After Dayton:
Contemporary Geopolitical,
Socioeconomic and Demographic
Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina
and Neighboring Countries

Međunarodna naučna konferencija
30 godina od Dayton:
Savremeni geopolitički,
socioekonomski i demografski
procesi u Bosni i Hercegovini
i zemljama u okruženju

 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Sarajevo, Bosna i Hercegovina



20 - 21 November 2025
20 - 21. novembar 2025.



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FEDERACIJA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE
KANTON SARAJEVO

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30 Years After Dayton:

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Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Neighboring Countries

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CONTENTS /SADRŽAJ

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE	5
O KONFERENCIJI	7
INTRODUCTION	9
UVOD	11
HUNGARY AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: CONTEXTS, DRIVERS, AND STRATEGIES	13
SUBJECTIVE ATLAS PRESENTS ALTERNATIVE GEOGRAPHY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	22
SPATIAL PATTERNS OF VOTING PREFERENCES IN POST-DAYTON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	30
ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE BOSNIAN- PODRINJE CANTON GORAŽDE THREE DECADES AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE DAYTON AGREEMENT	43
THE POST-DAYTON TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE MEĐUREČJE EXCLAVE	56
KLJUČNI FAKTORI SOCIJALNO-GEOGRAFSKIH PROBLEMA STANOVNIŠTVA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI	63
THE INNER PERIPHERY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ALONG THE INTER-ENTITY BOUNDARY LINE AS A LEGACY OF DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT	82
IMPLICATIONS OF THE DAYTON CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KLJUČ (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)	98
AGROTURIZAM KAO POKRETAČ RURALNE REVITALIZACIJE U JUGOZAPADNOJ BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI	110

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The scientific conference “30 Years After Dayton: Contemporary Geopolitical, Socio-Economic and Demographic Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Neighboring Countries” was held on 20–21 November 2025 at the University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Science. The conference was organized to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the initialling of the Dayton Peace Agreement, with the aim of critically examining the political, social, economic, and spatial processes that have shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider regional area over the past three decades.

The conference was organized by the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Sarajevo, and the Geographical Society in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Organizing Committee of the conference consisted of: Prof. Dr. Edin Hrelja, Prof. Dr. Nusret Drešković, Prof. Dr. Haris Gekić, Prof. Dr. Boris Avdić, Prof. Dr. Amra Banda, Asst. Professor Dr. Amina Sivac, MSc. Ahmed Džaferagić, Dr. Aida Avdić Marić, MSc. Belma Durmišević, and MSc. Emina Ajanović.

The organization of the conference and the publication of these conference proceedings were co-financed and supported by the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Youth of the Sarajevo Canton.

The Scientific Committee of the conference was international and consisted of: Prof. Dr. Nusret Drešković, University of Sarajevo – Chair of the Scientific Committee; Prof. Dr. Gerard Toal, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Prof. Dr. Godfrey Baldacchino, University of Malta; Prof. Dr. Peter Reményi, University of Pécs; Prof. Dr. Carl T. Dahlman, University of South Carolina; Prof. Dr. İsmet Akova, Istanbul University; Prof. Dr. Norbert Pap, University of Pécs; Prof. Dr. Süheyla Balcı Akova, Istanbul University; Prof. Dr. James Scott, University of Eastern Finland; Prof. Dr. Pavel Ptáček, Mendel University in Brno; Prof. Dr. Amaël Cattaruzza, Paris 8 University; Prof. Dr. Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu, Istanbul University; Prof. Dr. Imre Nagy, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Budapest; Prof. Dr. Gábor Pirisi, University of Pécs; Prof. Dr. Zdeněk Opršal, Palacký University Olomouc; Prof. Dr. Zsolt Radics, University of Debrecen; Prof. Dr. Seyithan Demirdağ, Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University; Prof. Dr. Rovshan Karimov, Hasan Aliyev Institute of Geography; Prof. Dr. Selim Hilmi Özkan Yıldız, Istanbul Technical University; Prof. Dr. Tuğba Aydın Halisoğlu, Tarsus University; Prof. Dr. Vuk Tvrtko Opačić, University of Zagreb; Prof. Dr. Zoran Stiperski, University of Zagreb; Prof. Dr. Slaven Gašparović, University of Zagreb; Prof. Dr. Marta Zorko, University of Zagreb; Prof. Dr. Miroslav Doderović, University of Montenegro; Prof. Dr. Arsim Ejupi, University of Prishtina; Prof. Dr. Marija Ljakoska, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boštjan Rogelj, University of Ljubljana; Asst. Prof. Dr. Aljoša Budović, University of Belgrade; Dr. Dávid Sümeghy, Austrian Academy of Sciences; Dr. Siniša Trkulja, Spatial Planning and Urbanism Agency of the Republic of Serbia; Prof. Dr. Semir Ahmetbegović, University of Tuzla; Prof. Dr. Dževad Mešanović, University of Tuzla; Prof. Dr. Ranko Mirić, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Haris Gekić, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Edin Hrelja, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Aida Bidžan-Gekić, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Lejla Žunić, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Amra Čaušević, University of Sarajevo; Prof. Dr. Amra Banda, University of Sarajevo; Asst. Prof. Dr. Amina Sivac, University of Sarajevo; and Prof. Dr. Boris Avdić, University of Sarajevo.

The event brought together scientists, researchers, experts, and members of the academic community from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, providing a platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and diverse research approaches related to contemporary geopolitical, demographic, and socio-economic processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the countries of Southeast Europe. Particular value was added to the conference through keynote lectures delivered by distinguished international scholars:

- Prof. Dr. Boštjan Rogelj, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;*
- Prof. Dr. Peter Reményi, University of Pécs, Hungary.*

The conference gathered more than 60 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, including university professors, researchers, experts, doctoral candidates, and students. A total of 19 scientific papers authored by researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, North Macedonia, and other countries were presented. The papers were organized into three thematic sessions:

- 1. Geopolitical Processes and Challenges*
- 2. Demographic Processes and Challenges*
- 3. Socio-Economic and Administrative-Territorial Challenges*

The presented research covered a broad range of topics, including geopolitical transformations in the post-Dayton period, regional development, territorial organization, demographic processes, depopulation, migration, socio-economic change, administrative-territorial challenges, identity-related processes, and various aspects of development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries.

On the second day of the conference, a professional field excursion was organized for registered participants, providing direct insight into selected socio-geographical phenomena and processes, historical-geographical features, and development challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The field component represented an important segment of the conference programme, as it enabled the integration of theoretical and research-based knowledge with concrete spatial examples while further encouraging professional and scientific exchange among participants.

The papers published in these conference proceedings represent the outcome of scientific collaboration among researchers from various institutions and countries and provide a significant contribution to the understanding of contemporary geopolitical, demographic, and socio-economic processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the broader regional context. All papers included in these conference proceedings underwent a double-blind peer-review process in accordance with the academic standards of scholarly publishing.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all authors, keynote speakers, session chairs, reviewers, participants, and members of both the Organizing and Scientific Committees for their dedication, expertise, and valuable contributions to the successful realization of the conference. Their commitment enabled high-quality scientific discussion, international exchange of knowledge and experience, and further strengthened cooperation among researchers engaged in the study of contemporary processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries.

*Editors
Sarajevo, July 2026*

O KONFERENCIJI

Naučna konferencija „30 godina od Dayton: savremeni geopolitički, socioekonomski i demografski procesi u Bosni i Hercegovini i zemljama u okruženju“ održana je 20. i 21. novembra 2025. godine na Univerzitetu u Sarajevu – Prirodno-matematičkom fakultetu. Konferencija je organizovana povodom obilježavanja tridesete godišnjice parafiranja Dejtonskog mirovnog sporazuma, s ciljem kritičkog sagledavanja političkih, društvenih, ekonomskih i prostornih procesa koji su tokom protekle tri decenije oblikovali Bosnu i Hercegovinu i širi regionalni prostor.

Organizatori konferencije bili su Odsjek za geografiju Univerziteta u Sarajevu – Prirodno-matematičkog fakulteta i Geografsko društvo u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine. Organizacioni odbor konferencije sačinjavali su: prof. dr. Edin Hrelja, prof. dr. Nusret Drešković, prof. dr. Haris Gekić, prof. dr. Boris Avdić, prof. dr. Amra Banda, doc. dr. Amina Sivac, mr Ahmed Džaferagić, dr. sc. Aida Avdić Marić, mr Belma Durmišević, te mr Emina Ajanović.

Organizaciju konferencije i objavljivanje ovog zbornika radova sufinansiralo je i podržalo Ministarstvo za nauku, visoko obrazovanje i mlade Kantona Sarajevo.

Naučni odbor konferencije bio je internacionalan i sačinjavali su ga: prof. dr. Nusret Drešković, Univerzitet u Sarajevu – predsjednik naučnog odbora, prof. dr. Gerard Toal, Virdžinijski politehnički institut i državni univerzitet, prof. dr. Godfrey Baldacchino, Univerzitet Malta, prof. dr. Peter Remenyi, Univerzitet u Pečuhu, prof. dr. Carl T. Dahlman, Univerzitet Južne Karoline, prof. dr. İsmet Akova, Univerzitet u Istanbulu, prof. dr. Norbert Pap, Univerzitet u Pečuhu, prof. dr. Süheyla Balci Akova, Univerzitet u Istanbulu, prof. dr. James Scott, Univerzitet Istočne Finske, prof. dr. Pavel Ptáček, Univerzitet Mendel u Brnu, prof. dr. Amaël Cattaruzza, Univerzitet Pariz 8, prof. dr. Nurcan Ozgur Baklacioglu, Univerzitet u Istanbulu, prof. dr. Imre Nagy, Mađarski univerzitet poljoprivrede i nauka o životu u Budimpešti, prof. dr. Gabor Pirisi, Univerzitet u Pečuhu, prof. dr. Zdeněk Opršal, Univerzitet Palackog u Olomucu, prof. dr. Zsolt Radics, Univerzitet u Debrecenu, prof. dr. Seyithan Demirdağ, Univerzitet Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit, prof. dr. Rovshan Karimov, Hasan Alijev institut za geografiju, prof. dr. Selim Hilmi Özkan Jildiz, Tehnički Univerzitet u Istanbulu, prof. dr. Tuğba Aydın Halisoğlu, Univerzitet Tarsus, prof. dr. Vuk Tvrtko Opačić, Univerzitet u Zagrebu, prof. dr. Zoran Stiperski, Univerzitet u Zagrebu, prof. dr. Slaven Gašparović, Univerzitet u Zagrebu, prof. dr. Marta Zorko, Univerzitet u Zagrebu, prof. dr. Miroslav Doderović, Univerzitet Crne Gore, prof. dr. Arsim Ejupi, Univerzitet u Prištini, prof. dr. Marija Ljakoska, Univerzitet Sv. Kiril i Metodij u Skoplju, doc. dr. Boštjan Rogelj, Univerzitet u Ljubljani, doc. dr. Aljoša Budović Univerzitet u Beogradu, dr. Dávid Sümeghy, Austrijska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, dr. Siniša Trkulja, Agencija za prostorno planiranje i urbanizam Republike Srbije, prof. dr. Semir Ahmetbegović, Univerzitet u Tuzli, prof. dr. Dževad Mešanović, Univerzitet u Tuzli, prof. dr. Ranko Mirić, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Haris Gekić, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Edin Hrelja, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Aida Bidžan-Gekić, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Lejla Žunić, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Amra Čaušević, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, prof. dr. Amra Banda, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, doc. dr. Amina Sivac, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, te prof. dr. Boris Avdić, Univerzitet u Sarajevu

Konferencija je okupila naučnike, istraživače, stručnjake i predstavnike akademske zajednice iz Bosne i Hercegovine i inostranstva s ciljem razmjene znanja, iskustava i različitih istraživačkih pristupa vezanih

za savremene geopolitičke, demografske i socioekonomske procese u Bosni i Hercegovini i zemljama jugoistočne Evrope.

Posebnu vrijednost konferenciji dala su uvodna predavanja istaknutih međunarodnih stručnjaka:

- prof. dr. Boštjana Rogelja, Univerzitet u Ljubljani, Slovenija;*
- prof. dr. Petera Reményija, Univerzitet u Pečuhu, Mađarska*

Konferencija je okupila više od 60 učesnika iz Bosne i Hercegovine i inostranstva, uključujući univerzitetske profesore, istraživače, stručnjake, doktorante i studente. Tokom konferencije predstavljeno je 19 naučnih radova autora iz Bosne i Hercegovine, Hrvatske, Slovenije, Mađarske, Češke Republike, Sjeverne Makedonije, i drugih zemalja.. Radovi su bili raspoređeni u tri tematske sesije:

- 1. Geopolitički procesi i izazovi*
- 2. Demografski procesi i izazovi*
- 3. Socioekonomski i administrativno-teritorijalni izazovi*

Prezentirana istraživanja obuhvatila su širok spektar tema, uključujući geopolitičke transformacije postdejtonskog prostora, regionalni razvoj, teritorijalnu organizaciju, demografske procese, depopulaciju, migracije, socioekonomske promjene, administrativno-teritorijalne izazove, identitetske procese i različite aspekte razvoja Bosne i Hercegovine i zemalja u okruženju.

Drugog dana konferencije organizovan je stručni terenski obilazak za registrovane učesnike, koji je omogućio neposredno upoznavanje sa odabranim društveno-geografskim pojavama i procesima, historijsko-geografskim obilježjima i razvojnim izazovima u Bosni i Hercegovini. Terenska nastava predstavljala je važan segment programa konferencije jer je omogućila povezivanje teorijskih i istraživačkih spoznaja sa konkretnim prostornim primjerima, te dodatno podstakla stručnu i naučnu razmjenu među učesnicima.

Radovi objavljeni u ovom zborniku predstavljaju rezultat naučne saradnje istraživača iz različitih institucija i zemalja te daju značajan doprinos razumijevanju savremenih geopolitičkih, demografskih i socioekonomskih procesa u Bosni i Hercegovini i širem regionalnom kontekstu. Svi radovi uključeni u zbornik prošli su postupak dvostruke anonimne stručne recenzije u skladu sa akademskim standardima naučnog izdavaštva.

Izražavamo iskrenu zahvalnost svim autorima, uvodničarima, moderatorima sesija, recenzentima, učesnicima, kao i članovima Organizacionog i Naučnog odbora koji su svojim angažmanom, stručnošću i posvećenošću doprinijeli uspješnoj realizaciji konferencije. Njihov doprinos omogućio je kvalitetnu naučnu raspravu, međunarodnu razmjenu znanja i iskustava, te dodatno osnažio saradnju među istraživačima koji se bave proučavanjem savremenih procesa u Bosni i Hercegovini i zemljama u okruženju.

*Urednici,
Sarajevo, juli 2026.*

INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country in Southeast Europe, located in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. It borders Croatia to the west, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the southeast, while also having access to the Adriatic Sea through the town of Neum. The country is predominantly mountainous, with all of its mountain ranges belonging to the young folded system of the Dinaric Alps. Most of its territory is influenced by a warm temperate humid climate (Cf), while the Mediterranean climate (Cs) prevails in the southern regions. Bosnia and Herzegovina possesses abundant water resources, with its most significant rivers being the Sava and its tributaries – Drina, Bosna, Vrbas and Una, as well as the Neretva River. Brown soils, particularly Dystric Cambisols and Calcaric Cambisols, dominate the country's pedological structure. Forests cover nearly half of the national territory, consisting primarily of oak forests in lower elevations, beech forests in hilly and mid-mountain areas, and coniferous forests at higher altitudes. Bosnia and Herzegovina became an independent state in 1992 following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This was followed by a war that claimed approximately 100,000 lives and displaced more than one million people. The Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, which established the entities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, created a highly complex and decentralized constitutional and legal framework within which the country continues to function today. According to the most recent population census, Bosnia and Herzegovina has around 3.5 million inhabitants, although there are indications that the actual population is significantly smaller. Depopulation trends, most pronounced in the eastern and western peripheral regions, began with the forced displacement of populations during the wars of the 1990s and have continued through economic migration in the post-war period. The majority of the population consists of members of the country's three constituent peoples: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. The capital city is Sarajevo, while other major urban centres include Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica, and Mostar. The economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains among the least developed in Europe, largely as a result of the turbulent process of economic transition, which was accompanied by extensive deindustrialization. Nevertheless, when viewed within the broader context of the global economy and living standards, the country can be considered broadly consistent with the world average.

Traces of human settlement in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be traced back to prehistory. In a broader historical context, the political organization of this area is initially associated with the periods of the Illyrians and the Romans. The first medieval Bosnian state emerged in the upper basin of the Bosna River, within the area of the present-day Sarajevo-Zenica Valley, where the influences of Byzantine Empire, Kingdom of Hungary and other neighbouring political entities intersected. During the Middle Ages, the state gradually expanded, eventually encompassing parts of the Dalmatian coast. Its decline led to its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. During the Ottoman period, despite changes in administrative organization, Bosnia retained both its name and a degree of territorial continuity. The contemporary borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina are largely based on the arrangements established by the Berlin Congress of 1878, when Austria-Hungary assumed administration over the territory and introduced the official name Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout the 20th century, the country underwent a series of political transformations, including Austro-Hungarian rule, the events leading to the First World War, the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the restoration of statehood through the decisions of ZAVNOBiH and AVNOJ during the Second World War, and its status as one of the republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Following the disintegration of

Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in 1992. This was followed by a devastating four-year war that culminated in the genocide committed in Srebrenica in 1995. Shortly thereafter, the Dayton Peace Agreement was reached, bringing an end to the armed conflict. The Dayton Agreement established a new and highly complex constitutional and political system. Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed of two entities—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, as well as the Brčko District, which enjoys a special status. Unlike Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is further decentralized and divided into ten cantons. At the local level, the country is organized into 143 units of local self-government, some of which hold official city status. This structure has resulted in an exceptionally complex and asymmetrical political-territorial organization.

Owing to the constitutional arrangement established by the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a *sui generis* political framework that shapes virtually all social processes within its territory. Within this framework, numerous functional problems have emerged, many of which have neither been resolved nor substantially mitigated even three decades after the signing of the peace agreement. Consequently, many analysts agree that while the Dayton Agreement successfully brought an end to the war and the accompanying destruction, it failed to provide a sustainable foundation for long-term social development. At the same time, there is a clear lack of consensus within Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the direction of future reforms, largely due to conflicting positions among domestic political actors. The socio-political reality created by the Dayton framework also has visible spatial manifestations and implications, some of which directly affect the everyday lives of the country's citizens. For this reason, there is a continuing need to address these complex issues from both domestic and international academic perspectives. Through rigorous research, it is possible to generate objective insights that may contribute to identifying optimal solutions to existing challenges, while also using the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an opportunity to examine real-world experiences of post-conflict state- and society-building. Such an approach necessarily requires an interdisciplinary perspective, and one of the most relevant fields in this regard is political geography. By examining the relationships between space, power, and social processes, this branch of human geography provides a theoretical and methodological framework for understanding how the complex constitutional and territorial organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina influences its overall social development.

UVOD

Bosna i Hercegovina je država Jugoistočne Evrope, smještena u zapadnom dijelu Balkanskog poluostrva. Graniči sa Hrvatskom na zapadu, Srbijom na istoku, te Crnom Gorom na jugoistoku, a preko Neuma izlazi na Jadransko more. Pretežno je brdsko-planinska zemlja, a sve njene planine pripadaju mladom nabranom sistemu Dinarida. Najveći njen dio se nalazi pod uticajem umjerene tople i vlažne klime (Cf), dok sredozemna klima (Cs) dominira na jugu. Vodno bogatstvo ovog geoprostora je veliko, a najznačajnije rijeke su Sava sa pritokama Drinom, Bosnom, Vrbasom i Unom, te Neretva. U pedološkoj strukturi preovladavaju smeđa tla, poput distričnog kambisola i kalkokambisola. Gotovo polovinu državne teritorije pokrivaju šume – hrastove u nižim područjima, bukove u sredogorju, a četinarske na višim planinama. Bosna i Hercegovina je nezavisna država od 1992. godine i raspada Jugoslavije, nakon čega je uslijedio rat u kojem je život izgubilo oko 100 hiljada ljudi, a više od milion je raseljeno. Daytonski mirovni sporazum iz 1995. godine, prema kojem su definisani entiteti Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine i Republika Srpska, stvorio je izrazito složeni i decentralizovani ustavno-pravni okvir u kojem ova država i danas funkcioniše. Prema posljednjem popisu stanovništva, u Bosni i Hercegovini živi oko 3,5 miliona stanovnika, ali postoje indicije da je realna brojnost populacije značajno manja. Depopulativni trendovi, koji su najizraženiji u istočnim i zapadnim perifernim oblastima, započeli su sa prisilnim izbjegličkim talasima tokom 1990-tih godina, a nastavljeni su ekonomskim migracijama u post-ratnom periodu. Glavninu stanovništva čine pripadnici tri konstitutivna naroda – Bošnjaci, Srbi i Hrvati. Glavni grad je Sarajevo, a ostali veći urbani centri su Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica i Mostar. Ekonomija Bosne i Hercegovine je jedna od najslabije razvijenih u Evropi, što je prvenstveno rezultat turbulentnog procesa tzv. ekonomske tranzicije, u sklopu kojeg je došlo do masovne deindustrijalizacije. Ipak, ako se razmotri kontekst globalne ekonomije i životnog standarda, onda se može konstatovati da se ova država uklapa u svjetski prosjek.

Tragovi ljudskog naseljavanja na području Bosne i Hercegovine mogu se pratiti još od prethistorije. Organizacija prostora u političkom smislu u širem historijskom okviru se prvobitno povezuje sa periodom Ilira i Rimljana. Prva srednjovjekovna bosanska država nastala je na području gornjeg toka rijeke Bosne, u zoni današnje Sarajevsko-zeničke kotline, gdje su se preplitali uticaji Bizanta, Ugarske i drugih susjednih političkih cjelina. Tokom srednjeg vijeka država se postepeno širila, a u kasnijoj fazi i dijelove dalmatinskog priobalja. Njeno slabljenje dovelo je do pada pod osmansku vlast u XV stoljeću. U osmanskome periodu, i pored promjena administrativne organizacije, prostor Bosne zadržava kontinuitet imena i određenu teritorijalnu prepoznatljivost. Savremene granice Bosne i Hercegovine u velikoj mjeri se oslanjaju na rješenja Berlinskog kongresa iz 1878. godine, kada Austro-Ugarska preuzima upravu i uvodi službeni naziv Bosna i Hercegovina. Tokom 20. stoljeća prostor prolazi kroz niz političkih transformacija: od austrougarske uprave, preko događaja koji vode ka Prvom svjetskom ratu, perioda Kraljevine Jugoslavije, obnove državnosti kroz odluke ZAVNOBiH-a i AVNOJ-a u Drugom svjetskom ratu, pa do statusa jedne od republika SFR Jugoslavije. U procesu raspada ove države, Bosna i Hercegovina proglašava nezavisnost 1992. godine, nakon čega dolazi do devastirajućeg četverogodišnjeg rata koji je kulminirao genocidom u Srebrenici 1995. godine. Nedugo nakon toga je ipak postignut Daytonski mirovni sporazum, kojim su okončana ratna dejstva. Daytonskim sporazumom uspostavljen je novi, veoma složen ustavno-politički sistem. Bosna i Hercegovina je ustrojena kroz dva entiteta – Federaciju Bosne i Hercegovine i Republiku Srpsku, te Brčko Distrikt, koji ima poseban status. Za razliku od Republike Srpske, Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine je dodatno decentralizovana i sastoji se od deset kantona. Na lokalnom nivou država je organizovana kroz 143 jedinice lokalne

samouprave, od kojih neke imaju službeni status grada. Ovakva struktura rezultira izrazito kompleksnim i asimetričnim političko-teritorijalnim uređenjem države.

Zahvaljujući Daytonskom ustavnom uređenju, Bosna i Hercegovina je dobila sui generis politički okvir, koji oblikuje praktično sve društvene procese na njenoj teritoriji. U sklopu tih procesa se javljaju brojni funkcionalni problemi, koji nisu otklonjeni, pa čak ni značajno umanjeni ni tri decenije nakon potpisivanja mirovnog sporazuma. Zbog toga se mnogi analitičari slažu u ocjeni da je Daytonski sporazum uspješno zaustavio ratna stradanja i destrukciju, ali nije ponudio održivu osnovu za dugoročan društveni razvoj. Sa druge strane, evidentan je nedostatak konsenzusa unutar Bosne i Hercegovine o pravcu budućih reformi, uslijed oprečnih stajališta među domaćim političkim akterima. Daytonska društveno-politička realnost ima i svoje jasno vidljive prostorne manifestacije i implikacije, od kojih neke imaju uticaj i na svakodnevni život građana ove države. Zbog toga postoji kontinuirana potreba da se ovoj kompleksnoj problematici pristupa i sa akademskog nivoa, kako domaćeg, tako i međunarodnog, kako bi se kroz istraživačku praksu došlo do objektivnoj spoznaja koje bi mogle doprinijeti pronalasku optimalnih rješenja za postojeće probleme, kao i iskoristilo studijski slučaj Bosne i Hercegovine za proučavanje stvarnih iskustava u izgradnji jednog postkonfliktnog društva. Neophodno je da takav pristup bude interdisciplinaran, a jedna od najrelevantnijih istraživačkih oblasti u tom pogledu je politička geografija. Upravo ova grana društvene geografije kroz proučavanje odnosa između prostora, vlasti i društvenih procesa, pruža teorijski i metodološki okvir za razumijevanje načina na koji složena ustavno-teritorijalna organizacija Bosne i Hercegovine utiče na njen ukupni društveni razvoj.

HUNGARY AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: CONTEXTS, DRIVERS, AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract: Hungary's post-2010 Western Balkans (WB) policy has become more activist, with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) increasingly visible behind Croatia and Serbia. We situate this turn of events in three contexts: (1) a divided Balkans with renewed great-power competition, where the European Union's internal crises and periodic enlargement fatigue created space for China, Russia, Turkey, and the United States, among others, to assert their interests; (2) a divided BiH whose Dayton-era power-sharing and international oversight enable external influence; and (3) a domestic sovereigntist turn in Hungary that favours regional power projection. We map the instruments across security deployments, economic statecraft, and political relations, and argue that BiH has a growing importance in Hungarian diplomacy that fits into the broader Hungarian–WB strategy. Hungary applies a multi-scalar, multi-faceted policy that combines security leadership, ideational projection, economic ties, and political support.

Key words: Western Balkans; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Hungary; security; soft power.

INTRODUCTION

Hungary's Western Balkans policy sharpened in the mid-2010s. Public and elite discourse on the region expanded, and media coverage increasingly focused on actors and events in the Western Balkans. Initially, Croatia and Serbia took the lead, but later Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared more frequently in elite discourses and in diplomatic scheduling. The media reported an increasing number of high-level meetings, and Bosnia and Herzegovina featured more often in the news. A symbolic moment occurred in 2018, when a photograph circulated first in the Hungarian and later in the international press that showed, during an international meeting in the prime minister's office, an ethnic map of Bosnia and Herzegovina hanging on the wall (Karčić 2022).

This paper asks two questions: What contextual factors shape the uptick in Hungarian–Western Balkans engagement in general and in Hungarian–Bosnia and Herzegovina relations in particular? What drivers best explain Hungary's regional and BiH policy instruments and narratives? To that end, we primarily examined narratives in Hungary, supplemented by reports from international organisations and the media, as well as official economic data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, few academic publications dealt with the Hungary–BiH relations, which is not surprising given that bilateral ties are rather weak (Đogo et al. 2024). Csaplár-Degovics (2022) provides a detailed analysis of Hungarian ambitions concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina in the aftermath of the annexation. A few papers examine Hungary's activity in the Balkans; e.g. Reményi et al. (2021) argued that great-power rivalry in the region helped Hungary to increase its activity in the region. Grey literature has also discussed Hungary's engagement with the Balkans (e.g., think-tanks like the

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Hungarian Institute of International Affairs), usually addressing only briefly the Bosnian–Hungarian relations, but clearly maintaining a Hungarian perspective (Ármás–Németh 2022; Erokhin 2024; Orosz 2023).

International commentators tend to be more critical, focusing on the controversial aspects of Hungary’s political engagement in the region (Cvijić et al. 2023). Hungarian sources and economic analyses like to examine BiH’s economic potential. Kromják (2021) assesses BiH’s macroeconomic situation focusing on structural problems and historical legacies. Dogo et al. (2024) analyse trade relations using the gravity model, based on which they argue that bilateral economic ties are weaker than they could be. Ármás and Németh (2022) highlight Hungary’s potential mediating role between the EU and the Balkans.

THREE INTERLOCKING CONTEXTS

We’d like to draw attention to three interlocking contextual factors. In our view, these amount to preconditions for the rise in Hungarian activity in the region. First, a politically and geographically fragmented Western Balkans without a clear hegemon offers room for a small-to-medium-sized state (like Hungary) to pursue its goals effectively. Second, Bosnia and Herzegovina is itself fragmented, which—through its internal divisions—facilitates the expansion of influence within the state, including the application of various soft-power tools. Finally, Hungary’s domestic political transformation after 2010 brought to power a supermajority-backed, sovereigntist government that articulates national (or nationally labeled party-, elite-, various group-) interests more overtly. Successive administrations led by FIDESZ party, enjoying strong domestic legitimacy and room for manoeuvre, were able and willing to enact radical changes in foreign policy.

A divided Balkans and renewed competition

The Western Balkans remains a region of small states located at the overlap of spheres of influence, historically situated ‘in-between’ major blocs. This condition of being ‘between empires’ is hardly new: the region has repeatedly served as a theatre of competition and a buffer zone among greater powers. Small-state status and a fragmented political-geographical structure are the outcomes of multiple, intense waves of state formation and border changes. Interstate antagonisms within the region—and the frequent inability to resolve them—together with resource constraints intrinsic to small states, create ideal conditions for external intervention, which is itself hardly foreign to the region (Jano 2008; Reményi et al. 2021).

The European Union would be the ‘natural’ great power in the region, but successive EU crises (sovereign-debt crisis, Brexit, COVID-19, etc.) and periodic enlargement fatigue have diluted Brussels’s leverage from time to time, opening space for other external actors (Chrzová et al. 2019). In the mid-2010s, amid EU hesitation, China increased its presence primarily through economic and financial tools and infrastructure development (Csapó–Reményi 2018; Shopov 2021). Until the war in Ukraine, Russia exerted influence mainly via energy, (security) politics and the media (Bechev 2017). The United States prioritised security and stability—largely through NATO—later adding the balancing of an expanding China and Russia to its aims (Vuksanović 2021). Turkey focused chiefly on soft power and cultural diplomacy. In the absence of strong European leverage and in the presence of these increasingly consequential actors, no clear hegemon emerged in the region, creating wider room for entrepreneurial middle powers (including EU members) to project influence. Hungary belongs among these states, and its Balkans policy has strengthened markedly since the mid-2010s (Reményi et al. 2021).

A divided Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina’s post-Dayton ethno-territorial structures reproduce this political-territorial fragmentation one scale lower, at the level of the state. BiH’s post-Dayton architecture institutionalises two entities and three constituent peoples under a complex, consociational design with international

oversight (the Office of the High Representative's 'Bonn powers'). This institutional fragmentation and internationalised governance both constrain central coherence and invite selective external engagement. Just as a politically and territorially fragmented Balkans is an ideal arena for external interventions, so too does a similarly divided Bosnia and Herzegovina ease external actors' activities inside the country. In Hungary's Bosnia policy, selective steps tied to particular domestic actors exemplify this pattern. Senior Hungarian politicians meet counterparts within Republika Srpska (RS) considerably more frequently, and a larger share of Hungarian financial instruments has been directed toward that entity. Political backing for the RS leadership is likewise made possible by the state's divisions rooted in the Dayton structure.

Hungary's sovereigntist turn

Since 2010, with FIDESZ's rise to power, a supermajority-backed, sovereignty-centred agenda has articulated national interests more vocally. We do not aim to analyse power structures within the FIDESZ governments or individual policy domains; rather, we highlight how this new political orientation has influenced policies concerning the Balkans.

Hungary's foreign-policy reorientation has, at least in narrative terms, cast the EU as an opponent and later an adversary. Alliances have been formed along party-political lines (see Hungarian–Serbian relations). With the so-called Eastern, then Southern Opening, and, ultimately, a connectivity-branded grand strategy, Hungary has sought to loosen exclusively European ties and build alternative partnerships. The strengthening of relations with the Balkans fits this pattern.

Ideological and domestic political orientations have also strongly shaped foreign-policy moves. Examples include anti-migration stances—culminating in the construction of border fences (Pap–Reményi 2017)—and the embrace of illiberalism and Christian-conservative values, which facilitated the development of excellent ties with Serbia and, indirectly, contributed to increased activism in Bosnia. Similarly domestic in origin was the effort to prioritise outward foreign direct investment by Hungarian firms and, more generally, to strengthen external economic relations (Endrődi-Kovács–Goreczky 2020; Ármás–Németh 2022). Southeastern Europe is a natural arena for these aims, where Hungarian economic actors enjoy comparative advantages.

The Hungarian government—and particularly its prime minister—also strives to present itself as an influential actor in international politics. Relations with great-power leaders and activism at the EU level point in this direction, as does activist foreign policy toward the Western Balkans. These domestic frames support niche power projection where relative capabilities are favourable (The Budapest Times 2024).

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARY AND BIH

Bosnia and Herzegovina has long been on the Hungarian strategic horizon, although it has rarely been a top priority of Hungarian geopolitics. In the medieval and early modern periods, the area was largely viewed from Hungary as a territory to be conquered and ruled, with the primary function of serving as a buffer. Crusades launched by Hungarian kings, as well as Bosnia's key geostrategic position in the fight against the Ottomans, embedded Bosnia in mainstream Hungarian geopolitical thinking. The Austro-Hungarian occupation and subsequent annexation created a 'quasi-colonial' situation in which Hungarian economic and political interests were present, even though a broad-based colonial consciousness has not taken root in Hungary (Csaplár-Degovics 2022). Prior to the Sarajevo assassination, Bosnia also entered Hungarian cultural memory through works of art, notably the paintings of Csontváry.

Within the socialist federation, direct Hungary–BiH relations were mediated at the federal level of Yugoslavia, leaving no room for direct cooperation. This was also a period of inward-looking policies for Hungary with limited sovereignty in international relations. After the transition in Hungary and the

violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, Hungarian–Bosnian relations re-emerged. Hungary was among the first to recognise BiH's independence in April 1992 and subsequently contributed to peacekeeping forces. Hungarian engineering corps were a core unit in the reconstruction of the Old Bridge of Mostar—a symbolic event in multiple ways. After decades of low-intensity relations, in the mid-2010s Hungarian politics refreshed its interest in the country, to the extent of labelling it an 'honorary neighbour' in 2024, despite the absence of a shared border. This renewed regional activism has employed multiple means, some of which we briefly outline below.

INSTRUMENTS OF SOFT POWER

We group the instruments of Hungarian interest representation in the Western Balkans—and within it in Bosnia and Herzegovina—into three broad categories. Other typologies are possible, but we consider the following to be the most important domains. As noted earlier, for Hungary the region has traditionally—and in the recent past as well—appeared above all as a security question. At times the region itself posed a security risk (the Yugoslav wars), while at other times a transit/buffer function dominated discussions of security (the Ottoman expansion, the 'migration crisis'). The second domain is economic relations, which can likewise be interpreted in historical perspective. From at least the nineteenth century, Hungary's relative economic development granted economic actors from the Carpathian Basin comparative advantages in the Balkans. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, these developmental differences re-emerged in some bilateral relations. Third, we should mention the political field, where Hungarian involvement in Balkan affairs also has a long pedigree—dating back to the Middle Ages—and which regained momentum with the region's re-fragmentation into small states.

Security deployments and border governance

Hungary is not a military great power, yet within the region—including in Bosnia and Herzegovina—it can be considered a significant security actor. Since the 1990s, security has remained a central element of Hungary's Balkans policy. Initially this was due to the armed conflicts accompanying the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and later the migration crisis generated a new security environment. In both contexts, the Hungarian government undertook substantial tasks.

In peacekeeping, sizeable Hungarian contingents have been serving in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo as part of international forces, consistent with the region's role in Hungarian security perceptions. In 2025, roughly one-third of EUFOR Althea troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina were from Hungary, and in Kosovo's KFOR mission Hungary ranked a distinguished third/fourth by troop numbers. From the early 2020s, Hungary's role has been visible not only in troop contributions but also in mission leadership, which the Hungarian government has framed as a desirable, strategically significant objective. Hungary has leveraged visible command roles and troop contributions to cultivate influence and access. In Kosovo, a Hungarian major general commanded KFOR between October 2021 and October 2022—the mission's first Hungarian commander—supported by sustained Hungarian contributions (About Hungary 2021). In BiH, Hungary led EUFOR Althea in 2024—a high-profile year noted by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence and international/official outlets—with follow-on senior posts (Chief of Staff in 2025; Deputy Commander from 2026) also signalled (About Hungary 2025).

Following the 2015 'migration crisis', the question of irregular migration has occupied a central place in Hungarian politics, extending well beyond narrowly defined security policy. The defence of Hungary's southern border and the associated narratives have been everyday experiences in Hungary over the past decade (Pap–Reményi 2017). Because the migration wave reached Hungary from Southeastern Europe, the region also became an important theatre in the fight against irregular migration. Hungary has supported regional physical border securitisation (e.g., provision of barbed wire) and joint border patrols, aligning with domestic security narratives and cultivating ties with like-minded governments (for example, in North Macedonia and Serbia) (About Hungary 2019; Hungary Today 2021).

These security instruments provide agenda-setting visibility disproportionate to aggregate military power and align with the Hungarian government's internal emphasis on order and sovereignty. At the same time, Hungary's significant role—particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina—has also provoked negative reactions, especially as selectivity and a preference for the Serb entity over the Federation of BiH or the state-level government have become more evident in Hungarian Bosnia policy (Klix 2025).

Economic relations

Hungary's economic presence in the Western Balkans has steadily strengthened over the past decade. Bilateral trade data—based on figures from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office³—show significant growth. In the early 2020s, Hungary was the region's fourth largest EU trading partner (Eurostat 2021). Aggregating the Western Balkan countries together with Croatia, the region would rank as Hungary's tenth most important trading partner, ahead of France. Hungary's external trade moreover shows a substantial surplus. Serbia stands out among partners, but the volume of trade has been growing with all countries in the region. This is also true for Bosnia and Herzegovina, although the base was extremely low. Hungary ranks among notable partners for both imports and exports, but BiH's share in Hungarian exports remains small. In 2024, Hungary was the tenth largest importer to, and the twelfth most important export market for, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Conversely, for Hungary, Bosnia is only the 37th largest export market—an asymmetry indicating that, in purely economic terms, the relationship is more significant for BiH. Foreign direct investment remains comparatively limited, further strengthening the inference that politico-strategic rather than purely commercial-economic motives drive the high-salience engagement.

Hungary has also built institutional channels for economic engagement across the Western Balkans, supporting export promotion and investment. One of the few regional offices of the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency was opened in Belgrade, reflecting the importance of the region in Hungarian trade policy. The agency helps to increase Hungary's growing investment activity in the region. This trend extends to Bosnia and Herzegovina, even if Hungary's FDI stock in BiH remains modest relative to Serbia and Croatia.

Crucially for BiH, Hungary launched a €35 million SME support scheme in Republika Srpska in 2022 (with grants of up to €25,000 for Hungarian-produced equipment), later reported as extended/expanded, and combined this with a state-backed Eximbank loan of around €110 million to the RS at the end of 2022 (N1 2022; Joób 2022). While this instrument signals Hungarian interest representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it openly focuses on one entity—raising sensitive questions in a post-war state. The programme has a precedent in Vojvodina, where the allocation of funds prominently involved ties to the Hungarian nation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, there is no significant Hungarian minority, so the linkage between economic incentives and ethnic kin policy does not apply. This makes Hungary's Bosnia policy somewhat different from its approaches to other neighbouring states (from Slovenia to Romania), where ethnic Hungarians simultaneously constitute an important goal and instrument of bilateral relations.

³ https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/kkr/en/kkr0007.html

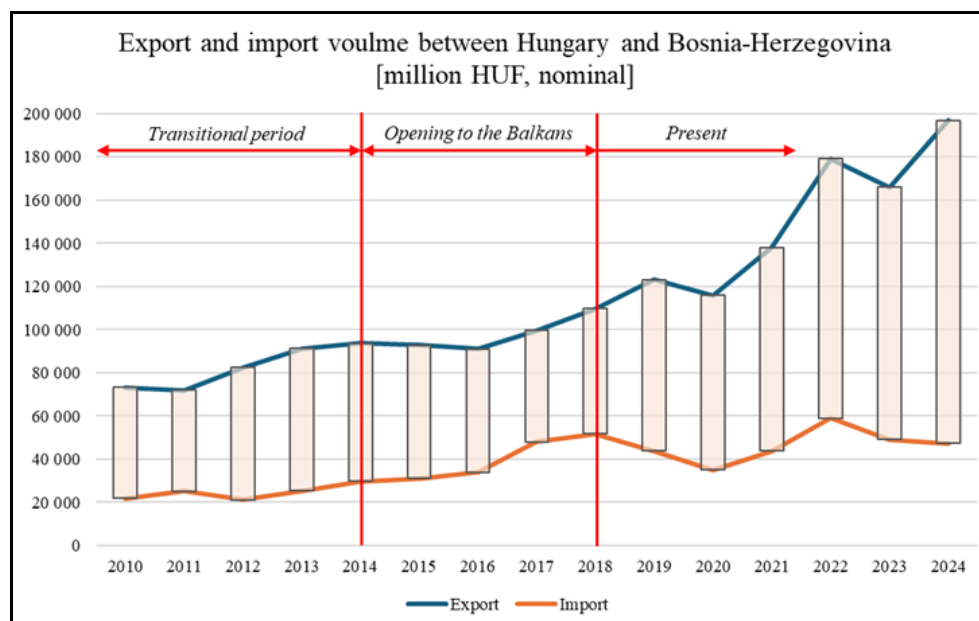


Figure 1: Trade relations of Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina compared to the basic changes in Hungarian Balkans policy (edited by the authors).

