

Care for Diasporic Communities: The Case of a Bilateral Agreement between Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Janja Žitnik Serafin

Introduction

Cultural production of immigrants or members of ethnic, national or language minorities is one of the basic elements in the formation and maintenance of their cultural identity. At the same time, their cultural production is a bridge between cultures, a path to intercultural exchange and a means of cultural affirmation of a minority community in its mother country as well as in the country of its residence. The impact of cultural production of the Slovenian community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Bosniak community in Slovenia on the cultural identity of their members, the cooperation between these communities, and the ways in which they promote their cultural achievements in both countries, had not been subjects of systematic research until recently.¹

In Slovenia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only some broader research projects in the field of ethnic and migration studies have touched upon these topics. Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina coexisted in a federative state that practiced the policy of systematic intercultural exchange. Slovenian language in Bosnia

and Herzegovina and the languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Slovenia were “brotherly” languages. They obtained the status of foreign languages only after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, when their speakers found themselves in an entirely new position.

In my paper I wish to explore organizational patterns used by the Bosniaks in Slovenia compared to those used by the Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the cultural production of the former and the latter in the framework of their ethnic cultural societies and associations, and their access to various financial resources including those necessary for (co-)organising lessons or courses of their mother tongues. I am also interested in how the minority status of the Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina is reflected in their cultural life and, on the other hand, how the absence of the minority status shows in the cultural life of the Bosniaks in Slovenia.

The paper is based on extensive fieldwork carried out under my supervision between 2012 and 2017: a survey carried out among the Slovenian cultural societies

in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SMI Survey 2012); interviews with teachers of the Slovenian language and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and interviews with representatives of both minorities (i.e. representatives of their cultural societies and associations) in Slovenia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively.² This empirical research was a longitudinal upgrade of a previous fieldwork under the same supervision which started in 2005 with a survey on the position of immigrants and members of the so-called “new minorities” in Slovenia, their offspring, and their cultural production. Two of my interviews were especially significant for this paper: with the Secretary and Projects Leader of the Bosniak Association of Slovenia, Admir Baltić (Žitnik Serafin 2014b), and with the Chair of the Association of Slovenian Societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Darko Mijatović (Žitnik Serafin 2014c). For the purpose of this publication, the paper has been additionally upgraded, using the results of a most recent target research project titled “Sodobne strategije slovenskih izseljencev za ohranjanje etnične identitete” (Contemporary strategies of Slovenian emigrants for the preservation of ethnic identity, 2016–2018), published in its Final Report (Žitnik Serafin, Kalc, Mlekuž, Vižintin 2018).

In the so-called “Dayton Constitution”, Bosnia and Herzegovina established the “domination of three constitutive nations” (Kržišnik-Bukić 2014: 135), and placed the Slovenians in the ethnic category of “others”. Later on, in the *Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Minorities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Zakon ... 2003), the Slovenians were explicitly named as a national minority. This means that – similarly as the Slo-

venians in Croatia and in Serbia³ – the Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina have obtained the status of a national minority whereas members of the nations from these countries in Slovenia are still striving for the acknowledgement of such status. Nevertheless, a mutual promise to support the preservation of the languages and cultures of the national minorities is a part of all the bilateral agreements between Slovenia and other successor states of the former Yugoslavia relating to science, culture and education (Komac 2014: 120).

On February 1, 2011, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia passed the *Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the National Communities of Members of the Nations of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Republic of Slovenia* (Pravno-informacijski sistem 2011). Three months later, a government committee on the questions of the national communities from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established on the basis of the Declaration. Only a year later, the new government led by the Prime Minister Janez Janša abolished this committee along with a number of others. The Bosniaks and members of other Yugoslav nations in Slovenia – joined within the Association of the Associations of Cultural Societies of the Nations of the Former Yugoslavia in Slovenia⁴ – have been pleading their right to attain the status of national minorities since 2003, when the Association was established. The president of the Association, Ilija Dimitrievski argues that these communities cannot consent to their status of ‘newcomers’ as they are in fact a product of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The

constitutional acknowledgement of the national minority status, Dimitrievski continues, would be prerequisite for the preparation of further legislation on the assertion of their special collective rights in terms of the preservation of their languages and cultures, the access to public media, political participation, and the dignity of these groups of Slovenian citizens. Today, he says, there are almost a hundred cultural societies in Slovenia contributing to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the nations of the former Yugoslavia (Dimitrievski 2014: 17–19).

