

Bosnian migration to Austria: between labour migration and transnational mobility

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Migration patterns

- Labour migration – “guest worker” recruitment institutionalized since the 1960ies
- Temporary recruitment
 - Marginalization
- Use of informal networks



Migration patterns

- Forced migration 1992-1995
 - Approx. 90000 Bosnian refugees came to Austria
 - De-facto refugees – temporary protection
 - Approx. 1/3 left Austria (either return to Bosnia or left for third countries)
- Today: emigration
 - Family reunification
 - Student mobility
 - Labour migration



Demographic changes

- The statistics on returns in Bosnia speak of a total number of 1.029.152 returnees, from which 449.413 returned from abroad and 579.739 are returned internally displaced persons (UNHCR, Statistics Package March 2011)
- Sarajevo: 240.000 persons left the city between 1992 and 1995, about 70.000 IDPs from other parts of Bosnia arrived. In 1998 the demographic picture of the city was changed, most of the Orthodox population left the city and the number of Bosnian Muslims rose up to 78,3%
- District of Banja Luka: By April 1995, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported the total number of Serbs as 719.000, Muslims as 37.000 and Croats as 30.000 (reduction of some 90 per cent of the local Muslim population and 85 per cent of the Croat population since the beginning of the war)

Transnational return & transnational mobility

- Return:
 - not place bound or permanent
 - open-ended process,
 - involving movement back and forth and
 - periods of dual residence



Reasons for transnational mobility

- Economical reasons
 - Having a “secured” life
 - Social & health system
- Family
 - Family visits & remittances
 - Property related issues (maintenance houses, flats)
 - Other social relations (friends; pre-war and post-war relations)
- Ideological reasons
 - Emotional attachment – Nostalgia – home-making efforts
 - Involvement into non-profit organizations – helping developing the country
 - Changed demographic picture

Being and longing – “Neither here nor there”

- Tensions within families
- Feeling of not being welcomed neither in Austria nor in B-H
- Living in a state of limbo – being an “eternal traveller”
- Positive way of living, but also enriching the feeling of discontinuity