Political links

Hungary pairs advocacy for EU enlargement with close ties to regional leaders (e.g., in RS and Serbia) and with other like-minded politicians and parties in North Macedonia and Slovenia. The opening act for excellent relations was the settling of historical antagonisms between Hungary and Serbia; following Vučić's rise to power in 2014, two like-minded leaders elevated bilateral ties to unprecedented levels (Drajić 2020).

Bosnia and Herzegovina, both economically and politically, long remained below the radar for Hungarian policy. From the late 2010s, it appeared more frequently in the news, and from the early 2020s the intensity of bilateral relations perceptibly increased: the number of official meetings slowly grew, and Hungarian politicians commented on the country more often. Selectivity has also been observable since the early 2020s. Statements regarding Bosnian Serbs are predominantly positive, whereas references to Bosniak actors are often negative. One notable episode was in December 2021, when rhetorical controversies generated frictions in BiH: remarks about 'two million Muslims' by the Hungarian PM triggered cross-party and religious objection in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulting in the cancellation of the already scheduled visit of the Hungarian PM to Sarajevo (Al Jazeera 2021).

Hungary projects conservatism/Christianity/illiberalism as identity pillars in Western Balkans debates, often opposing sanctions and privileging dialogue with contested actors (e.g., former Macedonian prime minister Gruevski or the RS leadership). The approach plays to dual audiences: sympathetic regional elites and EU counterparts observing Hungary's claims to regional brokerage. Financial and political support for Republika Srpska has stood out among the political links in recent years.

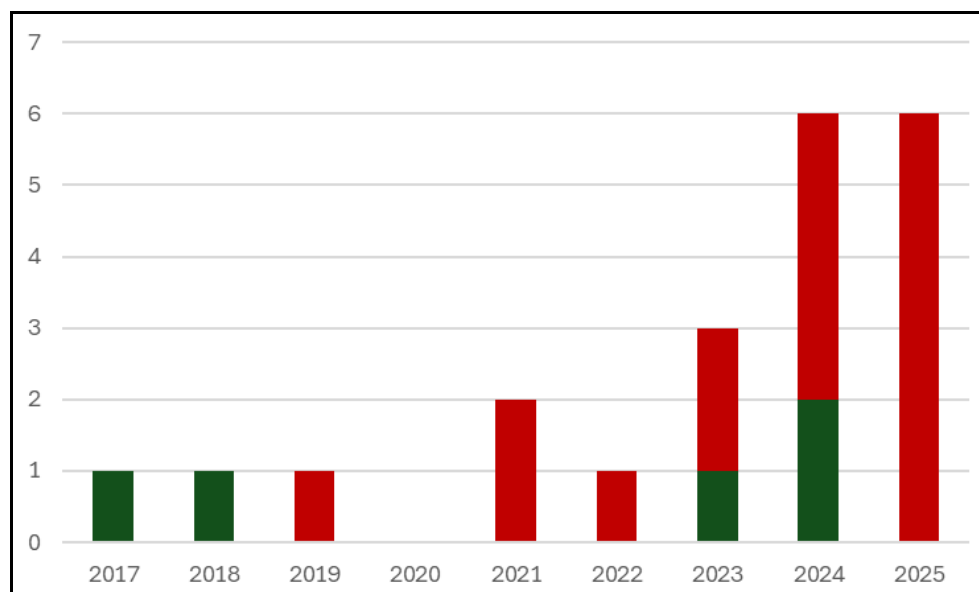


Figure 2: High-level meetings of Hungarian and Bosnia and Herzegovina politicians based on media reports. Green: non-RS politicians; red: RS politicians.

CONCLUSION

Hungary's BiH posture spans supranational roles (EUFOR command; Commissioner portfolios 2019–2024, loud advocacy of enlargement), bilateral high-level visits and meetings (e.g., with RS leadership), and the level of business entities, all scales experiencing increase in recent years.

The most visible strengthening of ties has occurred in the political field, where regular and increasing numbers of meetings serve as good indicators. In addition, trade relations point to growing activity by Hungarian firms. All of this is framed at the supranational level by security policy activism—the most stable articulation of Hungarian interests related to the region.

Hungary's BiH policy coheres with its broader Western Balkans strategy but differs in lacking ethno-national anchors and deep investment logics. Hungary's Carpathian Basin policies are often read through a kin-state/ethnic-minority lens (Transylvania, Vojvodina, etc.). In BiH, the absence of co-ethnic stakes and modest FDI suggest a different logic: status-seeking and preference-shaping through security leadership, selective finance and ideational narratives, rather than territorial or ethnic tropes. In a region without a clear hegemon, Hungary—a small/medium-sized state—deploys security leadership, targeted finance and identity narratives to perform regional power roles.

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SUBJECTIVE ATLAS PRESENTS ALTERNATIVE GEOGRAPHY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: This short article discusses the creation of a new atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented at the conference “30 Years After Dayton: Contemporary Geopolitical, Socioeconomic and Demographic Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Neighbouring Countries” and extends a recent themed intervention in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* on participative design and situated mapping in conflict affected societies (see De Vet, 2025). The *Subjective Atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina* brings together over eighty personal mappings from people living in a country long defined by outsiders—reduced to entities, ethnic categories, and wartime narratives. This atlas counters such simplifications with a polyphonic cartography: visual stories that show how people inhabit, remember, and imagine this place today. Created through participatory workshops across Bosnia and Herzegovina, the contributions use drawing, collage, and photography to create alternative mappings of a conflict affected state. You can watch a film of the launch of the atlas at Vijećnica here: atlas launch. You can watch a film about the making of the atlas here: atlas making.

Key words: Participatory mapping; arts-based methods; trauma-informed research; conflict affected societies.

INTRODUCTION

This short article discusses the creation of a new atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented at the conference “30 Years After Dayton: Contemporary Geopolitical, Socioeconomic and Demographic Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Neighbouring Countries” and extends a recent themed intervention in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* on participative design and situated mapping in conflict affected societies (see De Vet, 2025).

Heartfelt, familiar, local, accessible, difficult, maybe sad and yet maybe joyful, maps in our atlas are variously collections, inventories, collages, gazetteers of personal objects tied to a story, a memory, or they are hand-drawn maps using a soft felt-tip pen, pastel crayon, or coloured pencil, making marks on the sort of everyday paper that you might write a shopping list on, or use to load a printer. Intimate and at the same time geopolitical artworks about life and landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the maps emerge from friendly mapping workshops of thirty or more people, doodling, cutting and gluing scraps of card, listening to music and eating burek, or pita. Rather than offering a fixed or objective account, these situated mappings aim to feel the country—through the materialities of war-damaged buildings, the taste of homemade juices, and the joy of small acts of kindness. In a landscape where trauma lingers and political inertia persists, this publication opens space for critical imagination. It invites us to see Bosnia and Herzegovina not as divided, but as a layered place of entangled histories and resilient futures—mapped from within.

The significance of making maps together in this collaborative way was a powerful act for project participants:

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“Within the Bosnian context what does that mean to make a map that reflects on the war and how this conglomerates into a thing that we all love and is also very broken and full of hope and possibility and to map that out into something that is outside the realm of words was a really liberating exercise and it was so beautiful to see that my companions have completely different perspectives and this fear that most of us had of not doing a good map or not being able to communicate our opinion was just dismantled in such a beautiful way and it was a labour of love in a sense and just entirely wild concepts of perceiving things, and I was like this is really cool I could also perceive things in this way and this is going to bring me as a local even further.”

—**Anela Dumonjić, project participant**

The atlas is published in both English and Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian (BCS) and is available in bookshops in Bosnia and Herzegovina. You can also get your own copy of the atlas via the website of the publisher Subjective Editions for €27.50 (Subjective Atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina — Subjective Editions) and a PDF version of the book is also available for €6.00 (Subjective e-Atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina — Subjective Editions).

WHAT IS A SUBJECTIVE ATLAS?

Created through participatory mapping workshops held in Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and Vitez, the personal maps in the new *Subjective Atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina* use drawing, collage, and photography to capture how people inhabit, remember, and imagine their places and landscapes today.

“Creative approaches have the power to serve as a pathway for peacebuilding. Imaginative content such as this atlas is built in order to propel dialogue, transform public opinion, elevate underrepresented voices, and inspire hope, intercultural understanding, and cooperation among people living in post-conflict and divided societies. By combining such novel visual storytelling with historical dialogue and memory, witnessing, and intercultural cooperation, PCRC [Post-Conflict Research Center] aims to produce and promote programmes, content, and works that represent or advocate acts of justice.”

—**Velma Šarić, founder and president of the Post-Conflict Research Center**

Working with two NGOs, Sarajevo-based Post-Conflict Research Center and Subjective Editions in Brussels, the project to build a new atlas brought together more than 80 young people from across Bosnia and Herzegovina to create their own personal maps of everyday life and memories of a country too often defined by outsiders.

“I would like to say how much I enjoyed working on this project. I love being creative, and sometimes you just need to process heavy topics through art. I often think about those days when we were drawing and cutting paper.”

—**Amila Čandić, project participant**

“With every page, I discover aspects of Bosnia that I (and I imagine many others) tend to overlook in daily life. Yet when I see them laid out so thoughtfully, my first reaction is, “Oh yes, I’ve never noticed that, but it’s so Bosnian!” It will leave a lasting impression on everyone involved—and many beyond.”

—**Melisa Sinić, project participant**

The atlas was recently launched at Vijećnica (Sarajevo City Hall) to coincide with other events to mark the 30-year anniversary of the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the ‘Dayton Agreement’, which was initialled in Dayton, Ohio, on 21 November 1995. During the launch event at Vijećnica, **Samir Avdić, mayor of Sarajevo**, said:

“Today, the city hall once again becomes a symbol of meeting, dialogue and common reflection. We are proud that Sarajevo has the honour of hosting young authors whose

works show the power of creativity and hope for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their drawings, maps, and photographs remind us that peace is not only the absence of conflict, but also a space that we must constantly build anew.”

The agreement, which was re-signed ceremonially in Paris on 14 December 1995, ended the three-and-a-half-year-long war in Bosnia. It separated Bosnia and Herzegovina into two ethnically-defined entities, known as Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine and Republika Srpska, creating a complicated political structure and legislation that recognises three constituent ethnic groups and seventeen national minorities. The peace agreement brought an end to the 1992 to 1995 war in Bosnia, yet it cemented divisions and maps assisted in this ontological process that David Campbell (1999) once called ‘Apartheid Cartography’.

Our collective mapmaking in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to empower young people and to provide skills and resources to spread a culture of peace, thinking beyond ethnic division as a geographical entry point into the state and its landscape (see e.g. Laketa, 2019). It is this mission and the unique cartographic context—defined, divided, and shaped by the map—that this short article, and the large collection of maps it is based upon, is formed and emerges in a ‘country gutted by war and neoliberal transition... at the expense of both human and non-human forms of life’ (see Kurtović, 2022: no PN).

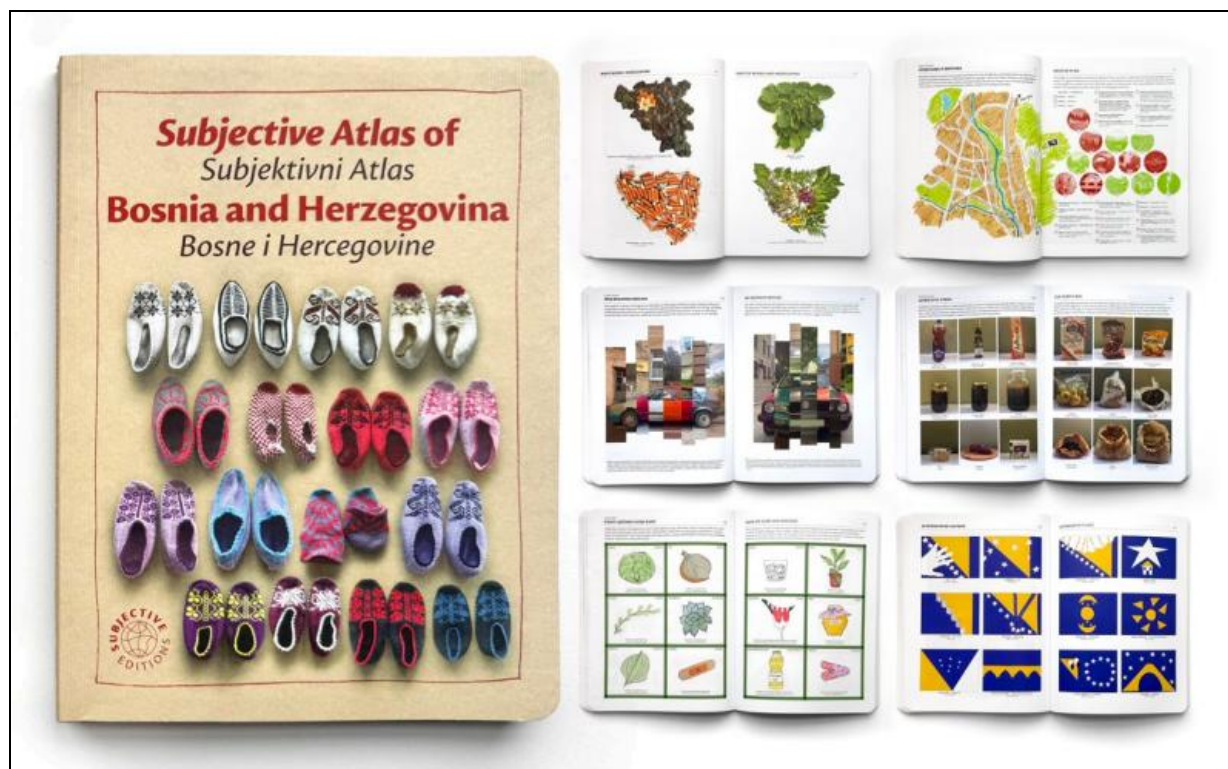


Figure 1. Atlas front cover and a selection of contributions. Credit: Riding, J. & De Vet, A. (eds.) (2025). *Subjective Atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina / Subjektivni Atlas Bosne i Hercegovine*. Brussels: Subjective Editions.

WHAT IS A MAP?

A map and its production is normally controlled and distributed through strict norms and visual discourses that shape our world. There is a direct link between the map and realities on the ground through drawing borders, and maps are objects which should be questioned and contextualised. Maps in our reading, limit aesthetic and affective experiences of place, and we inhabit certain geographical

narratives in the maps we use. For this reason, the reading of the map in our project is not a technical reading, but a cultural and political one.

Through a range of mappings in a variety of sites, the atlas records spatial knowledge in careful, novel, and artistic ways. It aims to challenge dominant modes of map production and creates space for alternative ways of doing academic research. The process of making a map can activate and articulate locally anchored knowledge and experiences.

The participatory and personal visual stories in our atlas reveal landscapes that lie behind fabrications: political, territorial, cartographic. It shares alternative maps that challenge dominant power structures. They show that maps can be an excellent graphic tool for non-linear storytelling. Yet what is more, their visualisation, their design, might not only be concerned with final results, but also the conditions of their making: how can maps be produced and imagined, and by who? Questions of methodology, transparency and the positionality of the map-maker are key to this collaborative project, and we want to celebrate map-making methods that foster shared authorship and collective belonging to a place.

Yet it is the map that traditionally gives borders a certain legitimacy in international law. This is referred to as the power of maps by geographers and relates to a long-held popular belief that a map objectively represents space. In our new atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, you will see that we subvert the traditional map, showing the reader a series of human interactions with the landscape by mapping the everyday entanglements of places and people. These maps are created by lots of hands, and they do not provide an objective view, or an accurate representation of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the contrary, one map looks like a cat clawing at the lines drawn across the country thirty years ago, while others depict heart-shaped collections of cigarette butts and local flora. Collectively they show that a country is more than its outline, its borders, both internal and external.

WHAT IS AN ATLAS?

An atlas in its simplest definition, is a collection of maps in book form. Atlases more often than not visually code a place from the view of an outsider, producing distant and dislocated representations of a place. The author of the atlas proposes a certain view usually at the expense of situated knowledges. And these top-down geographical representations shape and reproduce worldviews. Subjective atlases do something different. Using a participatory approach, subjective atlases challenge dominant views and counter-map the landscape from within. In creating a new atlas of the country Bosnia and Herzegovina we wanted to think beyond the geographical language of division, and conversely and interestingly we use maps to do this. In short, we are using the same cartographic tools to deconstruct the division that cartography has helped to engineer.

Yet, how do you make an atlas of the country Bosnia and Herzegovina so that it represents a range of voices and perspectives? Or indeed, how did we make an atlas of all of this country which has long been imagined as divided and not indeed just one entity?

We believe that in order for maps to represent a multitude of factors, they need to come into being through the work of a multitude of map-makers, and a way to do this is through participatory subjective mapping workshops. It is in plurality that we can encounter the many different ways of relating to places and can stimulate and centre multiple local understandings of a landscape. We sought to employ the novel methodology of participatory mapping and atlas making with the aim of utilising it as a tool for positive change.

Our collectively produced atlas is not meant to be an authoritative compendium, rather it is meant to force the viewer to look again at the landscapes of Bosnia and Herzegovina in peacetime. The bottom-up approach challenges dominant ways of representing nations and de-mystifies mapmaking, arguing that the politics of mapping lie not only in what one maps, but also in how one maps.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SUBJECTIVE ATLAS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA?

The mappings that I highlight in this section are part of our atlas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and are a slice of inquiry taken to reveal how our atlas engages deeply with the traumatic, material and environmental legacies of war and genocide. Mila Panić for example shows how landmines and landmine contamination remains an unresolved issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a contribution to the atlas from her hometown, Brčko. Another contributor, Anita Karabašić explores the urgent public health crisis that is developing in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to proximity of heavy industries to heavily populated areas in a mapping of Zenica, noting international exploitation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's loose regulations on diffuse emissions, a complex state structure, and the absence of environmental laws and policies.

Moving from the scale of a city to the intimate space of the home, from an old family album, Saša Tatić selected significant days from his childhood, focusing on those that capture his family house in Srbac in the background. They reveal the unfinished, raw state of the house during that time. As the years passed and the house remained unchanged, Tatić created a new series, revisiting the same frames. This juxtaposition serves as testament to a prolonged period of collective economic stagnation in Bosnia and Herzegovina for Tatić. Enes Žuljević takes this juxtaposition a step further, and creates collages of Mostar, where for the artist, ideologies, heritage, religion, and nationalistic narratives constantly compete for space in the landscape. Another artist, Igor Sovilj maps the growing use of contemporary artistic practices as activists' primary forms of expression. Sovilj participated in most of the performances or knew the people who organised them personally, as he is actively involved in the local activist scene in Prijedor. Together these artistic performances provide insights into the state of human rights and freedoms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to Sovilj.

Moving from bodily activism in sites of violence to the very materialities of such violence in the landscape, Ismar Ćirkinagić identified, gathered, and preserved plants from the sites of mass graves across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ćirkinagić hopes to present elements of new life that appear in places where lives have been abruptly cut short. These plants are the first to grow upon disturbed earth with nutrients from the rapid deposition of bodies enabling the grave site to become a necroecological island. Continuing in this vein, entangled in the soil beneath the surface, a selection of personal effects recovered from mass graves hold the last traces of identity and existence for Ziyah Gafić. He has catalogued thousands of items, hoping that someone might recognize the remnants of their loved ones. The images transform the painful process of identification into a powerful artistic statement.

These selected mappings from our new collectively created *Subjective Atlas of Bosnia Herzegovina* are a slice of inquiry taken through the atlas to reveal the traumatic, material and environmental legacies of war and genocide in the landscapes of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

DISCUSSION

There are maps in our atlas that are what you might call political and reveal the frustration that many citizens feel today in the country. Importantly, the new atlas does not deny the conflict affected present, and the experiences of citizens during an endless transition era, marked by ethno-nationalism, mass unemployment, nepotism, corruption, and brain drain, with young people who have inherited trauma from older generations being some of the hardest hit. Yet what is also present in our atlas are stories that you might not have encountered, as maps here go further than defining this place only in terms of war and its aftermath. There are acts of solidarity that depict a collective desire to reimagine the country and move beyond the decades-long political impasse. Together these personal maps remember the traumatic past, acknowledge the difficult present, and hope for a better future.

The atlas' 192 pages contain a unique collection of maps that portray snippets of Bosnian and Herzegovinian everyday life: the many signs that state the façade of a building is falling down; football graffiti; a collage of iconic Volkswagen Golfs from mark I to III that continue to be repatched and

repaired; a diasporic shopping list of everyday things; a recently cleared minefield; personal collections of crocheted handworks dotted around an apartment; an array of beautifully knitted woollen socks; juices; jams; burek; rakija; and cigarettes. The atlas contains stories about villages where only a few people remain, places inhabited in summer months, and souvenirs, postcards, and photographs sent by family now living abroad to the grandma left behind. Bullet-ridden pockmarked buildings appear alongside mappings of villagers who help each other through small acts of kindness. The contents of a single purple bag, family photo albums, rolling hills, and cemeteries are detailed beside mappings that explore environmental justice and human rights.

The atlas is not a complete story of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It explicitly states on the front cover that this is a subjective story of the country. A focus on the subjective is perhaps uniquely appropriate in a place where the voices of those who experienced war and its aftermath, the traumatic, environmental, and material legacies of conflict, are often missing from reports and studies. We hope the atlas provides a unique representation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that all those who call Bosnia and Herzegovina home, can find a little bit of their home in.

CONCLUSION

The participatory mapping methodology employed in our atlas develops new geographical imaginaries of this deeply divided ‘improvised’ state carved up with the aid of maps in 1995 (see Campbell, 1999; Crampton, 1996; Jeffrey, 2012; Toal and Dahlman, 2011). Making maps together in safe workshops aims to decolonise spaces of geographical knowledge production, moving beyond traditional methodologies deployed to conduct field-based research in conflict affected societies (see Cohen et al, 2011; see also Legg, 2017; Naylor et al, 2018; Noxolo, 2017; Radcliffe, 2017).

Of course, *geographers* have previously explored how maps helped to shape the present-day state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and today the country is divided into two ethnically defined entities due to a peace settlement that rendered a new geographical imaginary and reality (Campbell, 1999; Crampton, 1996; see also Riding, 2015a; Riding 2015b; Riding, 2016; Riding, 2017a; Riding, 2017b; Riding, 2019; Riding, 2020)—the expression of a complete system for the reduction to identity, as Nancy (2000: 145) writes in the chapter *Eulogy for the Mêlée (For Sarajevo, March 1993)*. Bosnia and Herzegovina is in addition governed via an unwieldy consociational tripartite political system overseen by an international community that fetishes ethnicity, entrenching ethnonationalism, corruption, and nepotism (see Gordy, 2015). The internationally implemented, divided context in which our mapping workshops took place shaped our inter-religious and multi-ethnic participatory methodology, which is trauma-informed and develops mapmaking methods to prevent retraumatization.

What is more, *maps* as this article argues visually document how citizens are ‘surviving peace’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Lippman, 2019). The creative and participatory mapping methodology acted as a ‘boundary object’ that enabled new knowledge to emerge during diverse workshops, with the map acting as an important point of reference (Harvey and Chrisman, 1998). Our collective mapping of Bosnia and Herzegovina inter-splices discursive-materialities, words and images in a ‘montage’ of sounds, smells, and tastes with personal memories and objects in landscapes ranging from rural hinterlands to downtown cityscapes (see also Riding and Dahlman, 2022). The mappings presented in this article and in our atlas are natural-cultural human-nonhuman assemblages, collages embracing contradictions that juxtapose mass graves and woollen socks, torture camps and family photograph albums, landmine contamination and strawberry fields. I put forward here participatory mapping as a decolonial geographical method of exploring landscape to research the fragmented materialities of war and genocide as dynamic phenomena, mapping their ongoing traumatic, material and environmental legacies and agencies in the present (see also work on counter-mapping, e.g. Peluso, 1995; body mapping, e.g. Luckett and Bagelman, 2023; Indigenous mapping, e.g. Bryan, 2011; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009; and cuerpo-territorio, e.g. Zaragocin and Caretta, 2020).

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SPATIAL PATTERNS OF VOTING PREFERENCES IN POST-DAYTON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: Since the first democratic elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990, voting has often been described as resembling a census, alluding to the strong correspondence between electoral outcomes and the ethnic composition of the population. These patterns were further reinforced in the post-Dayton period, both as a legacy of the war and due to a political system built on ethnic power-sharing. Concurrently, political fragmentation has taken place, resulting in a relatively large number of parties actively shaping the political landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. This study analyzes electoral results for 18 political subjects across the last three general election cycles (2014, 2018, and 2022). To examine the spatial patterns of voting preferences, municipal-level electoral data were used and compared with ethnic composition, levels of urbanization, and educational structure of the population. The aim of the research was to determine the extent to which electoral outcomes are genuinely linked to official demographic statistics. A high degree of correlation between voting preferences and ethnic composition was confirmed, while particular attention was also given to certain minor anomalies, which were primarily observed in urban areas.

Key words: electoral geography, Dayton Peace Accords, post-war democracy, ethno-political landscape, spatial voting patterns.

INTRODUCTION

The political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been shaped by long-standing historical processes of ethnic differentiation and institutional segmentation, which, from the Middle Ages up to the contemporary period, have produced a specific multicultural social structure. Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, as the three constituent peoples, represent the fundamental actors in political life, and their mutual relations have strongly influenced both the dynamics of the 1992–1995 war and the post-conflict state-building processes. In this context, ethnicity and nationalism remain central determinants of the political arena, while the power-sharing model, grounded in classical consociational theory, has become a key organizational principle of the post-war institutional order and party system (Zdeb, 2019). The Dayton Peace Agreement not only ended the armed conflict but also institutionalized the territorial and ethnodemographic changes produced by the war. The implementation process of Annex VII, which concerned the return of displaced persons, evolved into a struggle for territorial control among local political elites, making territory a resource of political power (Dahlman & O'Tauthail, 2005). The inter-entity boundary line, particularly in the case of Republika Srpska, further consolidated ethnically homogenized areas, while administrative and political mechanisms were used to preserve the demographic relations established by the war (Remenyi, 2011). Such spatial institutionalization of

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ethnicity provides the foundation for understanding the territorial patterns of electoral behavior in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Contemporary literature on the political development of Bosnia and Herzegovina largely starts from the thesis of the ethnocratic character of the system. Electoral contests and party organization are structured along ethnic lines, with a high degree of within-group homogeneity and a low level of integration at the state level (Hulsey & Stjepanović, 2017), as voters very rarely take the risk of nontraditional voting (Keil & Perry, 2015). The electoral system, shaped through a compromise between political elites and international actors, is not a neutral institutional framework, but an active factor in reproducing ethnic divisions and discriminatory arrangements, as evidenced by debates on the need for constitutional and electoral reforms in line with European human rights standards (Arapović & Brljavac, 2013). Critiques of the consociational model further emphasize that existing rules favor established ethno-national parties and limit incentives for interethnic compromise (Hulsey, 2016). However, the dominant interpretation of ethnicity as an almost exclusive determinant of political behavior faces certain empirical nuances. Research shows that electoral systems incorporating centripetal elements can encourage cross-ethnic and non-nationalist voting, particularly in contexts of high ethnic fragmentation, whereas high polarization has the opposite effect (Kapidžić, 2014). Moreover, analyses of individual electoral cycles suggest that, although ethno-territorial segmentation is stable and strong, there are moments in which multiethnic candidates achieve significant success, opening space for new dynamics within the rigid institutional framework (Raos, 2022; Kapidžić, 2023). Nevertheless, such breakthroughs remain constrained by the structural factors of the system, as attempts to replace nationalist actors with civic alternatives often end in prolonged post-election crises and the weakening of alternative parties (Hulsey, 2010; Andjelić, 2018; Hulsey & Keil, 2019).

Beyond the ethnic dimension, an increasing number of studies indicate the existence of additional social cleavages with a territorial component. The urban–rural divide proves relevant for understanding variations in support for left- and right-leaning parties, with these differences being more pronounced in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina than in Republika Srpska (Karić & Aydin, 2021). In Republika Srpska, where almost all relevant parties adopt strong nationalist positions, ideological differences are harder to differentiate, whereas in the Federation, ethnic polarization remains a strong contextual factor (Remenyi et al., 2022), particularly among the Croat electorate, where there is concern about circumventing their electoral will (Zdeb, 2016; Pepić & Kasapović, 2021). An additional dimension revealed by previous studies concerns the influence of campaign communication and candidate profiles on specific voter groups, particularly younger electorates. As highlighted by Arslanagić and Mitrović (2022), the type and content of political messaging, along with candidates' educational backgrounds, significantly shape voting preferences among youth. These findings suggest that spatial voting patterns are not one-dimensional along ethnic lines, but also result from additional intersections of socio-economic and institutional factors. In this sense, an electoral geography approach provides an analytical framework that goes beyond classical consociational models. Rather than viewing electoral outcomes solely through aggregated sociodemographic variables, the emphasis is placed on spatial dependence and neighborhood effects. Empirical analyses show that party support in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not only a function of local characteristics, but also of spatial spillover from neighboring municipalities, with ethnic composition, sectoral employment and the educational profile of the population having indirect effects on electoral outcomes (Remenyi et al., 2023). This confirms the existence of regional party strongholds and stable territorial bases of support, which are reproduced through spatial interactions.

The fragmentation of the party system further complicates this picture. High proportionality and built-in ethnic balance in the electoral design encourage party splintering and the emergence of new actors, while corruption and clientelistic networks contribute to unstable coalitions and weak political accountability (Hogić, 2020). Despite intensive international intervention and attempts to transform the political environment through electoral democracy (Manning, 2004), ethno-national elites have retained key levers of power, slowing down processes of democratization and institutional consolidation (Keil & Perry, 2016). This context produces the paradox of 'ethnopolitics prisoners', in which voters, although

often dissatisfied with government performance, remain within ethnically defined voting patterns due to the perception that alternatives have no real chance of success (Mujkić & Hulsey, 2010), a phenomenon common even in the context of local elections (Kapidžić, 2016; Mijatović & Matić, 2025). From the perspective of spatial analyses, these processes do not manifest solely as abstract institutional determinants but as concrete territorial patterns that can be mapped and quantified. Analyses at the municipal and city level show that the territorial distribution of voter preferences reflects the complex politico-territorial organization of the state, while also providing opportunities to identify patterns that go beyond pure ethnic segmentation (Mirić et al., 2015). Therefore, the study of spatial patterns of electoral outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not merely a technical issue of statistical modeling, but a theoretically important contribution to understanding the relationship between territory, identity, and political power in post-conflict societies.

Ultimately, the analysis of the spatial dimensions of electoral behavior enables a more precise understanding of how institutional design, historical legacy, and contemporary social cleavages together shape the political geography of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It simultaneously confirms the centrality of the ethnic factor while also opening space for the identification of additional, often overlooked, territorial and socio-economic variables that contribute to understanding the complexity of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian electoral landscape. This study aggregates results from the last three cycles of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina to identify spatial patterns of support for the parties that shape political processes in the country. Such insight is intended to provide a better understanding of the complexity of political relations in a post-conflict, multiethnic society through the lens of the spatial determinants of democratic processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study encompasses the results of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the years 2014, 2018, and 2022, focusing on the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country's highest legislative body. Since the research primarily targets the spatial dimension of electoral outcomes, the analysis was conducted using data on voter preferences at the municipal and city level. These data were obtained from the official website of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (izbori.ba). The collected data were systematized and processed in two phases, in order to identify spatial patterns and potential shifts in electoral support across the observed election cycles.

In the first phase of the analysis, the percentage of votes per municipality/city was examined for all political parties or organization that held the status of a parliamentary party in at least one of the three electoral cycles. A total of 18 such parties were identified. Although some parties participated in elections as part of coalitions with other (usually smaller) parties, it was assessed that this did not significantly affect the outcomes of the analysis. It is important to note that the descriptive analysis was based on the average electoral result for each party across the three cycles. Meaning, that the number of votes of a party was first compared to the total number of votes of all parties (so a percentage was calculated) during one cycle, and then the same process was repeated for the other two cycles as well. Afterwards, an average value was calculated from those three election results and used as a final number for analysis and later on map creation. For this purpose, a cartographic method was employed, which most clearly illustrates the spatial patterns of support each party enjoys among the electorate. However, for practical reasons, the study presents cartographic representations only for parties that most clearly reflect ethno-political spatial clustering. In the second phase of the analysis, demographic data at the municipal and city level were incorporated, sourced from the 2013 population census (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016). The variables considered included ethnic composition, degree of urbanization, and the proportion of highly educated residents. Subsequently, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for each political party to evaluate the extent to which electoral outcomes are associated with demographic indicators.

RESULTS

The following analysis presents the results of the last three general election cycles (2014, 2018, and 2022) and provides a more detailed examination of 18 different political organizations (16 individual parties and 2 coalitions) over this period. The parties were selected based on their relevance in terms of electoral performance in at least two of the three cycles or all three. In the text that follows, parties will be referred to by their abbreviations.

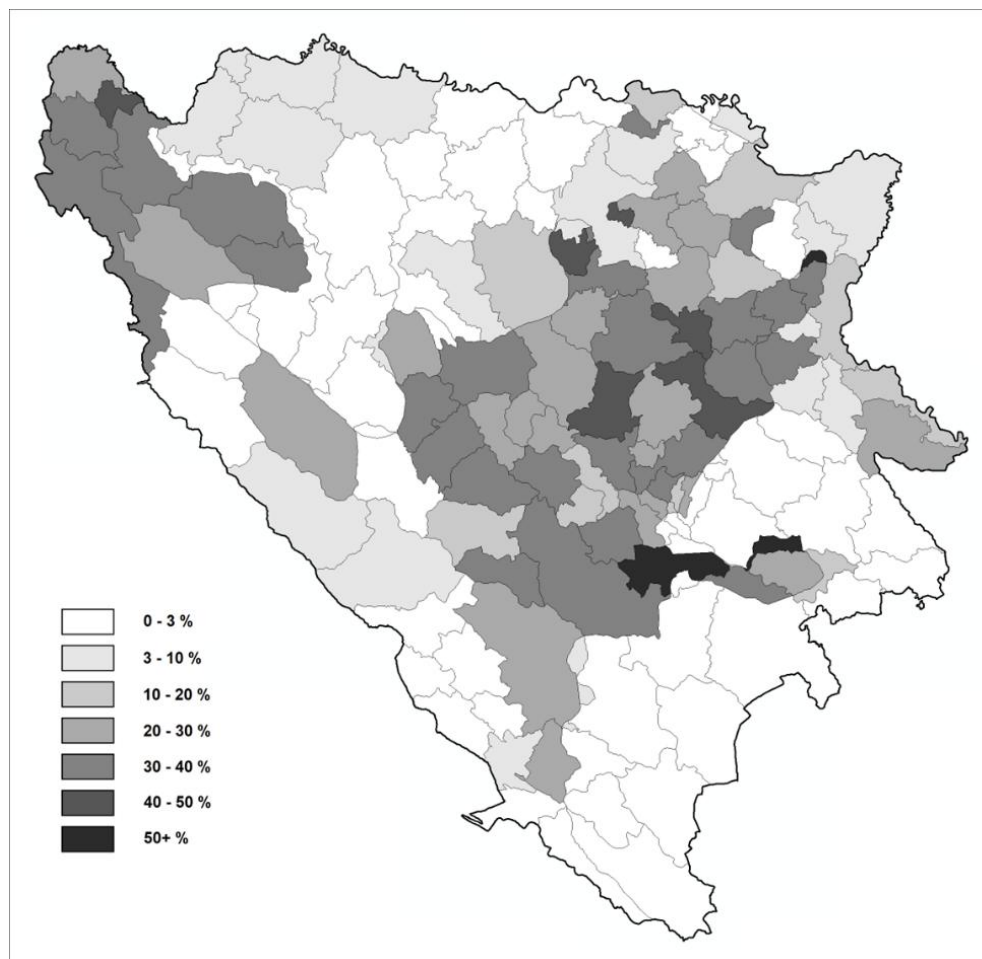


Figure 1. Mean share of votes by cities/municipalities for SDA in general elections 2014-2022.

During this period, **Party of Democratic Action** (Stranka demokratske akcije – SDA), a right-wing party, consistently received the highest number of votes nationwide, although its support gradually declined from the peak in 2014 to 2022. It is also the most popular party in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and among ethnic Bosniak voters. Looking at cumulative results, aside from its correlation with predominantly Bosniak areas, SDA had the highest percentage of voters in municipalities with a majority rural population (including several entirely rural municipalities) and among populations with lower levels of education. Geographically, its strongest support is observed in municipalities created as a direct result of the Dayton Peace Agreement (by splitting of pre-war municipalities), such as Trnovo FBiH, Teočak, Doboj Istok and Pale FBiH, and in municipalities surrounding the country's largest cities (e.g. Kakanj and Živinice), with some exceptions. SDA is also the Federation-headquartered party with the highest vote share in the entity of Republika Srpska.

Unlike SDA, **Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Stranka za Bosnu i Hercegovinu – SBiH) experienced a significant decline in voter support since the 2006 elections, particularly after 2010, with a slight recovery in 2022 largely due to a change in party leadership. The voting patterns of SBiH and

SDA are similar, as the parties are ideologically close and SBiH originated from SDA. However, due to its lower overall popularity, correlations are more difficult to identify. Its largest support was in the rural municipality of Čelić, which was created as a result of the Dayton Agreement, followed by similarly characterized Sapna. Kladanj, the party's third-largest voting base, is a pre-war municipality, but shares similar characteristics with the others. SBiH had no presence in the Republika Srpska.

Democratic Front (Demokratska fronta – DF) is the first party in this analysis that is at least formally left-leaning, but after the 2018 general election it emerged as SDA's strongest and most loyal coalition partner, subsequently shifting ideologically towards the right. Compared to the previous parties, DF received its highest vote share in moderately urbanized and areas with better-educated population, particularly in municipalities with a Bosniak majority. However, this support was not concentrated in the most urbanized municipalities themselves, but in the surrounding areas, most notably in the peripheral municipalities of Sarajevo, with its largest share coming from Vogošća, as well as in municipalities around Tuzla. DF had no presence in the Republika Srpska.

Among all the parties analyzed, **Alliance for Better Future** (Savez za bolju budućnost – SBB) experienced the most significant decline. It emerged as a relevant political party in 2010, but by 2022 it had lost all of its seats in both the national and federal parliaments, retaining only a few seats in two of the ten cantons. In its early history, SBB became one of SDA's main rivals, but in the following years it frequently alternated between fierce opposition to SDA and coalition participation, which is likely the main reason for its recent electoral decline. SBB is a centrist party, drawing the majority of its support from Bosniak voters in central regions of the country, specifically in the Goražde – Sarajevo – Zenica corridor, with lesser support in other majority Bosniak areas. Its strongest support was in the municipalities of Breza and Donji Vakuf, where the party held mayoral positions for extended periods. SBB shows a similar, though slightly stronger, correlation with more educated and urban population compared to DF. It had negligible presence in the Republika Srpska.

People's European Alliance (Narodni evropski savez – NES) is an interesting case because, during the 2014 and 2018 elections, it was divided into two separate parties, NBL and A-SDA, which merged to form NES in early 2021. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, their results are considered together. Both parties were breakaways from SDA. Compared to the previous parties, NES demonstrates the highest regional presence in the Una-Sana Canton, with only marginal support in most other parts of the country. The highest vote share was recorded in the city of Cazin, where the NES president has served as mayor for approximately two decades. Outside of Una-Sana Canton, the largest vote shares were in the Bosnian Podrinje and Zenica-Doboj cantons. Their support correlates primarily with rural, less-educated, Bosniak-majority populations. NES had negligible presence in the Republika Srpska.

Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska partija – SDP) is the second-largest party headquartered in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the oldest party in the country, legally continuing the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has also been the main opposition party to SDA since before the war, although after the 2010 elections it led the ruling coalition as the strongest party. Since that election, SDP lost a considerable number of votes (especially between 2010 and 2014), and even after a modest recovery in 2018, it never regained its 2010 levels of popularity. Unlike the previous parties, SDP performs relatively well in municipalities predominantly inhabited by Croats and Serbs, although the majority of its voters remain Bosniaks. Geographically, its highest vote shares were in the northeastern municipalities of FBiH (Tuzla Canton), the central parts of country (the most industrialized areas), and in Una-Sana Canton. Its support correlates with more educated population and more urbanized areas, but outside Tuzla (and partially Bihać) it is not the leading party in the largest cities. SDP is also by far the second most popular party in Republika Srpska among parties headquartered in Sarajevo.

Our Party (Naša stranka – NS) since its inception, has never entered a coalition with SDA, nor have its most prominent members previously been part of that party, which makes it unique compared to all other parties in this analysis. It is a left-leaning party which, similar to NES, is mostly concentrated in a

single area of the country – in this case, the Sarajevo Canton. Specifically, it is strongest in the most urbanized municipalities with the best educated population within Sarajevo (Centar and Novo Sarajevo). Outside of Sarajevo Canton, it achieved relatively decent results in Una-Sana, Tuzla and Bosnian Podrinje cantons. There was no presence in Republika Srpska. NS shows the strongest correlation, based on its combined national results, with more educated population and more urban, as well as ethnically mixed areas.

People and Justice (Narod i Pravda – NiP) is the first party analyzed so far that did not exist in any form prior to the 2018 elections. It also originated as a breakaway from SDA and is a centre-right party. Unlike most other parties that split from SDA, NiP has never entered a coalition with its former party at the national or federal level. Similar to NS, most of NiP's votes came from Sarajevo Canton; however, while NS was dominant in the central, most urbanized and educated parts of the canton, NiP prevailed in the suburban municipalities (e.g. Ilidža, Ilijaš and Hadžići). In general, there is still a correlation with a more educated and urban majority Bosniak population. Outside of Sarajevo Canton, its largest vote shares were registered in Bosnian Podrinje, most notably in the city of Goražde. It also achieved moderate support in parts of Una-Sana and Tuzla cantons. There was no presence in Republika Srpska.

Trinity (Trojka) is a coalition of SDP, NS and NiP, which in recent years has become a significant political force at all levels of government. Although all three member parties run separately in elections, it is reasonable to consider their electoral results also collectively. Therefore, when a voter casts a ballot for one of these parties, they are effectively also supporting the other two, as the three inevitably form a coalition. Likewise, for the purpose of the analysis, the result data for these parties from the 2014 and 2018 elections was added to a single number. Since 2018, they have also been highly critical of SDA and its partners and have taken active measures to remove them from government at various levels and replace them. Combined, these parties have a total number of votes relatively similar to SDA. Unlike SDA, many of their votes come from more urbanized and areas with more educated population, which are usually ethnically mixed, but still majority Bosniak. The highest vote shares for this coalition are concentrated in the major cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla, as well as their surrounding municipalities. Beyond these areas, they also have significant support in Bosnian Podrinje and parts of Zenica-Doboj, Una-Sana, Herzegovina-Neretva and Central Bosnia cantons.