Members of Slovenian academic circles have different views on the possible change of the Slovenian Constitution aimed at the recognition of the national minority status for these communities.⁵ Some authors support such recognition; others are more or less sceptical about it or even explicitly oppose the idea. The change of the Constitution seems unnecessary even to some members of these minorities or their descendants, for example the nationally awarded writer and film director, Goran Vojnović (his view is quoted in Milharčič Hladnik 2014: 90–91). Nev-

ertheless, some highly esteemed experts in minority issues speak in favour of it, among them the European Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks (quoted in Kržišnik-Bukić 2014: 10–11), and the Head of the Institute for the Constitutional Law in Ljubljana, Ciril Ribičič (2014: 199).

A Statistical Comparison between the Two Minorities

The Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The number of the Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been constantly decreasing since 1961 (*Statistički godišnjak/ ljetopis Federacije BiH=Statistical Yearbook 2013*: 69). A comparison between the number of the ethnically declared Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the number of the members of the Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that there are actually more Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina than those specified as such in the census. On the other hand, a three times larger number of the members of the Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that

Table 1: Ethnically declared Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the membership of the Slovenian societies

	Number of the ethnically declared Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2011–2013*	Number of the members of the Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2012**
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	1,100	3,083
<i>The Federation of B&H</i>	500	1,376
<i>The Republic of Srpska</i>	600	1,707

* Source: Josipovič 2014: 217; ** Source: SMI Survey 2012.

Table 2: Slovenians in other successor states of the former Yugoslavia and the membership of Slovenian ethnic societies in these countries

State	Number of the Slovenians, the latest census, 2011–2013*	Number of the members of the Slovenian cultural societies, 2012**
Croatia	10,517	6,047
Serbia	4,033	4,302
Kosovo	500	/
Montenegro	354	66
Macedonia	300	301

* Source: Josipovič 2014: 217; ** Source: SMI Survey 2012.

these societies also accept members of other nations (table 1), which was confirmed by the 2012 SMI Survey results.

If we compare the data from table 1 with the data from table 2, it becomes clear that such a distinct disproportion between the census numbers relating to the members of the Slovenian minority and the number of the members of the Slovenian ethnic societies (in favour of the latter) is – if we consider only the so-called Yugoslav region – characteristic only of Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The number of the members of the Slovenian societies in other countries of this region exceeds the census number of the Slovenians living there only in Serbia and Macedonia (besides Bosnia and Herzegovina), and in both the difference between those numbers is almost negligible (table

2). This unique case of the large number of the members of the Slovenian cultural societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be explained by the fact that in this country the interest in the study or employment in Slovenia is still relatively larger than in other countries of the region, and that a certificate confirming one's active membership in a Slovenian cultural society is taken into account in the Slovenian naturalisation process.

The Bosniaks in Slovenia

The number of the persons whose first residence was in other republics/states of the Yugoslav region that had moved to Slovenia by 2001 shows that most of them came from Bosnia and Herzegovina (67,670 out of 150,763 persons, table 3). I am using the data from the last classical

*Table 3: Residents of Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina (by the year of immigration)**

Before 1940	1941–52	1953–60	1961–70	1971–80	1981–90	1991–2001	Altogether by 2001
138	1,058	2,227	7,842	26,227	17,517	12,661	67,670

* Calculated on the basis of the data from: "Popis 2002" (Population Census 2002), Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, accessed March 10, 2018, www.stat.si/popis2002.

Slovenian population census in 2002, in which ethnicity, mother tongue and religion were systematically registered for the last time in that country.

Among those who migrated to Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the largest groups consisted of the Bosniaks (13,876 persons), the Muslims (as an ethnic option: 6,332 persons), the Bosnians (5,869 persons), the Croats (7,120 persons), the Serbs (15,612 persons), and the unknown nationality or those who did not wish to answer (14,639 persons) (Popis 2002 / Population Census 2002). If we add to those who declared themselves as Bosniaks in the 2002 census (21,542 members of the first and the second generation) at least some of those who ethnically declared themselves as Muslims or Bosnians – something that Admir Baltić argues as justified, we get a group of almost 40,000 persons (immigrants and their descendants) with many common characteristics (tables 4–5).

Admir Baltić, the Secretary of the Bosniak Association of Slovenia, believes that

the problem of three different names for Slovenian Bosniaks can be explained with the frequent change of the name used for this ethnic group in Slovenian population censuses:

The 2002 Slovenian population census noted 21,542 Bosniaks, 10,467 Muslims [as an ethnic option], and 8,062 Bosnians. A closer look at some additional characteristics of these three groups shows that we are dealing with very similar groups of population who share, to a great extent, their Bosnian-Herzegovinian origin, the Bosnian language as their mother tongue, and the Islam as their prevailing religion. On the basis of these common characteristics it can be concluded that in the case of these three supposedly different ethnic groups we are actually dealing with one nation; the nation that since 1993 has been officially called the *Bosniaks*, before that it was called the *Muslims*, and on the informal every-

Table 4: *Ethnically declared Muslims in Slovenia, population censuses 1953–2002**

1953 Census	1961 Census	1971 Census	1981 Census	1991 Census	2002 Census
1,617	465	3,197	13,339	26,577	10,467

* There were no options called Bosniaks or Bosnians before the 2002 census. Source: “Popis 2002” (Population Census 2002).

Table 5: *Bosniaks, Muslims and Bosnians in Slovenia, population census, 2002*

Bosniaks	Muslims (ethnic option)	Bosnians (regional option)	Altogether
21,542	10,467	8,062	40,071

day level – especially in Slovenia – it was called the *Bosnians*. This triple naming used in different censuses confirms that the Bosniak national consciousness is still developing and that it has not yet been stabilised in its full potential. [...] Danilo Dolenc, a Slovenian demographer working on statistical data based on population censuses, observes that no other nation has been faced with so many changes of its name as the Bosniaks (Baltić 2009: 25–26).

The assumption on the triple naming of members of the same group sharing the Bosnian-Herzegovinian origin, the Bosnian mother tongue, and most of them also the Islamic religion, is partly confirmed by the Slovenian census data on the persons who immigrated to Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina (table 3) and the last classical Slovenian population census data (2002) on religion and mother tongue (table 6). There are, of course, members of other nations among the Islamic believers in Slovenia. But – as Špela Kalčič (2006) observes – 99 percent of the members of the Islamic Community of Slovenia originate from the former Yugoslavia, and 90 percent of these from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even the refugee “corridor” through Slovenia in 2015 did not essentially change this proportion. Nevertheless, the large number of those who in the 2002 Slovenian census refused to state their religion is also quite telling (307,973 persons, table 6).

If we want to compare the shares of the members of both minorities that are also members of their ethnic cultural societies, an approximate estimation of the number of the members of the Bosniak societies in

Table 6: Slovenian population census, 2002: religion and mother tongue

religion	Islamic	47,488
	no answer	307,973
mother tongue	Bosnian	31,499
	unknown	52,316

Slovenia is needed. According to Baltić (in a letter to the author, December 2, 2014), the number of the members who regularly pay their membership fee, together with their family members, is between 3,000 and 4,000.

A quantitative comparison

There are 1,100 declared Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there are approximately 3,000 members of Slovenian ethnic cultural societies in that country (table 1). On the other hand, there are 21,542 Bosniaks in Slovenia according to the last classical population census, i. e. approximately twenty times more than the former, while only between 3,000 and 4,000 of them are members of the Bosniak cultural societies in Slovenia – the same number as in the case of the much smaller Slovenian minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most Slovenian Bosniaks are members of the Islamic Community of Slovenia rather than the Bosniak cultural societies or the Bosniak Association of Slovenia. When Ahmed Pašić, head of the Islamic community of the city of Jesenice was asked about how many Muslims there were in Slovenia, he replied: “Officially, according to the census: 47,500; unofficially: around 60,000.” (Pašić in Nežmah 2004) Baltić explains the reasons for such an obvious disproportion between the

membership of the Islamic Community of Slovenia and the membership of the Bosniak cultural societies in Slovenia:

The Islamic Community comprises the largest number of the Bosniaks, which can be explained by the fact that the Islamic religion was a key factor of distinction from the neighbours belonging to the Orthodox or Catholic religion also in Bosnia and Herzegovina. [...] Thus, the Bosniaks formed their national consciousness based on the Islamic tradition with a certain delay; yet, the religious belonging to the Islam is not a requirement for being declared as a Bosniak as there are numerous agnostics and atheists who also consider themselves Bosniaks (Baltić in Žitnik Serafin 2014b: 1).

In spite of these noticeable quantitative differences between the two minorities, many similarities can be observed in their organizational patterns and cultural activities. In the following sections I will try to look into the cultural situation of both minorities in the light of their organization and cultural production.