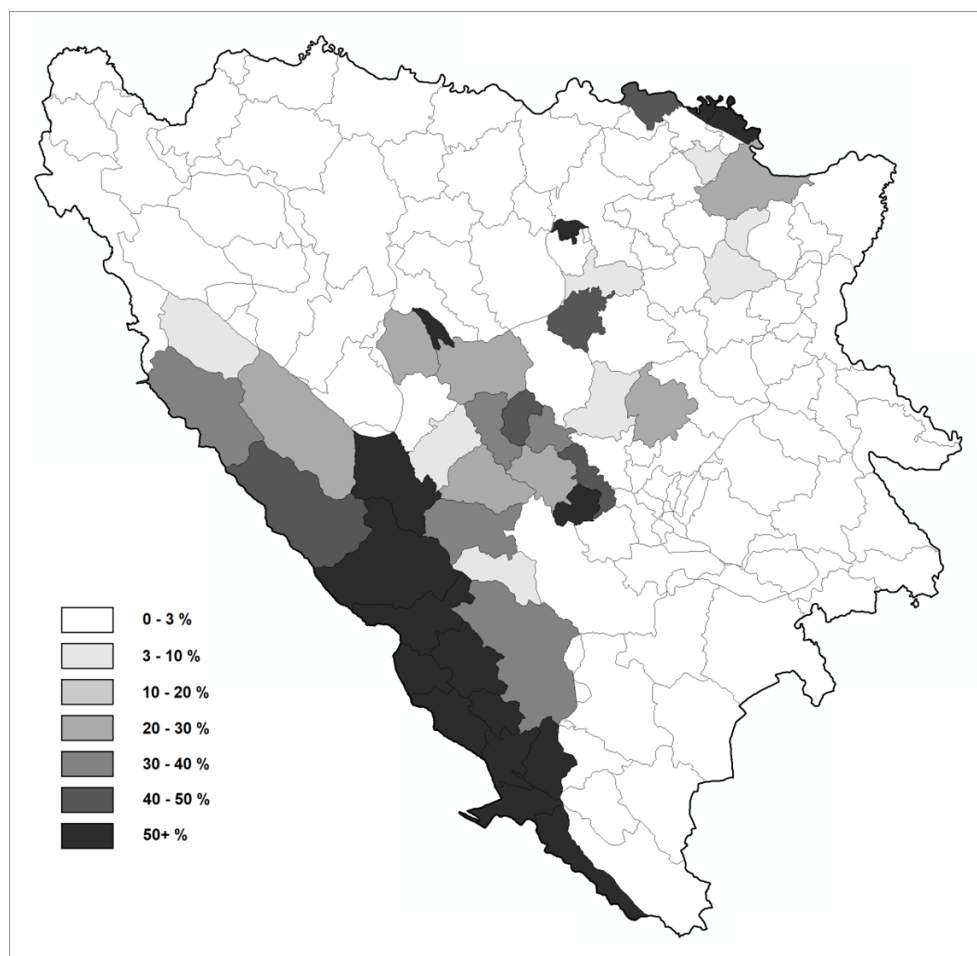


Figure 2. Mean share of votes by cities/municipalities for HDZ in general elections 2014-2022

Croatian Democratic Community (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica – HDZ) has by far been the most dominant party with a Croatian prefix since its formation. Consequently, the Croatian vote share is the most homogenised, with the smallest number of different parties surpassing the electoral threshold in Croat-majority areas. Accordingly, no meaningful correlation with education levels or urbanisation appears within Croat-majority municipalities. However, when these voting results are compared to the country as a whole, the municipalities in which HDZ received the highest vote shares are, interestingly, the second most correlated (after NS) with higher levels of education, while at the same time being the second most correlated with lower levels of urbanisation. This marks the first instance of a significant discrepancy between correlation with higher education and higher urbanisation. The largest vote shares for HDZ were recorded in Herzegovina-Neretva and West Herzegovina cantons. A slightly less dominant performance was observed in more ethnically mixed areas, such as Posavina Canton and Canton 10. Its presence in Republika Srpska was negligible, with the exception of a few municipalities in Posavina region.

Croatian Democratic Community 1990 (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica 1990 – HDZ 1990) is the largest opposition party to HDZ, having split from it in 2005. It performed considerably better in earlier electoral cycles than in those analysed here, where it has become a marginal party in most areas compared to HDZ. However, one region where it continues to receive a similar, and in some municipalities even a higher number of votes than HDZ is Canton 10, located in the southwest around Livno. Outside this area, its largest vote share is recorded in Posavina Canton and municipality of Prozor-Rama in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. In terms of correlation with education and urbanisation levels, the results are similar to those of HDZ, although less pronounced.

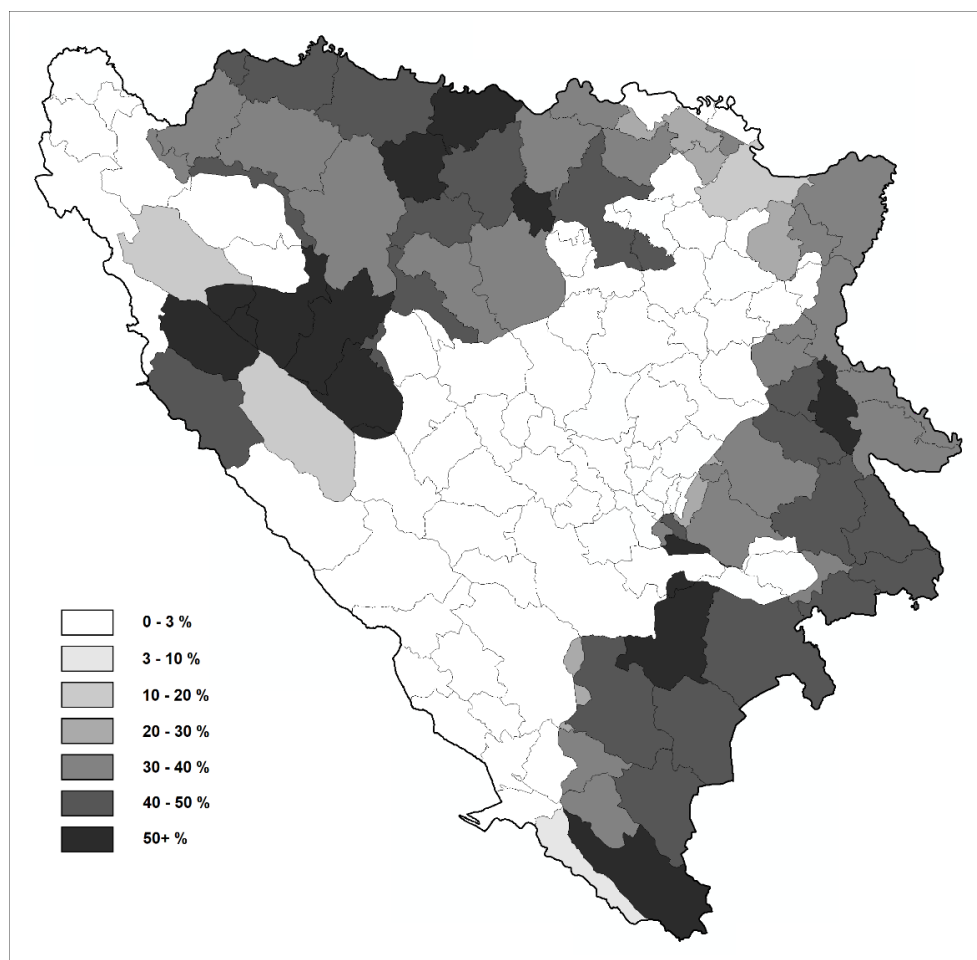


Figure 3. Mean share of votes by cities/municipalities for SNSD in general elections 2014-2022

Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata – SNSD) was by far the largest and most popular party headquartered in Republika Srpska during the research period. Throughout this period, it consistently led the government of this entity. Although it was founded as a left-wing party, over time it evolved into a far-right political force. In terms of geographical distribution, SNSD is considerably more dominant in Republika Srpska than SDA is in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, although internal regional differences remain. Its vote share is higher in the northwestern than in the eastern part of Republika Srpska. Support in the largest cities, such as Banja Luka and Bijeljina, is lower than in rural areas. Due to its overwhelming dominance, however, establishing meaningful correlations with socio-demographic variables is challenging. The party also enjoys support in Serb-majority municipalities within Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (notably in parts of Canton 10 and Una-Sana Canton).

Democratic People's Alliance (Demokratski narodni savez – DNS) is the oldest and longest-standing coalition partner of SNSD (over 25 years), with only the period between 2020 and 2022 spent in opposition to SNSD. The party reached its peak vote share in 2018, but has lost a significant number of voters since then, due to major internal struggles, leadership changes, and its brief period in opposition. Geographically, DNS has decent support across Republika Srpska, with its strongest performance in the far west, particularly in and around the city of Prijedor. The second, less prominent area of support is the municipalities of Istočno Sarajevo. DNS also achieved the second-best results among Serb parties in the Serb-majority areas of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, after SNSD. There is a slight correlation with more educated voters, although this correlation is stronger than that of the other previously analysed Serb parties, and it also maintains support in more rural areas.

After DNS, **Socialist Party** (Socijalistička partija – SP) is the second oldest and longest-standing coalition partner of SNSD, but unlike DNS, it has remained in this coalition continuously in recent years, as reflected in its stable, but stagnant election results. The party is formally left-wing, but like SNSD, it has shifted towards the right. The geographical distribution of its votes is mostly even, with the largest concentration in the Posavina region around Brčko, particularly in Pelagićevo municipality. In terms of correlation, SP shows the strongest association with the least educated and least urban populations among all the analysed parties.

As the major pre-war Serb political party in the country, **Serb Democratic Party** (Srpska demokratska stranka – SDS) remained in power for most of the period at the national and entity levels until 2010 (with several interim SNSD-led governments). Since then, however, it has largely been in opposition at most levels of government. Its vote share has declined substantially in the last two election cycles compared to 2014. In contrast to SNSD, SDS recorded a higher vote share in the eastern half of Republika Srpska than in the northwestern region. Unlike SNSD, however, it had no significant presence in the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is a slight positive correlation between SDS support and higher levels of education and urbanisation across Republika Srpska. The municipalities with the strongest support are located in Eastern Herzegovina, as well as in the regions of Semberija, Posavina and Istočno Sarajevo.

Party of Democratic Progress (Partija demokratskog progresa – PDP) was formed in Republika Srpska, in a manner similar to NS in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a group of independent activists who generally had not previously been members of the ruling parties. Unlike NS, however, it is significantly older and has consistently achieved stronger electoral results. Over the years, it has experienced periods of coalition with SNSD, but for the most part it has remained in opposition. While SDS has traditionally been more popular in the eastern part of Republika Srpska, PDP enjoys stronger support in the northwestern region, particularly in Banja Luka, the city from which all three of its former and current presidents originate. After Banja Luka, PDP records its strongest results in several geographically close, though not neighbouring, municipalities such as Srbac and Kotor Varoš. The party has also had only marginal presence in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In terms of correlation with education and urbanisation levels, the patterns are similar to those observed for SDS.

The coalition **Alliance for Change** (SDS-PDP) has existed even longer than aforementioned Trinity coalition (having been formed prior to the 2014 elections), and is arguably even more cohesive, with fewer instances of non-cooperation at the local level. As such, its cumulative electoral results provide a valuable basis for comparison with those of SNSD. The premise that a vote for one constituent party effectively represents a vote for the other is therefore even more applicable here than in the previously analysed coalition. Geographically, the results are now more evenly distributed between the eastern and northwestern parts of Republika Srpska, although slightly stronger performances are still recorded in the eastern municipalities identified in the SDS analysis. The weakest results are found in the central and northern Podrinje regions, as well as in the far western part of Republika Srpska. With regard to correlations with education and urbanisation, there are somewhat more urban areas than predominantly those that are rural with less educated population. However, due to the overall distribution and number of voters, this pattern is less pronounced than in some previously analysed parties, most notably the majority-Bosniak parties in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this category, the election results of all other smaller parties have been compiled together. If ‘other parties’ were treated as a single political party, it would be one of the largest in the country and the most ethnically diverse. Still, the majority of votes for these parties come from majority Bosniak areas, followed by majority Serb areas, and lastly majority Croat areas. The area of Tuzla Canton and its surroundings (Semberija region in RS) accounts for the largest vote share of other parties, with the most relevant being PDA, SD, and DEMOS. The municipality of Velika Kladuša and the city of Zenica also show a very high vote share, as their mayors come from local parties with little influence beyond those cities. The second-largest vote cluster is the area surrounding Sarajevo Canton. In terms of education,

there is a noticeable correlation with less educated populations as well as with more rural populations, though it is less pronounced.

Aggregated spatial correlations

Based on the previous analysis, which compiled the results of the 2014, 2018 and 2022 general elections and compared them to demographic data from the 2013 census, several key observations can be made regarding the relationship between electoral outcomes and population characteristics in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 1. Education, urbanization and ethnicities as correlates of electoral support by parties

Stat	SDA	HDZ	DF	SBB	SDP	NiP	NS	HDZ1990	A-SDA/NBL/NES	SzBiH	SNSD	SDS	PDP	DNS	SP	FBiH trojka	SDS-PDP	Other parties
Correl. Higher education	-0.22	0.18	0.02	0.06	-0.07	0.14	0.31	0.13	-0.17	-0.18	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.27	0.07	-0.01	-0.14
Correl. Urbanization	-0.08	-0.13	0.22	0.23	0.08	0.29	0.48	-0.06	0.01	-0.06	0.00	0.02	0.01	-0.04	-0.15	0.26	0.02	-0.02
Correl. Bosniaks	0.93	-0.30	0.87	0.79	0.80	0.57	0.42	-0.27	0.45	0.54	-0.67	-0.58	-0.55	-0.49	-0.51	0.84	-0.63	0.36
Correl. Serbs	-0.71	-0.42	-0.69	-0.63	-0.63	-0.42	-0.34	-0.36	-0.31	-0.39	0.93	0.82	0.77	0.71	0.63	-0.65	0.88	-0.21
Correl. Croats	-0.20	0.97	-0.16	-0.15	-0.16	-0.17	-0.11	0.84	-0.14	-0.15	-0.43	-0.37	-0.34	-0.34	-0.26	-0.19	-0.40	-0.19
Correl. Others	0.33	-0.19	0.54	0.55	0.40	0.47	0.73	-0.18	0.21	0.13	-0.37	-0.30	-0.24	-0.29	-0.30	0.60	-0.32	0.41

Based on data: Central Election Commission (izbori.ba)

When considering educational attainment, the correlations are weaker than for ethnic composition, but notable patterns emerge. Parties that are most strongly associated with municipalities where a significant proportion of the population has completed high school or has some level of university education are, in descending order, NS, HDZ, HDZ 1990 and NiP. Conversely, parties that show the weakest correlation with more educated populations include SP, SDA, SBiH and NES. Most Serb-majority parties fall in the middle of the scale, indicating moderate alignment with educational levels.

Table 2. Education and urbanization as correlates of electoral support
(ranking of parties)

Party	Highly educated population	Party	Urbanization rate
NS	0,31	NS	0,48
HDZ	0,18	NiP	0,29
NiP	0,14	SDP-NS-NiP	0,26
HDZ 1990	0,13	SBB	0,23
SDP-NS-NiP	0,07	DF	0,22
SBB	0,06	SDP	0,08
DNS	0,03	SDS	0,02
DF	0,02	SDS-PDP	0,02
SNSD	0,01	NES	0,01
SDS	-0,01	PDP	0,01
SDS-PDP	-0,01	SNSD	0,00
PDP	-0,01	Other parties	-0,02
SDP	-0,07	DNS	-0,04
Other parties	-0,14	SBiH	-0,06
NES	-0,17	HDZ 1990	-0,06
SBiH	-0,18	SDA	-0,08
SDA	-0,22	HDZ	-0,13
SP	-0,27	SP	-0,15

Based on data: Central Election Commission (izbori.ba)

The pattern of urbanisation shows similar trends to education, with correlations being generally smaller than for ethnicity. Parties with the strongest support in more urbanised municipalities include NS, SDP, NiP and SBB, whereas those with the largest support in less urbanised, rural municipalities include SP, HDZ, SDA and HDZ 1990. A noteworthy observation is that SDA and SP rank among the lowest in both education and urbanisation, while HDZ and HDZ 1990, despite being highly correlated with

education, fall among the least urbanised areas, highlighting a significant discrepancy between educational and urban support bases.

Overall, these findings suggest that ethno-religious identity remains the single strongest determinant of political support in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with education and urbanisation playing secondary, but still meaningful roles. The patterns indicate that parties strategically appeal to constituencies shaped by both historical ethnic divisions and socio-economic characteristics, with certain parties, such as NS, demonstrating an ability to attract a more diverse and urbanised electorate compared to traditional ethnically-aligned parties.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of electoral results and party dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2014 to 2022 reveals the persistence of deep-rooted structural features within the country's political system, which continue to shape voting behavior and governmental functionality. Ethno-religious identity remains the single most influential determinant of political preferences, with SDA, SNSD and HDZ demonstrating exceptionally strong alignment with their respective constituent ethnic groups. This confirms long-standing observations regarding the ethnocratic character of the Bosnian political system, in which the organization of power and party structures is inherently tied to ethnic representation. While education and urbanisation exert secondary influence, their effects are non-negligible, particularly for parties such as NS, NiP and SDP, which demonstrate a capacity to mobilize voters in more urbanized areas, particularly among more educated population. These patterns indicate that, although ethnicity dominates, socio-economic and territorial factors intersect to create localized variations in support, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of electoral geography beyond purely consociational interpretations.

The findings also highlight the enduring consequences of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the post-war institutional architecture. By formalizing territorial and ethno-demographic divisions, the agreement entrenched patterns of spatial segregation that continue to influence voting behavior today. Municipalities established or reconfigured under Dayton Peace Agreement, such as Trnovo (FBiH), Čelić and Teočak, show persistent support for specific parties, reflecting the way territorial delineations have been leveraged by political elites to consolidate their bases of power. This underscores the interplay between historical legacy and contemporary electoral outcomes, where institutional arrangements reinforce entrenched party strongholds and constrain the emergence of alternative political actors.

Consociational mechanisms and party structures further reinforce these dynamics, limiting meaningful accountability and citizen oversight. As Dejanović (2019) observes, the distribution of power through consociational arrangements and entrenched party privileges restricts the capacity of citizens to influence decisions or ensure effective implementation of governmental programs. Parties are incentivized to maintain their established voter bases, often prioritizing ethnic loyalty and clientelist networks over programmatic policy solutions. The findings also reveal that coalitions, such as the Trinity (SDP-NS-NiP) or SDS-PDP Alliance for Change, demonstrate the strategic consolidation of influence, yet even these alliances primarily operate within the constraints of ethnically and territorially defined electorates.

In conclusion, the electoral landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by the dominance of ethnically-aligned parties, spatially concentrated strongholds, and limited capacity for citizen-driven accountability. While education and urbanization introduce secondary layers of influence, the overarching structure remains ethno-territorially segmented, privileging established actors and limiting opportunities for new political entrants. These findings demonstrate the continued relevance of spatial analyses in understanding the interaction between territory, identity and political power, and underscore the challenges of promoting functional governance and democratic responsiveness in post-conflict, multiethnic societies. Future reforms must therefore address both institutional and structural dimensions

to enhance citizen influence and reduce ethnically-driven constraints. On the other hand, future research in this field should pay greater attention to the qualitative motivations of different voter groups, in order to complement the insights gained from quantitative studies. Electoral geography, in this context, must integrate findings from studies in other areas of the social sciences.

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ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE BOSNIAN-PODRINJE CANTON GORAŽDE THREE DECADES AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE DAYTON AGREEMENT

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Abstract: Over the past three decades, significant demographic changes have been recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in the components of natural population change and migration processes (birth rate, mortality, and migration). The most pronounced changes are evident in the border and peripheral regions of the country, among which the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, located in the eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, stands out.

The main objective of this research is to identify and analyze changes in population dynamics within the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and to examine their consequences for spatial transformation. The observed demographic shifts are the result of complex political-geographical processes, economic development, and the specific administrative and territorial organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This paper analyzes key processes that have contributed to the decline in the total population, with a particular focus on changes in birth rates, mortality, and migration patterns. Special attention is given to spatial transformation resulting from these demographic and socio-economic processes.

The methodological framework of the study includes the application of several scientific methods: statistical analysis, comparative method, analysis and synthesis, GIS methodology, and field observation. The expected results will contribute to a better understanding of spatial-demographic transformations in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and provide a foundation for sustainable spatial development planning.

Key words: population, demographic change, birth rate, mortality, migration, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, spatial transformation, GIS.

INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced profound demographic and spatial transformations characterized by a continuous population decline, population aging, and intensified migration processes (Gekić et al., 2022). These changes are particularly pronounced in peripheral and border areas (Marić & Avdić, 2023), where the combined effects of economic transition and administrative-territorial fragmentation have significantly altered patterns of population movement, settlement distribution, and overall demographic structure. The Bosnian-Podrinje Canton represents one of the most illustrative examples of these processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Located in the eastern part of the country, the Canton has been exposed to long-term depopulation trends resulting from both natural population decline and intensive migration processes, including internal and external migration. Previous studies on the Western Balkans confirm that depopulation processes are not isolated but rather represent a broader regional phenomenon affecting post-socialist and post-conflict areas characterized

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by economic marginalization and peripheralization (Lukić et al., 2012; Proroković, 2023). However, these processes are significantly more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly due to wartime events, as well as long-term economic and political instability.

The main objective of this research is to analyze changes in the demographic dynamics of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton in the post-Dayton period and to assess their impact on spatial transformation. Particular attention is given to natural population change, migration patterns, and their spatial consequences, including rural depopulation and changes in land cover resulting from natural population change and migration processes within the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton. This study also situates demographic processes within a broader socio-economic and political-geographical context, emphasizing the role of administrative restructuring following the Dayton Peace Agreement, uneven regional development, and the weakening of the rural economic base. In this sense, the research contributes to understanding how population decline leads to visible spatial transformations in peripheral regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE BOSNIAN-PODRINJE CANTON

The Bosnian-Podrinje Canton is located in the southeastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the geographical regionalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it belongs to the macro-region of Mountain-Valley Bosnia, specifically to the Upper Drina mesoregion, with Goražde as its mesoregional center. According to the natural regionalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is situated within the forest-grass altitudinal zone.

Under the contemporary administrative organization, it is one of the ten cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and includes three municipalities: Foča in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Goražde, and Pale in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Fig. 1).

From a geological perspective, the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton is mainly composed of younger Paleozoic deposits, with layers of Triassic, Devonian, and Quaternary formations. The relief is dominated by fluvio-denudational landforms, while fluvio-accumulative forms occur in the valleys of the Drina River and its tributaries. The climate is shaped by the region's geographical position, terrain, altitude, and the openness of the Drina valley. Average annual temperature is 9.6°C, with precipitation ranging from 700–800 mm in lower areas to 1000–1250 mm at higher elevations (Hrelja et al., 2017). Hydrographically, the area belongs to the Black Sea basin, with the Drina River forming the main river system and receiving tributaries such as the Kolina, Osanica, Podhranjenski Potok, and Prača (Živojević, 1964; 2009; Hrelja et al., 2012). Biogeographically, the canton is part of the Eurosiberian subregion, characterized by oak, beech, and beech-fir forests.

Favorable climatic, hydrographic, and biogeographical characteristics, fertile soil, and a favorable geographical position provided natural conditions that enabled settlement in this area from the earliest times. The largest number and highest density of settlements are located along river courses, primarily along the Drina River, where 23,734 inhabitants currently reside.

The Upper Podrinje area is characterized by hilly and mountainous terrain, dissected by river courses, deep valleys, gullies, and gorges. Due to the orographic structure of the terrain, accessibility is limited to river valleys and mountain passes, which conditions the channelized nature of the transport network. The Drina valley represents the main transport artery of eastern Bosnia and has historically been part of an important route connecting the Adriatic coast with the inland, passing through Trebinje, Bileća, Gacko, Čemerno, Tjentište, Foča, and further along the Drina. With the arrival of the Ottomans, caravan routes were established (the Dubrovnik Road connecting Constantinople and Dubrovnik), which were significantly expanded and modernized during the Austro-Hungarian period in accordance with military and economic demands.

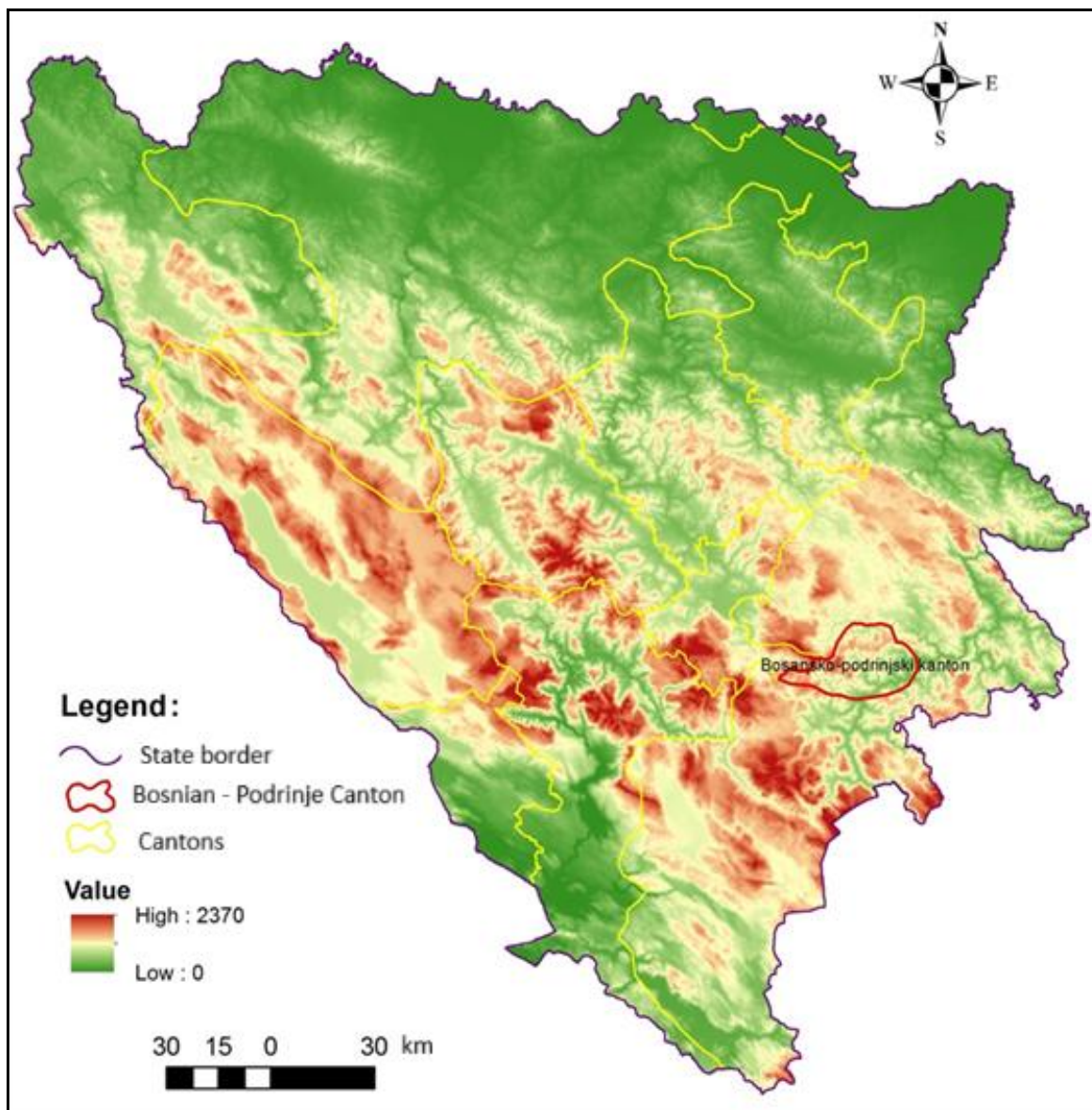


Figure 1. Geographical position of Bosnian-Podrinje Canton

Source: Authors, baseline database of GIS center University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Science

As the Drina valley forms the axis of the communication network, it is intersected by numerous modern roads. A major route runs from Belgrade through Užice, Višegrad, Foča, and Trebinje to Dubrovnik. From Brod na Drini, the road passes via Tjentište along the Sutjeska River valley. Another route leads from Brod na Drini along the Bistrica valley, across the Rogoj Pass and Trnovo to Sarajevo. Additional connections extend to Podgorica, Pljevlja, Rudo, Priboj, Uvac, Rogatica, Žepa, Vlasenica, and Zvornik. During the socialist period, most of these roads were asphalted, significantly contributing to the economic development of Upper Podrinje (Kahvedžić, 2005).

From an economic-geographical perspective, although the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton possesses numerous natural and socio-geographical tourism potentials, it has a strong tradition of agricultural production (especially fruit growing) and industrial production. In the past, the economy was dominated by defense and chemical industries, while in recent years, alongside the defense industry, the textile, electrical, and mechanical industries have developed significantly (Hrelja et al., 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological concept of this research was defined according to the objectives and tasks of the study, which focus on analyzing the overall changes in population dynamics in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and their consequences for spatial transformation.

The research employed the following scientific methods:

General scientific methods (spatial analysis method, geostatistical method, synthesis method) were used to determine changes in natural population change and migration processes. During the research, statistical data from the last two officially conducted population censuses in Bosnia and Herzegovina were used. Based on these data, natural population change and migration trends in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, as well as in neighboring municipalities, were clearly identified. The data were analyzed not only at the level of the total population of the Canton and neighboring municipalities, but also at the settlement level, which provided a clearer picture of areas affected by depopulation (mainly rural areas) and areas where the population stagnates or shows slight growth.

In addition, official statistical data from state and entity statistical agencies, as well as adopted spatial planning and strategic documents at the cantonal and municipal levels, were used to provide assumptions regarding natural population change and migration trends after 2013, the year of the last population census. GIS methodology was applied to establish spatial databases of natural population change and migration processes and to visualize them geographically. This method was also used to analyze Google Earth imagery and to link Corine Land Cover (CLC) data from 2000 and 2018, enabling a comparison of spatial changes and their geovisualization in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton.

Field observation method was used to verify desk-collected and analyzed spatial information and to gather photographic documentation illustrating changes in natural population dynamics and migration processes and the resulting spatial transformations. Since the title of the paper refers to the period of three decades after the Dayton Agreement, it should be emphasized that the key census comparison is based on the 1991–2013 period, while the land-cover analysis covers the period 2000–2018. These temporal limitations primarily result from the lack of adequate and comparable statistical data. The last population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina was conducted in 2013, and despite certain methodological shortcomings, it remains the most relevant and reliable source for demographic analyses such as those presented in this study. Likewise, the land-cover analysis does not encompass the full thirty-year period because satellite datasets of this type are published at six-year intervals. Consequently, the first available dataset after the Dayton Agreement dates from 2000, while the most recent one used in this research is from 2018.

Nevertheless, this study provides an important basis for future research on demographic and land-cover changes in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, particularly through the use of new statistical and satellite data as they become available.

NATURAL POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION PROCESSES IN THE BOSNIAN-PODRINJE CANTON

The Bosnian-Podrinje Canton administratively belongs to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and represents its easternmost canton, entirely surrounded by municipalities that belong administratively to the other entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. As such, it is considered a depopulation area. According to the latest census, the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton has 23,734 inhabitants, representing 1.07% of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 0.67% of the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two of the three municipalities in the canton are entirely rural (Foča – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Pale – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), while in the city of Goražde, the majority of the population lives in urban areas (56.5% of the total population). The average household size is the smallest in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at 2.7 members (Strategy for

the Development of BPK Goražde, 2021). According to the latest census, the average age of the population is 41.2 years, which is higher than the average age in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In terms of gender structure, the canton has the oldest female population on average. After the 2013 census, a trend of increasing elderly population and a decrease in young and adult population was observed in all local government units (Strategy for the Development of BPK Goražde, 2021).

Low natural population growth and migration (both internal and external) have led to a decrease in population across all municipalities of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton.

In the city of Goražde, according to the 2013 census, 20,897 people live, accounting for 91.5% of the canton's population and 1.3% of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These inhabitants reside in 7,573 households, making the average household size 2.76. Compared to 1991, the population has nearly halved due to administrative and political changes, population migrations during and after the war, both outside the canton and beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The population has continuously decreased over the period, also because of negative natural growth.

As a result of administrative and political changes following wartime events in Bosnia and Herzegovina and after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, all municipalities in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton were formed by dividing one or two pre-war municipalities: Goražde was split into Goražde and Novo Goražde; Pale and Rogatica were divided into Pale, Rogatica, and Pale in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Foča and Kalnovik were divided into Foča, Kalnovik, and Foča in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 1. Changes in the Number of Settlements in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton
after the Signing of the Dayton Agreement

Municipalities	Settlements 1991	Settlements 2013	Settlements divided between two municipalities	Decrease in the number of undivided settlements
Goražde	187	126	18	61
Foča	120	89	12	31
Pale	70	57	0	13
Rogatica	118	117	1	1
Kalnovik	71	68	12	2

Source: Federal Office of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<https://fzs.ba/>)

Through administrative division, the municipality of Goražde lost a significant number of settlements. From 187 settlements in 1991, the municipality had 126 settlements in 2013. Eighteen settlements were divided between Goražde and the newly established municipality of Novo Goražde.

Foča had 120 settlements in the pre-war period, which decreased to 89 settlements in 2013. Of the total 31 settlements lost in this municipality, 12 were divided among neighboring municipalities. Similarly, the municipality of Pale, according to the 2013 census, lost 13 pre-war settlements, with none shared with newly formed municipalities. The municipality of Rogatica lost one settlement (Vražalice), which was assigned to the municipality of Pale in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Additionally, the municipality of Kalinovik lost 2 settlements entirely, and 12 settlements were divided between neighboring municipalities: one to Foča in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the rest to the municipality of Konjic.

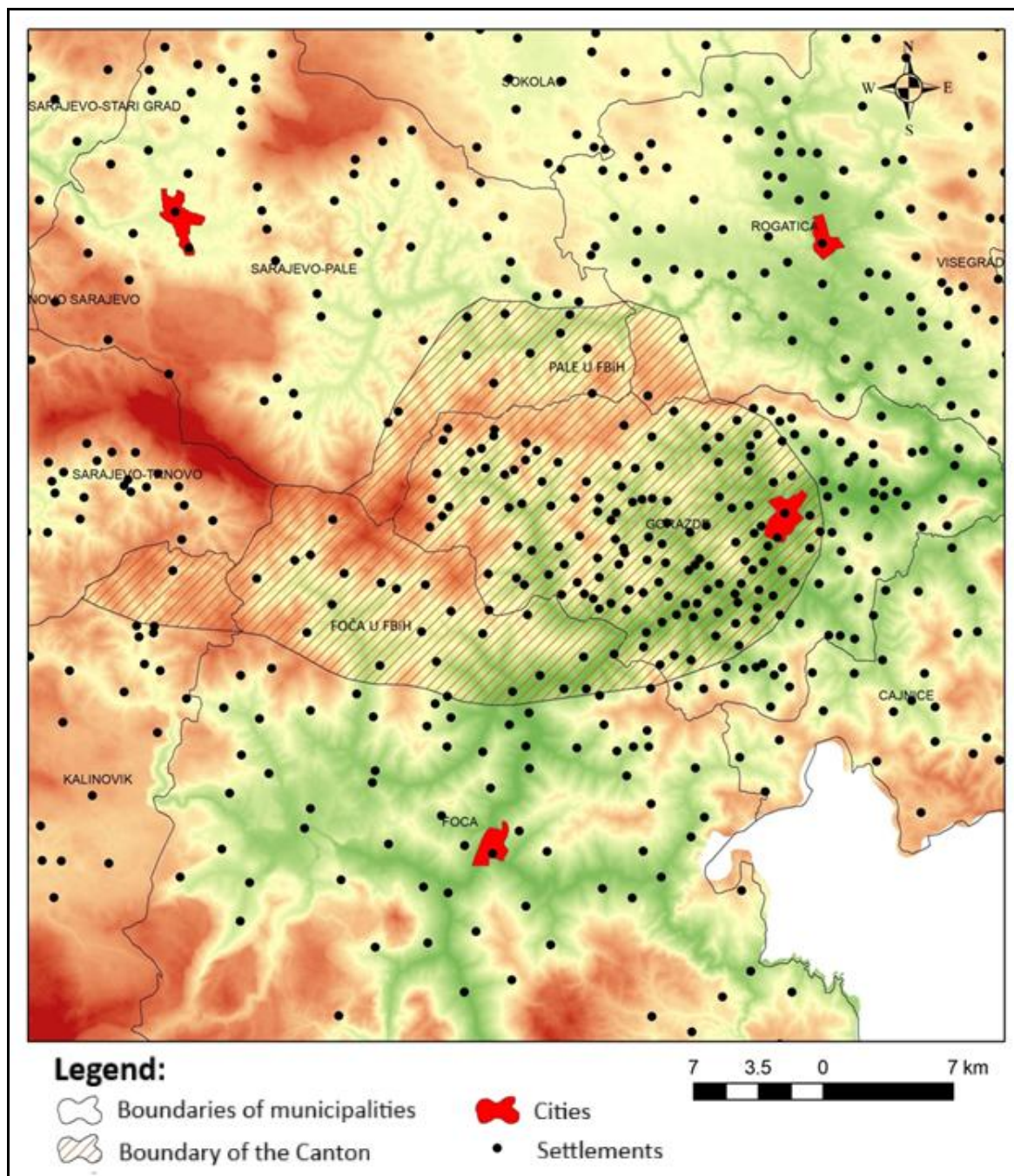


Figure 2. Administrative and political causes of changes in the number of settlements and population
Source: Authors, baseline database of GIS center University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Science

Changes in the population over the last 30 years are very pronounced in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, where a continuous decline in the number of inhabitants is evident. According to the 1991 census, 39,998 people lived in the area that now belongs to the Canton, while the 2013 census recorded 23,734 inhabitants, representing 1.07% of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 0.67% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 2. Changes in the population numbers in the Bosansko-Podrinje Canton and neighboring municipalities, 1991–2013.

Municipalities	Population, 1991	Population, 2013	Decrease/increase in population (No)	Decrease/increase in population (%)
Goražde	32858	20897	11961	36.4
Foča	35389	18288	17101	48.3
Pale	14480	20909	+6429	+44.4
Rogatica	21881	10723	11158	51.0
Kalnovik	4249	2029	2220	52.2
Novo Goražde	4715	3117	1598	33.9
Pale u FBiH	1972	904	1068	54.2
Foča u FBiH	5158	1933	3225	62.5

Source: Federal Office of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<https://fzs.ba/>)

As can be seen from the statistical indicators, all municipalities of the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton, as well as almost all neighboring municipalities, have experienced a decline in population. In the city of Goražde, the population decreased by 36.4%, in Foča by 48.3%, in Rogatica by 51%, in Kalinovik by 52.2%, in Novo Goražde by 33.29%, in Pale in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by 54.2%, and in Foča in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by 62.5%. The only municipality that recorded population growth during the period 1991–2013 was Pale, with an increase of +44.4%. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (up until 1998), the municipality of Pale was the political and administrative center of Republika Srpska, which influenced demographic trends in this part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As previously highlighted, changes in the population of the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton are the result of natural population change and migration processes. The population trend has been steadily declining, with a negative natural growth rate of -0.8 in the last five years (Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton in Figures, 2023). Data on emigration indicate that international emigration is significantly lower than internal migration within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, rural-to-urban migration is particularly pronounced in the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton. This does not refer to daily commuting but to permanent changes of residence. Accordingly, significant changes in the ratio of urban to rural population were observed during the last intercensal period (1991–2013).

In 1991, in the study area, the rural population significantly exceeded the urban population (16,273 urban versus 23,715 rural residents). According to the 2013 census, this ratio had shifted considerably, with the number of rural and urban residents nearly equal. Specifically, in 2013, the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton had 11,806 urban residents (a decrease of 27.5% from 1991) and 11,928 rural residents (a decrease of 49.7% from 1991).

The decline in rural population was recorded in 175 out of 190 settlements belonging to the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton. Accordingly, according to the 2013 census, 26 settlements were abandoned, with zero residents. Only four rural settlements recorded an increase in population. Additionally, the only urban settlement also experienced a decline in population. Changes in natural population dynamics and migration processes have significantly affected land cover in the study area. These changes are the result of the depopulation of rural areas (through the abandonment of residential buildings and cessation of primary economic activities) and settlement in the central urban area (urbanizing previously non-urban, often agricultural, lands).

ANALYSIS OF LAND COVER CHANGE IN THE BOSANSKO-PODRINJSKI CANTON

The analysis of land cover change in the study area was conducted for the period from 2000 to 2018. To obtain data on land cover changes, Corine Land Cover (CLC) images were analyzed. The CLC database contains data on land cover for reference years, as well as data on changes in land cover between these reference years. Specifically, the CLC database includes land cover data for the reference years 1980, 1990, 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2018, along with information on land cover changes between these years.

The standard approach for creating the CLC database is based on visual interpretation of satellite images according to the accepted CLC methodology, producing vector data on land cover at a scale of 1:100,000, with a minimum polygon width of 100 m and a minimum mapping area of 25 ha, or 5 ha for the land cover change database. The defined CLC nomenclature includes 44 classes, arranged into three hierarchical levels, each describing a different type of land cover.

In the analysis of land cover changes, the CLC 2018 dataset provides a significant resource for implementing key studies at the level of specific spatial units. For example, it can show where landscape fragmentation is worsening due to the construction of roads or other infrastructure. In agricultural areas, CLC can indicate where structural changes are continuing or intensifying, such as the conversion of pastures into arable land, expansion or reduction of cultivated areas, and similar transformations.

The available CLC images for the defined period (2000–2018) were collected, imported into GIS, and subsequently extracted specifically for the area of the Bosansko-Podrinjski Canton.

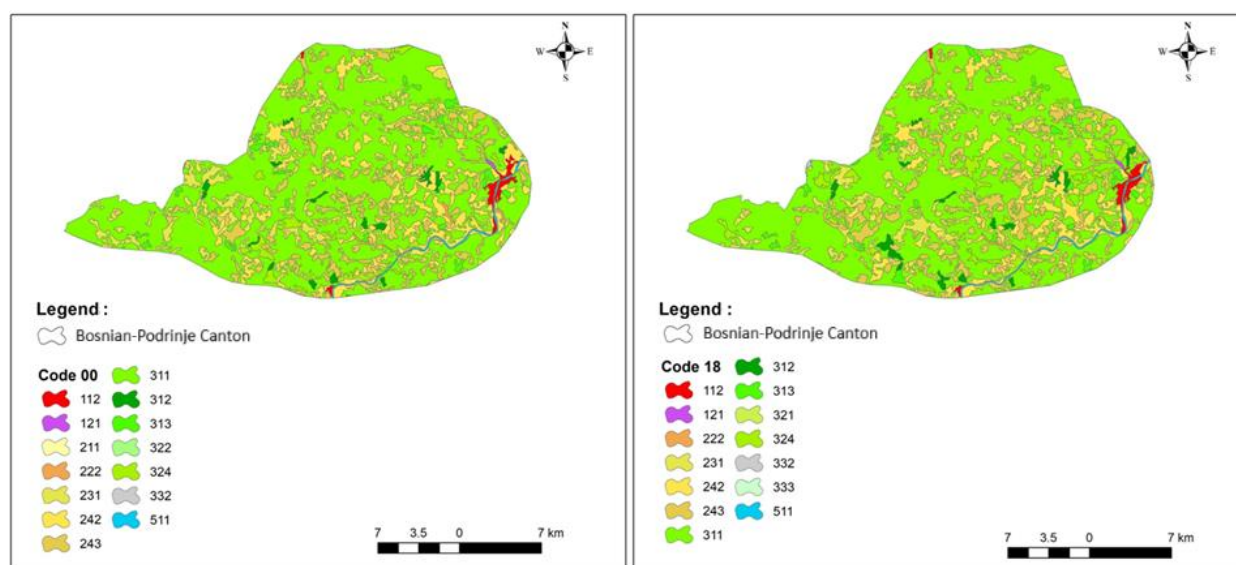


Figure 3. CLC of Bosnian-Podrinje Canton (2000 left, 2018 right)

Source: www.copernicus.eu, adapted and edited by authors.

Table 3. CLC in the Bosansko-podrinjski Canton for the period 2000–2018

CLC	Name	2000 (Area km ²)	2018 (Area km ²)	Decrease/ increase (Area km ²)	Decrease/ increase (%)
112	Discontinuous urban fabric	4.18	4.25	0.07	1.6
121	Industrial or commercial units	0.3	0.3	0	0.0
222	Fruit trees and berry plantations	1.16	0.35	-0.81	-231.4
231	Pastures	34.88	28.9	-5.98	-20.7

242	Complex cultivation patterns	62.04	55.89	-6.15	-11.0
243	Land principally occupied by agriculture, with significant areas of natural vegetation	48.1	57.27	9.17	16.0
311	Broad-leaved forest	329.45	321.41	-8.04	-2.5
312	Coniferous forest	5.8	7.85	2.05	26.1
313	Mixed forest	8.37	9.96	1.59	16.0
324	Transitional woodland/shrub	11.95	19.67	7.72	39.2
511	Water courses	3.32	3.25	-0.07	-2.2

Source: www.copernicus.eu, adapted and edited by authors

The aim of the Corine Land Cover (CLC) analysis is to determine changes in land use over the past twenty years, which are largely the result of natural population change and migration processes. In the Bosansko-podrinjski Canton, according to CLC, the following first-level classes are represented: Artificial surfaces; Agricultural areas; Forests and semi-natural areas; and Water bodies. At the second level, the represented classes include: urban areas, industrial, commercial, and transport units, pastures, heterogeneous agricultural areas, forests, and inland waters.

Analysis of land cover data in the Bosansko-podrinjski Canton shows that the largest land area is covered by forested areas (335.5 km²), followed by agricultural land (146.18 km²), urban areas (4.18 km²), and the least represented are water bodies (3.32 km²). The dominant presence of forested areas is a result of the physical-geographical conditions (hilly-mountainous relief) of the study area. During the analyzed period, 2000–2018, the greatest increase in land cover was observed in transitional woodland/shrub, while the largest decrease occurred in fruit trees and berry plantations and pastures. These data indicate two interconnected processes: the loss of agricultural land caused by overgrowth, which is largely a result of the abandonment of rural areas by the local population.

Low natural population growth and migration processes (caused by the unfavorable situation following the signing of the Dayton Agreement) have contributed to increasing rural depopulation, leading to overgrowth and the loss of the original function of these areas.



Figure 4. Overgrowth of agricultural land in the rural areas of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton
Photo: Hrelja, E.

On the other hand, the process of urbanization is concentrated in the city of Goražde compared to the other two municipalities. According to the 2013 population census, the municipalities of Foča in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Pale in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have no urban settlements, and very few collective housing units are being built there—mostly individual houses and weekend homes. In this context, as well as due to a generally more favorable living environment, an increase in population is expected in the coming period in the city of Goražde, suburban settlements, settlements with central functions, demographically larger settlements, and returnee settlements (PP BPK, 2016).

Physical-geographical factors in the Goražde area limit human activities to a very small area (valley expansions along river courses), thereby “guiding” the construction of settlements and associated infrastructure. Due to the limited available non-urbanized land in the city center, urbanization occurs spontaneously and is mostly oriented toward the remaining agricultural land (Hrelja et al., 2024).



Figure 5. Urbanization of agricultural land in the core urban area of Goražde
Photo: Hrelja, E.

The Spatial Plan of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton (2016) states that urbanization will no longer be as pronounced, and that the other two components of the urbanization process—morphological and functional—will be more prominent in the planned period compared to the recent past. The Development Strategy of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton (2021) aims to ensure smart management of natural resources and sustainable spatial planning. One of the measures to achieve this priority, in line with spatial planning documentation, concerns the regulation of the inhabited urban cores of local communities. However, functional and morphological transformations in the central part of the city continue to contribute to urbanization and deruralization, with scattered urban areas having increased by 8.2% over the past 20 years (Hrelja et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

The results of this research confirm that the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton represents one of the most pronounced examples of demographic decline and spatial transformation in the peripheral areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The identified processes of depopulation, aging, rural abandonment, and changes in land cover correspond with broader demographic and socio-economic trends recorded in post-socialist and post-conflict regions of Southeast Europe (Gekić et al., 2022; Avdić, Avdić, & Zupanc, 2022).

The strong decrease in population between 1991 and 2013 reflects not only the direct consequences of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also long-term structural problems characteristic of peripheral regions (Marić & Avdić, 2023). Similar demographic trends have been identified in other mountainous and border regions of the Western Balkans, where economic marginalization, weak transport accessibility, lack of investment, and limited employment opportunities have intensified emigration and demographic aging (Lukić et al 2012). In the case of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton, these processes were additionally shaped by the post-Dayton administrative-territorial organization, which fragmented the pre-war functional space and significantly altered demographic and settlement structures.

The research also confirms that rural depopulation represents one of the key drivers of spatial transformation in Canton. The decline of agricultural activity, abandonment of settlements, and reduction of demographic vitality in rural areas directly contributed to the overgrowth of former agricultural land and the expansion of transitional woodland and shrub areas. Similar processes have been documented in numerous peripheral rural regions of Southeast and Eastern Europe (Proroković, 2023; Maštilović & Zoppi, 2021), where depopulation and deagrarianization lead to natural reforestation and landscape transformation. In this context, land-cover changes in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton can be interpreted as a spatial manifestation of broader demographic and socio-economic restructuring processes.

At the same time, the concentration of population and economic functions in the city of Goražde demonstrates a process of selective spatial polarization. Although the Canton is characterized by depopulation, Goražde maintains the role of the primary demographic, economic, and administrative center, attracting population from surrounding rural settlements. Such trends correspond with theoretical approaches to peripheralization, which emphasize increasing inequalities between central and peripheral areas, especially in post-socialist and post-conflict states. However, unlike larger urban centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the development potential of Goražde remains constrained by limited spatial capacities, mountainous relief, and the overall economic position of the region.

The observed spatial transformations also raise important questions regarding spatial resilience and sustainable regional development. Despite continuous demographic decline, certain localities within the Canton have preserved a degree of functional stability due to industrial activity, transport connectivity, and administrative significance. This suggests that demographic decline does not necessarily affect all settlements equally and that local development capacities still exist. Therefore, future development strategies should focus not only on demographic revitalization measures, but also on strengthening economic diversification, improving infrastructure connectivity, and promoting sustainable management of natural resources.

Finally, the research highlights the importance of integrating demographic and spatial analyses in understanding post-conflict regional transformation. The combination of census indicators, GIS methodology, and land-cover analysis enabled a more comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between population dynamics and spatial change. Future research should therefore include newer demographic indicators, migration datasets, and higher-resolution satellite imagery to monitor ongoing processes more precisely and support evidence-based spatial planning policies in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton and other peripheral regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CONCLUSION

The conducted analysis of demographic and spatial changes in the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton indicates a pronounced and long-lasting process of depopulation, resulting from the interaction of natural population change and migration processes, as well as complex administrative-political and socio-economic circumstances arising after the war and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Between 1991 and 2013, the Canton lost a significant portion of its total population, with a decline particularly pronounced in rural settlements. Negative natural population growth, aging, reduction in household numbers, and intensive internal and external migrations led to the abandonment of some settlements and a decrease in the demographic vitality of the entire area. The village-to-city migration process further altered the balance between urban and rural populations, with the number of rural inhabitants almost halving compared to 1991.

Demographic changes have directly influenced spatial transformation. Analysis of Corine Land Cover data for the period 2000–2018 shows a decrease in agricultural areas, particularly pastures and orchards, alongside an increase in forested and transitional woodland areas, clearly reflecting processes of overgrowth and rural abandonment. This trend results from a declining number of inhabitants engaged in primary activities and from the general socio-economic stagnation of peripheral areas of the Canton.

On the other hand, urbanization is predominantly concentrated in the city of Goražde, where limited natural spatial capacities (valley expansions along the Drina River) both direct and constrain spatial development. Urbanization often occurs at the expense of agricultural land, further altering the functional and morphological structure of the area.

It can be concluded that demographic processes are the key factor in the contemporary spatial transformation of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton. Without systemic measures aimed primarily at improving the general living environment (political and economic security), revitalizing rural areas, and implementing demographic population policies, the trends of depopulation and spatial transformation will continue in the future.

In this regard, it is essential not only to establish high-quality spatial planning documentation but also to implement it effectively, alongside the introduction and enforcement of stricter legal regulations, to ensure sustainable and long-term management of the natural resources of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton.

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THE POST-DAYTON TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE MEĐUREČJE EXCLAVE

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UDC: 911.3:32(497.6Međurečje)

Abstract: Exclaves are territorial anomalies within the state construct: they disrupt the territorial integrity of states because of their geographical separation from the mainland. In most cases, access is possible only through the surrounding host territory. The origins of an enclave are closely related to various spatial socio-political changes and state-building processes. This paper analyses the theoretical aspects of an enclave through a literature review on borders and territoriality, focusing on the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina's enclave, Međurečje. The area of Međurečje administratively belongs to the Rudo municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By geographical definitions (Robinson, 1959; Vinokurov, 2007) combined with traditional (i.e. Agnew, 1994; Catudal Jr, 1973; Taylor, 1994) and contemporary concepts (i.e. Laine, 2016; Van Houtum, 2005 among others) in border studies, it qualifies either as a full enclave or as a pene-enclave due to its accessibility criteria. Although its current status as a territorial outlier was formalized by the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) the origins of the enclave predate the Agreement. During the SFRY jurisdiction, the area did not represent a territorial dispute because of the nature of administrative borders within the former Yugoslavia. However, the DPA redefined the territorial configuration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Međurečje area gained significance in geopolitical and territorial issues. Its position today, as an international enclave, raises questions of state consolidation and border delimitation. The significance of exploring the topic of territorial integrity in Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in its construct as an internally fragmented state in the post-Dayton era. The case of Međurečje highlights how small territorial anomalies continue to impact broader geopolitical issues. This case represents a crucial vehicle for understanding the socio-political realities of a post-conflict state.

Key words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Exclave, Međurečje enclave, post-Dayton era.

INTRODUCTION

The state, by definition, has two fundamental aspects: first, the state's exercise of power through a set of central political institutions, and second, the clear spatial demarcation of the territory within which the state exercises its power (Agnew, 1994). Under this system, the state frequently falls into what Agnew (1994) terms the territorial trap the assumption that state power is exercised exclusively within contiguous, clearly defined borders where sovereignty, territory, and society are perfectly aligned. Yet, history and geography frequently produce anomalies that defy this cartographic ideal. Non-contiguous fragments of states (Vinokurov, 2007), such as exclaves directly challenge conventional notions of territorial integrity. These spaces are not merely cartographic curiosities, rather they serve as geopolitical pressure points where the friction between administrative history and contemporary sovereignty is most visible.

In the context of the Western Balkans, where borders have been frequently redrawn through both diplomatic negotiations and violent conflicts, these anomalies become much more than map errors or simple leftovers of unresolved history. As Newman (2006) explains, the border must be understood as a physical and often static geographic outcome of socio-spatial dynamics. The contemporary territorial organization of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina presents an exceptional complexity of administrative fragmentation, internal entity lines and disputed border sections, which continue to challenge conventional understandings of sovereignty and administrative coherence.

The most distinctive territorial anomaly in this landscape is the village of Međurečje. Belonging administratively to the Rudo municipality in the entity of Republika Srpska, this enclave of Bosnia and

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Herzegovina is situated entirely within the Zlatibor District of Serbia, specifically the Priboj municipality. While it covers only 3.95 square kilometers, its existence challenges the state consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and highlights the structural complexities of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995). While Annex 2 of the Dayton Peace Agreement defined the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), it failed to provide specific mechanisms for the management of international exclaves. The structural omission left Međurečje in a state of cartographic inertia where Bosnia and Herzegovina exercises *de jure* sovereignty over a territory it cannot physically access without crossing the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Analyzing Međurečje offers vital insights into the broader dilemma of post-conflict territoriality, tracing how the open, internal borders of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) hardened into international frontiers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TERRITORIAL DISCONTINUITY

To conceptualize the unique geographical situation of Međurečje, Robinson (1959) provided the foundational definition of an exclave as a portion of state territory which is entirely separated from the main part by the territory of another state. From the perspective of the host nation, this same space constitutes an enclave. However, the distinction between a true exclave and a pene-exclave is crucial for modern spatial analysis. Classical definitions often overlook the functional realities of spatial accessibility. To address this, Catudal Jr (1973) introduced the concept of the *pene-exclave*, defining it as a territory that legally belongs to the mainland but can only be practically accessed by land through a foreign state due to topographical obstacles, structural isolation, or infrastructural configurations.

The formation of exclaves can be understood through several theoretical lenses, particularly following Vinokurov (2007) definitions. From a realist perspective, exclaves represent the outcome of historical power relations where dominant regional actors impose territorial solutions that serve their strategic interests (Mearsheimer, 2003). Conversely, liberal institutionalist approaches emphasize the role of international mediation and legal frameworks in creating institutional solutions to territorial disputes (Keohane & Nye, 2011).

Međurečje sits precisely at the intersection of these theoretical definitions demonstrating a clear hybridity. This hybridity means that while the village remains a true exclave under international law, its socio-economic survival is defined by the functional parameters of a pene-exclave. This tension directly manifests as a sovereignty gap, where *de jure* authority lacks the physical connectivity required for daily administrative enforcement. As Laine (2016) argues, borders are no longer just lines on a map but are active social processes and practices. In the case of Međurečje, the border is a daily performance. Residents must cross international boundaries to access basic services in either Rudo (Bosnia) or Priboj (Serbia). This fluidity reflects Van Houtum's (2005) assertion that borders function as b/ordering and othering mechanisms, the inhabitants of the exclave are caught in a permanent state of in-betweenness, where their legal citizenship and geographical reality are in constant tension.

Furthermore, the territorial trap described by Agnew (1994) is particularly acute here. The state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to exercise sovereignty over a patch of land it cannot reach without the explicit permission of a neighboring sovereign power. This is a sovereignty gap that is often filled by informal local arrangements or, conversely, becomes a recurrent flashpoint for bilateral diplomatic disputes.

METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDY SELECTION

This study employs a qualitative, explanatory single-case study design focused on the Međurečje exclave. A single-case approach is highly effective when investigating a unique spatial phenomenon that serves as a critical case for testing well-established theoretical frameworks, such as Agnew's (1994) territorial trap. Međurečje serves as an ideal critical case because it isolates the variables of legal sovereignty and physical infrastructure by examining a space where *de jure* authority cannot be accessed without foreign transit, we can evaluate whether the container model of the state holds true in post-

conflict borderlands. The source base for this study was compiled using a systematic multi-step triangulation process designed to ensure empirical reliability:

primary legal and administrative documents: this category includes the text of the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), official documentation from the OHR and EU Special Representative for BiH systemic status decrees from the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and official border policy updates from the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

statistical and cadastral records: empirical data regarding population dynamics, ethnic distribution, and spatial size were gathered by cross-referencing the official field tracking datasets from the 2013 Preliminary Results published by the Republika Srpska (Institute of Statistics, 2014) with the finalized 2013 settlement-level census volumes published by the central (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019).

secondary academic literature: foundational texts in political geography and border studies were collected through a systematic search of academic indexes using the keywords exclave topology, post-conflict sovereignty, and Western Balkan border delimitation. Sources were selected based on relevance to post-Yugoslav border transformations.

The analytical procedure follows a qualitative thematic analysis, coding historical-administrative evolution, infrastructural dependencies, and legal sovereignty frameworks to evaluate how local cross-border dynamics interact with state-level demarcation policies.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND THE YUGOSLAV LEGACY

The historical origins of Međurečje are not found in the (1995) Dayton negotiations, they are however deeply rooted in centuries of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian administrative shifts. And as Golić (2008) confirms, historical facts about the formation of the enclave on the territory of Serbia are little known, as there are no reliable written sources. Many such territorial anomalies in the Balkans survived the transition to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and later the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) because, as Taylor (1994) notes, the nature of borders within a socialist federation was primarily administrative rather than political.

During the SFRY era, the border between the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Socialist Republic of Serbia was largely symbolic. Internal movement was entirely unimpeded, and the cadastral oddity of Međurečje reportedly linked to a 19th century land gift or a specific local bey's estate mattered very little to the daily lives of its inhabitants. The village was naturally integrated into the local economy of the neighboring Serbian town of Priboj, which was significantly closer and more accessible than the Bosnian municipal center of Rudo.

The geopolitical crisis of the 1990s fundamentally altered this fluid dynamic. As the internal administrative lines of the SFRY were transformed into binding international borders under the *uti possidetis* principle endorsed by the Badinter Arbitration Committee B. G. Ramcharan (1997), what was once a minor cadastral quirk was suddenly elevated to a matter of international law. The Dayton Peace Agreement, while designed to bring an end to the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, effectively froze these internal administrative lines into place. Consequently, Međurečje was formalized as a permanent sovereign outlier of Bosnia and Herzegovina located inside the Republic of Serbia, completely lacking a contiguous land corridor to connect it to the mainland Rudo municipality.

THE POST-DAYTON ADMINISTRATIVE REALITY

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement established a highly fragmented constitutional and territorial structure. By dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into two highly autonomous entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS), it introduced thousands of kilometers of Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL). In this fragmented landscape, the international border with Serbia added an additional layer of administrative complexity.

THE LOCATION OF THE MEĐUREČJE

As illustrated in the cartographic data above, Međurečje sits as an isolated island of sovereign Bosnian territory located approximately one kilometer away from the main contiguous landmass of the Rudo municipality, completely enclosed by the Priboj municipality of Serbia. The so-called “Bosnian island in Serbia” is located in the lower reaches of the Pobraćnica River, a left tributary of the Lim (Golić, 2008). Međurečje administratively belongs to the Republika Srpska (RS). This internal alignment adds a unique geopolitical dimension to the anomaly: the exclave is a sovereign Bosnian territory, situated within an entity that maintains special parallel relationships with Serbia, yet it is physically surrounded by Serbia itself. This nested sovereignty significantly complicates state consolidation. For the central government in Sarajevo, the exclave stands as an inviolable symbol of the state’s territorial integrity. As for the local authorities in Rudo, it represents an ongoing logistical and financial burden, and for the residents themselves, it remains a constant source of bureaucratic friction.



Figure 1. Geographical location, spatial isolation of the Međurečje exclave of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its proximity to the Priboj municipality of Serbia, and to Rudo municipality, Republika Srpska.

Source: Jan S. Krogh's Geosite: Bosnian exclave of Međurječje.

Managing this territory has required complex, often *ad-hoc* coordination mechanisms across multiple levels of government. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) has documented persistent disputes over boundary demarcation, administrative jurisdiction, and public service provision OHR and EU Special Representative for BiH (2003). As Chandler (2000) notes, the complex territorial arrangements established by Dayton created ongoing administrative challenges that required constant international oversight and intervention. Furthermore, the constitutional status of territorial exclaves within Bosnia and Herzegovina’s federal structure remained highly ambiguous in the post-Dayton period. The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has addressed several cases related to jurisdictional disputes involving exclave territories, establishing precedents for administrative coordination between entities (Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2000). In the wider regional context, the European Union's Stabilization and Association Process has continually emphasized that resolving these fractured administrative spaces and improving cross-border efficiency are vital prerequisites for deeper European integration European Commission (2019).

In recent years, the definitive delimitation of the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia has remained one of the few unresolved bilateral issues in the region. The Serbian government has occasionally proposed territorial swaps to resolve anomalies like Međurečje, alongside the divided infrastructure around the Štrpci railway station and the hydro-power plants on the Drina River. However, as Elden (2019) observes, land is not merely a parcel of property to be traded, it is bound up

in the national imagination. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, yielding even a few square kilometers of land, especially an exclave, is viewed politically as an unacceptable threat to the fragile unity of the post-conflict state.

SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPACT ON THE LOCAL POPULATION

The human dimension of the Međurečje exclave reveals the clear limitations of modern statecraft when applied to non-contiguous spaces. The settlement finds itself in a highly paradoxical situation. The demographic tracking of the exclave highlights the practical challenges of post-conflict borderland administration. Fieldwork conducted for the 2013 census initially recorded a baseline of 171 enumerated persons within the settlement boundaries of Međurečje (Institute of Statistics, 2014). However, following systematic data cleaning and residency verification crucial given the population's cross-border fluidity and reliance on Serbian infrastructure the finalized and officially ratified results established the permanent resident population at 146 inhabitants (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019). According to these finalized state metrics, the demographic distribution consists of 16 Bosniaks (11.0%), 123 Serbs (84.2%). The inhabitants pay property and land taxes and vote within the Bosnian electoral system, but they rely almost exclusively on Serbian infrastructure for basic utilities including electricity, telecommunications, and healthcare due to their physical separation from the mainland.

In practice, the governance of Međurečje operates through a fragile and often informal true exclave arrangement, as it is separated from the principal part of the state by the territory of another state (Vinokurov, 2007). The total lack of a formal border treaty between Sarajevo and Belgrade exacerbates this situation. Serbia has historically proposed territorial swaps specifically involving the Štrpci Railway station to resolve these anomalies, while BiH steadfastly opposes any exchange of territory that might suggest a revision of the Dayton Peace Agreement core territorial integrity. This deadlock distinguishes Međurečje from other European post-conflict anomalies, such as the Baarle-Hertog/Nassau complex in Western Europe, where EU integration has rendered the border virtually invisible (Vinokurov, 2007). In the Western Balkans, however, the unresolved border remains a rigid obstacle.

A significant gap in current research and administration remains the lack of updated, high-resolution cadastral mapping, as both states often rely on contradictory, SFRY era records to support their respective claims during diplomatic negotiations. Consequently, Međurečje serves as a living microcosm of the territorial trap (Agnew, 1994), where the rigid requirements of state consolidation clash with the realities of territorial sovereignty in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kolossoff & O'Loughlin, 1998; Paasi, 1998; Vinokurov, 2007).

This systemic friction creates what border scholars call a liminal space. The residents are often overlooked by Sarajevo because of their physical distance and small numbers, yet they cannot be fully integrated into the Serbian state apparatus because they reside on foreign soil. This daily reality highlights the persistence of the local against the grand narratives of the national (Laine, 2016). While diplomats in Belgrade and Sarajevo debate the technicalities of border delimitation, the people of Međurečje operate in a gray zone of pragmatism, frequently ignoring the formal border where possible to maintain vital social and economic ties.

SOVEREIGNTY AND THE FUTURE OF TERRITORIAL ANOMALIES

The case of Međurečje forces a critical re-evaluation of how territorial integrity operates in post-conflict zones. Traditional Westphalian frameworks define sovereignty as absolute control over a continuous, unbroken landmass. In theory, the rise of supranational integration (such as the European Union), and variable border geometry should reduce the economic and logistical penalties of physical separation.

Yet, in the Western Balkans, where the institutional memory of the 1990s conflict remains influential, territory continues to be treated as a zero-sum game. The refusal to finalize the border treaty between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia is not a technical failure, but a deeply political one. Međurečje serves as an active microcosm of this wider stalemate. To resolve the exclave status through a formal land swap would require a level of mutual trust and constitutional flexibility that currently does not exist within the Bosnian political landscape.

If the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina are inviolable, then the exclave must remain Bosnian territory. However, if the primary function of the state is to provide reliable administrative services to its citizens, the current arrangement represents a clear failure of localized governance. This tension between the *de jure* stability of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the *de facto* instability of the territory's geography remains entirely unresolved.

The Međurečje exclave case offers important insights for post-conflict territorial design. As (Kaufman, 2015) argues, territorial solutions that prioritize strict ethnic separation often create new, unforeseen problems regarding administrative efficiency and democratic governance. The exclave's experience demonstrates both the structural possibilities and the severe limitations of complex territorial arrangements in deeply divided societies. The broader European context of territorial governance provides alternative frameworks for understanding exclave management. The European Union's emphasis on institutionalized cross-border cooperation and administrative harmonization offers potential, yet currently distant, models for addressing the challenges faced by territorial exclaves (Anderson et al., 2003).

CONCLUSION

Međurečje is far more than an unusual geographical feature, it reveals the ongoing structural complexities of state-building in post-conflict societies. It represents the persistent friction of distance (Sack, 1986) in an age where borders are supposedly becoming obsolete. Analyzing this space through classical and contemporary spatial theories shows that territorial anomalies are active, influential components within contemporary regional geopolitics.

The continued existence of Međurečje highlights the structural fragility of Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial construct. It serves as a reminder that the Dayton Peace Agreement, while successful in stopping active warfare, left behind a complex legacy of frozen anomalies that continue to challenge the sovereignty and functionality of the state. As Bosnia and Herzegovina pursues long-term European integration, resolving the status of these micro-territorial outliers will serve as a critical test of its capacity to function as a fully consolidated, sovereign international actor. Until these underlying legal disputes are resolved, Međurečje remains a quiet reminder that the political landscape is rarely as clean as the lines drawn upon a map.

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KLJUČNI FAKTORI SOCIJALNO-GEOGRAFSKIH PROBLEMA STANOVNIŠTVA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

Senada Nezirović¹

UDC: 911.3[314:316](497.6)

Sažetak: Rad predstavlja pregled najvažnijih socijalno-geografskih problema koji su nastali kao rezultat brojnih složenih događaja u posljednjoj deceniji prošlog i početkom ovog stoljeća. Navedeni događaji i transformacije pored političko-geografskih i ekonomsko-geografskih, uzrokovali su brojne socijalne probleme stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini. S obzirom na apsolutnu dominaciju tzv. nacionalnih tenzija i proizvodnje prijetućih konflikata u našem društvu, socijalne teme su na žalost potpuno potisnute u stranu, s toga cilj ovog istraživanja je analiza ključnih faktora socijalno-geografskih problema stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini i njihove posljedice. Širina postavljenih ciljeva rada zahtijevala je korištenje podataka koji su morali biti preuzeti iz različitih izvora. Analize su bazirane na zvanično dostupnim podacima iz domaćih i inostranih izvora. U izradi rada korištene su geografske i statističke metode, komparativna metoda i metoda analize sadržaja s raspoloživim podacima na predmetnu temu. Komparativna metoda je omogućila poređenje rezultata glavnih pokazatelja Bosne i Hercegovine s državama u regionu kako bi se utvrdile sličnosti i razlike socioekonomskog i regionalnog razvoja. Identifikacija najvažnijih socijalno-geografskih problema stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine i uzročnih faktora, od posebnog je geografskog interesa, jer ukazuje na doprinos geografske struke u njihovom rješavanju.

Ključne riječi: socijalno-geografski problemi stanovništva, ključni faktori, nezaposlenost stanovništva, siromaštvo, ljudska prava, Bosna i Hercegovina.

UVOD

Razvoj Bosne i Hercegovine obilježen je događajima koji su se desili u posljednjoj deceniji prošlog stoljeća. Tu prije svega treba istaći agresiju na nezavisnu i međunarodno priznatu Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu nakon proglašenja njene nezavisnosti i dejtonsko političko-teritorijalno uređenje. Agresija na našu zemlju od 1992–95. završena je okvirnim sporazumom za mir. Dejtonski sporazum potvrdio je Bosnu i Hercegovinu kao samostalnu i suverenu državu u evropskoj zajednici država. Njime je Bosna i Hercegovina dobila novi Ustav i političko-teritorijalno uređenje, koje se može smatrati izuzetno složenim. Ova složenost je bazirana na međuetničkim tenzijama i postojanju vrlo različitih političkih interesa, kao i na rezultatima ratnih dešavanja (Nezirović, 2022.). Navedeni događaji i transformacije pored političko-geografskih i ekonomsko-geografskih, uzrok su brojnih socijalnih problema stanovništva što je dovelo do socioekonomskog preobražaja Bosne i Hercegovine. Prema brojnim pokazateljima u Bosni i Hercegovini izražena je visoka nezaposlenost i neaktivnost radno sposobnog stanovništva, standard stanovništva sve je lošiji naročito kod penzionera s niskim primanjima, cijene hrane ne prestaju rasti, kao posljedica siromaštva javljaju se različite vrste bolesti. Nadalje, izražena je socijalna isključenost stanovništva direktno povezana s obrazovanjem, nedovoljan je sistem socijalne i zdravstvene zaštite naročito u pogledu ranjivih skupina stanovništva, ugrožena su ljudska prava. Na osnovu terenskog istraživanja, ranijih nalaza, informativnih sredstava, statističkih pokazatelja, različitih informacija i dokumenata prikupljenih od ranije, ovaj rad se fokusira na hipotezi da su politički procesi i ekonomski uslovi ključni faktori socijalno-geografskih problema u Bosni i Hercegovini. Da bi se ispitala ova hipoteza, iz mnoštva socijalno-geografskih problema izdvojeni su nezaposlenost i neaktivnost radno sposobnog stanovništva, faktori socijalne uključenosti/isključenosti u obrazovanju, siromaštvo, bolesti stanovništva kao posljedica slabe zdravstvene zaštite, socijalna zaštita stanovništva, penzioni sistem i ljudska prava.

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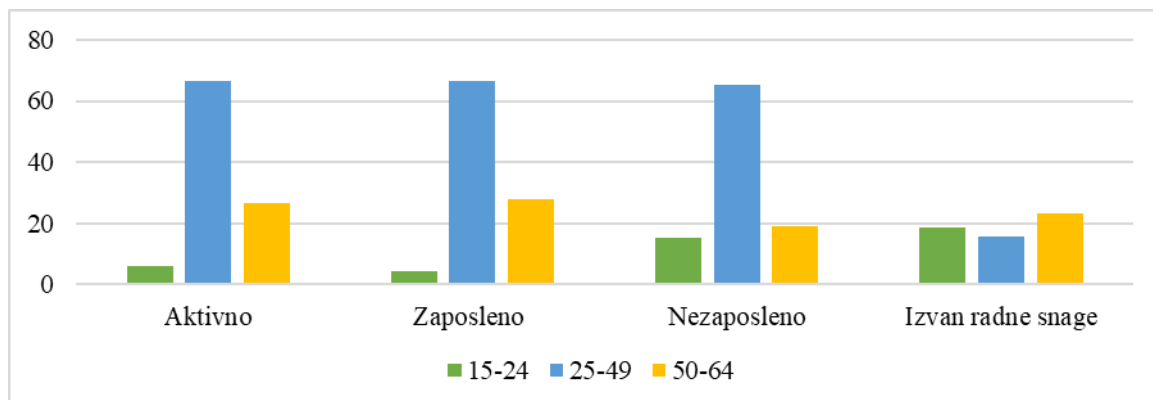
METODOLOGIJA

U radu su razmatrani najvažniji globalni socijalno-geografski problemi koji su nastali kao rezultat brojnih složenih događaja u posljednjoj deceniji prošlog i početkom ovog stoljeća u Bosni i Hercegovini.

S obzirom na apsolutnu dominaciju tzv. nacionalnih tenzija i proizvodnje prijetjećih konflikata u našem društvu, socijalne teme su na žalost potpuno potisnute u stranu. Istraživanje socijalno-geografskih problema u okviru ovog rada, zahtijevalo je analizu brojnih socijalnih problema stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini. U radu je ukazano na faktore koji su uzrok nastanka socijalno-geografskih problema Bosne i Hercegovine i njihove posljedice. Uz svaki od segmenata koji je obrađen u radu priloženi su grafički i tabelarni pokazatelji. U radu su date smjernice na koji način je neophodno smanjiti siromaštvo i socijalnu isključenost stanovništva što bi omogućilo bolji položaj ranjivih grupa stanovništva koje čine: osobe s invaliditetom, interno raseljene osobe i povratnici, porodice s dvoje i više djece, starije osobe, nezaposleni, radnici niže kvalifikacije, djeca, žene i mladi. Složenost istraživanja zahtijevala je korištenje podataka iz različitih izvora, osim stručne literature, korišteni su relevantni statistički pokazatelji nadležnih agencija, planski dokumenti, bilteni, razvojni programi UN-a, strategije razvoja i ostali demografski statistički pokazatelji. Prikupljeni radni materijal i podaci su shodno njihovoj strukturi, obrađeni savremenim geografskim metodama. Metodologija izrade rada zahtijevala je primjenu kombinovane kvalitativne i kvantitativne uporedne metode, metode analize i sinteze, metoda analize sadržaja s raspoloživim podacima na predmetnu temu. Komparativna metoda je omogućila poređenje rezultata glavnih pokazatelja kako bi se utvrdile sličnosti i razlike Bosne i Hercegovine s državama u regionu Zapadnog Balkana (poznat i kao WB6) analiza je usmjerena na Crnu Goru, Srbiju, Sjevernu Makedoniju, Albaniju i Kosovo.

Nezaposlenost i neaktivnost radno sposobnog stanovništva

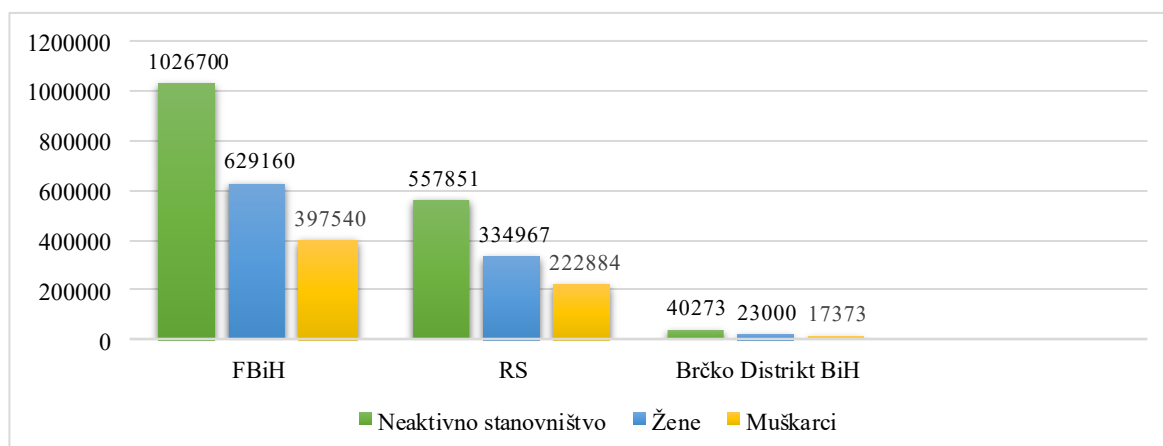
Sociodemografski procesi značajno utiču na socijalnu politiku, koja podrazumijeva državnu preraspodjelu nacionalnog dohotka usmjerenu na smanjenje socijalnih nejednakosti i izjednačavanje životnih uslova građana (Puljiz, 2015). Zapošljavanje je jedan od osnovnih uslova za osiguranje socijalne uključenosti stanovništva u privredi i društvu. Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine je radno sposobno stanovništvo, kojeg ima 2.873.000 (84.60%) podijelila na *radnu snagu* i *ekonomski neaktivno* stanovništvo. Radnu snagu čini 1.442.000 osoba. Radna snaga se dijeli na *zaposlene* i *nezaposlene*. Prema podacima ove agencije u Bosni i Hercegovini je 1.280.000 zaposlenih i 162.000 nezaposlenih osoba. Od ukupne radne snage od 25 do 49 godina životne dobi 66,5% je aktivno, od toga je zaposleno 66,7 %, nezaposleno 65,3 %, izvan radne snage je 42,4%, to su osobe od 65 i više godina. Anketna stopa nezaposlenosti je značajno manja od registrovane i na nivou Bosne i Hercegovine za III kvartal 2025. godine iznosila je 11,2%. Broj zaposlenih osoba u III kvartalu 2025. godine veći je za 4,8% u odnosu na II kvartal 2025. godine, dok se broj nezaposlenih osoba smanjio za 12,0%. (Agencija za rad i zapošljavanje Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025. Pregled stanja tržišta rada na dan 31. Oktobra 2025. godine) (Slika 1.)



Slika 1. Radno sposobno stanovništvo prema aktivnosti i starosnim grupama, BiH 2025.

Izvor: autorica uradila prema, izvoru, Agencija za rad i zapošljavanje Bosne i Hercegovine, demografija i socijalne statistike, Pregled stanja tržišta rada na dan 31. listopada 2025. godine

Gledamo li Sarajevo kao cjelinu, četiri opštine glavnog grada Bosne i Hercegovine, osim najvećeg broja stanovnika, ima i najviše zaposlenih 97.022 odnosno 3,25% od ukupnog broja radno sposobnog stanovništva. Prema podacima popisa stanovništva u Banja Luci ima 63.457 zaposlenih odnosno 2,12%. Prema broju zaposlenih slijede Bijeljina (1,21%), Tuzla (1,13%), Mostar (1,06%), Zenica (1,02%), Prijedor (0,94%), Brčko (0,75%), Ilidža i Doboj (po 0,69%). Najveći procenat zaposlenih u odnosu na broj radno sposobnih ljudi u tom gradu imaju Sarajevo, Banja Luka i Bijeljina (Popis, 2013. <https://studomat.ba/popis-2013>). Stopa nezaposlenosti u Bosni i Hercegovini tokom 2024.godine, kretala se između 12,2 % i 13,5 %, u III kvartalu 2025. godine iznosila je 11,2%. Anketna stopa zaposlenosti u III kvartalu 2025. godine iznosila je 44,5% i veća je u odnosu na II kvartal 2025. godine (42,5%) za 2,0 %. Stopa nezaposlenosti mladih (15-24 godine) u Bosni i Hercegovini u III kvartalu 2025. godine iznosila je 33,5% i manja je (u odnosu na II kvartal 2025. godine 33,9%) za 0,4 % (Agencija za rad i zapošljavanje Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025, Pregled stanja tržišta rada na dan 31. listopada 2025. godine). Od ukupnog broja osoba koje traže zaposlenje, 199.407 ili (59,46 %) su žene. Na dan 31.7.2025. prema evidencijama zavoda i službi zapošljavanja u Bosni i Hercegovini bilo je 320.940 nezaposlenih osoba. U odnosu na prethodni mjesec broj nezaposlenih je veći za 4.013 osoba ili 1,27 %. Analizirano prema dobnim skupinama, najviše nezaposlenih je u dobi od 25 do 49 godina. U Bosni i Hercegovini je više od 50% neaktivnog stanovništva. *Ekonomski neaktivno stanovništvo* su učenici stariji od 15 godina, studenti, penzioneri, domaćice, nesposobne osobe za rad i ostali. U Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine ekonomski neaktivnih je 1.026.700 osoba od toga su 629.160 ili 61.28% žene i 397.540 muškarci. U drugom entitetu Republika Srpska 557.851 osoba ekonomski neaktivna od toga su 334.967 žena i 222.884 muškaraca. U Distriktu Brčko BiH ekonomski neaktivno je 40.373 osobe, od toga 23.000 žena i 17.373 muškaraca (Slika 2.).

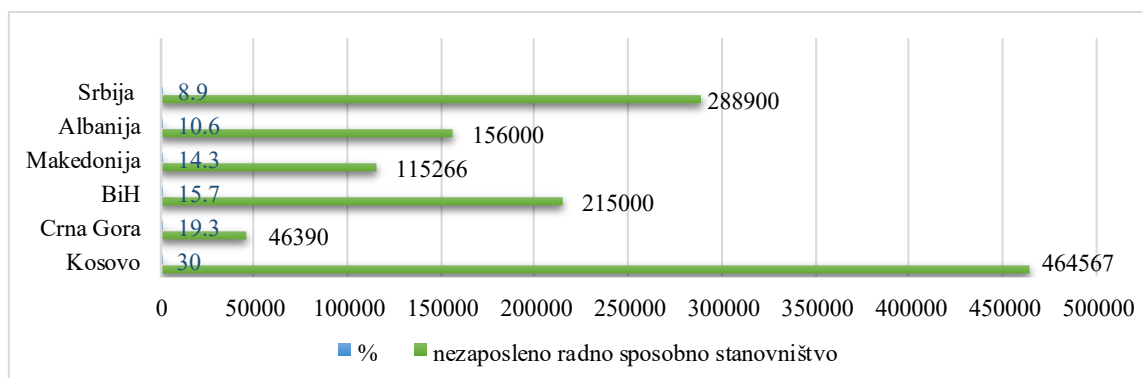


Slika 2. Neaktivno stanovništvo prema administrativnom uređenju Bosne i Hercegovine 2025.