Comparison between the Organizational Patterns and Cultural-Artistic Activities of the Two Minorities

Parallels

The first and the most obvious similarity is in the time of the formation of the present cultural societies. The existing Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina were established in two waves: the first six of them were founded between 1992

and 1994, the rest around 2003; only *Triglav*, the largest Slovenian society in the Republic of Srpska was registered between both waves, in 1998. Two almost identical waves are also characteristic of the establishment of the Bosniak societies in Slovenia: the first ones were formed at the time of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995), the rest of them in the new millennium. The role and the purpose of the former and the latter were practically the same: the early societies were formed to organize aid in war conditions, to help with the evacuation of a number of families from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to take care of the refugees in Slovenia. After the war, the mission soon changed from humanitarian engagement to the preservation of language and ethnic cultural traditions.

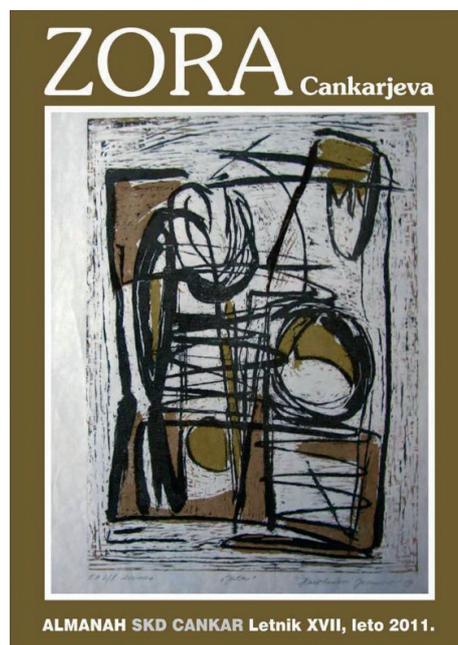
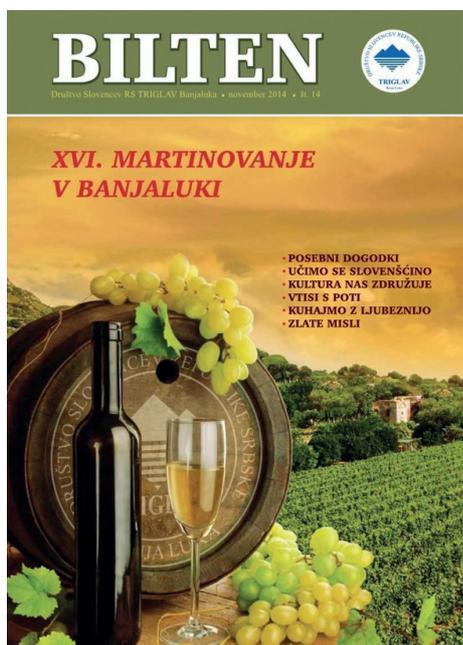
By March 2003, there were 16 registered societies established by the Muslims in Slovenia (Klopčič, Komac and Kržišnik-Bukić 2003: 207–208); in the meantime, some of them have changed their names adding the attribute Bosniak – e.g. the cultural society in Jesenice called *Biser*. Three from five founding societies of the Bosniak Association of Slovenia no longer exist but many new ones have been formed since. Between 2005 and 2013, new Bosniak cultural societies appeared in the cities of Velenje, Ljubljana, Koper and Maribor (Baltić in Žitnik Serafin 2014b: 5). There is though one significant difference between the Slovenian and Bosniak ethnic societies: as opposed to the Bosniak cultural societies in Slovenia, some of the present Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, e.g. the Sarajevo *Cankar* and the Banja Luka *Triglav*, have a really long tradition of predecessors.⁶

An important parallel can also be found

in the beginnings of the associating of the societies. The Bosniak Association of Slovenia was registered in 1997, but its prehistory reaches back to the times of co-operation and association of early Bosniak societies in the Gorenjska region and in central Slovenia. Only one year after the Bosniak societies in Slovenia joined into the *Bosniak Association*, Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina joined into the *Coordinating Committee of the Slovenian organizations* (1998), a forerunner of the present *Association of Slovenian Societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina "Evropa zdaj"* founded in 2010. Both associations, the Bosniak and the Slovenian one, include the same number of member societies: nine each. In both cases only one other

society exists in the country outside the association. Both associations have very similar roles and more or less the same number of annual projects.

Both ethnic societies, Slovenian and Bosniak, are organized according to the national legislation: (almost) all have their president, secretary, treasurer, steering/executive committee, board of trustees, assembly and court of honour. Their further division into very similar sections in both countries also constitutes parallel organizational patterns. The forms and ways in which they maintain their cultural traditions and mother tongue are virtually identical: participation in the organization of language classes, society libraries, celebration of national holidays, celebration



Picture 1: The Bulletin of the 'Triglav' Slovenian Society, Banja Luka, B&H, and Zora Cankarjeva, annual publication of the 'Cankar' Slovenian Society, Sarajevo, B&H

of some religious holidays, ethno and folk music, traditional dances cultivated by folklore groups, national costumes, national dishes and traditional handcraft.