Izvor: Popis 2013: Preko milijon zaposlenih u BiH – jeli ovaj broj realan? <https://studomat.ba/popis-2013-preko-milijon-zaposlenih-u-bih-da-li-je-ovaj-broj-realn/60604/> Agencija za statistiku BiH, 2024, demografija i socijalne statistike demography and social statistics Anketa o radnoj snazi u Brčko distriktu, 2023.godina /https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2024/BRC_13_2023_Y1_1_HR.pdf

Nezaposlenost stanovništva je uglavnom dugoročan problem, sadašnje stanje govori da je 1/2 od ukupnog broja nezaposlenih bez posla najmanje pet godina od kojih je 1/4 čak i preko deset godina. Također, mnogi ako ne i većina nezaposlenih, jedva da se mogu smatrati ekonomski aktivnim (Federalni zavod PIO/MIO, Fond PIO RS). U cilju smanjenja stope neaktivnosti te povećanja ukupne zaposlenosti u Bosni i Hercegovini, neophodno je unaprijediti okruženje za lakše zapošljavanje žena. Osobe s invaliditetom su i dalje posebno diskriminirane na tržištu rada jer i pored izdvajanja na aktivne politike zapošljavanja, one nemaju omogućen fizički pristup poslu radi neprilagođenosti javne infrastrukture (trotoari, javni prijevoz, razni objekti i javne ustanove). Stopa aktivnosti stanovništva u poređenju sa zemljama regiona, a posebno sa zemljama EU je i dalje niska.

Posljednjih godina zemlje Balkana bilježe visok nivo nezaposlenosti radno sposobnog stanovništva, zbog čega sve više ljudi, posebno mladih, šansu za posao ali i novi život traži u razvijenim zemljama zapadne Evrope. Prema najnovijim podacima, najviša stopa nezaposlenosti je na Kosovu, Crnoj Gori, Bosni i Hercegovini i Sjevernoj Makedoniji (Slika 3.) (Nove najniže razine nezaposlenosti u EU u 2024. godini, <https://financije.hr/nove-najnize-razine-nezaposlenosti-u-eu-u-2024>).



Slika 3. Nezaposleno radno sposobno stanovništvo u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana

Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, nove najniže razine nezaposlenosti u EU u 2024. godini, <https://financije.hr/nove-najnize-razine-nezaposlenosti-u-eu-u-2024>; Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, Anketa o radnoj snazi u Bosni i Hercegovini, Nezaposlene osobe prema dužini traženja posla, BiH https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2025/LAB_00_2024_Y11_BS.pdf, str 5.

Faktori socijalne isključenosti stanovništva u obrazovanju

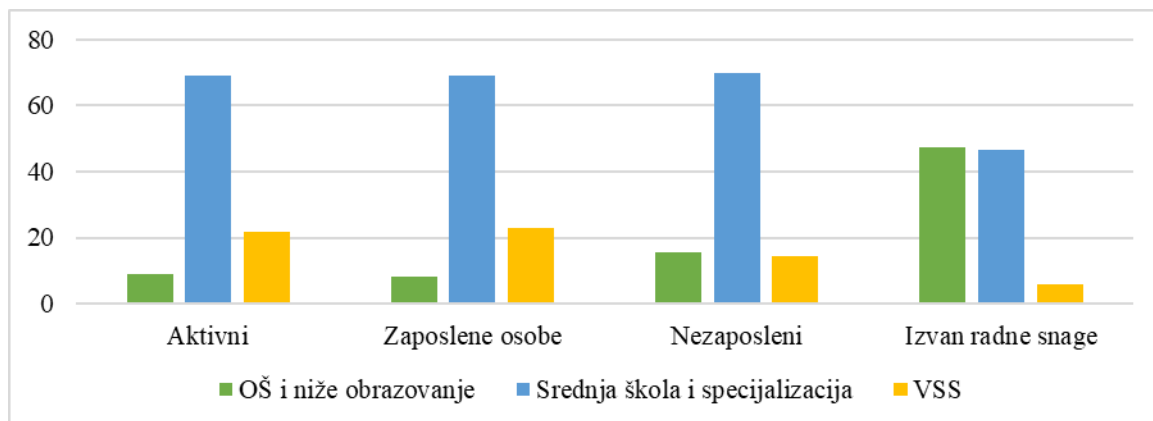
Obrazovanje stanovništva odražava broj i učešće pojedinih grupa stanovništva prema pismenosti i stepenu obrazovanja i jedno je od važnijih obilježja stanovništva. Analiza stanovništva prema pismenosti važan je pokazatelj društveno-ekonomskog razvoja. Pismenim se smatra ono lice koje zna pročitati i napisati sastav (tekst) u vezi sa svakidašnjim životom, bez obzira na kojem jeziku piše i čita. Sva ostala lica, uključujući i ona koja samo čitaju, smatraju se nepismenim (Nezirović, S., 2022). U Bosni i Hercegovini **obrazovanje** se odvija na četiri nivoa: predškolsko, osnovno, srednje i visoko obrazovanje (Tabela 1.).

Tabela 1. Pregled obrazovnih institucija u Bosni i Hercegovini 2024.

Predškolsko		Osnovno		Srednje		Visoko	
Ustanove	Djeca	Ustanove	Učenici	Ustanove	Učenici	Ustanove	Studenti
495	41 214	-1667 škola -47 specijalnih škola	256.343	313	107.740	25 Univerziteta i 13 VŠ	71 862

Izvor: Agencija za Statistiku BiH, 2023/2024., <https://odgovorno.ba/unazad-pet-godina-u-bih-prestalo-sa-radom-sedam-visokoskolskih-ustanova-novih-ni-na-vidiku/>, <https://hea.gov.ba/Content/Read/lista-akreditiranih-vsu>

Obrazovanje bi trebalo imati cilj osposobljavanja za samostalno učenje i snalaženje u društvu odnosno jačanje konkurentnosti pojedinca na tržištu rada. Na Zapadnom Balkanu 23,7 % mladih ne školuje se, a u zemljama EU 11,1 %. Bez stečenih kvalifikacija stanovništvo se ne može zaposliti, što povećava rizik nezaposlenosti i siromaštva. Prosječno 16,9 % mladih od 15 do 24 godine u zemljama EU ne radi i nije na školovanju, a na Zapadnom Balkanu 35,1%, najlošija situacija je na Kosovu gdje skoro polovina mladih (49,1%) niti radi niti se školuje (Visoka nezaposlenost mladih na Zapadnom Balkanu). Prema podacima posljednjeg popisa iz 2013.godine u Bosni i Hercegovini je 2,82% stanovništva nepismeno. Prema završenoj školskoj spremi radno sposobnog stanovništva starijeg od 15 godina osnovnu školu ima 9 %, srednju 69 %, više i visoko obrazovanje 21 % (Slika 4.) (Agencija za rad i zapošljavanje Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 2025). Više od 20% visokoobrazovanog stanovništva ima u Sarajevu, Banja Luci, Tuzli i Mostaru. Ove opštine uglavnom su univerzitetski centri i najrazvijenije su u Bosni i Hercegovini (Nezirović, S., 2022).



Slika 4. Radno sposobno stanovništvo prema aktivnosti i stepenu obrazovanja u BiH 2025.

Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, Agencija za rad i zapošljavanje Bosne i Hercegovine, demografija i socijalne statistike, Pregled stanja tržišta rada na dan 31. listopada 2025. godine.

U Bosni i Hercegovini postoje različiti faktori rizika od socijalne isključenosti stanovništva koji su direktno povezani s obrazovanjem, gdje su najčešći uzroci loše materijalno stanje u porodici i nezadovoljavajuća systemska rješenja za različite nivoe obrazovanja. Dodatni faktori rizika za isključenost u obrazovanju su zdravstveni problemi, fizički ili mentalni nedostaci te pripadnost manjinskim grupama (poput Roma), kao i povratnicima u određeno područje ili regiju. Ugrožena skupina su djeca s navršених 15 godina, a nisu pohađala osnovnu školu, jer se oni, prema zakonu, školuju po principu školovanja odraslih. To podrazumijeva vanredno polaganje razreda. Jedan od faktora socijalne uključenosti/isključenosti za dalje obrazovanje jeste finansijsko stanje u porodici. Stopa upisa djece iz siromašnih porodica u srednje škole mnogo je niža nego što je slučaj s njihovim vršnjacima, što ih stavlja u daleko ranjiviji položaj u pogledu siromaštva. Prema istraživanjima više od polovine učenika koji ne nastave pohađati srednju školu nalaze se u kategoriji siromašnih. Najugroženije kategorije djece po pitanju pristupa obrazovanju su djeca s posebnim potrebama, djeca povratnici, djeca iz porodica u stanju socijalne potrebe i djeca Romi (Bosna i Hercegovina, Izvještaj o socijalnoj uključenosti Godišnji izvještaj 2023. Str.9). Za socijalnu uključenost svakog pojedinca u društvu, potrebno je izgraditi i održavati inkluzivni sistem obrazovanja. Lanac inkluzivnosti počinje obrazovanjem kojim se pojedinac osposobljava za uključivanje na tržište rada što mu omogućava finansijsko osamostaljivanje odnosno ekonomsku neovisnost. Tako se pojava siromaštva sprječava, a ujedno postiže bolji kvalitet života. Sagledavanje promjena u obrazovanju stanovništva nije značajno samo s aspekta promjena u obrazovnom i kulturnom nivou stanovništva, već te promjene istovremeno znače i promjene u ekonomskim, socijalnim i drugim karakteristikama stanovništva (Nezirović, S.,2022.).

Siromaštvo

Sadašnji socijalno-geografski problemi stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine daleko su ozbiljniji nego ikada prije, a to se naročito odnosi na siromaštvo. Pojam siromaštvo označava nedostatak materijalnih dobara za normalno zadovoljenje osnovnih ljudskih potreba za održavanje života i zdravlja osobe, pojedinca, porodice ili društvene grupe. Prema pokazateljima Svjetske banke, pojedinac ili domaćinstvo čiji je prihod manji od 1,90 dolara na dan, nalazi se ispod granice siromaštva (Nezirović, S., & Sivac, A., 2019, str. 113-114). U našoj zemlji siromaštvo se najčešće mjeri indikatorima vezanim za potrošnju dok se više dimenzionalnost siromaštva posmatra u pristupu ustanovama socijalne zaštite, zdravstvu, obrazovanju i mogućnosti zapošljavanja. Prema podacima Ujedinjenih naroda 17,5 % stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini živi u ekstremnom siromaštvu, preživljava s 3 do 5 KM dnevno, svaka peta osoba neupitno je siromašna (Siromaštvo u BiH, 2025. Pošast koja pogađa više od milijon ljudi). Gledano prema spolu 13,8% žena je siromašno i 13,2% muškaraca. Relativno siromaštvo mjeri odnos između broja onih koji najmanje troše s ostalim domaćinstvima u Bosni i Hercegovini. Prosječna mjesečna potrošnja gradskih i ne gradskih domaćinstava je gotovo identična, s nešto većim vrijednostima

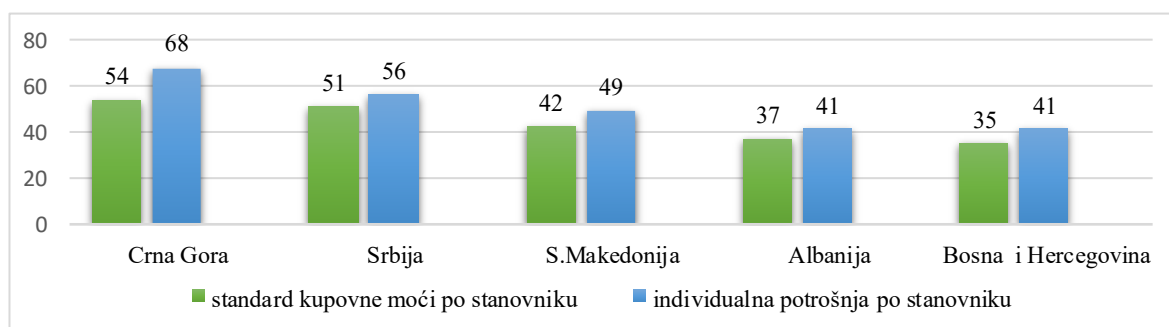
potrošnje u negradskim domaćinstvima. Relativna stopa gradskog domaćinstva stanovništva je 12,1%, ne gradskog 14,3% (Tabela 2.).

Tabela 2. Stope relativnog siromaštva u Bosni i Hercegovini usporedni pregled 2015. i 2020/21.

	2015	2020/21
Žene	16,7	13,8
Muškarci	17,1	13,2
Gradska domaćinstva	11,3	12,1
Negradska domaćinstva	20,5	14,3

Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, Bosna i Hercegovina, Izvještaj o socijalnoj uključenosti, Godišnji izvještaj 2023. str.19.

Prosječna potrošnja po domaćinstvu u Bosni i Hercegovini prema Anketi o potrošnji domaćinstva u 2021/2022. godini bila je 1775,98 KM. Izdaci za hranu, bezalkoholna pića, stanovanje i energente činili su oko 54% ukupne potrošnje. Prosječno domaćinstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini od ukupnih izdataka za hranu i piće je odvajalo 30% dok je prosječno domaćinstvo u EU na hranu i piće trošilo 18,4%. Cijene hrane, ne prestaju rasti, tako da i ona postaje luksuz. Sindikalna potrošačka korpa koju je Savez samostalnih sindikata Bosne i Hercegovine izračunao za mjesec august 2025. godine, iznosi 3.541,80 KM (Sindikalna potrošačka korpa August, 2025). Prosječna plata isplaćena za Juli u Bosni i Hercegovini je 1.601KM (Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine 2025. Prosječne mjesečne bruto plaće zaposlenih za Avgust, 2025.), u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine 1.628,00 KM (Federalni zavod za statistiku, 2025) u entitetu RS 1.556 KM, (Republički zavod za statistiku RS, 2025.) u Brčko Distriktu 1.487KM (Agencija za statistiku BiH,2025: Bilten godina XXIV broj 4). Pokrivenost Sindikalne potrošačke korpe prosječnom platom je 44,52%. Pokrivenost Sindikalne potrošačke korpe minimalnom platom je 28,23% (Sindikalna potrošačka korpa). Ogroman broj građana radi za minimalnu platu i s tim nedovoljnim iznosom nastoji prehraniti porodicu. *Individualna potrošnja po stanovniku* prema standardu kupovne moći u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana iznosila je: u Bosni i Hercegovini i Albaniji 41%, Sjevernoj Makedoniji 49 %, Srbiji 56 %, Crnoj Gori 68 % od prosjeka EU (Državni zavod za statistiku Kroatija, 2024). Za Kosovo nisu bili dostupni podaci za 2024.godinu (Slika 5.).

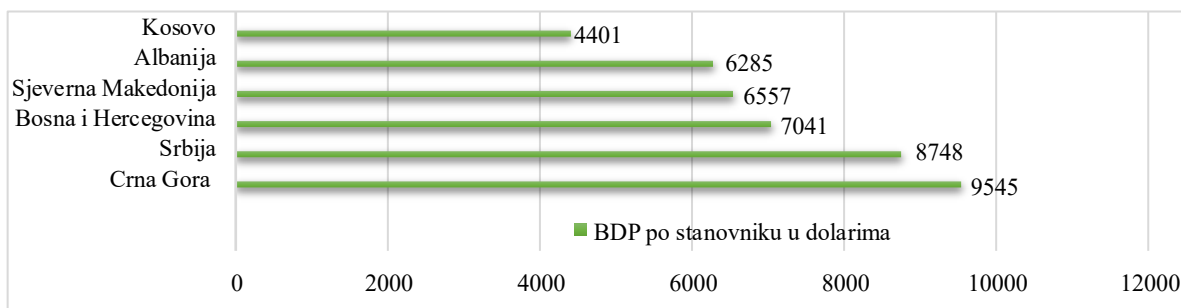


Slika 5. Standard kupovne moći i individualna potrošnja po stanovniku u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana

Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, MONSTAT, Bruto domaći proizvod i stvarna individualna potrošnja po stanovniku <https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/ppp/2024>. Državni zavod za statistiku Kroatija, 2024. Bruto domaći proizvod i stvarna individualna potrošnja u standardu kupovne moći u 2023. <https://podatci.dzs.hr/media/ogqaybmx/nr-2024-2-3-bruto-domaći-proizvod-i-stvarna-individualna-potrošnja-u-standardu-kupovne-moći-u-2023.pdf>

Bruto domaći proizvod po glavi stanovnika uglavnom je pokazatelj nivoa ekonomske aktivnosti, dok je stvarna individualna potrošnja po glavi stanovnika alternativni pokazatelj, bolje prilagođen da opiše materijalno blagostanje domaćinstva. Rezultati Evropskog programa poređenja cijena i BDP-a pokazuje da je BDP po stanovniku u Bosni i Hercegovini, izražen u Standardu kupovne moći u 2024. iznosio 35% prosjeka EU 27, dok je stvarna individualna potrošnja po stanovniku u Standardu kupovne moći u istoj

godini iznosila 42% prosjeka EU (Agencija za statistiku BiH 2025/ Bruto domaći proizvod BDP) (Slika 6).

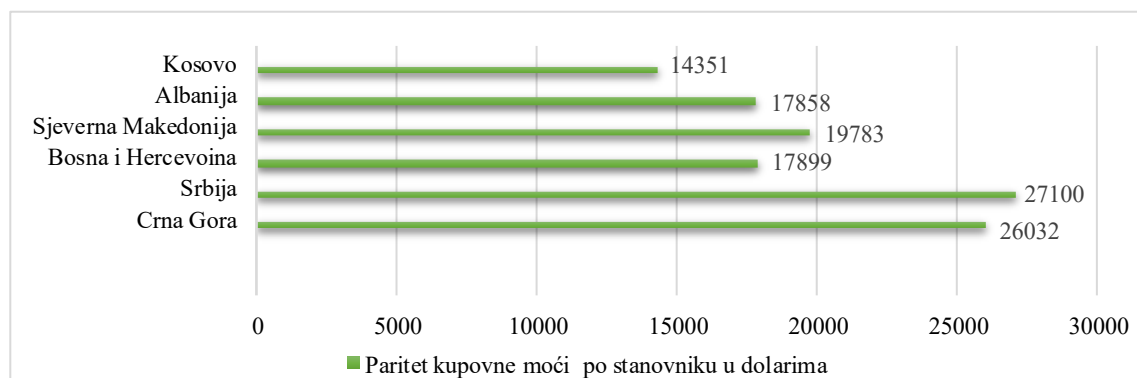


Slika 6. Usporedni pokazatelji BDP po stanovniku u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana

Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, Usporedba Slovenije, Hrvatske i Zapadnog Balkana u 2023.
<https://viborc.com/hr/usporedba-Slovenija-Hrvatske-Zapadni-Balkan-2023-ekonomija-politika/>

I dalje su evidentne razlike između nivoa stvarne individualne potrošnje i BDP per capita među zemljama. Prema podacima MMF Bosna i Hercegovina je šesta najsiromašnija zemlja u Evropi, a na Zapadnom Balkanu treća (Ukrajina, 5,66 dolara po stanovniku u ratu, Kosovo, 6,39, Moldavija, 7,49, Bjelorusija, 7,56, Sjeverna Makedonija, 7,69, Bosna i Hercegovina, 8,42, Albanija, 8,92, Srbija, 12,38 i Crna Gora, 12,65). Prema konačnim podacima EUROSTAT-a, bruto domaći proizvod po stanovniku prema standardu kupovne moći u Crnoj Gori u 2024. godini iznosio je 53% prosjeka EU. Srbija se nalazi na nivou od 52% evropskog prosjeka, Sjeverna Makedonija i Albanija na nivou od 42% i Bosna i Hercegovina na nivou od 35% evropskog prosjeka (Uprava za statistiku Crne Gore, MONSTAT, 2025.). Niske stope ekonomskog rasta i visoke nezaposlenosti posljedice su siromaštva značajnog dijela stanovništva koje živi ispod linije siromaštva (Despotović, 2016).

Nezaposlenost i siromaštvo imaju duboke socijalne korijene koji leže u sistemu neravnomjerne i nepravedne raspodjele znanja, vještina, sposobnosti i potencijala, odnosno u nedostupnosti obrazovanja svim kategorijama stanovništva, posebno u nedostupnosti obrazovanja u zrelom periodu. Najpogođenije skupine siromašnog stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini su nezaposleni građani, studenti i penzioneri. Procjenjuje se da 40% studenata živi u siromaštvu ili u finansijski nepovoljnim uvjetima, posebno oni koji nemaju studentske stipendije, jedva plaćaju školarinu i smještaj. Stopa rizika od siromaštva i socijalne isključenosti stanovništva u zemljama EU je 21,4 %, u Bosni i Hercegovini 59%. Prema podacima UN-a, u Bosni i Hercegovini siromašno je svako šesto domaćinstvo, 15% stanovništva je apsolutno siromašno (Siromaštvo u Bosni i Hercegovini, 2025: Pošast koja pogađa više od milijon ljudi). Najnoviji podaci iz zemalja u procesu proširenja o udjelu stanovništva u riziku od siromaštva nakon socijalnih transfera kreću se 27,9% na Kosovu, Bosni i Hercegovini 27,7%, Albaniji 22%, Sjevernoj Makedoniji 21,8 %, Crnoj Gori 20,3 %, i Srbiji 19,9 %, svi su veći nego u EU, gdje je udio u 2024. iznosio 16,2%. Paritet kupovne moći po stanovniku (PPP) je još jedna mjera životnog standarda koja uzima u obzir troškove života u zemlji (Slika 7.) Taj broj možemo koristiti kako bismo uskladili iznose BDP-a po glavi stanovnika za razlike u nivoima cijena među zemljama (Usporedba Slovenije, Hrvatske i Zapadnog Balkana u 2023.).



Slika 7. Uporedni pokazatelji paritet kupovne moći po stanovniku u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana
Izvor: autorica uradila prema izvoru, Usporedba Slovenije, Hrvatske i Zapadnog Balkana u 2023.

Socijalne teme u našoj zemlji su potpuno potisnute u stranu, s obzirom na apsolutnu dominaciju tzv. nacionalnih tenzija i proizvodnje prijetućih konflikata. Oko 60-80 % nezaposlenih živi u siromaštvu, ovisno o nivou podrške koju primaju doznake od institucija ili članova porodica koji rade u inostranstvu. Socijalnu situaciju stanovništva na neki način ublažavaju doznake iz inostranstva koju djeca šalju roditeljima kako bih mogli preživjeti. Bosna i Hercegovina po veličini naše dijaspor je druga u Evropi i to je ono što na indirektni način održava tzv. socijalni mir, gdje se o tome ne vodi računa. Iz Helsinškog odbora za ljudska prava upozorili su da, prema međunarodnim standardima 80% penzionera 65+ i gotovo polovina djece <15 godina živi u siromaštvu.

U 3,4 % domaćinstva djeca mlađa od 15 godina nemaju mesni obrok bar jednom dnevno. Velika većina djece jede tri obroka dnevno, ali 2,2 % porodica nije u stanju bar jednom dnevno priuštiti voće i povrće. U gotovo 3% domaćinstava djeca ne posjeduju novu odjeću, a imaju samo po jedan par obuće. Razlog je, nedostatak novca. Gotovo 13 % domaćinstava ne može priuštiti mesni, pileći, riblji obrok ili vegetarijansku zamjenu svaki drugi dan. U nedostatku novčanih sredstava s finansijskim poteškoćama u plaćanju stanarine, režija i rata za stambeni ili drugi kredit suočava se 8,5% domaćinstava, dok 13 % njih ne može priuštiti mesni obrok barem svaki drugi dan (Izvještaj o socijalnoj uključenosti GI, 2023.).

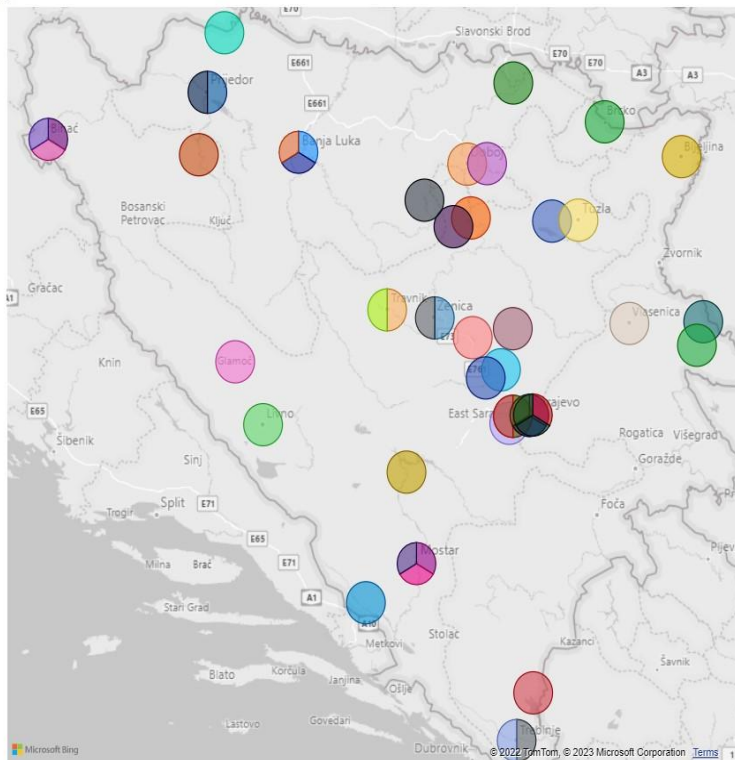
Pravilna ishrana je osnovni preduslov da se neka bolest ne pojavi, odnosno ona je preduslov da se neka bolest lakše liječi kada se pojavi (Nezirović, S., & Sivac, A., 2018, str. 120-121). Siromašno stanovništvo u Bosni i Hercegovini, uslijed nedostatka novčanih sredstava, sve više je izloženo nepravilnoj ishrani, gladi, bolesti i ekološkim problemima. Kad se analiziraju nezaposlenost, niske plate i mirovina, bijeda i neimaština, nije pretjerano reći da u našoj zemlji, široki slojevi stanovništva (u koje, naravno, ne spadaju političari i biznismeni kapitala upitnog porijekla) ne znaju što će danas ili sutra jesti.

Iako je pravo na hranu jedno od univerzalnih ljudskih prava, ono nije prepoznato kroz zakone o socijalnoj zaštiti, a javne kuhinje su još uvijek osnovni tip pomoći za pružanje besplatnih toplih obroka osobama u potrebi. U Bosni i Hercegovini ima 54 javne kuhinje za podjelu besplatnih obroka, pri čemu se 35 objekata (64,8 %) nalazi u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine (FBiH), 18 objekata (33,3 %) u entitetu Republika Srpska (RS) i 1 objekt (1,8%) u Brčko Distriktu BiH (Slika 8., Tabela 3.).

Mapa javnih kuhinja u Bosni i Hercegovini

Naziv javne kuhinje:

- Centar Fenix-Narodna kuhinja, Sanski Most
- Centralna kuhinja Crvenog križa Kantona Saraj...
- Crveni križ grada Mostara
- Crveni krst Bileća
- Glamoč
- Gradska narodna kuhinja Zenica
- H.O. Merhamet-regionalni odbor Sarajevo
- Hleb života - Hrišćansko humanitarno udruže...
- Imaret Trebinje
- "Iskra" Novi Grad
- JAVNA KUHINJA „MERHAMED“ RO MAGLAI
- Javna kuhinja Crveni krst Banja Luka
- Javna kuhinja Crveni krst Teslić
- Javna kuhinja grada Bijeljine
- Javna kuhinja Jedan obrok dnevno Doboj Istok
- Javna kuhinja Merhamet Breza
- Javna kuhinja Obrok ljubavi- Mozaik prijateljst...
- Javna kuhinja Srpske humanitarne udruge "Do...
- Javna kuhinja Visoko
- M.D.D. „Merhamet“ Narodna kuhinja
- MDD Merhamet-Javna kuhinja, Banja Luka
- Merhamet Javna kuhinja Tuzla
- Merhamet javna kuhinja Zenica
- Merhamet-Javna kuhinja Jablanica
- MFS-EMMAUS - Javna kuhinja



Slika 8. Prostorni razmještaj Javnih kuhinja u Bosni i Hercegovini

Izvor: <https://www.undp.org/bs/bosnia-herzegovina/news/53-javne-kuhinje-sirom-bih-hrane-18000-ljudi>

Tabela 3. Zastupljenost javnih kuhinja prema administrativnom uređenju u Bosni i Hercegovini

FBiH Kantoni	Javne kuhinje	FBiH Kantoni	Javne kuhinje	RS Regije	Javne kuhinje	BDBiH Organizovana prehrana	Javne kuhinje
BPK	1	TK	4	Prijedorska	5	Brčko Distrikt BiH	1
HNK	4	PK	1	Bijeljinska	6		
KS	9	USK	4	Dobojska	5		
Kt 10	2	ZHK	1	Is. Sarajevo	1		
SBK	2	ZDK	7	Trebinjska	1		
		Ukupno:	35		18		1

Izvor: autorica uradila tabelarni pregled na osnovu izvora, Razvojni program UN-a u Bosni i Hercegovini (UNDP) 2023 Mapiranje javnih kuhinja u Bosni i Hercegovini, Analitički izvještaj str.17 i 18. <https://www.undp.org/bs/>

Broj korisnika u **54** javne kuhinje je **18.529** osoba. Najzastupljenije ugrožene kategorije društva među korisnicima javnih kuhinja su penzioneri, nezaposleni, samohrani roditelji, osobe s poteškoćama u razvoju, te pripadnici romske populacije. Prema izvještaju UNDP za Bosnu i Hercegovinu zastupljenost određenih starosnih grupa u javnim kuhinjama u Bosni i Hercegovini je sljedeća: 0-14 godina 81,6%, od 15-64 godine- 95,9 % i preko 65 godina-89,9 % (Mapiranje javnih kuhinja u Bosni i Hercegovini, Analitički izvještaj, <https://www.undp.org/bs/bosnia-herzegovina>, str.12.). U opštini Lukavac je otvorena i prva dječja javna kuhinja 2018., koja ima oko 500 korisnika, te prva baby javna kuhinja i besplatan baby shop u Bratuncu 2021.godine (Baby javna kuhinja i besplatan baby shop). Mnogi siromašni stanovnici, osim što posjećuju javne kuhinje, dobivaju pakete pomoći u hrani, lijekovima, higijenskim potrepštinama na dnevnoj, sedmičnoj ili mjesečnoj bazi od humanitarnih organizacija

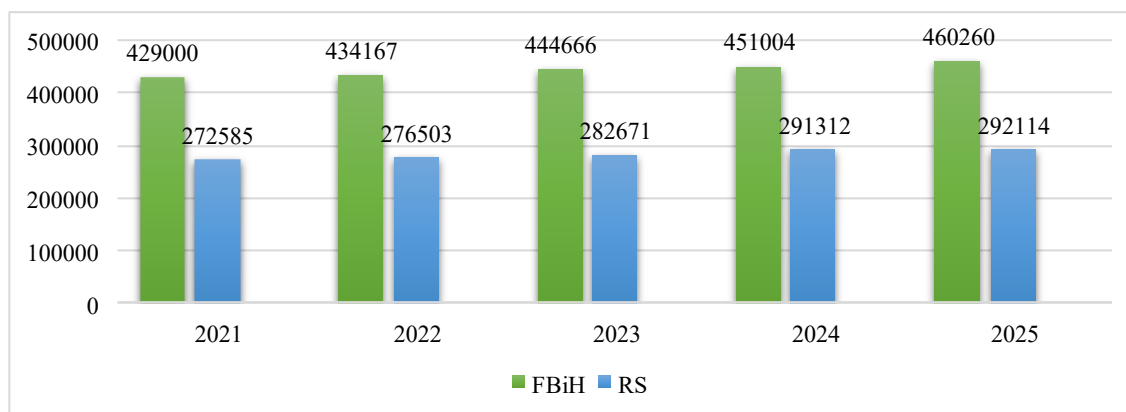
Crvenog križa, Caritasa, Merhameta, Pomozi.ba i drugih kako bi nekako preživjeli još jedan dan, sedmicu ili mjesec.

Starenje stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine

Podaci o stvarnom stanju starijeg stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine nakon posljednjeg popisa stanovništva iz 2013.godine do danas nisu dovoljno analizirani po godinama. Stoga slika nije sistematična i sve obuhvatna. Mnoga područja uopšte se ne prate kroz redovnu statistiku ili posebna istraživanja, kao što su potrebe starijih osoba za zdravstvenom zaštitom, njihovo građansko učešće, materijalna deprivacija, subjektivno blagostanje, barijere u mobilnosti, pristup različitim socijalnim uslugama itd. Stanovništvo Bosne i Hercegovine danas po svojim obilježjima spada u: ostarjelo, slabo vitalno, nisko fertilno, pa time i slabo reproduktivno. Biološka regresija daje jasan pečat dobnoj strukturi. Prosječna starost stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini je 45,7 godina. Zbog ubrzanog starenja, sadašnja prosječna životna dob, mogla bi premašiti prosjek od 50 godina, slika starenja stanovništva u Bosne i Hercegovine nije svijetla (Nezirović,S.,2024.).

Penzioni sistem

Penzioni sistem je dio sistema sigurnosti, odnosno, dio socio-ekonomskih politika koji služi za osiguravanje socijalne zaštite za sprječavanje rizika od siromaštva u slučaju starosti i invalidnosti rada. Jako važan dio ekonomskog, socijalnog i finansijskog sistema Bosne i Hercegovine čini penzioni sistem. Na ovaj sistem, osim ekonomskih, bitno utiču demografske promjene. Penzije su ekonomska kategorija jer predstavljaju štednju radno aktivnog stanovništva za starost. S druge strane, penzije su i socijalna kategorija jer predstavljaju prihode starih ljudi koji nisu u stanju da zarađuju za život. Odnos broja penzionera i broja aktivnih osiguranika u Bosni i Hercegovini je gotovo izjednačen što ukazuje na ekonomsku neodrživost penzijskog sistema. Prema zvaničnim pokazateljima 2025.godine u Bosni i Hercegovini ima 752.374 penzionera (Agencija za statistiku, 2025). Penziju za mjesec Avgust 2025.godine u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine, je primilo 460.260 korisnika, (Fond PIO/MIO FBiH, 2025.) u Republici Srpskoj, 292.114 korisnika (Fond PIO Republike Srpske, 2025.). (Slika 9.) U Brčko Distriktu 13.039 korisnika od toga su 7.451 penzioneri RS i 5.588 penzioneri FBiH (Statistički podaci Brčko Distrikta). U Bosni i Hercegovini broj penzionera je i dalje u stalnom porastu. Odnos broja penzionera i broja aktivnih osiguranika je gotovo izjednačen što ukazuje na ekonomsku neodrživost penzijskog sistema.



Slika 9. Uporedni pokazatelji broja penzionera u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 2021.-2025.

Izvor: Autorica uradila tabelarni pregled na osnovu izvora Fond PIO/MIO FBiH i Fond PIO RS.

Postojeći javni sistem penziono-invalidskog osiguranja u Bosni i Hercegovini, suočen je s problemom nedovoljnih finansijskih sredstava za izvršenje nastalih obaveza prema penzionerima. Nedovoljno izdvajanje sredstava u penzioni sistem, ovu kategoriju stanovništva, starije često siromašne ljude izlaže

riziku da postanu nova ugrožena grupa. Na ovaj sistem, osim ekonomskih, bitno utiču i demografske promjene.

Iako se očekuje da penzioni sistem bude održiv u srednjoročnom periodu, u dugoročnom periodu će biti potrebne reforme. Prosječan omjer bruto penzije i plate je među najnižima u regiji (Analiza stanja socijalne zaštite u Bosni i Hercegovini, World Bank Open Knowledge Repository 2025.). Zbog niskih novčanih primanja (penzija) koje nisu dovoljne za pokriće osnovnih životnih troškova ekonomska situacija umirovljenika u prosjeku nije povoljna, uglavnom većina ove populacije za potrebe vlastitog domaćinstva, ekonomsku aktivnost usmjerava u ruralnu poljoprivrednu proizvodnju.

Bolesti stanovništva kao posljedica slabe zdravstvene i socijalne zaštite

Kao posljedica siromaštva i slabe socijalne zaštite stanovništva javljaju se različite vrste bolesti. Najčešći uzročnici smrti su posljedica srčanih oboljenja i moždanog udara, što je kontinuirani trend u posljednjih 15 godina na globalnom nivou. Vodeći uzroci umiranja stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine su: kardiovaskularna oboljenja 53,8 %, maligne neoplazme 21 %, endokrina i metabolička oboljenja s poremećajima u prehrani 5,5 %. Od oboljenja iz ovih grupa godišnje umire više od 3/4 od ukupnog broja umrlih. Među vodećim zaraznim bolestima najviše je respiratornih: gripa/bolesti slične gripi, varicele, streptokokna angina, TBC respiratornog sistema, morbili i druge hronične bolesti, mentalne bolesti, potom bolesti kardiovaskularnog sistema, ali i karcinomi uzimaju danak (Najveći rizici za zdravlje stanovništva u Bosni i Hercegovini su kardiovaskularne i mentalne bolesti, dijabetes, 2025.). Duhan konzumira 44,1% odraslih, alkohol 28,8 %, oko 21,2 % odraslih je pretilo, a tjelesno aktivno je samo 24,6 % stanovnika (Zdravstveno stanje stanovništva i zdravstvena zaštita u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine 2020. godina). Iako većina osoba starije životne dobi ima zdravstveno osiguranje, njihov pristup uslugama zdravstvene zaštite nije zadovoljavajući, posebno u ruralnim sredinama, dok je s druge strane njihov pristup zdravstvenoj zaštiti i lijekovima ograničen zbog niskog dohotka ili niske dostupnosti usluga. Kapaciteti medicinskog kadra su znatno manji od prosjeka zemalja Evropske Unije, što za posljedicu može da ima otežan i nepravovremen pristup pacijentu. Kontinuirano je povećavanje troškova u sektoru zdravstva, tako su izdaci u 2022. godini iznosili skoro 4 milijarde KM od čega su 69% bili javni, a 31 % privatni. To je za 236 milijona KM više nego prethodne godine (Agencija za statistiku BiH, 2024, demagogija i socijalne statistike, statistika nacionalnih zdravstvenih računa).

Kontinuirano povećanje izdataka se jednim dijelom može objasniti i starenjem stanovništva, a i činjenicom da liječenje postaje „skuplje“ uvođenjem novih tehnologija i većeg spektra laboratorijskih nalaza, te rasta indeksa cijena. Na temelju obrade najnovijih podataka UN za 2025. procjenjuje se da Bosna i Hercegovina ima 3.140.095 stanovnika. Prema podacima iz World Population Reviewa, objavljenim krajem 2022. godine očekivani životni vijek u prosjeku iznosio je 75 godina, za žene 77, muškarce 73 godine. Ipak, rijetki su stanovnici u ovoj zemlji da 60. rođendan dočekaju bez zdravstvenih tegoba (Najveći rizici za zdravlje stanovništva u BiH su kardiovaskularne i mentalne bolesti, dijabetes, 2025.).

Sistem socijalne zaštite stanovništva

Socijalna zaštita iz perspektive ljudskih prava odnosi se na sisteme socijalne sigurnosti i odgovornost države za sigurnost i blagostanje svojih građana. U pravnom sistemu u BiH tradicionalno socijalna zaštita je tretirana kao uži dio socijalne sigurnosti. Pojam “socijalna zaštita” na nivou EU zamjenjuje i istovremeno obuhvata stare pojmove kao što su: socijalna sigurnost, socijalno osiguranje i socijalna pomoć. U užem smislu definicija socijalne pomoći predstavlja skup naknada i usluga koje trebaju osigurati egzistencijalni minimum ljudima u stanju privremene ili trajne socijalne potrebe, polazeći od provjere njihova imovnog stanja (Gradašćević Sijerčić, J., 2020). Cilj sistema socijalne zaštite je da određenim, najugroženijim grupacijama stanovništva, pruži odgovarajuću pomoć i osigura pristup istoj, odnosno da pruži pravu pomoć, pravu osobu, u pravo vrijeme i na pravi način. Kroz sistem socijalne zaštite potiče se i socijalna uključenost najugroženijih pojedinaca i društvenih grupa (Nužnost reformiranja sistema socijalne zaštite u Bosni i Hercegovini, 2021).

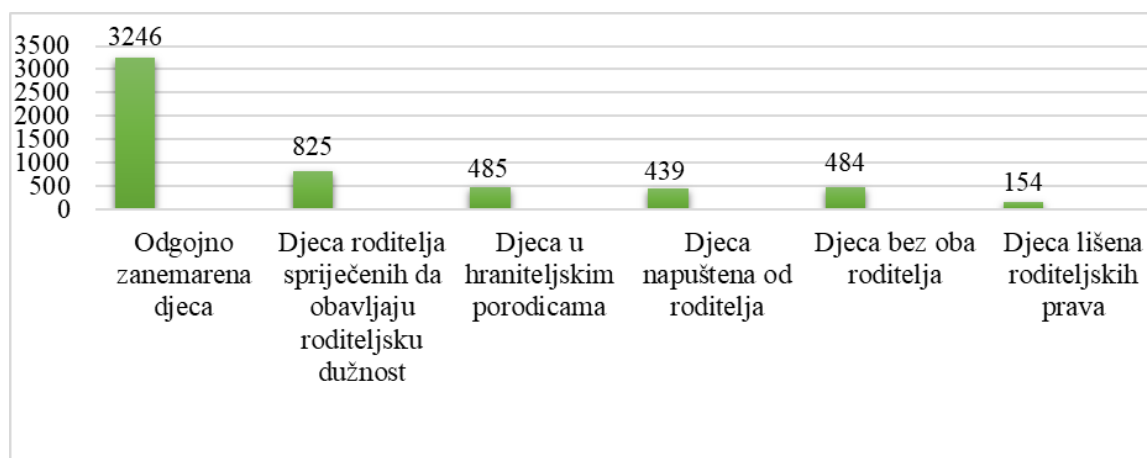
U Bosni i Hercegovini djeluje 112 centara za socijalni rad u kojima je zaposleno 1.791 osoba. U Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine postoje 22 službe socijalne zaštite, dok u drugom entitetu Republika Srpska ima 11 centara koji djeluju u opštinama. U Brčko Distriktu ne postoji centar za socijalni rad već samo jedan Pododjel u okviru Odjela za zdravstvo. Broj intervencija u 2023. godini iznosio je 541.019 (Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, 2023. Socijalna zaštita BHAS, Sarajevo, Tematski bilten 07).

Tabela 4. Broj centara za socijalni rad prema administrativnom uređenju u Bosni i Hercegovini

Godina	FBiH	RS	BDBiH	Bosna i Hercegovina
2018.	59	50	1	110
2019	59	51	1	111
2020	59	51	1	111
2021	59	52	1	112
2022	59	52	1	112
2023	59	52	1	112

Izvor: Autorica uradila tabelarni pregled na osnovu izvora, Agencija za statistiku BiH, 2023 Socijalna zaštita BHAS Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, TB07 Tematski bilten, Thematic Bulletin ISSN 1840-104X Social Welfare. /https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Bilteni/2023/SOC_00_2022_TB_1_BS.pdf, str.19.

Pravo na socijalnu zaštitu osigurava se pružanjem usluga socijalne zaštite u vidu novčane pomoći, osposobljavanja za život i rad, podrške u izjednačavanju mogućnosti djece i omladine sa smetnjama u razvoju, zbrinjavanja u hraniteljsku porodicu itd. Prema pokazateljima 2023. godine jedan od oblika socijalne zaštite primalo je 500.769 korisnika, od toga 393.513 (78,58 %) su punoljetni korisnici od 46-59 godina s većim brojem žena i 107.256 (21,42%) maloljetni korisnici od 7-14 godina gdje prednjače osobe muškog pola. Prema kategorijama 160.597 (40,8 %) korisnika nedostaju prihodi za izdržavanje, 46.684 (11,86 %) su osobe sa smetnjama u psihičkom i fizičkom razvoju, 43 043 (10,9%) osobe kojima je potrebna socijalna zaštita, hronično bolesne osoba 3,6 % i 2,8 % stare osobe bez porodičnog staranja. Starateljstvo nad punoljetnim osobama u 2023. godini, imalo je 5087 osoba. Od ovog broja 2.167 osoba je od 51-70 godina. Kada su u pitanju maloljetni korisnici od 7-14 godina od 107.256 u stanju različitih socijalno-zaštitnih potreba je 36.227 (34 %) ugroženih porodičnom situacijom 43.292 (40 %) i maloljetnih lica sa smetnjama u psihičkom i fizičkom razvoju 14.907 (14 %) (Vijeće ministara, Bosna i Hercegovina, Direkcija za ekonomsko planiranje, 2024, Izvještaj o socijalnoj uključenosti, godišnji izvještaj 2023.). (Slika12.)



Slika 12. Kategorije djece u stanju socijalne potrebe u Bosni i Hercegovini 2023.god.

Izvor: Autorica uradila na osnovu izvora, Agencija za statistiku BiH 2024., Socijalna zaštita 2018-2023.godine, 07 Tematski bilten

Sistem socijalne zaštite djece i porodica s djecom u Bosni i Hercegovini je organizovan kroz zakone o socijalnoj zaštiti, dječjoj zaštiti i porodične zakone i provodi se putem Centara za socijalni rad i ustanova socijalne zaštite u Federaciji BiH, te Javnog fonda za dječju zaštitu u entitetu RS.

Ljudska prava

Građanska, politička, ekonomska, socijalna i kulturna prava svakog pojedinca su propisana Ustavom Bosne i Hercegovine, međunarodnim ugovorima ili konvencijama koje je BiH potpisala, kao i zakonima (Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova BiH). Djeca, žene, mladi, osobe s invaliditetom, starije osobe izbjeglice i raseljena lica svakodnevno se susreću s brojnim izazovima u pogledu ostvarivanja svojih prava. Najveći broj žalbi odnosi se na povrede građanskih i političkih prava, prava u pravosuđu i upravi, ekonomskih, socijalnih i kulturnih prava, kršenju prava djece, svih oblika diskriminacije, povrede prava lica lišenih slobode, povrede prava osoba s invaliditetom, nacionalnih i vjerskih prava. Podaci kojima Institucija ombudsmana raspolaže u vezi s nasiljem u porodici zasnivaju se na pojedinačnim žalbama zaprimljene u periodu od 2019. godine, pa do 2024. godine (Tabela 5.)

Tabela 5. Žalbe građana BiH upućene Instituciji ombudsmana u periodu 2019.- 2024. godina

Nasilje u porodici	
Godina	Broj predmeta
2019.	1
2020	7
2021	6
2022	1
2023	6
2024.	7

Izvor: Institucija ombudsmana za ljudska prava Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025: Specijalni izvještaj o pojavnim oblicima, mehanizmima zaštite i prevencije od nasilja u porodici u Bosni i Hercegovini <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ba/Dokumenti.aspx?id=28&tip=4&lang=BS,str.36>.

Iskazani broj predmeta nasilja u porodici u ovoj bazi podataka ne oslikava stvarno brojčano stanje ovih predmeta, s obzirom na to da pojedini predmeti u kojima je kršenje prava „nasilje u porodici“, u zavisnosti o označenoj odgovornoj strani (sud, tužilaštvo, policija, centar za socijalni rad i dr.), registruju i u okviru drugih odjeljenja, npr. Odjeljenje za praćenje građanskih i političkih prava, Odjeljenje za praćenje ljudskih prava u oblasti pravosuđa i uprave, Odjeljenje za praćenje ostvarivanja ekonomskih, socijalnih i kulturnih prava, te Odjeljenje za praćenje ostvarivanja prava djece. Institucija ombudsmana bilježi 7.087 obraćanja građana. Prema godišnjem Izvještaju za 2024. godinu, zbog povrede građanskih prava ova institucija je zaprimila 2.792 žalbe građana. Najveći rast prijava zabilježen je u oblasti prava djeteta i to za 30 % u odnosu na prethodnu godinu (Institucija ombudsmana za ljudska prava Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025).

Djeca u Bosni i Hercegovini se svakodnevno suočavaju s brojnim izazovima u ostvarivanju svojih prava. Do danas, reformski naponi u Bosni i Hercegovini su se većinom fokusirali na reakcije pravosuđa u slučajevima maloljetničkog prijestupništva. Podaci o djeci žrtvama krivičnih djela često nisu sveobuhvatni, niti su lako dostupni. Međutim prema podacima Visokog sudskog i tužilačkog vijeća Bosne i Hercegovine raste broj. Bosna i Hercegovina ima obavezu poduzeti sve što je neophodno kako bi se izričito zabranilo fizičko kažnjavanje djeteta u svim sredinama, uključujući i porodicu. Problem vršnjačkog nasilja je i dalje jako izražen, u većini slučajeva radi se o verbalnom nasilju u osnovnim i srednjim školama. Vršnjačko nasilje se najčešće dešava u školi, za vrijeme odmora, u učionicama, na hodnicima ili u dvorištu.

Žene u Bosni i Hercegovini se svakodnevno suočavaju s brojnim izazovima u ostvarivanju svojih prava. Agencija za ravnopravnost polova Bosne i Hercegovine ističe da je među prioritarnim oblastima

sprečavanje i suzbijanje nasilja na osnovu pola, uključujući nasilje u porodici i trgovinu osobama, rad, zapošljavanje i pristup ekonomskim resursima, javni život i donošenje odluka te jačanje saradnje na regionalnom i međunarodnom nivou. Bosna i Hercegovina je usvojila važne pravne standarde za ravnopravno učešće žena i muškaraca u donošenju odluka i vodstvu, koji su u skladu s međunarodnim ugovorima o ljudskim pravima. Iako je udio žena u stanovništvu Bosne i Hercegovine veći od 50 %, njihovo učešće u vlasti je daleko ispod toga.

Mladi u Bosni i Hercegovini se suočavaju s različitim problemima. Prioriteti mladih ljudi se ogledaju u obrazovanju, zapošljavanju, zdravlju, socijalnom statusu, participaciji u javnom životu, kulturi, sportu i slobodnom vremenu. Kroz ove prioritete određuje se ekonomski i socijalni položaj mladih. Ova problematika ima dugoročne posljedice na ekonomiju, društvo i budućnost zemlje. Vrlo prioritetan i poseban izazov treba da budu strategije i politike zadržavanja mladih u Bosni i Hercegovini koji sve više emigriraju (Parlamentarna skupština Bosne i Hercegovine, 2023).

Osobe s invaliditetom su i dalje vrlo marginalizirana kategorija zbog nedovoljnih zakona kojima bi se riješila njihova prava i zbog njihove isključenosti iz procesa donošenja odluka. Posebno su žene i djeca s invaliditetom u riziku. Zakoni u oba entiteta nalažu veću fizičku pristupačnost objektima, zdravstvenim uslugama, obrazovanju i transportu za osobe s invaliditetom, ali primjena zakonskih odredbi varira u zemlji. Pored civilnih invalida i civilnih žrtava rata postoji i kategorija ratnih vojnih invalida (RVI). Prema posljednjim podacima Agencije za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine za 2023. godinu, bilo je 61.591 osoba sa smetnjama u fizičkom i psihičkom razvoju, od čega 46.484 punoljetnih i 14.907 maloljetnih korisnika (Agencija za statistiku BiH, Socijalna zaštita 2018-2023.).

Izbjeglice i raseljene osobe i dalje se susreću s nedovoljnim uslovima za održivi povratak, nedostaju jednaka prava zapošljavanja, obrazovanja i ostvarivanja, zdravstvene i socijalne zaštite u mjestima povratka. Prema pokazateljima u 2023. godini bilo 91.223 raseljene osobe, 32.003 raseljena lica s mjestom boravka u Federaciji BiH, 59.155 raseljenih lica s mjestom boravka u Republici Srpskoj i 65 raseljenih lica s mjestom boravka u Brčko Distriktu BiH.

U cilju poboljšanja kapaciteta u oblasti ljudskih prava u Bosni i Hercegovini u narednom periodu potrebno je usuglasiti sveobuhvatni strateški dokument u oblasti zaštite i promocije ljudskih prava i suzbijanja diskriminacije. Kao izazov stoji unapređenje sistema koordinacije sa svim nadležnim nivoima vlasti uključujući i regionalnu saradnju i saradnju s međunarodnim institucijama. U tom smislu naročito se ističe potreba razvoja sistema razmjene i prikupljanja podataka, odnosno monitoringa, evaluacije, budžetiranja i planiranja u oblasti ljudskih prava.

ZAKLJUČAK

Ključni faktori socijalno-geografskih problema u Bosni i Hercegovini su politički procesi i ekonomski uslovi što su potvrdili rezultati analize na osnovu postojeće nezaposlenosti i neaktivnosti radno sposobnog stanovništva, socijalne isključenosti stanovništva, siromaštva, bolesti stanovništva zbog slabe zdravstvene i nedovoljne socijalne zaštite, teško održiv penzion sistem i ugrožena ljudska prava. Rezultati potvrđuju da su socijalne teme u našoj državi potpuno potisnute u stranu, s obzirom na apsolutnu dominaciju tzv. nacionalnih tenzija i proizvodnje prijeteci konflikata. Socijalnu situaciju stanovništva na neki način ublažavaju doznake iz inostranstva koju djeca šalju roditeljima kako bih mogli preživjeti. Bosna i Hercegovina po veličini naše dijaspe je druga u Evropi i to je ono što održava na čudan, indirektni način tzv. socijalni mir, gdje se o tome ne vodi računa. Vlast u našoj zemlji se mora angažovati na sveobuhvatnoj reformi sistema socijalne zaštite i uklanjanja diskriminacije u odnosu na međunarodne standarde koji vrijede za ovu oblast.

Nužno je u fokus planiranja i ostvarivanja socijalnih prava staviti potrebe korisnika, a prava po osnovu statusa postepeno reducirati do potpunog uklanjanja. Od posebne je važnosti uspostaviti sistem minimuma standarda socijalne zaštite koji će važiti na cijelom prostoru Bosne i Hercegovine, čime će se

ukloniti praksa diskriminacije po teritorijalnom principu. Jedan od strateški identificiranih ciljeva je *manjiti siromaštvo i socijalnu isključenost stanovništva*.

Postoje mogućnosti poboljšanja efikasnosti u programima zaštite djece, sprječavanje i ublažavanje siromaštva. Da bi se ublažilo siromaštvo, treba djelovati u različitim smjerovima. Strana bi ulaganja u državu značila veliki korak prema povećanju kapitala i dohotka. Javni sektor treba staviti u fokus na ulaganje u zdravstvo i obrazovanje, odnosno u ljudski kapital i infrastrukturu. Ispunjenje ovog cilja u narednom periodu bi imalo bolji položaj ranjivih grupa koje čine: osobe s invaliditetom, Romi, povratnici i interno raseljene osobe, porodice s dvoje i više djece, starije osobe, nezaposleni, niže kvalifikovani radnici, djeca, žene i mladi. Jako važan dio ekonomskog, socijalnog i finansijskog sistema je penziono-invalidsko osiguranje stanovništva. Penzioni sistem u našoj državi suočen je s problemom nedovoljnih finansijskih sredstava za izvršenje nastalih obaveza prema penzionerima, zbog čega su neophodne reforme postojećeg sistema penziono-invalidskog osiguranja, jer su penzije među najnižim u Evropi, a i u regiji. Nedovoljno izdvajanje sredstava u penzioni sistem, ovu kategoriju stanovništva izlaže riziku da postanu nova ugrožena grupa. Na ovaj sistem, osim ekonomskih, bitno utiču i demografske promjene.

U cilju poboljšanja kapaciteta u oblasti ljudskih prava u Bosni i Hercegovini u narednom periodu potrebno je usaglasiti sveobuhvatni strateški dokument u oblasti zaštite, promocije ljudskih prava i suzbijanja diskriminacije. Kao izazov stoji i unapređenje sistema koordinacije sa svim nadležnim nivoima vlasti uključujući i regionalnu saradnju i saradnju s međunarodnim institucijama. U tom smislu naročito se ističe potreba razvoja sistema razmjene i prikupljanja podataka, odnosno monitoringa, evaluacije, budžetiranja i planiranja u oblasti ljudskih prava. Agencija za ravnopravnost polova Bosne i Hercegovine ističe da je među prioritetnim oblastima sprečavanje i suzbijanje nasilja na osnovu pola, nasilja u porodici i trgovinu osobama, pravo na rad, zapošljavanje i pristup ekonomskim resursima, javni život i donošenje odluka. U najvećem riziku su djeca iz socijalno ranjivih porodica, čiji su roditelji nezaposleni i koji nemaju osnovne finansijske resurse, djeca s invaliditetom, romska djeca i djeca koja žive u disfunkcionalnim porodicama izložena nasilju u porodici i često su socijalno isključena. Osiguranje uslova za poboljšanje položaja djeteta i sprovođenje akcionih planova koji se odnose na zaštitu prava djeteta ostaje izazov za naredni period. Najkraće rečeno, da bi se riješilo siromaštvo i ostali problemi, treba pronaći političko rješenje za Bosnu i Hercegovinu. Bez političkog rješenja nema ni rješenja za siromaštvo ni bilo što drugo. Svi politički akteri u Bosni i Hercegovini, uključujući lokalne zajednice i nevladine organizacije, trebaju činiti znatno veće napore kako bi povećali interes i angažovanost mladih za posao i osnivanje porodice, a kao najveći izazov ostaje i dalje jače povezivanje institucija za zapošljavanje s potrebama tržišta rada.

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THE INNER PERIPHERY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ALONG THE INTER-ENTITY BOUNDARY LINE AS A LEGACY OF DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT

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Abstract: The Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) reorganized the internal territorial structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with long-lasting spatial and development effects. This paper examines the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) as an internal administrative line that contributes to uneven development and socioeconomic marginalisation. Using a composite Geographical Marginalisation Index (GMAR), distance-based spatial analysis and GIS mapping, the study analyses patterns of marginalisation in municipalities located along the IEBL. The results show that marginalisation levels are highest in areas closest to the boundary, particularly within the buffer of five kilometres. These areas display features of inner peripherality, including demographic ageing, weak economic, social and institutional capacity. The paper introduces the concept of marginalisation friction zones to describe micro-spatial areas where sharp development contrasts occur across short distances. The findings highlight the IEBL as an important factor influencing long-term spatial inequality and rural decline in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: Inter-Entity Boundary Line, inner periphery, regional disparities, friction zones.

INTRODUCTION

The Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) represents a defining moment in the contemporary political and spatial configuration of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ó Tuathail & Dahlman, 2006). Beyond formally ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agreement established a new political and territorial structure that fundamentally reshaped governance arrangements (Bieber, 2006). Dayton thus introduced a post-war constitutional framework and a significantly restructured territorial system whose effects continue to influence development patterns and spatial inequalities (Avdić, 2025). One of the most distinctive spatial outcomes of the Dayton framework is the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), an internal administrative line defining the territorial and institutional framework of the country's two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, with the Brčko District functioning as a separate administrative unit (Raos, 2010; Ajanović et al., 2024). Although according to its constitutional foundation IEBL does not function as a border, it nevertheless represents a significant administrative feature with spatial implications. Its presence is clearly reflected in socioeconomic and demographic patterns, where pronounced differences and functional discontinuities can be observed (Avdić et al., 2022).

Originally conceived as a geopolitical construct during peace negotiations, the IEBL was subsequently materialised through post-war administrative restructuring. This process involved the creation of new municipalities, many of which were delineated along ethnic and political criteria rather than historical,

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functional or economic considerations (Avdić et al., 2020). As a consequence, the post-Dayton territorial configuration is associated with pronounced spatial, demographic and functional discontinuities, reflected in divided settlements and municipalities, disrupted transport corridors and fragmented functional regions (Remenyi et al., 2016). At the same time, entity-based governance arrangements contributed to the fragmentation of administrative and statistical systems (Zangenberg & Pilviö, 2020), further complicating development planning and policy coordination (RESPA, 2021; OECD, 2025). These processes can affect on everyday accessibility patterns, institutional performance and local development potential, particularly in areas situated along the IEBL.

In order to conceptually frame these processes, this study draws on the notion of inner peripheries. Inner peripheries are commonly understood as territories located within national borders that experience limited access to services and weaker socioeconomic performance, despite not being geographically remote in the classical sense (ESPON, 2017; Kluza, 2020; Blečić et al., 2023; De Leo, 2023). Such areas are characterised by persistent geographical and socioeconomic disparities, while often retaining environmental and sociocultural potential that remains neglected due to weak integration into cohesion and rural development policies (de Toni et al., 2021). Although the concept has gained prominence in European spatial policy debates (ESPON EGTC, 2024), it remains analytically underdeveloped, particularly with regard to the spatial formation mechanisms through which internal territorial arrangements produce long-term marginalisation, as well as the implications for territorial cohesion and sustainability (Copus et al., 2017; de Toni et al., 2021; Churski et al., 2025).

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, research on peripherality has predominantly focused on border regions, emphasising their geometric marginality, expressed through distance from national and regional centres, and functional marginality related to institutional weakness and infrastructural deficits (Avdić, 2025). By contrast, internal administrative boundaries have received considerably less attention as independent drivers of spatial inequality (Marić et al., 2024). This gap is particularly significant given that the IEBL cuts across previously integrated settlement systems, functional regions and everyday mobility spaces, thereby generating a specific form of internal peripherality.

Within this conceptual and empirical context, the present study conceptualises zone along the IEBL as a distinct form of inner periphery, a spatially fragmented area characterised by demographic weakening and economic underperformance, emerging as an internal outcome of the post-Dayton administrative reorganisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this paper, IEBL is treated as a transitional spatial zone where development gaps and functional breaks are clearly visible. The analysis adopts a combined quantitative-qualitative perspective, focusing on zones of spatial continuity and discontinuity in demographic, economic and broader social dimensions, influenced by an administrative arrangement that is largely unique in the regional context.

More specifically, the study examines demographic and socioeconomic disparities among municipalities located along the IEBL and assesses their position within the national spatial structure through comparison with municipalities outside this zone. To avoid simple binary (inside/outside) comparison, the analysis introduces *marginalisation friction zones*, defined as micro-spaces of pronounced spatial and socioeconomic discontinuity. Mapping these zones highlights patterns that are consistent with the effects of post-conflict territorial restructuring, including uneven access to public services and constrained development prospects in municipalities along the IEBL. At the same time, spatial analysis in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains inherently challenging due to overlapping administrative layers, fragmented governance structures and inconsistencies in statistical and territorial units. Differences in institutional structures and data systems across the entities make it harder to compare indicators and understand spatial patterns, particularly along the IEBL, where the administrative line overlaps with everyday functional space.

Spatial scope of research

The spatial scope of the research is defined by a 5 km buffer zone along the IEBL. Municipalities or cities are included in the core study area when their municipal centre is located within 5 km of the IEBL, reflecting their direct exposure to post-Dayton administrative organisation and its associated spatial effects. Based on this criterion, the analysis covers 41 municipalities situated within the immediate IEBL zone. This buffer-based approach is used to capture areas where the influence of the IEBL is most pronounced in everyday socio-spatial processes, including accessibility to services and local development opportunities. Communities located within this zone are assumed to experience stronger spatial discontinuities and development constraints compared to those situated further away. For analytical and statistical purposes, additional distance-based sub-zones were applied. These include distance categories of 0-3 km, 3-5 km, 5-10 km and above 10 km from the IEBL. While inferential statistical tests were conducted using these multiple distance classes, the primary spatial focus of the study remains on municipalities located within the 5 km buffer zone, as this area most clearly reflects the spatial effects of post-conflict and post-transition territorial restructuring.

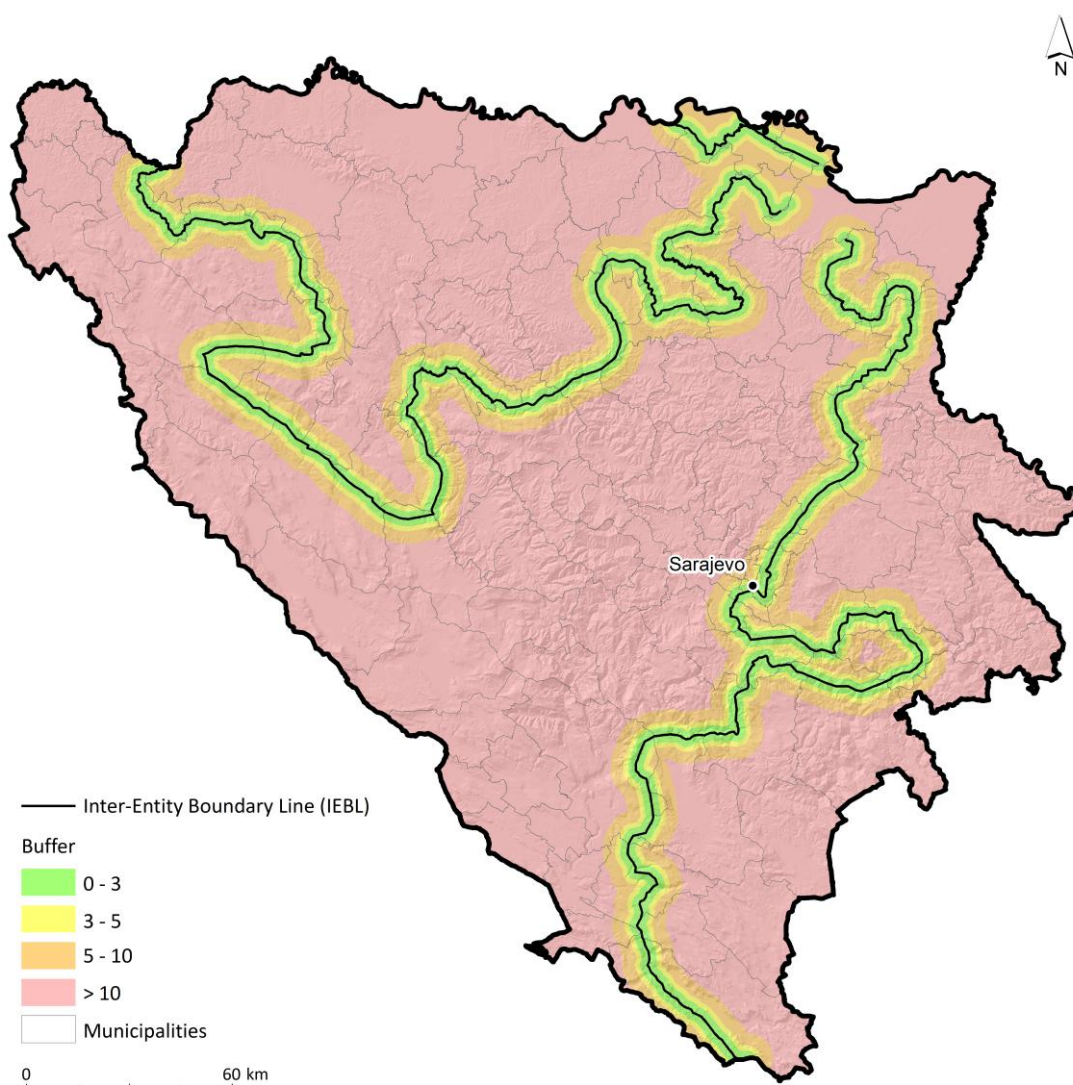


Figure 1. IEBL buffer zones used for spatial and statistical analysis

Source: Authors

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a combined spatial and statistical approach to examine the relationship between post-conflict territorial arrangements and patterns of spatial marginalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The methodological framework is centred on the analysis of a composite *Geographical Marginalisation Index* (GMAR), which was developed and presented in earlier work (Marić & Avdić, 2023; Avdić, 2025). The Marginalisation Index is designed to capture marginalisation as a multidimensional condition by combining spatial and non-spatial indicators across eight dimensions: demographic, administrative, transport, economic, health, educational, cultural and physical-geographic marginalisation. By combining these dimensions into a single composite measure, the index enables a systematic comparison of municipalities and provides an integrated assessment of cumulative disadvantage across the national territory. The empirical analysis is based on data collected for the period 2013-2022, covering official results from the 2013 population census and subsequent annual estimates and administrative statistics available up to 2022.

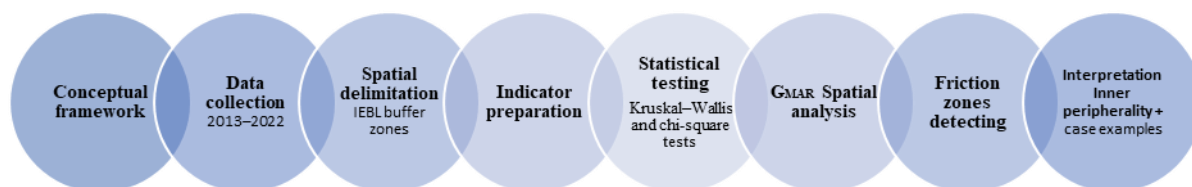


Figure 2. Methodological phases

The methodological framework follows clearly defined research phases, ensuring transparency and allowing the analytical procedure to be replicated (Figure 2). To examine whether municipalities located along the IEBL differ significantly from those situated further away, the study applies a set of inferential statistical tests. First, a Kruskal-Wallis (k-samples) test is employed to assess differences in Marginalisation Index values across four distance-based groups defined by their proximity to the IEBL (0-3 km, 3-5 km, 5-10 km, and above 10 km). In addition, a chi-square test of independence is applied to examine differences in the distribution of marginalisation classes between municipalities located within the immediate IEBL zone (defined as a buffer of up to 5 km) and those situated outside this buffer. The test is conducted using the proportional shares of municipalities classified into five marginalisation levels:

- non-marginalised areas (1),
- low marginalisation (2),
- moderate marginalisation (3),
- high marginalisation (4)
- very high marginalisation (5).

This approach allows for a categorical comparison of marginalisation intensity and provides evidence on whether proximity to the IEBL is associated with a significantly different structure of marginalisation levels compared to municipalities not directly exposed to the boundary. The choice of tests follows common practice in studies of spatial and socioeconomic disparities where Kruskal-Wallis is suitable for comparing non-normally distributed index values across several distance groups (Hasan et al. 2024), while chi-square is appropriate for testing whether the distribution of marginalisation classes differs between the IEBL buffer and the rest of the country (McHugh, 2013).

The statistical analyses are complemented by a spatial examination of Marginalisation Index values using GIS-based methods. Particular attention is given to the identification of *marginalisation friction zones* along the IEBL, defined as micro-spaces of pronounced spatial and socioeconomic discontinuity where development conditions shift abruptly across short distances. These zones are identified based on spatial contrasts in index values across the IEBL (with at least a two-level difference in marginalisation)

and the clustering of unfavourable marginalisation outcomes. The aim of this spatial analysis is not only to identify general patterns, but also to highlight concrete territorial examples that may serve as potential case studies. By combining statistical analysis with spatial examination, the methodology makes it possible to explore how post-conflict and post-transition political and administrative arrangements have contributed to widening socioeconomic differences, increasing spatial fragmentation and weakening functional links between areas, particularly in territorially sensitive spaces along the IEBL.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spatial definition of the inner periphery

Preliminary analysis indicated that the marginalisation index does not follow a normal distribution (Shapiro-Wilk test, $p < 0.001$). Consequently, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to examine differences in marginalisation levels between distance-based groups. The results reveal statistically significant differences in the marginalisation index across buffer zones ($H = 141.985$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that proximity to the IEBL is associated with varying levels of marginalisation. Mean rank values show the highest marginalisation levels in settlements located closest to the boundary, particularly within the first 3 and 5 km. Marginalisation levels decrease with increasing distance, reaching the lowest values in settlements located more than 10 km from the IEBL (*mean rank* = 2929.21).

Table 1. Kruskal-Wallis test of settlement-level GMAR values by distance from the IEBL

Buffer zone (distance from IEBL)	N (settlements)	Mean rank (GMAR)
Up to 3 km	793	3635.96
3 to 5 km	346	3524.47
5 to 10 km	770	3043.83
Over 10 km	4227	2929.21

Post hoc comparisons indicate that significant differences exist between most distance categories ($p < 0.001$), with two notable exceptions. No statistically significant difference was found between settlements located within 0-3 km and those within 0-5 km of the IEBL, suggesting a high degree of socioeconomic homogeneity within the immediate boundary zone. Similarly, no significant difference was observed between settlements located beyond 10 km and those within the broader 0-10 km category ($p = 0.085$), indicating a diminishing boundary effect at greater distances. These findings point to the existence of a spatial threshold effect, whereby the influence of the IEBL on marginalisation is most pronounced within the first 5 km from the boundary. Settlements within this zone share similar socioeconomic conditions and levels of cumulative disadvantage, forming a spatially coherent area of elevated marginalisation. Beyond this threshold, marginalisation levels progressively converge towards national patterns, suggesting that the direct impact of the IEBL weakens with distance. Following the identification of the 5 km buffer as the zone of strongest IEBL influence, further analysis concentrates on demographic and socioeconomic indicators within this area, using official statistics to evaluate deviations from national averages. Overall, the results point to a core zone of inner peripherality within 5 km of the IEBL, where weakened functional links tend to be the strongest. However, the influence of the IEBL is not uniform across space. Its effects depend on local conditions and proximity to stronger development centres, which explains why some areas are more affected than others.

Demographic and socioeconomic patterns within the 0-5 km IEBL buffer zone

Following the identification of the 0-5 km buffer as the zone most strongly influenced by the IEBL, the analysis proceeds with a focused examination of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of municipalities located within this area. The results are based on official statistical indicators and are interpreted through direct comparison with municipalities located outside the IEBL zone, i.e. the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*population change 1991-2013 and 2013-2022; natural change 2015-2022;*

crude birth rate; share of youth population; share of elderly population; average age; share of tertiary-educated population; employed women ratio; average pension; average net monthly wage; unemployed-to-employed ratio; trend in the number of pupils; and urbanisation rate). From this broader set of variables, Table 2 presents those indicators that exhibit the largest differences in mean values between the two groups and thus most clearly differentiate the 0-5 km IEBL zone from the rest of the country.

Table 2. Demographic and socioeconomic differences between municipalities in the 0-5 km IEBL zone and other municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Indicator	IEBL zone (0–5 km)	Other municipalities	Difference
Population change 1991-2013	-4,022	-6,684	+2,662
Crude birth rate (‰, 2015-2022)	6.39	7.58	-1.19
Share of young population (0-14, %)	10.93	12.72	-1.79
Share of elderly population (65+, %)	23.09	20.32	+2.77
Average age (years)	41.87	40.27	+1.60
Average pension (KM)	385.6	457.2	-71.6
Pupil population trend 2013-2022 (%)	-19.6	+260.3	-279.9
Urban population share (%)	23.4	33.0	-9.6

As shown in Table 2, municipalities located within the 5 km IEBL zone systematically deviate from national demographic and socioeconomic patterns across indicators closely related to long-term population dynamics, age structure and socioeconomic capacity. With regard to population change between 1991 and 2013, the IEBL-adjacent municipalities record a smaller absolute population decline compared to other municipalities. This apparent advantage, however, primarily reflects a lower initial population base rather than more favourable demographic trajectories and does not contradict the broader pattern of demographic weakening observed in the post-war period. Demographically, the IEBL-adjacent municipalities exhibit pronounced population ageing, reflected in a higher share of elderly population (65+), a lower proportion of young residents (0-14) and a higher average age compared to the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These patterns are accompanied by lower crude birth rates and a strongly negative trend in the number of pupils between 2013 and 2022, indicating advanced stages of demographic contraction, declining reproductive potential and sustained out-migration from the immediate boundary zone. At the same time, the pupil trend indicator outside the IEBL zone should be interpreted with caution, as it is highly sensitive to small baseline values and influenced by a small number of extreme cases that inflate the mean; the median indicates a comparable decline in both groups (IEBL: -20.0%; other municipalities: -20.5%).

Socioeconomic indicators reveal a similarly unfavourable profile. Municipalities within the 0-5 km buffer record substantially lower average pension levels and a markedly lower share of urban population, pointing to long-term economic vulnerability. Together, these characteristics suggest a reduced capacity for socioeconomic renewal and adaptation. The systematic divergence of these municipalities from broader national trends supports their interpretation as a spatially distinct zone of inner peripherality shaped by cumulative and mutually reinforcing structural disadvantages.

Spatial gradient of marginalisation intensity along the IEBL

To further examine whether proximity to the IEBL is associated not only with differences in marginalisation levels, but also with a distinct structural composition of marginalisation intensity, a chi-square test of independence was applied. The test compares the distribution of municipalities across five marginalisation classes at the national level and within the 5 km IEBL buffer zone.

Table 3. Distribution of marginalisation classes at the national level and within the 5 km IEBL buffer zone

Level of marginalisation	National level (%)	IEBL buffer (0–5 km) (%)
1st class (non-marginalised)	7.4	4.3
2nd class (low marginalisation)	19.4	15.9
3rd class (moderate marginalisation)	24.1	34.3
4th class (high marginalisation)	31.9	31.5
5th class (very high marginalisation)	17.2	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0

As shown in Table 3, the marginalisation structure of zone within the 5 km IEBL buffer differs from the national pattern. Non-marginalised and low-marginality areas are less represented in the IEBL buffer (4.3% and 15.9%, respectively) compared to the national level (7.4% and 19.4%), while municipalities classified as moderately marginalised are substantially more prevalent within the first zone (34.3% versus 24.1%). The shares of high and very high marginalised municipalities remain comparable. The chi-square test confirms that these differences in marginalisation class distribution are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 526.43$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that municipalities located within the immediate vicinity of the IEBL exhibit a distinct marginalisation profile compared to the national structure. This finding suggests the presence of a spatial gradient of marginalisation intensity in relation to proximity to the IEBL.

The statistical differences identified in Table 4 are consistent with the spatial patterns illustrated in Figure 3. The maps reveal a pronounced spatial structuring of marginalisation intensity along the IEBL, with a clear concentration of settlements belonging to higher marginalisation classes in its immediate vicinity. Areas characterised by low or non-existent marginalisation (GMAR classes 1-2) are markedly less prevalent along the IEBL, while settlements classified within high and extreme marginalisation classes (GMAR 4-5) form spatially continuous belts adjacent to the boundary. This contrast visually highlights a marginalisation gradient, with areas closer to the IEBL showing higher marginalisation levels and more pronounced spatial clustering of unfavourable development conditions.

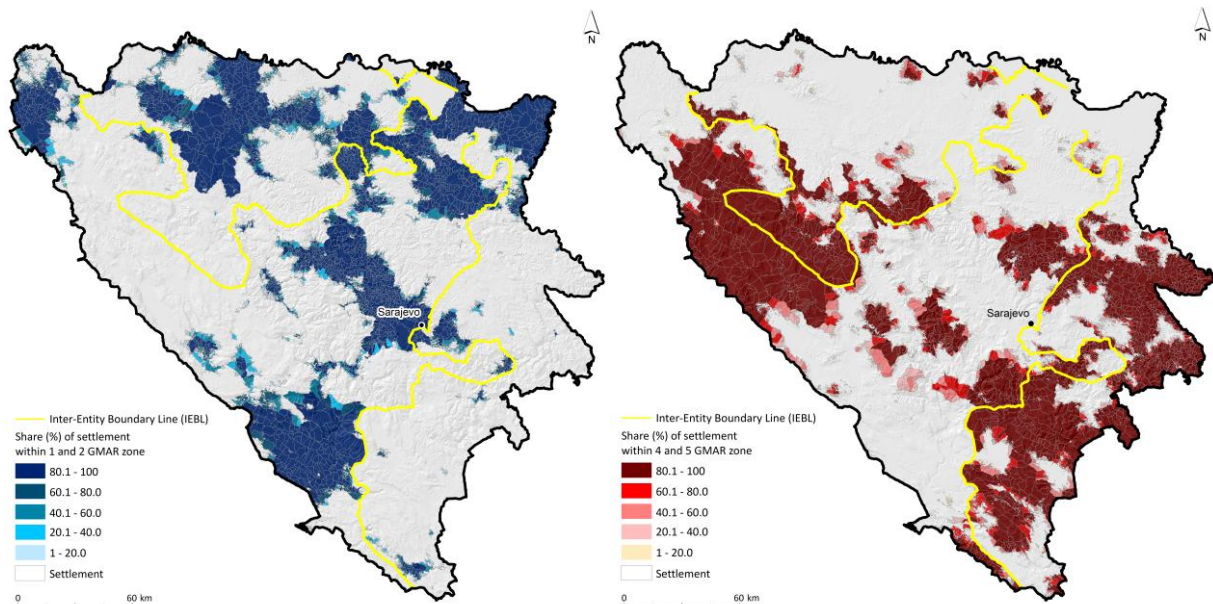


Figure 3. Low marginalisation (GMAR 1-2) versus high marginalisation classes (GMAR 4-5)

Source: Avdić, 2025

Based on Figure 3, areas characterized by low levels of marginalisation largely coincide with the main spatial axes of economic development. The primary axis connects the Sarajevo-Zenica urban corridor with Herzegovina to the south, as well as with northern Bosnia, which forms a separate development corridor extending in an east – west direction. The most important road networks interlink these zones,

further reinforcing their functional integration. In general, these areas are located farther from IEBL, with a few exceptions, such as the contact zone between Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo and the broader Doboj region. Conversely, highly marginalised areas are predominantly concentrated in the western and eastern parts of the country. Cartographic analysis indicates that the marginalisation zone in mountainous areas along the IEBL extends well beyond the analyzed 5-kilometer buffer, which has partially influenced the overall results of the study.

Administrative Fragmentation and the Emergence of Marginalisation Friction Zones along the IEBL

The spatial patterns identified in the previous sections cannot be fully understood without considering the post-Dayton administrative restructuring and its long-term territorial consequences. The establishment of the IEBL was accompanied by a profound reorganisation of local administrative units (Raos, 2010), particularly through the creation of a large number of small municipalities along the boundary zone (Avdić et al, 2022; Ajanović et al., 2024).

Following the Dayton Peace Agreement, 30 new municipalities were formed along the IEBL (Avdić et al., 2022), often through the division of pre-war municipalities based on newly defined political and ethnic lines (Ó Tuathail & Dahlman, 2006). This process resulted in administratively fragmented territories characterised by limited economic bases and pronounced demographic fragility (Kadušić et al., 2025). For instance, according to census data (2013), municipalities such as Kupres (RS), Petrovac, Istočni Drvar and Istočni Mostar record extremely small populations in 2013 (ranging from fewer than 100 to just over 300 inhabitants), very low population densities (under 10 people per km²) and exceptionally high average ages, exceeding 45 years and reaching 53.7 years in the case of Kupres (RS). Similarly, larger also sparsely populated municipalities such as Trnovo (FBiH), Ribnik and Oštra Luka combine extensive territorial size with very low population density (4–14 inhabitants per km²) and advanced ageing, indicating demographic depression and long-term socioeconomic vulnerability.

Beyond the creation of new municipalities, the IEBL disrupted long-established functional and spatial linkages between urban centres and their rural hinterlands (Bieber, 2006). More than 300 settlements were divided by the entity line, producing fragmented settlement systems (Avdić et al., 2022). In many cases, transport corridors, infrastructure networks, service catchment areas and daily mobility patterns were abruptly interrupted by the establishment of the IEBL (Marić et al., 2024). These disruptions reflect the broader post-Dayton political–territorial restructuring, which largely followed wartime frontlines and institutionalised ethnically defined administrative units, producing a fragmented spatial and governance framework (Campbell, 1999; Bieber, 2006). As a result, previously integrated urban systems and their rural hinterlands were disrupted, leading to administrative duplication, institutional inefficiencies and reduced access to public services, labour markets and social infrastructure. Parts of this neighborhood became part of Republika Srpska, administratively incorporated into the city of Istočno Sarajevo, where two markedly different social and urban development patterns have emerged within a relatively small area. A similar situation can be observed in the town of Trnovo, located in the wider Sarajevo area.