Other activities are also similar in both minorities: both associations of societies have their own website which is occasionally inactive because they lack a qualified webmaster. Due to the same reason, there are only a few individual societies that have got their own home page with a link to their online periodical. As opposed to most Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the majority of the Bosniak societies in Slovenia have their own Facebook profiles because they find it easier this way to keep in touch with their members. Only the largest societies on both sides publish their own newsletter, almanac or similar. These are usually the same societies that have got some experience with other publishing as well. All the societies have regular society meetings and picnics. Larger societies also organize various trips, outings or visits of their mother country while the smaller societies are invited to join them. The same applies to the celebration of national holidays. About one third of the societies in both cases are also active in organizing sports activities and other competitions. Three societies on each part have choruses, and the share of the societies that organize various exhibitions and lectures is also similar on both sides. Both minorities have produced some regular radio programmes of their own in the past (e.g. Slovenians in Prijedor, Banja Luka ..., Bosniaks in Ljubljana, Maribor, etc.) or they still produce them.

On the other hand, there is an important difference between cultural productions of these two minorities: the strong



Picture 2: The young folklore group of the 'Biser' Bosniak Cultural Society in Jesenice, Slovenia

point of the Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina is their choruses, and the strong point of the Bosniak societies in Slovenia is their folklore groups. The latter also have more drama groups than the former. Visual arts are more or less regularly performed in three Bosniak societies and in one Slovenian society (in Tuzla), which has its own group of painters and which now organizes regular artists' colonies.

Both, the Bosniak and the Slovenian ethnic societies usually invite other Bosniak/Slovenian societies to their events. This means that their cooperation does not necessarily take place through the Association but also directly, between individual societies. Both minorities pay more and more attention to the inclusion of children and youth – in some Bosniak societies, e.g. in the Jesenice *Biser*, the share of the members aged between 5 and 25 was no less than 85 percent (Balagić 2009: 101–109).

From the perspective of intercultural

cooperation and exchange, both communities act – on the local and national levels – in a cohesive way. In spite of the relatively small number of its members, the Slovenian community in Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the most active minorities there. As the Chair of the Association of Slovenian Societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Darko Mijatović says half in jest, the *Slovenian Triglav Society* in Banja Luka, which shares its office room with 15 other minorities of the Republic of Srpska, is lucky because other minorities are less active, which leaves the Slovenian community more space in the office room (Mijatović in Žitnik Serafin 2014c: 5). The truth is they cooperate with the local artists of other national provenance who are members of either the national majority or of other minorities, which makes their events much more interesting for the media (ibid.: 8). Simi-

larly, there is a lot of cultural cooperation between the Slovenian Bosniaks and other ethnic communities as well as with the Slovenian majority. As a best practice of such cooperation, Baltić mentions a member society of the Bosniak Association of Slovenia, namely the *Sevdah Society* from Ljubljana, which regularly organizes events in which they even manage to combine artists from individual Serbian and Kosovo-Albanian ethnic societies – which, to his knowledge, is a rare phenomenon (Baltić in Žitnik Serafin 2014b: 8).

Differences

The first difference between these two minorities can be noticed in their self-definition. Baltić says: “My definition: a Bosniak is anyone who declares himself as Bosniak and who sees Bosnia and Herzegovina or Sandžak as his mother country or the mother country of his ancestors.” (Ibid.:



Picture 3: The ‘Camerata Slovenica’ chorus of the ‘Cankar’ Slovenian Society, Sarajevo, B&H

1) Mijatović, on the other hand, says, “We abide by the Slovenian legislation. It matters when our members apply for Slovenian citizenship. Until last year they were able to apply as Slovenians if they could prove Slovenian roots up to four generations back. This has changed, now only those can apply as Slovenians whose Slovenian roots go two generations back.” (Mijatović in Žitnik Serafin 2014c: 1) This would mean that for the Bosniaks in Slovenia (and this is also common practice in most population censuses), ethnic affiliation is a matter of personal choice whereas Slovenian ethnic affiliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be proved through one’s genealogy. Due to this change in Slovenian naturalisation legislation, the *Slovenian Triglav Society* in Banja Luka reduced the number of their members from 1,300 to slightly over 700 (ibid.). There has been much discussion on the problematic politicizing of ethnic affiliation and membership in Slovenian societies abroad, politicizing caused by the fact that – as already mentioned – a certificate on one’s active membership in a Slovenian cultural society is taken into account in the process of obtaining Slovenian citizenship. But the discussion on this issue between researchers and policy makers has not been very fruitful so far.

A second difference is in the organization and funding of minority language classes. Slovenian ministry responsible for education co-finances Slovenian language classes for young members of Slovenian communities abroad, including Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of the teachers are sent from Slovenia. Owing to this fact, regular Slovenian language classes are organized in almost every city of either the Federation of Bosnia and

Herzegovina or the Republic of Srpska where a Slovenian cultural society exists. In Slovenia, on the other hand, classes of Bosnian language are organized in the framework of various projects only in Ljubljana, Jesenice and Velenje. They have been financed from the Swiss Contribution, Norway Grants and EEA Grants. As opposed to Slovenian language classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the question of systematic organization and long-term funding of Bosnian language classes in Slovenia remains unanswered although the promises contained in the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the cooperation in culture, education and science* (Spozrazum 2000) follow the principles of reciprocity: “Contractual partners will offer organizational and financial support for supplementary lessons of the mother tongue and culture for the children and youth of Slovenian nationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the children and youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Slovenia.” Emil Vega (2013: 11) writes, “Our country, which provides classes of Slovenian language for Slovenians abroad, expects reciprocity – the classes of Bosnian language should be financed by Bosnia and Herzegovina. But Bosnia and Herzegovina, which after the war lost one third of its population as they left the country, and facing its own economic and political challenges, is unable to cope with this task.”

A third difference is in the funding of the two minorities’ cultural activities. As this question is closely related to my suggestions contained in the conclusion, I will discuss it later. There are of course many other parallels and differences be-

tween these two minorities in the area of their organizational schemes and cultural production, but I was able to present in this paper only the most significant ones.

Conclusion

Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina share a long history of belonging to the same state: first to the Austrian-Hungarian empire, then to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and finally to the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Thus it is not surprising that there are more similarities than differences between their minorities living in the other country. This is also the reason why a Slovenian feels more or less at home in Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as does a Bosniak in Slovenia – despite the fact that in both cases we are talking about national, religious and language minorities, which means that they both differ from the majority society at least in terms of three different parameters. Parallels between the two minorities are evident not only in all areas of their cultural interests but also in the range of possibilities for the fulfilment of those interests. Further parallels can be observed in their organizational patterns (ethnic cultural societies and their internal organization, associations of these societies, their history ...), the diversification of their cultural production and its pronounced significance for cultural identity of the members of these minorities (Baltić in Žitnik Serafin 2014b: 7; Mijatović in Žitnik Serafin 2014c: 7). Both minorities nourish their mother tongues through a wide range of their societies' activities as well as their cooperation in the organization of language classes and courses.

Both countries have a similar stand on the recognition of collective rights

in the area of cultural activities of the minorities living within their state borders. Cultural projects of ethnic societies and associations are co-financed from various sources. The Slovenian cultural societies in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have partly been co-financed by municipalities and by some cantons, for example by the Ministry of Culture of the Canton of Sarajevo, occasionally also by the Zenica-Doboj Canton. In the Republic of Srpska they have also been co-financed by the municipalities and by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Srpska (SMI Survey 2012). The Bosniak cultural societies in Slovenia have been co-financed by their local municipalities as well as by the Slovenian ministry in charge of culture and/or by the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia. The Slovenian and the Bosniak ethnic societies are both more or less unsatisfied with the state funding whereas they feel more comfortable with their cooperation at the local level, i. e. with the participation of their municipalities, which – besides their public calls for cultural-artistic and publishing projects, conferences, infrastructure, etc. – often provide free or subsidised use of the societies' office rooms or other premises. On the other hand, the care for one's own minority in the other country has been much more substantial in the case of Slovenia's care for the Slovenian minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina compared to the care of the latter for the Bosniak minority in Slovenia. The activities of the Slovenian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been considerably co-financed by the Slovenian Government Office for Slovenians Abroad while the Slovenian ministry in charge of education has been

co-financing Slovenian language classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been unable to offer this kind of support to the Bosniak minority in Slovenia.