Within this broader context of administrative fragmentation and functional disintegration, the analysis identifies the emergence of what is termed *marginalisation friction zones*. These zones represent micro-spatial areas of pronounced socioeconomic and spatial discontinuity located along the IEBL. They function as break points where the legacy of the Dayton administrative arrangement generates abrupt transitions from relatively more favourable development conditions to distinctly unfavourable ones over very short spatial distances. Marginalisation friction zones are not defined solely by elevated levels of marginalisation, but rather by the sharp contrast and sudden shifts in marginalisation intensity between neighbouring settlements or municipalities. In this sense, they capture a relational and process-based dimension of marginalisation, reflecting the friction produced by administrative borders imposed onto previously integrated functional spaces. The identification of marginalisation friction zones was based on a combined spatial analysis of GMAR marginalisation classes, proximity to the IEBL and the

detection of localised discontinuities in marginalisation intensity. By focusing on abrupt changes in marginalisation classes across short distances along the boundary, these zones were mapped as areas where spatial inequality is most clearly and sharply articulated.

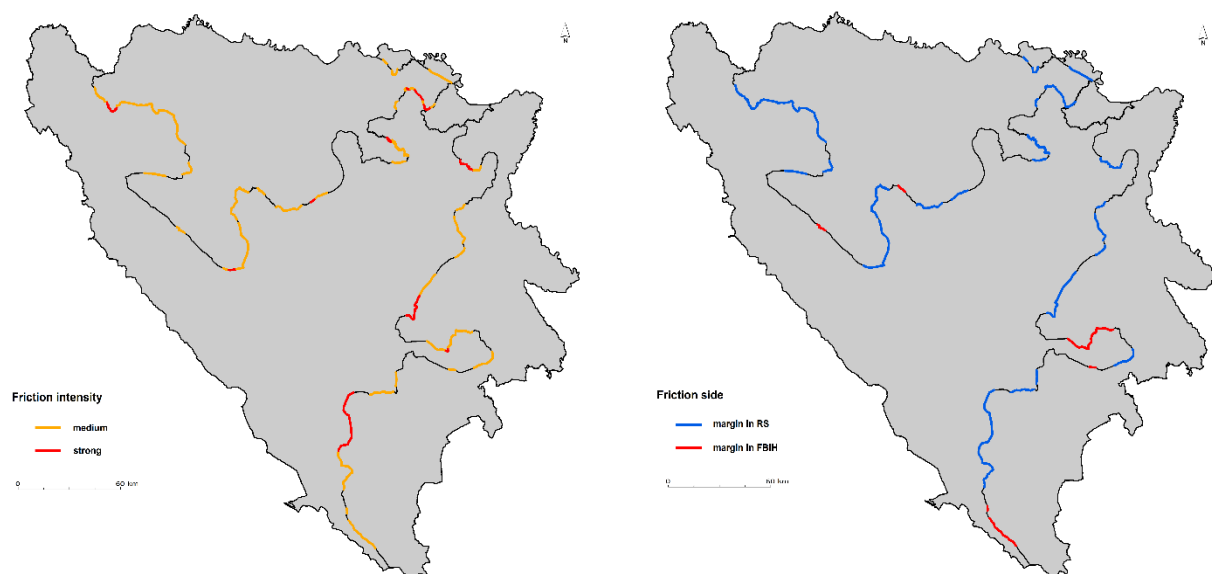


Figure 4. Intensity and sidedness of friction zones along the IEHL
Source: Authors

To illustrate how marginalisation friction zones manifest in concrete spatial settings, the following examples present selected locations along the IEHL, where sharp socioeconomic and functional contrasts are visible over very short distances. Selected high-resolution satellite images (Google Earth) are provided in the Appendix for reference. The images illustrate boundary-adjacent areas where the administrative line disrupts natural gravitational relations towards nearby development centres, contributing to weakened functional connectivity and intensified processes of marginalisation and peripheralisation. In many cases, this is reflected in the gradual passivisation of local areas and the emergence of features associated with so-called *left-behind places* (Fuerst-Bjeliš et al., 2025). Some of these zones include:

- Kupres (RS), consisting of three villages, noted as a municipality with the most unfavorable age and educational structure of its population (Appendix 1);
- Jezero, the largest completely abandoned village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, located between Zenica (FBiH) and Teslić (RS) (Appendix 2);
- similar disparity pattern between Gradačac (FBiH) and Pelagićevo (RS) (Appendix 3);
- marginalised municipality of Lopare (RS), contrasted with the nearby macro-regional center of Tuzla (FBiH) (Appendix 4);
- stark contrast in developmental patterns between the historical core of Sarajevo (municipality of Stari Grad, FBiH) and the neighboring mountainous municipality of Istočni Stari Grad (RS) (Appendix 5);
- almost entirely depopulated corridor connecting the Bosnian Podrinje Canton with the rest of the Federation of BiH (Appendix 6);
- municipality of Istočni Mostar (RS), as spatially and economically dysfunctional area (Appendix 7).

The selected cases serve as illustrative reference points for understanding how the legacy of post-Dayton territorial reorganisation translates into micro-spatial discontinuities that are not always apparent in aggregated statistical analyses. These examples suggest that marginalisation friction zones are not limited to one type of landscape or settlement system. They appear both in remote rural settings and in

peri-urban contexts, but in each case the significant feature is the same, sharp contrasts in development conditions across short distances near the IEBL. The cases also indicate that these contrasts often combine demographic erosion with weak service access, pointing to a cumulative mechanism rather than a single driver. The identified friction zones also provide a strong basis for future qualitative research. While the statistical and spatial analysis highlights where sharp contrasts occur, qualitative case studies could explore how these discontinuities are experienced in everyday life, through access to services, mobility patterns, institutional interactions and local development strategies. Such research would help clarify whether IEBL-adjacent disparities are primarily shaped by administrative fragmentation, demographic decline, weak infrastructure or a combination of these factors. Conceptually and empirically, friction zones provide a grounded basis for understanding the lived dimension of inner peripherality along the IEBL. At the same time, these zones are also suitable settings for exploring perceived marginalisation and inner peripherality (Fischer-Tahir & Naumann, 2013; Kühn, 2015; Angelucci & Vittori, 2023), which should not be overlooked, since they are closely linked to place attachment and to the ways residents interpret everyday access, opportunities and belonging.

Although the analysis provides consistent evidence of spatial disparities along the IEBL, several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis combines census-based indicators with more recent administrative statistics, which can affect how precisely current dynamics are captured in rapidly changing areas. The use of aggregated municipal-level data may also mask differences within municipalities, while fixed distance buffers inevitably simplify spatial processes that vary from place to place. As with any composite index, the results are shaped by indicator choice and underlying methodological decisions. Finally, while the findings point to clear spatial links, they do not by themselves prove causality, and they cannot fully capture how these patterns are experienced in everyday life, an aspect that would benefit from follow-up qualitative case studies.

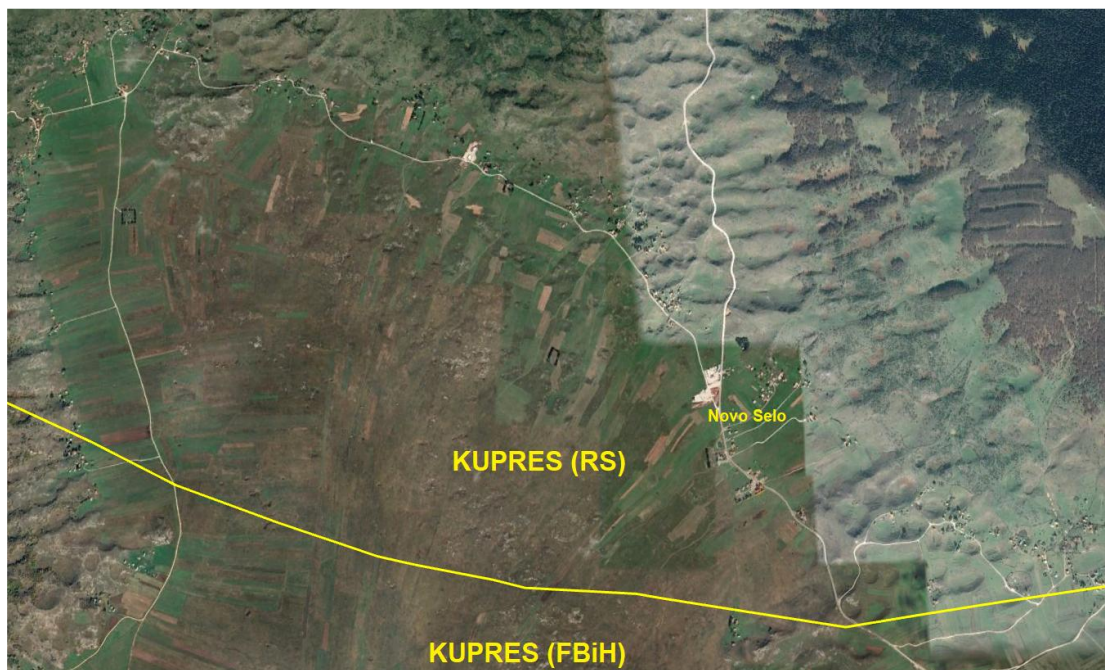
CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) in forming spatial patterns of marginalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By combining a composite marginalisation index (GMAR), distance-based spatial analysis and cartographic sources, the analysis shows how the post-Dayton territorial structure is closely linked to uneven development outcomes along the IEBL. Also there are notable exemptions, the results indicate that settlements located closer to the IEBL in certain aspects tend to experience higher levels of marginalisation, with the strongest effects observed within the first five kilometres from the boundary. This area can be understood as a core zone of inner peripherality, where population ageing, socioeconomic weakening and limited institutional capacity coincide. Marginalisation does not decline gradually with distance, but instead displays clear spatial thresholds, suggesting that the influence of the IEBL weakens only beyond a certain distance.

The findings also highlight the role of small municipalities along the IEBL, which are generally demographically weak. These municipalities face long-term development constraints linked to limited governance capacity. As a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina provides a strong examples of an internal periphery, where rural decline and poor accessibility are concentrated along an internal boundary. In addition, the IEBL cuts across wider functional regions, affecting transport connections, labour markets and service areas. These disruptions contribute to administrative inefficiency and reinforce socioeconomic disparities, creating ongoing challenges for balanced regional development. Overall, the findings suggest that the IEBL functions as a factor that actively shapes spatial inequality within the post-Dayton territorial system. An important contribution of the study is the identification of marginalisation friction zones. These are small-scale areas where sharp differences in marginalisation appear between neighbouring settlements or municipalities. In many cases, the IEBL interrupts natural links to nearby development centres, weakening everyday functional connections. Although the IEBL marks an internal administrative organisation, its influence extends much further into long-term development patterns and socioeconomic differences.

Future research could focus on cases of cross-entity regional cooperation, particularly in areas where transport systems and labour markets extend across the IEBL, but remain institutionally fragmented. In this context, comparative case studies could assess whether restoring or improving connections between neighbouring areas affected by IEBL-related functional disruptions contributes to reducing marginalisation, and which indicators should be prioritised. Another important direction is the reassessment of the long-term sustainability of small municipalities created after Dayton Peace Agreement, especially in relation to demographic trends and socioeconomic capacity.

APPENDICES



Appendix 1. IEBL between municipalities of Kupres (FBiH) and Kupres (RS)
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 2. Abandoned village of Jezero on IEBL between Zenica (FBiH) and Teslić (RS)
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 3. IEBL between Gradačac (FBiH) and Pelagićevo (RS)
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 4. IEBL between Tuzla (FBiH) and Lopare (RS)
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 5. IEBL between Stari Grad Sarajevo (FBiH) and Istočni Stari Grad (RS)
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 6. IEBL forming the corridor between Bosnian Podrinje Canton and the rest of entity of
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Source: Google Earth



Appendix 7. Three parts of municipality of Istočni Mostar (RS), along the IEBL between Mostar (FBiH) and Nevesinje (RS)
Source: Google Earth

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IMPLICATIONS OF THE DAYTON CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KLJUČ (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)

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Abstract: The municipality of Ključ is located in the northwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, within the traditional geographical region of Bosanska Krajina and in the Una-Sana Canton. Ključ is one of the oldest urban centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, first mentioned in historical sources in 1322, and during the medieval Bosnian state it held significant administrative and military importance. Later, during the period of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in the 1980s, Ključ maintained its status as an important socio-economic center and was the largest urban settlement between Bihać and Jajce. At that time, the municipality covered an area of approximately 844 km², and its gravitational sphere extended across a wide area from Manjača and Vrbjani to Bravsko and Vrhpolje, with a strong functional and developmental orientation toward Banja Luka as the regional center.

The war period of 1992–1995 and the constitutional-administrative arrangements established by the Dayton Agreement led to profound spatial-functional, demographic, and socio-economic changes in the former municipality of Ključ. Following the establishment of the inter-entity boundary line and the formation of the municipality of Ribnik, the territory of Ključ was reduced to approximately 362 km², with the loss of part of its population, natural resources, and former gravitational significance. According to the 2013 census, the municipality had 16,130 inhabitants, while projections for 2025 indicate a further pronounced decline in population.

Socio-economic indicators suggest that today Ključ is among the most underdeveloped municipalities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Negative demographic trends are reflected in a declining natural population growth, a negative migration balance, an aging population, and reduced economic activity. Although emigration has traditionally been characteristic of this area, it intensified further in the post-war period. Local perceptions indicate that the standard of living and the position of Ključ within the broader regional context were significantly more favorable before 1992.

The aim of this study is to analyze the implications of the Dayton constitutional-administrative framework on socio-economic conditions at the local level, with a particular focus on the municipality of Ključ. The analysis encompasses demographic changes, the functioning of the healthcare and education systems, forest resource management, environmental protection, and the municipality's opportunities for participation in higher levels of government. The analysis shows that territorial fragmentation and the complex administrative structure impose long-term limitations on development, while individual positive effects, such as trade and small-scale infrastructure projects, remain marginal. These findings contribute to understanding how institutional and spatial reorganization shapes local development in the post-Dayton context. (slightly rephrased for clarity and flow)

Key words: Dayton constitutional arrangement, loss of territory, inter-entity boundary line, depopulation, socio-economic development, Municipality of Ključ, Bosanska Krajina.

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INTRODUCTION

The Dayton Peace Agreement, formally known as the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was signed on December 14, 1995, with the aim of ending the conflict and establishing lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to maintaining political stability, the Dayton Agreement introduced a complex constitutional and legal framework with multi-layered divisions of authority between the state, the entities, the cantons, and local government units. Although the primary goal was to preserve peace, the long-term consequences of this institutional arrangement are particularly visible at the local level, where the complex administrative structure and territorial changes hinder economic development, resource management, and the provision of public services.

The Municipality of Ključ, located in the northwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Una-Sana Canton, represents an example of a local government unit directly affected by the Dayton arrangement. In 1995, its territory was divided by the inter-entity boundary line, and part of its territory was used to form a new municipality – Ribnik (formerly known as Srpski Ključ until 2004). The area of the Municipality of Ključ was reduced by approximately 57% (from around 844 km² to about 362 km²), resulting in the loss of significant forested areas and part of its population. The Dayton arrangement also impacted the health, education, and public administration systems. These changes make Ključ a representative case study for analyzing the negative effects of the Dayton constitutional framework on local socio-economic development. While wartime destruction played a significant role, this study focuses on long-term institutional constraints introduced by the Dayton framework.

The aim of this study is to analyze how the complex constitutional and administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina shapes socio-economic conditions at the local level, with a particular focus on the Municipality of Ključ. The study also contributes to understanding the implications of the Dayton arrangement for small communities, addressing the causes of their challenges and the ways in which the complex institutional structure complicates the daily lives of local residents. It is assumed that territorial reduction, population redistribution, and a complex administrative-political framework negatively affect access to natural resources, public services, and local development.

The research question of this study is: To what extent does the complex constitutional and administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting from the Dayton Agreement, shape socio-economic processes at the local level, with a particular focus on the Municipality of Ključ? The study is based on a case study approach combined with comparative socio-economic analysis of pre- and post-Dayton periods. The paper is structured to first present the sources and methodology, then describe the study area, followed by the results of the socio-economic analysis, then a discussion on the implications of the Dayton arrangement, and finally, a conclusion summarizing the findings.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study encompass demographic and socio-economic indicators of the Municipality of Ključ, as well as the broader context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sources include census results, statistical yearbooks, thematic bulletins on the economy, education, and social services, as well as strategic documents at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Una-Sana Canton, and the Municipality of Ključ. Additionally, the analysis is supported by relevant literature on the implications of the Dayton Agreement, as well as the natural and social characteristics of the municipality, and verified online sources.

The research methodology is based on a combination of comparative and descriptive statistical analyses, tracking changes in socio-economic indicators across two time periods: the first covering relatively favorable conditions up to the early 1990s (baseline), and the second covering the recent period (2013–2025). The analysis includes population structure, employment, economic activity, education, natural resource management, the health system, and local participation in higher levels of government.

Special attention was given to linking changes in these indicators with administrative-territorial changes and the complex institutional framework resulting from the Dayton arrangements, including the establishment of the inter-entity boundary line and the reduction of the municipality's territory. This approach allows for a systematic assessment of trends, identification of key factors shaping the socio-economic conditions of the Municipality of Ključ, and provides a basis for understanding the long-term consequences of a complex constitutional-administrative framework at the local level.

The methodological framework also includes a critical assessment of the data, especially for the recent period, taking into account potential methodological limitations and inconsistencies between sources, thereby ensuring a more accurate interpretation of the results. This approach contributes to a comprehensive and coherent analysis of socio-economic changes in the post-Dayton context.

STUDY AREA

The Municipality of Ključ is located in the northwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, within the traditional region of Bosanska Krajina. Administratively, it belongs to the Una-Sana Canton of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its center is approximately 70 km from Banja Luka, 90 km from Bihać, and 220 km from Sarajevo by road. The main road passing through the center of the municipality connects Ključ with Bihać and Sarajevo, providing relatively good accessibility to larger administrative centers.

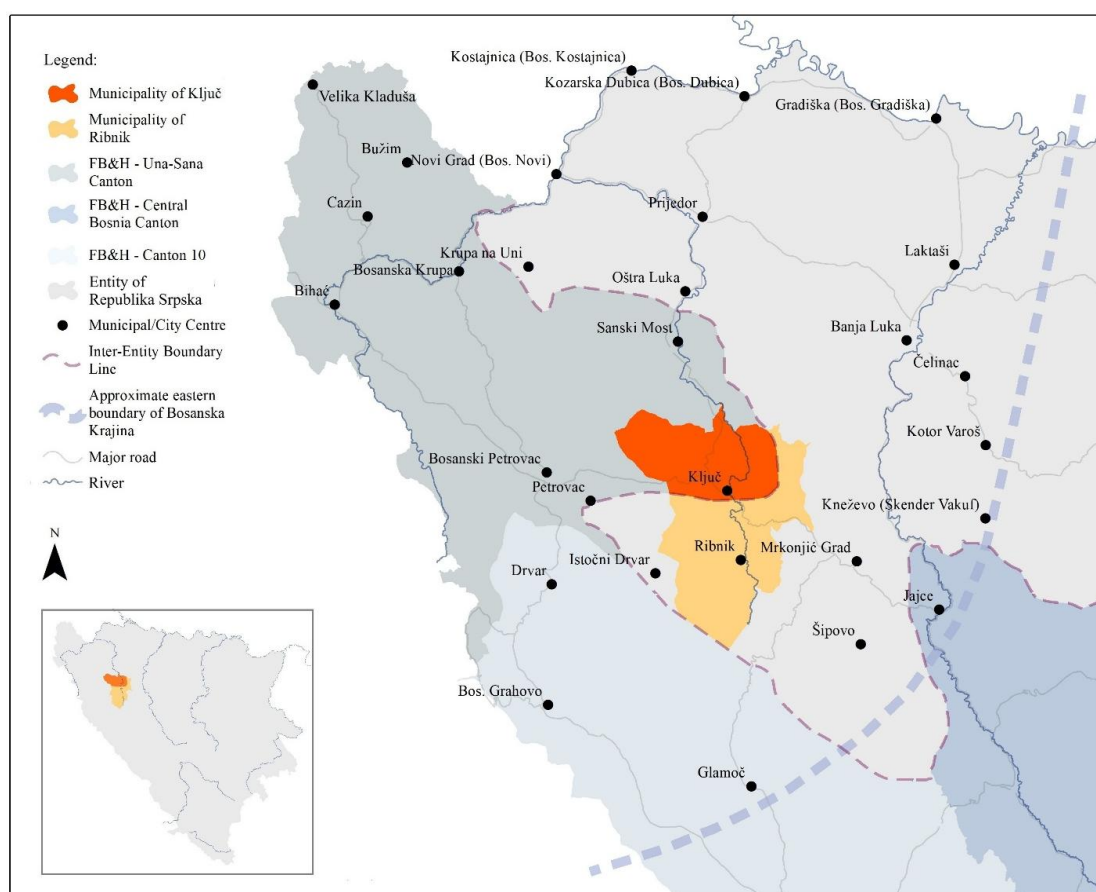


Figure 1. Geographical location of the Municipality of Ključ

Source: authors

In terms of relief, the territory of the Municipality of Ključ is predominantly hilly and mountainous. The Sana and Sanica rivers have shaped valleys that provide more favorable conditions for settlement and agricultural activities compared to the surrounding mountain ranges – Grmeč, Šiša, Čelić Kosa, and

other lower mountains. Mountainous areas are largely forested, representing the most important natural resource for the development of the local economy, while agricultural land is concentrated in the valleys, as well as on plateaus and low hills surrounding them. These natural conditions have significantly influenced the size, distribution, and functions of settlements within the municipality.

The municipality's administrative-political framework further defines its functioning. The reduction of its territory due to the formation of the Municipality of Ribnik (within the entity Republika Srpska) decreased the area of Ključ by approximately 57%, resulting in the loss of part of its population and natural resources. This territorial division directly affects resource management, planning of local development projects, and access to public services.

Today, the municipality includes one urban center and 40 rural settlements, with a total population of 16,130 (2013 census). The urban core of Ključ comprises about one-third of the population. Larger rural settlements include Krasulje and Sanica, which have mixed urban-rural functions, while Biljani Donji and Hadžići stand out among the larger settlements in terms of size and population. Other settlements have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, and the average population density in the municipality is around 45 inhabitants per km².³

The population is predominantly mature and elderly, with a pronounced negative natural growth due to mortality and emigration to urban centers and abroad. Socio-economic indicators, including tax revenues, employment, and education, indicate that the municipality ranks among the least developed in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Economic activity is based on agriculture, services, and small craft and industrial enterprises.

RESULTS

The analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the Municipality of Ključ is based on a comparison of historical and contemporary statistical data, including the population censuses of 1991 and 2013, statistical yearbooks, and thematic and strategic reports on the economy, education, healthcare, and natural resource management. The results presented in this section focus exclusively on the quantitative and structural changes recorded in the observed indicators, without interpretative assessment.

The comparative approach enables the identification of measurable changes that occurred following the Dayton Peace Agreement and the subsequent administrative-territorial reorganization.

Territorial and administrative changes

Before 1995, the Municipality of Ključ covered an area of approximately 844 km². Following the establishment of the inter-entity boundary line and the formation of the Municipality of Ribnik, the territory of Ključ was reduced to approximately 362 km². This represents a reduction of about 57% of the municipality's pre-war territory.

Prior to 1992, the Municipality of Ključ encompassed a broader functional area extending from Manjača and Vrbjani to Bravsko and Vrhpolje. Administrative reorganization resulted in the separation of settlements that had previously been part of a unified municipal territory.

As a consequence of these changes, the current spatial extent of the municipality differs significantly from its pre-war administrative boundaries.

³ Statistika.ba. (n.d.). Population and settlement data for the years 1991 and 2013. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <http://www.statistika.ba/?show=12&id=11509>

Demographic changes

According to the 1991 population census, the Municipality of Ključ had 37,391 inhabitants. The 2013 census recorded a total population of 16,130 inhabitants. This represents a numerical decrease of 21,261 inhabitants, or approximately 57%.

In 1991, the settlements that later became part of the Municipality of Ribnik had a population of 9,107 inhabitants, while the remaining part of today's Municipality of Ključ had 28,284 inhabitants. The comparison of census data indicates that population decline occurred both as a result of territorial separation and within the current administrative boundaries of the municipality.

According to population estimates by the Federal Institute of Statistics, the population of the Municipality of Ključ in mid-2025 was 14,922. These estimates indicate a continued decrease in the total population after 2013.⁴

Natural population change also differs between the observed periods. In 1991, the natural population growth rate was 7.1%.⁵ According to recent estimates, the natural population change rate in 2025 is -3.8%.⁶

Changes are also evident in the age structure of the population. In 1991, the share of young population (0–14 years) was 23.2%, the working-age population (15–64 years) accounted for 69.7%, and the elderly population (65 years and older) for 7.1%. According to the 2013 census, the share of young population was 29.9%, the working-age population 46.8%, and the elderly population 23.3%.⁷ These changes partly reflect differences in census methodology and the effects of post-war population redistribution.

⁴ Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2025c). Unsko-Sanski kanton u brojkama: 2025 izdanje = Una-Sana Canton in Numbers: 2025 Edition, Sarajevo. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/unsko-sanski-kanton.pdf>

⁵ Republic Institute of Statistics (1991, December). Statistički godišnjak Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine = Statistical Yearbook of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: Republic Institute of Statistics

⁶ Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2025c). Unsko-Sanski kanton u brojkama: 2025 izdanje = Una-Sana Canton in Numbers: 2025 Edition, Sarajevo. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/unsko-sanski-kanton.pdf>

⁷ Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2025c). Unsko-Sanski kanton u brojkama: 2025 izdanje = Una-Sana Canton in Numbers: 2025 Edition, Sarajevo. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/unsko-sanski-kanton.pdf>

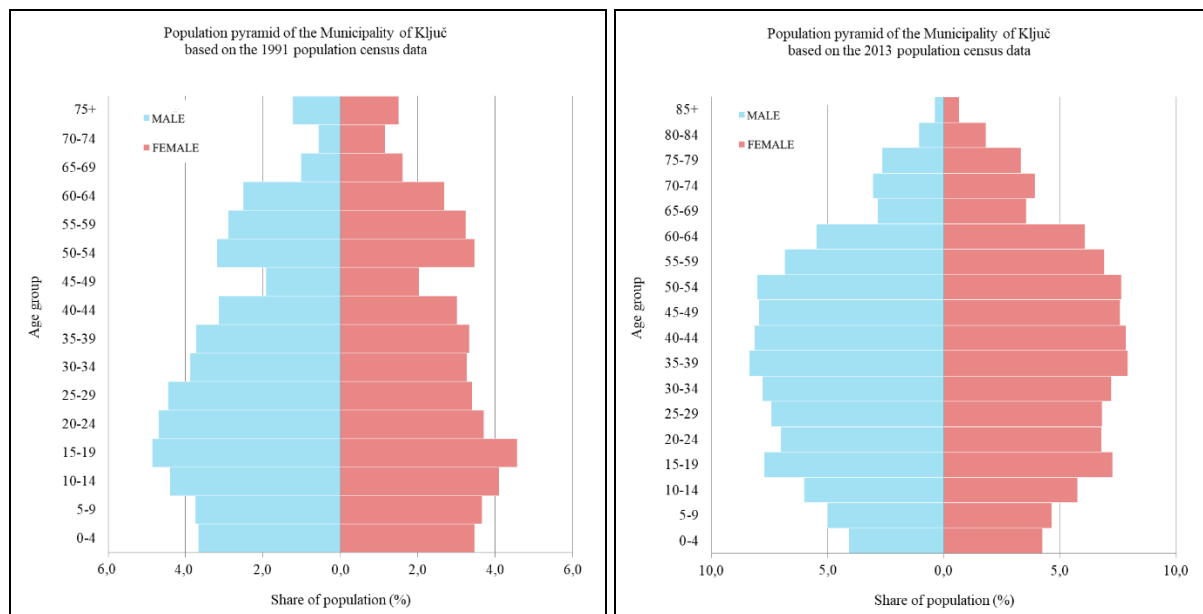


Figure 2. Population pyramids of the Municipality of Ključ in 1991 (left) and 2013 (right)

Source: Authors according to data from: Republic Institute of Statistics (1991, December). *Statistički godišnjak Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* = Statistical Yearbook of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: Republic Institute of Statistics; Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (n.d.). *Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Bosni i Hercegovini: rezultati popisa: Knjige 01 do 08* = Population, Households and Dwellings Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Census Results. Books 01 to 08. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjigePregled.html?lang=bos>

Employment and economic activity

Data on employment show notable differences between the pre-war and recent periods. According to 1990 data, a total of 6,205 persons were employed in the Municipality of Ključ, of whom 5,997 were employed in the public sector and 208 in the private sector. Employment by sector included industry and mining (1,939 employed), forestry (1,105), transport and communications (475), trade (605), and construction (313).⁸ According to available data for the recent period, in mid-2024 the number of employed persons in the municipality was 1,484. For comparison, in 2013 a total of 5,043 persons were recorded as employed. Sectoral employment data are based on administrative records and may include overlaps between categories.

Employment by sector in the recent period shows that the five largest employment sectors are manufacturing industry (832 employees), wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles (826), construction (748), agriculture, forestry and fishing (507), and public administration (313).^{9 10} These data reflect changes in both the volume and sectoral structure of employment compared to the pre-war period.

⁸ Republic Institute of Statistics (1991, December). *Statistički godišnjak Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* = Statistical Yearbook of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: Republic Institute of Statistics

⁹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (n.d.). *Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u Bosni i Hercegovini: rezultati popisa: Knjige 01 do 08* = Population, Households and Dwellings Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Census Results. Books 01 to 08. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjigePregled.html?lang=bos>

¹⁰ Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2025b). *Employment, Unemployment and Wage 2024* (Statistical Bulletin 401). Sarajevo. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Zaposlenostnezaposlenost-i-place-2024.pdf>

Healthcare system

Primary healthcare services in the Municipality of Ključ are provided by the Ključ Health Center and local outpatient clinics. Secondary healthcare services are available at the General Hospital in Sanski Most, while tertiary healthcare services are provided at the Cantonal Hospital in Bihać and clinical centers in Tuzla and Sarajevo. The distance to these tertiary healthcare institutions ranges from approximately 100 to 230 km.

The Clinical Center in Banja Luka, although geographically closer, is not institutionally designated as a referral healthcare facility for residents of the Municipality of Ključ.

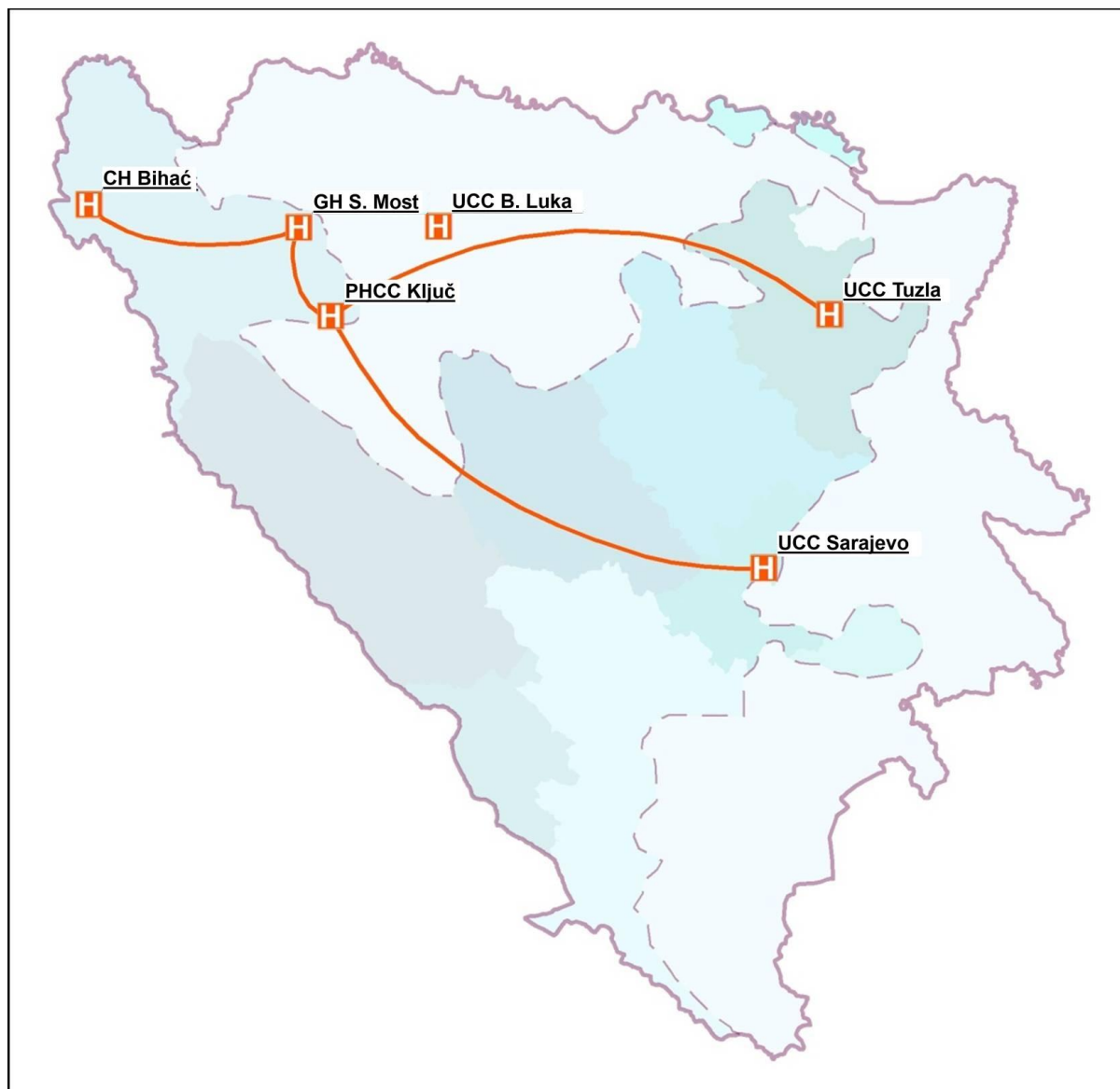


Figure 3. Administrative-territorial orientation of health care services for the population of the Municipality of Ključ (Legend: PHCC – Primary Health Care Center, GH – General Hospital, CH – Cantonal Hospital, UCC – University Clinical Center)
Source: authors

Forest resources and natural resource management

Before the 1992–1995 war, the Municipality of Ključ encompassed extensive forested areas, particularly on the Grmeč and Šiša mountains. Following the establishment of the Municipality of Ribnik, a significant portion of these forested areas became part of the new municipality.

Today, forest management within the Municipality of Ključ is not centralized. Part of the forests, especially those on Grmeč and the Čelić Kosa area, is managed by the branch office of the Sanski Most Forestry Unit – part of the public company “Unsko-Sanske Šume.” The remaining forests within the current territory of the municipality are managed by the Ključ Forestry Administration. This division of management means that the Ključ Forestry Unit does not oversee forests across the entire municipality, which represents an administrative and functional challenge.

Moreover, the forests on Grmeč and Šiša are the most economically valuable in the municipality due to their quality and potential for the timber industry. According to cartographic comparisons and administrative data, forested areas within the present territory of Ključ are estimated to be approximately 70% smaller than in 1991, further limiting local access to natural resources.

Education system

The education system has undergone substantial quantitative changes. In the school year 1990/1991, primary schools in the Municipality of Ključ had 4,772 students, while secondary schools had 1,506 students. In the school year 2024/2025, the number of primary school students was 451, and the number of secondary school students was 178. These figures indicate a significant reduction in the number of students at both educational levels.^{11 12 13}

Higher education is not available within the municipality. Students from Ključ predominantly enroll in universities located in Sarajevo and Bihać, while enrollment in the University of Banja Luka is limited.

Environmental protection and inter-municipal issues

Environmental protection issues include unregulated waste disposal and the existence of a municipal landfill in Ribnik, located near the inter-entity boundary line. This landfill is situated in proximity to settlements within the Municipality of Ključ.

Water resource protection is affected by administrative boundaries. The Okašnica spring, an important water source, is located within another municipality and entity. As a result, responsibility for water protection zones is institutionally divided.

Participation in higher levels of governance

Participation of the Municipality of Ključ in higher levels of government is limited by demographic and economic indicators. Data on fiscal capacity, population size, and employment levels place the municipality among smaller and less economically active local government units within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹¹ Republic Institute of Statistics (1991, December). Statistički godišnjak Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine = Statistical Yearbook of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: Republic Institute of Statistics

¹² Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2024). Primary education 2023/2024 (Statistical Bulletin 378). Sarajevo. Retrieved on 5 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/osnovno-obrazovanje.pdf>

¹³ Institute for Statistics of FBiH. (2025a). Secondary Education 2024/2025 (Statistical Bulletin 398). Sarajevo. Retrieved on 8 February 2026 from <https://fzs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Srednje-obrazovanje.pdf>

Available records indicate the implementation of several small-scale infrastructure projects and an increase in trade and service activities in certain settlements during the recent period.

DISCUSSION

The results presented in the previous section indicate that the socio-economic conditions of the Municipality of Ključ have undergone substantial changes since the early 1990s. While wartime destruction and population displacement represent an important contextual background, the findings suggest that long-term institutional and territorial arrangements introduced by the Dayton Peace Agreement have played a significant role in shaping post-war development trajectories at the local level. The discussion below interprets the observed demographic, economic, institutional, and spatial changes within this broader constitutional-administrative framework.

Territorial fragmentation and functional reorientation

The reduction of the municipal territory by approximately 57% following the establishment of the inter-entity boundary line represents one of the most significant structural changes affecting Ključ. The results show that the municipality lost a large part of its former functional and gravitational area, including settlements, natural resources, and established infrastructural links. Such territorial fragmentation appears to have altered the spatial logic of local development, as the municipality now operates within substantially reduced administrative boundaries.

The weakening of functional links with Banja Luka and the gradual reorientation towards Bihać, as indicated by administrative, healthcare, and educational flows, reflects a broader reconfiguration of regional connections imposed by the post-Dayton institutional framework. These changes suggest that administrative borders, rather than geographic proximity alone, play a decisive role in shaping access to services, markets, and development opportunities.

Demographic decline and population restructuring

Demographic indicators reveal a pronounced population decline between 1991 and 2013, with available estimates indicating the continuation of this trend after 2013. While part of the population loss can be attributed to territorial separation and wartime displacement, the persistence of negative demographic trends in the post-war period suggests the influence of longer-term structural factors.

The results indicate substantial changes in the age structure of the population, particularly an increase in the share of elderly residents and a decrease in the working-age population. Such demographic restructuring is commonly associated with limited local employment opportunities, selective outmigration, and reduced attractiveness of smaller municipalities within complex administrative systems. In the case of Ključ, these demographic patterns appear to constrain local labor supply, fiscal capacity, and long-term development potential.

Economic activity and employment structure

The comparison of employment data highlights a significant reduction in the number of employed persons and notable changes in sectoral employment structure. Pre-war employment was characterized by a strong presence of industry, forestry, transport, and public-sector activities. In the recent period, employment is more concentrated in manufacturing, trade, construction, and public administration, with a considerably smaller overall workforce. The loss of forested areas and the relocation of forest management outside the municipality, as documented in the results, appear to have reduced the availability of locally controlled natural resources. This situation suggests a weakened link between local resources and local economic benefits, which may limit the municipality's capacity to generate employment and reinvest revenues into development initiatives.

Public services: education and healthcare

Changes in the education system, particularly the sharp decline in the number of primary and secondary school students, reflect broader demographic processes but also have long-term implications for human capital development. The absence of higher education institutions within the municipality and the redirection of students toward universities in Sarajevo and Bihać indicate how administrative and institutional structures shape educational mobility and youth trajectories.

Similarly, the healthcare system illustrates the spatial consequences of the post-Dayton administrative framework. Although primary healthcare is available locally, access to secondary and tertiary healthcare services depends on institutions located at considerable distances. The institutional inaccessibility of geographically closer facilities in Banja Luka highlights the extent to which administrative boundaries influence everyday socio-economic practices, including access to essential public services.

Environmental management and inter-municipal coordination

The results related to environmental protection and natural resource management point to challenges arising from divided administrative responsibilities. The location of the Ribnik landfill near the inter-entity boundary line and the institutional division of water protection zones, such as the Okašnica spring, illustrate the complexity of managing shared environmental resources in a fragmented governance system.

These findings suggest that environmental risks and resource management issues transcend municipal and entity boundaries, while decision-making authority remains territorially fragmented. As a result, local governments such as Ključ may have limited capacity to influence environmental outcomes that directly affect their population.

Position within higher levels of governance

Due to the reduced population, the Municipality of Ključ is losing institutional capacity to significantly influence decision-making at higher levels of government, as there are not enough influential representatives in key decision-making structures. Demographic data, fiscal capacity, and employment levels further confirm the municipality's limited participation in higher levels of governance, reducing its access to development funding and its ability to shape policies that could benefit the local community.

In multi-level governance systems, such limitations often place smaller municipalities at a structural disadvantage, particularly when institutional arrangements are complex and highly decentralized. Although the results record the implementation of certain small-scale infrastructure projects and growth in trade and service activities, these developments remain insufficient to compensate for broader structural constraints. The findings suggest that positive changes remain spatially and sectorally limited, without significantly affecting overall socio-economic trends.

Ključ as a representative case in the post-Dayton context

Taken together, the findings indicate that the Municipality of Ključ exemplifies the challenges faced by small local communities operating within the post-Dayton constitutional-administrative system of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Territorial fragmentation, demographic decline, reduced control over resources, and limited institutional influence interact to shape long-term development outcomes.

While the Dayton framework successfully established peace and political stability, the case of Ključ suggests that its complex institutional design may generate unintended constraints at the local level. These constraints appear particularly pronounced in municipalities that experienced territorial reduction

and functional marginalization, making Ključ a relevant case for understanding broader post-Dayton socio-economic processes.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the socio-economic conditions in the municipality of Ključ indicates that long-term development trends are largely determined by the Dayton constitutional-administrative arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Territorial fragmentation, population redistribution, and a complex administrative-political structure have produced multiple negative effects that reinforce each other. The most pronounced negative aspects include depopulation and population aging, reduced fiscal capacity and economic activity, limited access to educational and health services, weaker control over natural resources and the environment, and marginalization in higher levels of governance.

The results show that the population of the municipality of Ključ decreased from 37,391 in 1991 to 16,130 in 2013, with projections for 2025 indicating a further decline to around 14,922 inhabitants. Territorial loss of nearly 57% of its area and a reduction of about 70% in forested areas have directly affected local revenues and employment, while the decline in student numbers in primary and secondary education has further limited human capital development. Administrative and spatial restrictions hinder access to health centers and higher education institutions, and marginalization in higher levels of governance reduces opportunities for infrastructure and development investments.

Although individual positive effects are observed—such as increased trade, development of service activities, and smaller infrastructure projects in previously underdeveloped settlements—they remain marginal compared to the cumulative negative impact of the complex constitutional-administrative system. The municipality of Ključ serves as a clear example of how the Dayton arrangement, while effective in preserving peace, long-term constrains the socio-economic development of small local communities, especially those that have lost territorial and functional cohesion.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for policies that strengthen local autonomy, ensure more efficient management of natural and infrastructural resources, and mitigate the negative consequences of the complex administrative structure. This research contributes to understanding the processes that shape local development in the post-Dayton context and provides a foundation for further studies and strategic interventions aimed at the sustainable development of small communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings are relevant not only for Ključ but also for other small municipalities affected by post-Dayton territorial and institutional fragmentation.

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AGROTURIZAM KAO POKRETAČ RURALNE REVITALIZACIJE U JUGOZAPADNOJ BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

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Haris Gekić²

UDC: 911.3:338.48-44(497.6-14)

Sažetak: Agroturizam može predstavljati važan instrument uravnoteženijeg turističkog razvoja jugozapadne Bosne i Hercegovine s obzirom na to da su ruralni resursi i dalje nedovoljno valorizovani u odnosu na druge oblike turističke potražnje. Ovo istraživanje kombinuje terenske opservacije i strukturisanu anketu provedenu u 105 poljoprivrednih domaćinstava u periodu mart–septembar 2024. godine sa ciljem procjene lokalnih resursa, spremnosti domaćinstava i glavnih prepreka za razvoj agroturizma. Rezultati pokazuju da ispitanici u velikoj mjeri prepoznaju potencijal agroturizma (96%), ali da je stvarna uključenost u agroturističke tokove i dalje niska, budući da 82% ispitanika nikada nije koristilo agroturizam u posmatranom području. To ukazuje na izražen jaz između resursne osnove i stepena njene praktične aktivacije.

Najviše vrednovane prednosti za privlačenje posjetilaca imaju očuvana priroda (4,70), mir i tišina (4,60) te domaća gastronomija (4,51). Prostorno specifične vrijednosti, kao što su Livanjsko polje, divlji konji na Cincaru, vodopad Kravica, jezera i krške rijeke, u sprezi sa proizvodima zaštićenog porijekla, posebno Livanjskim i Kupreškim sirom te Glamočkim krompirom, predstavljaju važnu osnovu za produženje turističke sezone i jačanje ruralnih prihoda. Kao ključne prepreke izdvajaju se ograničena promocija i slaba saobraćajna povezanost. Na osnovu rezultata predloženi su pravci razvoja koji uključuju snažniju podršku malim gazdinstvima, integrisano brendiranje prostora i certifikovanih proizvoda, unapređenje osnovne pristupačnosti i upravljanje nosivim kapacitetom prostora. Rezultati istraživanja potvrđuju da agroturizam može biti realan instrument ruralne revitalizacije i održivog razvoja u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini. Nalazi također potvrđuju stav da agroturizam može služiti kao instrument održivog ruralnog razvoja u skladu s UN ciljevima održivog razvoja 8 i 12.

Ključne riječi: agroturizam, ruralna revitalizacija, održivi ruralni razvoj, jugozapadna Bosna i Hercegovina, poljoprivredna domaćinstva, lokalni proizvodi.

UVOD

Agroturizam je postao sve značajnija tema u istraživanjima ruralnog razvoja jer objedinjuje poljoprivredu, turizam, lokalnu hranu i svakodnevni ruralni život unutar istog prostornog i ekonomskog okvira. Za razliku od šireg pojma ruralnog turizma, agroturizam se konkretnije odnosi na turističke aktivnosti povezane sa farmama, poljoprivrednom proizvodnjom ili načinima života zasnovanim na poljoprivredi. Ova razlika je važna jer ne doprinosi svaka turistička aktivnost u ruralnom prostoru podjednako održivosti poljoprivrednih domaćinstava niti obnovi ruralnih zajednica. Stoga Phillip i ost. (2010) ističu da agroturizam treba posmatrati kao už i specifičniji segment ruralnog turizma, a ne kao njegov sinonim.

Takvo razlikovanje posebno dobija na značaju u ruralnim područjima u kojima se turizam ponekad razvija nezavisno od poljoprivredne proizvodnje, dok u drugim slučajevima ostaje neposredno povezan sa farmama, poljoprivrednim pejzažima i lokalnim proizvodima. U takvim kontekstima naročito su važni poljoprivredni pejzaži u kojima koegzistiraju prirodni i kulturni resursi, jer oni pružaju prostornu osnovu za turističke doživljaje zasnovane na posebnostima mjesta, ali i za oblike razvoja ukorijenjene u produktivnom životu ruralnih zajednica. Upravo je to jedan od glavnih razloga zbog kojih je

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agroturizam posljednjih godina privukao sve veću akademsku pažnju, posebno u istraživanjima održivog turizma i budućnosti ruralnih područja.

Rastući interes za agroturizam usko je povezan sa širim promjenama u ruralnim regijama. U mnogim područjima sama poljoprivreda više ne predstavlja stabilnu osnovu za prihode domaćinstava, dok depopulacija i slabljenje ruralnih usluga nastavljaju preoblikovati život na selu. U takvim okolnostima agroturizam se često posmatra kao jedan od realnijih načina diverzifikacije ekonomije domaćinstava, bez prekidanja veze između ljudi, zemljišta i lokalne proizvodnje. Tew i Barbieri (2012) pokazuju da njegov doprinos nije ograničen samo na neposrednu zaradu. Za mnoga poljoprivredna domaćinstva agroturizam predstavlja i način privlačenja novih kupaca, povećanja vidljivosti poljoprivrednih proizvoda, edukacije posjetilaca o poljoprivredi te jačanja društvene vrijednosti ruralnih stilova života.

Literatura također sugerise da je agroturizam najznačajniji kada se posmatra kao dio šire strategije ruralnog razvoja, a ne kao izdvojena turistička niša. Ammirato i ost. (2020) u svom sistematskom pregledu naglašavaju njegov značaj za održivi razvoj ruralnih područja, posebno tamo gdje se turizam može povezati sa lokalnim resursima, poljoprivrednim naslijeđem i inicijativama zasnovanim na zajednici. Istovremeno, literatura upozorava na previše pojednostavljena tumačenja. Turizam sam po sebi ne može preokrenuti strukturno nazadovanje ruralnih područja, a pozitivni ishodi zavise od lokalnih kapaciteta, upravljanja, saradnje i kvaliteta teritorijalne integracije između poljoprivrede i turizma. To je naročito važno u jugoistočnoj Evropi, gdje se ruralni turizam već dugo razmatra kao mogući put prema uravnoteženijem razvoju, ali gdje su neravnomjerna ulaganja i institucionalna ograničenja često sputavala ostvarenje njegovog punog potencijala (Hall, 2004).

U Bosni i Hercegovini ova pitanja imaju poseban značaj. Ruralna područja raspolažu značajnim prirodnim i kulturnim resursima, snažnom tradicijom male poljoprivredne proizvodnje i širokim spektrom proizvoda koji bi mogli podržati prepoznatljiviji razvoj turizma. Istovremeno, agroturizam je i dalje neravnomjerno razvijen i još uvijek zauzima relativno skromno mjesto u ukupnoj turističkoj ekonomiji. Ipak, širi turistički kontekst pokazuje da postoji prostor za snažniju diverzifikaciju. Prema službenim statističkim podacima (Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, 2026), Bosna i Hercegovina je 2025. godine zabilježila oko 2 miliona turističkih dolazaka i 4,1 milion noćenja, a strani turisti su činili 70,9% svih dolazaka. Najnovija istraživanja o agroturizmu u Bosni i Hercegovini ukazuju na sličnu kombinaciju izraženog potencijala i trajnih strukturnih ograničenja, posebno u pogledu infrastrukture, promocije, finansijske podrške i lokalne institucionalne podrške (Čolaković-Prguda i ost., 2025). U tom smislu, ključno pitanje nije samo da li ruralna područja posjeduju resurse za razvoj agroturizma, nego i da li se ti resursi mogu pretočiti u snažniji i koherentniji model razvoja.

Polazeći od navedenog okvira, cilj ovog rada nije samo identifikovati potencijal agroturizma u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini, već i ispitati može li se agroturizam razumjeti kao pokretač ruralne revitalizacije. U ovom radu ruralna revitalizacija se posmatra kao širi proces koji uključuje diverzifikaciju ruralnih izvora prihoda, snažniju valorizaciju lokalnih resursa, bolju vidljivost poljoprivrednih domaćinstava te očuvanje ruralnog identiteta i pejzaža. Iz te perspektive, agroturizam je relevantan ne samo zato što privlači posjetioce, nego i zato što može doprinijeti funkcionalnijem i održivijem povezivanju poljoprivrede, prostora i razvoja. Takav pristup u skladu je i sa recentnim istraživanjima koja agroturizam svrstavaju u širi kontekst ruralnog razvoja, umjesto da ga posmatraju isključivo kao nišni turistički proizvod (Armesto-López i ost., 2025). U tom smislu, istraživanje je relevantno i za šire rasprave o održivom ruralnom razvoju u skladu s UN ciljevima održivog razvoja 8 i 12.

Teoretski okvir: agroturizam i ruralna revitalizacija

Jedno od prvih pitanja u istraživanjima agroturizma jeste njegovo precizno definiciono određenje. Ovo područje već dugo karakteriše preklapajuća upotreba termina kao što su ruralni turizam, poljoprivredni turizam, turizam zasnovan na farmama i agroturizam. Phillip i ost. (2010) smatraju da je takvo

konceptualno preklapanje dovelo do određenih nejasnoća te predlažu jasniji okvir zasnovan na tri ključne dimenzije: da li je aktivnost vezana za aktivnu farmu, kakva je priroda kontakta između turista i poljoprivredne aktivnosti te koliki je stepen autentičnosti iskustva. Flanigan i ost. (2014) dodatno pokazuju da interakcija, aktivna farma i autentičnost ostaju centralni elementi praktičnog razumijevanja agroturizma. Zbog toga se u ovom radu agroturizam tretira kao uža i specifičnija kategorija unutar ruralnog turizma, sa izraženijom vezom sa samom poljoprivredom. Ova razlika je važna jer istraživanje ruralne revitalizacije ne može biti usmjereno samo na prisustvo posjetilaca u ruralnim područjima, već mora uzeti u obzir i to da li turističke aktivnosti ostaju povezane sa produktivnim ruralnim životom.

Iz perspektive ruralnog razvoja, agroturizam se najčešće tumači kao oblik diverzifikacije poljoprivrednih domaćinstava. To podrazumijeva da domaćinstva proširuju svoju djelatnost izvan konvencionalne proizvodnje i koriste svoja imanja, proizvode, znanja i svakodnevno okruženje kako bi stvorila dodatnu vrijednost. Tew i Barbieri (2012) utvrdili su da pružaoci usluga agroturizma ovu djelatnost često vrednuju zato što im pomaže da privuku nove kupce, promoviraju poljoprivredne proizvode, educiraju javnost i unaprijede kvalitet porodičnog života. Barbieri (2013) dodatno pokazuje da agroturizam može biti povezan sa širim okolišnim, sociokulturnim i ekonomskim koristima u poređenju s drugim poduzetničkim aktivnostima na farmi. U sličnom smislu, Ammirato i Felicetti (2013) naglašavaju da agroturizam može doprinijeti revitalizaciji ruralnih zajednica kada je povezan sa lokalno utemeljenim strategijama razvoja. Posmatrani zajedno, ovi nalazi podupiru stav da agroturizam može jačati otpornost ruralnih domaćinstava, naročito u sredinama u kojima je sama poljoprivreda pod sve većim pritiskom.

Druga važna dimenzija odnosi se na vezu između agroturizma, naslijeđa i lokalnog identiteta. Ruralna revitalizacija ne svodi se samo na stvaranje prihoda; ona podrazumijeva i očuvanje značenja i upotrebe ruralnog prostora. Bessière (1998) pokazuje da tradicionalni proizvodi i gastronomija mogu postati važni posrednici između identiteta mjesta i turističke potražnje. To je posebno relevantno za agroturizam jer posjetioci često ne traže samo smještaj, nego i dublje iskustvo ruralnog života: lokalnu hranu, poljoprivredne pejzaže, sezonske ritmove i kontakt sa domaćinstvima čije aktivnosti i dalje imaju produktivnu osnovu. Sánchez-Martín i ost. (2024) također naglašavaju važnost poljoprivrednih pejzaža i turističke potražnje u konceptualizaciji agroturizma. Tamo gdje takvi elementi ostaju vidljivi i vjerodostojni, agroturizam može doprinijeti očuvanju lokalne posebnosti umjesto njenom svođenju na generičku turističku ponudu.

Istovremeno, lokalne učinke agroturizma ne treba romantizirati. Karampela i Kizos (2018) naglašavaju da učinci agroturizma na lokalnom nivou ne zavise samo od postojanja farmi ili turističke potražnje, nego i od strukture ponude, obima poslovanja i umreženosti sa lokalnim partnerima. Barbieri (2020) slično ističe da istraživanja agroturizma sve više prevazilaze samu farmu i otvaraju šira razvojnja, okolišna i upravljačka pitanja. To je važno za ruralnu revitalizaciju jer pažnju preusmjerava sa izolovanih farmi na šire teritorijalne odnose. Drugim riječima, agroturizam snažnije doprinosi lokalnom razvoju kada je ugrađen u šire mreže koje uključuju proizvođače, lokalne institucije, turističke aktere i prateće usluge.

Za potrebe ovog rada, ruralna revitalizacija se shvaća kao višedimenzionalan proces odgovora na ruralno nazadovanje, usmjeren na obnovu ruralne vitalnosti kroz ekonomsko, društveno, kulturno i okolišno jačanje ruralnih područja (Hu i ost., 2024; Liu i ost., 2020). U tom smislu, ona uključuje ekonomsku aktivaciju, diverzifikaciju strategija domaćinstava, snažnije korištenje endogenih resursa, jačanje lokalnog identiteta te očuvanje poljoprivrednih i kulturnih pejzaža. Šehić-Kršlak (2018) ruralni turizam u Bosni i Hercegovini direktno povezuje sa širim procesima ekonomskog razvoja, dok Ammirato i ost. (2020) naglašavaju da agroturizam dobija puni smisao kada se razumije unutar okvira održivosti. Iz takve perspektive, agroturizam se može posmatrati kao pokretač revitalizacije kada pomaže ruralnim domaćinstvima da ostanu održiva, podržava tržišnu vidljivost lokalnih proizvoda i podstiče oblike turizma koji su usklađeni s karakterom ruralnog okruženja. Ovakvo razumijevanje dobro se uklapa i u novija istraživanja koja agroturizam izričito smještaju u šire polje ruralnog razvoja, umjesto da ga tretiraju kao izdvojenu turističku specijalnost (Armesto-López i ost., 2025).

Ova teoretska pozicija posebno je prikladna za jugozapadnu Bosnu i Hercegovinu. Regija objedinjuje nekoliko obilježja koja literatura dosljedno prepoznaje kao važne pretpostavke razvoja agroturizma: privlačne ruralne pejzaže, prepoznatljive poljoprivredne proizvode, malu porodičnu proizvodnju i mogućnost ponude iskustava snažno vezanih za konkretan prostor. Ključno pitanje, međutim, nije samo da li takvi resursi postoje, nego i da li se mogu mobilizirati na način koji proizvodi trajne lokalne koristi. Zbog toga se analiza u ovom radu ne zaustavlja na osnovnom opisu potencijala agroturizma, već se usmjerava prema širem pitanju ruralne revitalizacije.

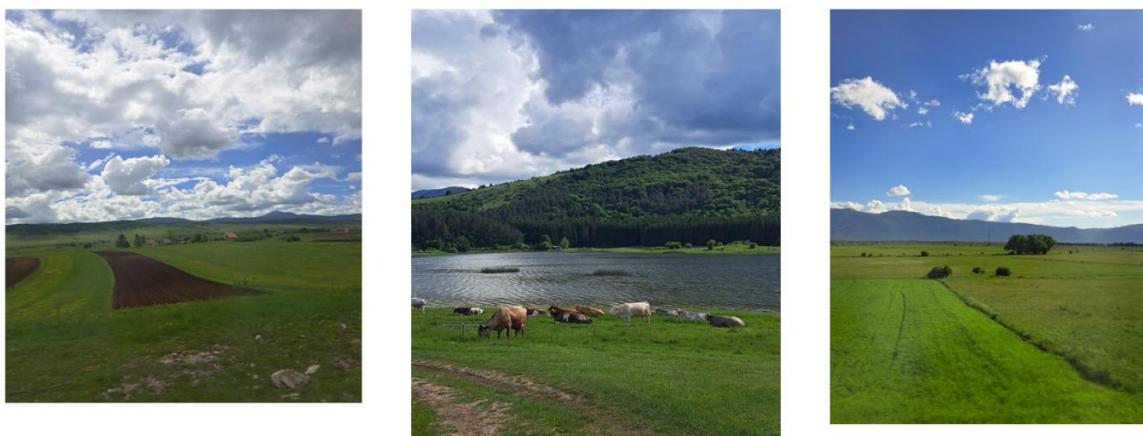
Materijali i metode

Ovo istraživanje kombinuje terenske opservacije, anketiranje poljoprivrednih domaćinstava i deskriptivnu statističku analizu. Empirijsku osnovu rada činila je anketa provedena u 105 poljoprivrednih domaćinstava u periodu mart–septembar 2024. godine. Uzorak je formiran kao eksplorativni terenski uzorak, uz nastojanje da budu obuhvaćena domaćinstva iz različitih dijelova istraživnog područja i iz različitih lokalnih konteksta relevantnih za razvoj agroturizma. Takav pristup omogućio je uvid u lokalne razvojne obrasce, percepciju resursa i glavne prepreke razvoju agroturizma u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini.

Istraživano područje obuhvata širi jugozapadni dio Bosne i Hercegovine i uključuje jedinice lokalne samouprave Livno, Tomislavgrad, Kupres (FBiH), Kupres (RS), Drvar, Istočni Drvar, Glamoč, Bosansko Grahovo, Čitluk, Ljubuški, Grude, Široki Brijeg i Posušje. Anketa je provedena u ruralnim područjima navedenih jedinica lokalne samouprave, koje zajedno čine osnovni prostorni okvir istraživanja. Ukupna površina ovog prostora iznosi 6.583 km², što čini oko 12,8% teritorije Bosne i Hercegovine. Turističko-geografski položaj ovog prostora relativno je povoljan za razvoj turizma, budući da se nalazi u blizini jadranskog zaleđa i duž zapadne granice sa Republikom Hrvatskom. Istovremeno, izražen ruralni karakter prostora, tradicija poljoprivredne proizvodnje, planinski pejzaži, kraška polja i zaštićena prirodna područja čine ovo područje pogodnim za ispitivanje potencijalne uloge agroturizma u ruralnoj revitalizaciji (Gekić i ost., 2022).

Na ovom prostoru živi oko 170.000 stanovnika, a za potrebe ovog rada posebno je važan njegov izrazito ruralan karakter te raznolik spoj planinskih, krških i vodnih pejzaža. Najvažnije prirodno-geografske osnove za razvoj agroturizma predstavljaju planine Cincar, Šator, Vran planina, Čvrstica i Čabulja, krška polja, vodopadi, pećine, Park prirode Blidinje i mreža krških rijeka i jezera. Poseban značaj ima i Livanjsko polje, površine 458,7 km² (Ramsar Sites Information Service n.d.), kao jedno od najupečatljivijih prirodnih obilježja regije. Ovakva prostorna struktura daje istraživanom području raznoliku pejzažnu osnovu za povezivanje poljoprivrede, lokalnih proizvoda i iskustvenih oblika agroturizma.

Anketni upitnik sastojao se od 19 pitanja, od čega je 15 bilo zatvorenog, a 4 otvorenog tipa. Upitnik je bio usmjeren na tri osnovna sklopa: procjenu lokalnih resursa, percepciju potencijala agroturizma i identifikaciju glavnih prepreka njegovom daljem razvoju. Zatvorena pitanja korištena su radi prikupljanja uporedivih informacija o stavovima ispitanika prema potencijalima agroturizma, atraktivnosti ključnih lokalnih resursa i glavnim preprekama njegovom daljem razvoju. Otvorena pitanja omogućila su ispitanicima da slobodnije iznesu zapažanja o lokalnim iskustvima, praktičnim problemima i razvojnim mogućnostima koje nije bilo moguće u potpunosti obuhvatiti unaprijed ponuđenim odgovorima. Na taj način anketni upitnik je objedinio uporedivost odgovora i mogućnost dodatnog kvalitativnog uvida u lokalne razvojne okolnosti.



Slika 1. Karakteristični elementi ruralnog pejzaža jugozapadne Bosne i Hercegovine relevantni za razvoj agroturizma.

Foto: Bidžan-Gekić, A.

Anketom su obuhvaćena poljoprivredna domaćinstva iz svih navedenih jedinica lokalne samouprave, pri čemu se broj ispitanika među lokalitetima razlikovao u skladu sa teritorijalnom zastupljenošću i dostupnošću na terenu. Uzorak stoga nije koncipiran kao strogo statistički reprezentativan za svaku pojedinačnu općinu/opštinu ili grad, nego kao eksplorativni uzorak usmjeren na prepoznavanje glavnih razvojnih obrazaca u regiji. Rezultate zato prvenstveno treba tumačiti kao pokazatelj percepcija anketiranih domaćinstava o resursima, preprekama i mogućnostima razvoja agroturizma u trenutku istraživanja. Njihova osnovna vrijednost ogleda se u identifikovanju dominantnih stavova, percipiranih razvojnih prepreka i prostornog razmještaja potencijala agroturizma iz perspektive samih poljoprivrednih domaćinstava.

Prikupljeni podaci uneseni su i obrađeni u programu Microsoft Excel, koji je korišten za organizaciju podataka, deskriptivnu statističku analizu i grafički prikaz rezultata. Pored ankete, istraživanje se oslanjalo i na terensko posmatranje u istraživanom području, geografsku deskripciju regije te pregled naučne i stručne literature relevantne za agroturizam i održivi ruralni razvoj. Time je omogućeno povezivanje anketnih nalaza sa širim raspravama o ruralnom razvoju i njihovo tumačenje unutar specifičnog teritorijalnog konteksta jugozapadne Bosne i Hercegovine.

Metodološki posmatrano, ovo istraživanje treba razumjeti kao geografski utemeljenu i interpretativnu studiju razvoja agroturizma. Cilj istraživanja nije bilo testiranje formalnog uzročnog modela, nego procjena načina na koji poljoprivredna domaćinstva percipiraju lokalne resurse, šta prepoznaju kao glavne prepreke razvoju i u kojoj se mjeri agroturizam može smatrati realnim pokretačem ruralne revitalizacije u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini. To je u skladu sa recentnim istraživanjima koja agroturizam ne tretiraju samo kao turistički proizvod, već i kao razvojnu praksu utemeljenu u prostoru, oblikovanu lokalnim resursima, akterima i institucionalnom podrškom (Armesto-López i ost., 2025).

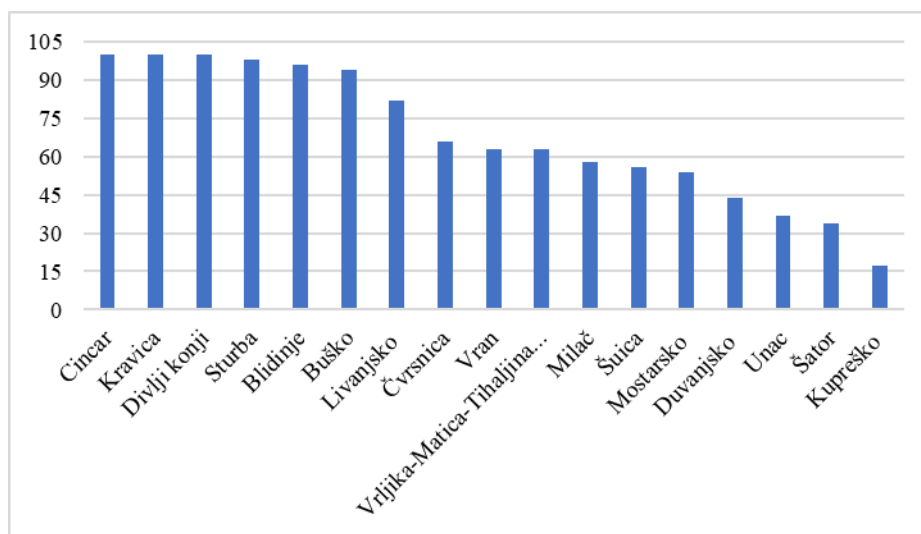
Rezultati i diskusija

Resursna osnova razvoja agroturizma

Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da istraživano područje raspolaže solidnom resursnom osnovom za razvoj agroturizma, zasnovanom na spoju poljoprivredne proizvodnje, ruralnog pejzaža, prepoznatljivih lokalnih proizvoda i prirodnih atrakcija. Iz perspektive anketiranih domaćinstava, razvojni potencijal agroturizma ne vezuje se samo za boravak na farmi, nego za šire iskustvo koje objedinjuje lokalnu hranu, pejzaž i svakodnevni ruralni život. To znači da se agroturizam u ovom prostoru najrealnije razvija kao povezani ruralni proizvod, a ne kao izolovana usluga pojedinačnog domaćinstva.

Posebno važan dio resursne osnove čine proizvodi sa jasno izraženim teritorijalnim identitetom. Empirijski materijal pokazuje da se Livanjski sir, Kupreški sir i Glamočki krompir izdvajaju kao najprepoznatljiviji poljoprivredni proizvodi ovog prostora. Ovo je bitno jer pokazuje da domaćinstva upravo u lokalnim proizvodima vide jednu od najsnažnijih osnova za povezivanje poljoprivrede i turističke ponude. Drugim riječima, gastronomija se u istraživanom području ne pojavljuje kao prateći element, nego kao jedan od ključnih nosilaca budućeg razvoja agroturizma.

Jednako je važno i prirodno okruženje. Prema odgovorima ispitanika, među najatraktivnijim prirodnim resursima vrijednim posjete izdvajaju se planina Cincar sa divljim konjima, vodopad Kravica, rijeka Sturba, Blidinje, Buško jezero, Livanjsko polje i planina Čvrsnica (Slika 2). Ovakav raspored odgovora pokazuje da domaćinstva prirodne atrakcije ne doživljavaju kao sporednu pozadinu agroturizma, nego kao jedan od glavnih resursa za oblikovanje ukupnog iskustva posjetilaca.



Slika 2. Najatraktivniji prirodni turistički potencijali vrijedni posjete prema broju odgovora.

Rezultati dodatno upućuju na to da domaćinstva agroturizam ne razumiju samo kroz neposredni prostor farme, nego kroz šire teritorijalno iskustvo koje povezuje poljoprivredu, pejzaž i obližnje atrakcije. U interpretativnom smislu, to znači da razvojni potencijal agroturizma u regiji počiva na umrežavanju lokalnih resursa, a ne na izolovanom djelovanju pojedinačnih domaćinstava.

Posmatrano zajedno, ovi nalazi pokazuju da ovom prostoru ne nedostaju osnovni elementi potrebni za razvoj agroturizma. Ono što ostaje neizvjesnije jeste u kojoj se mjeri ti elementi mogu efikasno povezati u koherentnu, funkcionalnu i prepoznatljivu ruralnu turističku ponudu.

Percipirani potencijal i sadašnji nivo aktivacije

Jedan od najjasnijih nalaza ankete jeste jaz između percipiranog potencijala i stvarne upotrebe. Gotovo svi ispitanici (96%) smatraju da regija raspolaže pogodnim prirodnim i društvenim uslovima za razvoj agroturizma, ali je istovremeno 82% navelo da nikada nije koristilo agroturizam u ovoj regiji. Tew i Barbieri (2012), polazeći iz perspektive pružalaca usluga, naglašavaju da koristi od agroturizma ne nastaju samim postojanjem farmi i ruralnih atrakcija, nego zavise od toga u kojoj se mjeri ti resursi pretvaraju u održive usluge, iskustva i strategije domaćinstava. Taj uvid se dobro uklapa i u ovaj slučaj. Glavni problem istraživanog prostora, čini se, nije odsustvo resursa, nego činjenica da su oni u praksi još uvijek samo djelimično aktivirani.

Relativno skromna ocjena promocije dodatno potvrđuje takvo tumačenje. Ispitanici su trenutni nivo promocije agroturizma ocijenili prosječnom ocjenom 3,5. Hall (2004), raspravljajući o ruralnom turizmu

u jugoistočnoj Evropi, ukazuje na to da mnoga ruralna područja u regiji raspolažu značajnim endogenim resursima, ali ostaju ograničena fragmentiranošću, slabom koordinacijom i ograničenom institucionalnom podrškom. Uočeni obrazac u ovom istraživanju je sličan. Istraživano područje očigledno posjeduje osnovu za razvoj agroturizma, ali još uvijek nema dovoljno vidljiv, brendiran i teritorijalno organiziran proizvod. Problem, dakle, nije samo u tome što agroturizam postoji, ali nije dovoljno poznat, nego i u tome što njegovi postojeći elementi još nisu dovoljno čvrsto povezani da bi funkcionirali kao konkurentna regionalna ponuda.

Treba imati u vidu i jedno metodološko ograničenje. Broj ispitanika razlikovao se među lokalnim jedinicama, pa su nalazi pouzdaniji kao pokazatelj širih regionalnih tendencija nego kao osnova za strogo poređenje između pojedinačnih općina/opština i gradova. Također, rezultati prvenstveno odražavaju percepcije anketiranih poljoprivrednih domaćinstava zabilježene u periodu istraživanja, a ne cjelovitu procjenu svih objektivnih razvojnih pokazatelja agroturizma u svakoj pojedinačnoj sredini. Uprkos tome, rezultati jasno ukazuju na širi teritorijalni obrazac nedovoljno aktiviranog potencijala agroturizma u regiji.

Glavne komparativne prednosti istraživanog područja

Rangiranje ruralnih prednosti pruža možda i najjasniji uvid u to šta sama lokalna domaćinstva vide kao jezgro buduće ponude agroturizma. Najvišu prosječnu ocjenu dobila je lijepa i očuvana priroda (4,70), zatim mir i tišina (4,60), gastronomija i domaća hrana (4,51) te ljubaznost lokalnog stanovništva (4,37). Kulturno-historijsko naslijeđe dobilo je najnižu ocjenu (4,14), iako je i ono ukupno vrednovano pozitivno (Tabela 1). Ove vrijednosti upućuju na to da se najjače komparativne prednosti istraživanog prostora nalaze u kvalitetu prirodne sredine, miru, tišini i iskustvu svakodnevne ruralne autentičnosti.

Tabela 1. Prednosti ruralnih područja za privlačenje turista prema broju odgovora ispitanika.

Ruralne prednosti	5 – potpuno se slažem	4 – slažem se	3 - niti se slažem niti se ne slažem	2 – ne slažem se	1 – u potpunosti se ne slažem	Prosječan rejting
Lijepa i očuvana priroda	74	31	0	0	0	4,70
Kulturno-historijsko naslijeđe	37	46	22	0	0	4,14
Gastronomija i domaća hrana	69	24	9	3	0	4,51
Ljubaznost lokalnog stanovništva	57	35	9	3	1	4,37
Mir i tišina	73	24	6	2	0	4,60

Ovakav obrazac pokazuje da lokalna domaćinstva jezgro buduće ponude vide u manjim, iskustveno orijentisanim i prostorno osjetljivim oblicima agroturizma. To znači da se komparativna snaga istraživanog područja ne nalazi u obimu, nego u kvalitetu prirodne sredine, gastronomiji, miru i svakodnevnoj ruralnoj autentičnosti. U tom smislu, empirijski rezultati više podržavaju selektivni nego masovni model razvoja.

Relativno niža ocjena kulturno-historijskog naslijeđa ne znači da taj resurs nema razvojni značaj, nego prije da je trenutno slabije uključen u postojeću ili buduću agroturističku ponudu. Empirijski gledano, priroda i hrana trenutno djeluju kao neposrednije razvojne osnove, dok naslijeđe ostaje potencijal za kasniju diverzifikaciju ponude.

Ograničenja snažnijeg razvoja agroturizma

Rezultati ankete sugerišu da glavne prepreke snažnijem razvoju agroturizma nisu toliko stavovske koliko organizacione prirode. Ispitanici nisu prikazali agroturizam kao nepoželjnu ili nerealnu aktivnost. Naprotiv, tvrdnja da agroturizam treba razvijati u regiji dobila je najvišu prosječnu ocjenu (4,59). Farme kao mjesta odmora i relaksacije ocijenjene su sa 4,56, farme kao atraktivne za turiste sa 4,45, a tvrdnja da područje ima idealne prirodne i društvene uslove za razvoj agroturizma sa 4,43. Ovi rezultati pokazuju da lokalna domaćinstva u velikoj mjeri prepoznaju agroturizam kao vjerodostojan pravac razvoja.

Istovremeno, nedostatak lokalnog interesa ocijenjen je kao prepreka prosječnom ocjenom 3,9, dok dodatni odgovori ispitanika i terenska zapažanja upućuju i na slabu saobraćajnu infrastrukturu te ograničenu promociju kao praktična ograničenja razvoja. Tew i Barbieri (2012) naglašavaju da se agroturizam često razvija radi ostvarenja više ciljeva domaćinstva, ali da njegovi učinci zavise od toga mogu li farme te ciljeve povezati s održivim oblicima poduzetništva i uključivanja posjetilaca. Barbieri (2013) i Karampela i Kizos (2018) slično pokazuju da agroturizam ostvaruje snažnije razvojne učinke tamo gdje su farme povezane sa širom mrežom usluga, lokalnim partnerstvima i podupirućim strukturama. Upravo je to ono što se u ovom slučaju pokazuje ograničenim. Glavna prepreka nije snažan lokalni otpor, nego još uvijek slabo organizovano razvojno okruženje u kojem resursi postoje, ali ostaju samo djelimično povezani i nedovoljno vidljivi. Recentno istraživanje agroturizma u Bosni i Hercegovini ukazuje na sličan skup ograničenja, posebno na slabu infrastrukturu, nedovoljnu promociju, ograničene finansijske resurse i nedostatnu podršku lokalnih vlasti (Čolaković-Priguda i ost., 2025).

Iz ovoga proizlazi važna analitička posljedica. O agroturizmu u istraživanom području ne treba raspravljati samo na nivou inicijative pojedinačnih domaćinstava. Rezultati upućuju na potrebu za srednjim, odnosno mezo-nivoom podrške koji bi uključivao općine/opštine i gradove, kantone, lokalne turističke organizacije, mreže proizvođača i infrastrukturu manjeg obima. Bez tog posrednog nivoa koordinacije, čak i kvalitetni lokalni resursi vjerovatno će ostati fragmentisani. Zbog toga ovaj dio rada treba razumjeti prije kao analizu uslova ruralnog razvoja nego kao jednostavan inventar atrakcija.

Agroturizam i ruralna revitalizacija: ključne razvojne implikacije

Posmatrani iz perspektive ruralne revitalizacije, rezultati ukazuju na nekoliko važnih razvojnih implikacija. Barbieri (2013) pokazuje da agroturizam može generisati ne samo ekonomske, nego i sociokulturne i okolišne koristi, dok Armesto-López i ost. (2025) naglašavaju da je agroturizam najprimjerenije razumjeti unutar šireg konteksta ruralnog razvoja, a ne kao izolovanu turističku nišu. Takav okvir je ovdje posebno koristan. U istraživanom području agroturizam može doprinijeti diverzifikaciji ruralnih izvora prihoda tako što poljoprivrednim domaćinstvima omogućava da vrijednost ne ostvaruju samo kroz proizvodnju, nego i kroz gostoprimstvo, gastronomiju, edukativni kontakt i iskustva zasnovana na pejzažu. Istovremeno, on može ojačati vidljivost i tržišnu ulogu proizvoda čiji je teritorijalni identitet već relativno dobro uspostavljen, te podstaći aktivniju i multifunkcionalniju upotrebu ruralnog prostora.

Istovremeno, rezultati pokazuju da se takvi revitalizacioni efekti ne mogu pretpostaviti automatski. Ammirato i ost. (2020) u svom sistematskom pregledu naglašavaju da agroturizam podržava održivi ruralni razvoj samo onda kada je ugrađen u šire lokalne kapacitete i razvojne strategije. Armesto-López i ost. (2025) iznose sličan argument svrstavajući agroturizam u širi okvir ruralnog razvoja, umjesto da ga tretiraju kao samodovoljno rješenje. Ovi rezultati dobro se uklapaju u takvo upozorenje. Istraživano područje već raspolaže atraktivnim pejzažima, prepoznatljivim prehrambenim proizvodima i snažnom lokalnom svijesću o potencijalu agroturizma, ali anketa istovremeno pokazuje nizak nivo stvarne upotrebe i tek umjerenu promociju. To znači da samo prisustvo resursa nije dovoljno. Njihova razvojna vrijednost zavisi od toga da li su organizovani, interpretirani, promovisani i uključeni u održive teritorijalne strategije. To je u skladu i sa recentnim istraživanjima na nivou Bosne i Hercegovine, koja

naglašavaju da buduća konkurentnost agroturizma zavisi od ulaganja u infrastrukturu, edukaciju lokalnog stanovništva i koordinisanu promociju na domaćem i međunarodnom tržištu (Čolaković-Prguda i ost., 2025).

Rezultati također sugerišu kakav je tip ruralne revitalizacije najrealniji za jugozapadnu Bosnu i Hercegovinu. Najjači resursi ovog prostora jesu očuvana priroda, mir, gastronomija i privlačnost farmi kao mjesta odmora i ruralnog doživljaja. Barbieri (2013) i Ammirato i ost. (2020) podržavaju održivo usmjereno tumačenje razvoja agroturizma, u kojem su lokalni kvalitet, usklađenost sa okolišem i održivost domaćinstava važniji od samog obima. Takva perspektiva je ovdje posebno relevantna. Empirijski obrazac upućuje na selektivan, manji i održivo usmjeren model, a ne na model zasnovan na masovnosti. Agroturizam se u ovoj regiji zato pokazuje uvjerljivijim kao teritorijalno utemeljen oblik ruralne obnove, usklađen sa osjetljivim pejzažima i aktivnostima na nivou domaćinstva, nego kao pokušaj imitacije masovnog turizma u ruralnom prostoru.

Ukupno posmatrano, rezultati istraživanja podržavaju oprezan, ali jasan zaključak. Agroturizam u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini može se opravdano tumačiti kao potencijalni pokretač ruralne revitalizacije, ali samo kao dio razvojnog procesa koji je još uvijek nedovoljno koordinisan. Regija ne mora graditi svoju agroturističku osnovu od nule. Ono što joj je potrebno jeste snažnije povezivanje poljoprivrednih domaćinstava, lokalnih proizvoda, atraktivnih pejzaža, lokalne podrške i jasnije tržišne komunikacije. Upravo se u tom jazu između obilja resursa i slabe funkcionalne integracije nalazi i glavni problem koji ovo istraživanje identifikuje, ali i glavni prostor za buduće razvojno djelovanje.

ZAKLJUČAK

Ovo istraživanje pokazalo je da jugozapadna Bosna i Hercegovina raspolaže povoljnom resursnom osnovom za razvoj agroturizma, zasnovanom na atraktivnim ruralnim pejzažima, očuvanim prirodnim vrijednostima, prepoznatljivim lokalnim proizvodima i poljoprivrednim domaćinstvima kao potencijalnim nosiocima budućeg razvoja. Rezultati ankete također ukazuju na to da lokalna domaćinstva jasno prepoznaju ovaj potencijal. Istovremeno, rezultati pokazuju da je agroturizam u istraživanom području još uvijek u ranoj fazi razvoja. Glavni problem nije nedostatak resursa, nego njihova slaba funkcionalna integracija u vidljiviju i konkurentniju ponudu ruralnog turizma. U tom smislu, glavni rezultat rada jeste jasan jaz između snažnog resursnog potencijala i ograničene praktične aktivacije.

Rezultati dalje sugerišu da je najrealniji model razvoja za istraživano područje selektivan i održivo usmjeren oblik agroturizma zasnovan na očuvanoj prirodi, miru i tišini, domaćoj hrani i privlačnosti farmi kao mjesta odmora i ruralnog doživljaja. Agroturizam se stoga može smatrati realnim pokretačem ruralne revitalizacije u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini, ali samo ukoliko se razvija planski, koordinisano i održivo. Snažnija promocija, bolja lokalna infrastruktura i sistematičnija institucionalna podrška bit će neophodni kako bi se postojeći resursi preveli u koherentan razvojni okvir. To je u skladu i sa recentnim istraživanjima o agroturizmu u Bosni i Hercegovini, koja infrastrukturu, promociju i lokalnu podršku ističu kao ključne pretpostavke daljeg razvoja.

Na osnovu rezultata istraživanja, razvoj agroturizma u jugozapadnoj Bosni i Hercegovini trebalo bi usmjeriti na bolje povezivanje lokalnih proizvoda, poljoprivrednih domaćinstava, prirodnih atrakcija i institucionalne podrške. Ključni izazov nije nedostatak resursa, nego njihova nedovoljna organizovanost, vidljivost i uključenost u prepoznatljivu regionalnu ponudu. Zbog toga se kao važni pravci daljeg djelovanja izdvajaju jača podrška malim domaćinstvima, unapređenje promocije i pristupačnosti te razvoj selektivne i održivo usmjerene agroturističke ponude, usklađene sa karakterom prostora i lokalnim identitetom.

Iz perspektive razvojnih politika, ovi rezultati relevantni su za UN ciljeve održivog razvoja 8 i 12, posebno u vezi sa ruralnim zapošljavanjem, podrškom lokalnim proizvodima i održivijim oblicima razvoja turizma (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.-a). Rezultati su

također u skladu s ciljem 12.b, koji naglašava potrebu razvoja alata za praćenje efekata održivog razvoja u turizmu koji stvara radna mjesta i promoviše lokalnu kulturu i proizvode (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.-b).

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