Darko Mijatović stresses that the minority status of the Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina ensures them better access to Bosnian-Herzegovinian local and state funds. If the Slovenian community had not been officially recognised as a minority by Bosnia and Herzegovina, he says, it would be much more difficult for Slovenian societies and their umbrella organization, the Association to apply for public funds in the country of residence (Mijatović in Žitnik Serafin 2014c: 9). Admir Baltić, on the other hand, is more sceptical in the case of the Bosniak community in Slovenia: “If the (official minority) status should regulate this issue, then yes. The status in itself does not necessarily generate more favourable chances for the financing of the societies’ activities; but from our perspective, this is precisely the main purpose of the status.” (Baltić in Žitnik Serafin 2014b: 9)

I believe Slovenia should acknowledge the minority status of members of the nations of the former Yugoslavia in Slovenia, including the Bosniaks, and treat the public funding of their ethnic societies the same way it treats the funding of cultural programmes and infrastructure of the so-called autochthonous minorities in Slovenia, recognized by the Slovenian Constitution. Furthermore, I also believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina should – at least in a very modest degree – comply with the existing bilateral agreement with Slovenia on the reciprocal funding of each minority’s mother tongue classes in the other country. The financial and moral

effect of these changes upon the Bosniaks in Slovenia would be favourable, and the burden and the benefits of the support intended for one’s own minority in the other country would be a bit more equally distributed between both countries. It will probably take a considerable period of time before these goals can be reached. But as first steps in this direction were made many years ago, it is doubtlessly time for some further steps now.

References

- Balagić, Nihad (2009). Kulturno in športno društvo Bošnjakov ‘Biser’ – Jesenice – na kratko o sedemnajstih letih delovanja. *Bošnjaška kultura od prostovoljstva k profesionalizaciji* (ed. Admir Baltić). Ljubljana: Bošnjaška kulturna zveza Slovenije, 101–109.
- Baltić, Admir (2009). Organiziranost bošnjaške oziroma bosansko-hercegovske skupnosti na kulturnem področju – primerjava Slovenije, Nizozemske in Švedske. *Bošnjaška kultura od prostovoljstva k profesionalizaciji* (ed. Admir Baltić). Ljubljana: Bošnjaška kulturna zveza Slovenije, 7–86.
- Dimitrievski, Ilija (2014). Ob desetletnici delovanja EXYUMAKA in Makedonci v Sloveniji. *Kdo so narodne manjšine v Sloveniji?* (ed. Vera Kržišnik-Bukić). Ljubljana: Zveza zvez kulturnih društev narodov in narodnosti nekdanje SFRJ v Sloveniji, 15–24.
- Josipovič, Damir (2014). Sedanje razmerje med popisnimi statistikami in društvenim organiziranjem Slovencev. *Priseljevanje in društveno delovanje Slovencev v drugih delih jugoslovanskega prostora: Zgodovinski oris in sedanost* (ed. Janja Žitnik Serafin). Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 215–225.
- Kalčič, Špela (2006). Oblačilne prakse in procesi redefinicije identitete v slovenskih muslimanskih skupnostih po razpadu Jugoslavije. PhD diss., University of Ljubljana.

- Klopčič, Vera, Komac, Miran, Kržišnik-Bukić, Vera (2003). *Albanci, Bošnjaki, Črnogorci, Hrvati, Makedonci in Srbi v Republiki Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja.
- Komac, Miran (2014). Varstvo 'novih' narodnih manjšin (skupnosti). *Kdo so narodne manjšine v Sloveniji?* (ed. Vera Kržišnik-Bukić). Ljubljana: Zveza zvez kulturnih društev narodov in narodnosti nekdanje SFRJ v Sloveniji, 103–127.
- Kržišnik-Bukić, Vera (2014). Znanstvena izhodišča za definicijo 'narodne manjšine v Republiki Sloveniji' in problem strokovnih razhajanj. *Zgodovinski, politološki, pravni in kulturološki okvir za definicijo narodne manjšine v Republiki Sloveniji* (eds. Vera Kržišnik-Bukić, Damir Josipovič). Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 127–166.
- Kržišnik-Bukić, Vera (ed.) (2014a). *Kdo so narodne manjšine v Sloveniji?* Ljubljana: Zveza zvez kulturnih društev narodov in narodnosti nekdanje SFRJ v Sloveniji.
- Kržišnik-Bukić, Vera, Josipovič, Damir (eds.) (2014). *Zgodovinski, politološki, pravni in kulturološki okvir za definicijo narodne manjšine v Republiki Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja.
- Milharčič Hladnik, Mirjam (2014). Kulturološki okvir definicije 'narodna manjšina v Republiki Sloveniji' v kontekstu migracijskih gibanj. *Zgodovinski, politološki, pravni in kulturološki okvir za definicijo narodne manjšine v Republiki Sloveniji* (eds. Vera Kržišnik-Bukić, Damir Josipovič). Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, 81–92.
- Nežmah, Bernard (2004). Musliman v slovenski domovini. *Mladina*, February 13, 2004, www.mladina.si/93273/musliman-v-slovenski-domovini/ (10 March 2018).
- Pravno-informacijski sistem (2011). Deklaracija RS o položaju narodnih skupnosti pripadnikov narodov nekdanje SFRJ v RS, <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=DEKL32> (10 March 2018).
- Ribičič, Ciril (2014). Interes in odgovornost večinskega naroda za sožitje z manjšinami: Novodobne narodne manjšine in osamosvojitve Slovenije. *Kdo so narodne manjšine v Sloveniji?* (ed. Vera Kržišnik-Bukić). Ljubljana: Zveza zvez kulturnih društev narodov in narodnosti nekdanje SFRJ v Sloveniji, 179–204.
- SMI Survey (2012). A survey carried out among the Slovenian cultural societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. SMI Archive at ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Box Projekt Poklicne migracije 2011–2014, folder Anketa 2012.
- Sporazum med vlado Republike Slovenije in Svetom ministrov Bosne in Hercegovine o sodelovanju v kulturi, izobraževanju in znanosti [signed on September 19, 1999]. *Uradni list RS* 69 (2000).
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. Popis 2002 [2002 Census], www.stat.si/popis2002 (10 March 2018).
- Statistički godišnjak/ljetopis Federacije BiH=Statistical Yearbook 2013*. Sarajevo: Federalni zavod za statistiku.
- Vega, Emil (2013). Korenine v Bosni, drevo v Sloveniji. *Glasiló Ljubljana*, September 2013: 11.
- Zakon o zašiti prava pripadnika nacionalnih manjina u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine (2003). *Službeni glasnik BiH*, May 6, 2003.
- Žitnik Serafin, Janja (2014a). Prerez zgodovine slovenskih kulturnih društev v jugoslovanskem prostoru. *Priseljevanje in društveno delovanje Slovencev v drugih delih jugoslovanskega prostora: Zgodovinski oris in sedanjost* (ed. Janja Žitnik Serafin). Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 137–179.
- Žitnik Serafin, Janja (2014b). Intervju z Admirjem Baltićem (Part 1: October 23, 2014; part 2: November 2, 2014). SMI Archive at ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Box Bilateralni projekt z BiH 2014–2015 – Gradivo. Folder Intervjuji.

- Žitnik Serafin, Janja (2014c). Intervju z Darkom Mijatovićem, Laktaši, Bosnia and Herzegovina, October 13, 2014. SMI Archive at ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Box Bilateralni projekt z BiH 2014–2015 – Gradivo, folder Intervjuji.
- Žitnik Serafin, Janja (2015). Recipročnost ali simetrija? Primerjava kulturnih interesov in možnosti dveh manjšin. *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* 42, 113–126.
- Žitnik Serafin, Janja, Kalc, Aleksej, Mlekuž, Jernej, Vižintin, Marijanca Ajša (2018). *Sodobne strategije slovenskih izseljencev za ohranjanje etnične identitete: Zaključno poročilo* (Contemporary strategies of Slovenian emigrants for the preservation of ethnic identity: Final Report), https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/zakljucno_porocilo_3.pdf (10 March 2018).
3. The Slovenians in Serbia and in Croatia are even granted the possibility of being specifically represented in the parliament.
 4. Slovenian: *Zveza zvez kulturnih društev narodov in narodnosti nekdanje SFRJ v Sloveniji*.
 5. Compare different views of the authors in Kržišnik-Bukić (2014a) and Kržišnik-Bukić and Josipović (2014).
 6. The history of the Slovenian cultural societies in the Yugoslav region is presented in Žitnik Serafin 2014a: 137–179.

Notes

1. The paper was presented at the Turin AEMI conference in 2015. Parts of a previous Slovenian article by the author (Žitnik Serafin 2015) are also focused on the subject of this paper.
2. These interviews were conducted in the framework of the following research projects: “Poklicne migracije Slovencev v prostor nekdanje Jugoslavije: od naseljencev do transmigrantov” (Slovenian labour migration to the countries of the former Yugoslavia: From settlers to transmigrants, 2011–2015), “Ohranjanje slovenstva med mladimi člani slovenske skupnosti v jugoslovanskem prostoru” (Preservation of Slovenian identity among young members of Slovenian communities in the area of the former Yugoslavia, 2013), and “Pomen kulturne produkcije Slovencev v BiH in pripadnikov narodov BiH v Sloveniji” (The significance of the cultural production of Slovenians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of members of the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Slovenia, 2014–2015).

