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### **Abstract**

International Relations is increasingly interested in the transnational connectivity of migrants with their host-lands and original homelands. Why do conflict-generated diasporas from the same original homeland and living in the same host-land mobilize in sustained versus episodic ways? Even if not violent, sustained diaspora mobilization can exacerbate societal tensions, and be a source of domestic and international insecurity. This article focuses on the sustained mobilization of Bosnian Muslims versus the episodic mobilization of Croats and Serbs in the Netherlands in the early 2010s. I argue that a traumatic contentious issue that binds three actors – diasporas, host-state, and home-state – is central to such mobilization. This issue is the failure of Dutch peace-keeping forces to protect the Srebrenica enclave in 1995. Migration integration regimes, threats from radical right parties, host-state foreign policy, and transnational influences can trigger episodic diaspora mobilization, but not sustain it. The article concludes with plausibility probes from a cross-country comparison of Bosniaks in Sweden, and a cross-group comparison with Palestinians in the UK.

## **Introduction**

International Relations is increasingly interested in the dense connectivity of migrants with their original homelands, host countries, and political processes in various locations. Interest goes beyond political participation in host societies (Bauböck and Faist 2010). Diasporas engage with remittances, institutions, interest groups, and party politics in countries of origin and contribute to their transnationalization (Lyons and Mandaville 2010). They exert radicalizing and moderate impacts on conflict and peace processes and engage in democratization (Byman et al. 2001, Shain 2002, Adamson 2006, Koinova 2011).

Why do some conflict-generated diasporas mobilize in sustained ways while others do not, even if they come from the same original homeland and the conflict there has decreased? Understanding even moderate sustained mobilization is important, because it may create hubs of discontent and grounds for further domestic or international tensions. It is also important to understand why some diasporas in a new political environment move on from their traumatic past, while others continue to exhibit conflict-prone attitudes.

Based on my 2011-2012 study of post-Yugoslav diasporas in the Netherlands, I offer a *social movements* perspective on the conditions and mechanisms for sustained diaspora mobilization. Political opportunities and constraints – such as integration regimes, threats from radical right parties, host-state foreign policies, and transnational influences – can trigger but not sustain diaspora mobilization. I argue that a traumatic contentious issue that binds together diasporas, host-state, and home-state is central to sustained mobilization. In the 2010s, such an issue existed for Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) in the Netherlands, who mobilized in sustained ways, but not for Croats and Serbs, who did not.<sup>1</sup> The article contributes to the transnational social movements literature by demonstrating that not all opportunities and constraints have the

same impact on diaspora mobilization. A traumatic contentious issue deeply embedded in the domestic politics of both host-state and home-state is a source of durable contention.

This article reviews four clusters of explanations relevant to the puzzle. The central discussion compares modes of mobilization of the featured diasporas. The conclusions address the argument's external validity and examples of cross-country and cross-group comparisons.

### **Definitions in the Context of Social Movements Approaches**

I use Adamson and Demetriou's (2007) definition of "diaspora": "a social collectivity that exists across state borders and that has succeeded over time to: 1) sustain a collective national, cultural or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and 2) display an ability to address the collective interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organizational framework and transnational links." Anderson (1998) considers such diasporas "long-distance nationalists." I do not essentialize identities, but consider a conglomeration of individuals belonging to different generations, institutions, networks, families, home-towns, and political orientations who make homeland-oriented claims (see Brubaker 2005). I distinguish between formal and informal leaders who control entrepreneurial power. Formal leaders are part of organizations. Informal leaders operate outside of them, organizing networks with their links to restaurants, shops, and businesses or social activities.

A major characteristic of "conflict-generated" diasporas is a traumatic identity that often becomes "frozen" in remote locations. Displaced persons experience painful disruption of their lives, struggle with adaptation, and long for their homeland (Shapiro 2013). Reification of trauma in diaspora networks and institutions perpetuate a myth of return and radical attitudes

towards the original homeland, and prevent post-conflict reconciliation (Shain 2002, Smith and Stares 2007). The universe of such cases includes the Albanian, Armenian, Bosnian, Chechen, Croat, Palestinian, Serb, Somali, Tamil, among other diasporas. More recently, scholars argued that traumatic identities do not always trigger radical behaviors but can be reconciled (Lyons 2006, Hall 2011, Kostic 2012). Displacement can even offer reorientation and reframing of social identities rooted in conflict and obedience to authoritarian practices (Shapiro 2013 referring to Dauphinee). I take these debates further by seeking to understand variation in mobilization among diasporas stemming from violent conflict.

“Diaspora mobilization” designates individual and collective actions of identity-based social entrepreneurs who organize and encourage migrants to behave in a concerted way to make homeland-oriented claims, bring about a political objective, or contribute to a cause.

Mobilization entails that entrepreneurs have the capacity to harness material and symbolic resources to reach a collective goal (Tilly 1978). Core mobilization efforts take place through mobilizing structures of tight identity-based networks rooted in family, neighborhood, and private ties, often reinforced through wartime refugee experiences. This definition emphasizes diaspora engagement with the homeland-oriented dimension, not migrants’ orientation towards the host-state or engagement with “homegrown terrorism.”

Diasporas can mobilize in radical ways by contributing financially to rebel factions, recruiting soldiers, and staging violent demonstrations and boycotts (Collier and Hoeffler 2000, Shain 2002, Adamson 2006). They can also act moderately by staging peaceful protests and campaigns, lobbying, reframing conflict issues, supporting democratic factions, diffusing democratic ideas and practices, and participating in transitional justice initiatives (Lyons 2006, Young and Park 2009, Koinova 2011). Most examples of mobilization studied here fall into the

moderate category, but differ in how sustained they are.

It is important to speak about moderate mobilization for several reasons. Mobilization may employ nonviolent means but still be contentious. Tarrow notes that “ordinary people have power because they challenge power-holders, produce solidarities, and have meaning to a particular population, groups, situations, and national cultures” (2011:8). Sustained mobilization indicates that factors not visible to scholars and policy-makers could still aggravate fears among migrants, endanger their security, and empower extreme right parties to fuel conflicts threatening their wellbeing. Sustained mobilization, even if moderate, could prevent dissolution of conflict-generated identities and create hubs of contentious activism.

Some social movement approaches offer insights into sustained mobilization. Social movements are distinguished from riots, strikes, and other contentious events depending on how sustained they are. They are “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow 1998). Episodic outbursts of contention can emerge when political opportunities and constraints change. They can be turned into sustained action against “powerful opponents,” if they are based on "dense social networks and connective structures" and "draw on consensual or action-oriented cultural frames" that give meaning to collective action (1998:10). Sustained mobilization needs strategic objectives, not simple targets (Beinin and Vairel 2011). It can develop formal organizations or operate through informal social ties (Jasper 2005).

Social movement theories are useful for thinking about political opportunities and constraints, framing and meaning, mobilization of resources, and other aspects of the political process. A few scholars of transnational diaspora politics have used political opportunity structures and framing mechanisms (Wayland 2004, Sökefeld 2006, Koinova 2011, Adamson

2013). In previous work I employed these notions to understand comparatively how diasporas mobilize through different *channels* (state-based vs. transnational) (Koinova 2014a, 2014b).

Here I focus on *sustained vs. episodic* mobilization.

## **Methodology**

This study considers mobilization of conflict-generated diasporas during post-conflict reconstruction of their original homelands. During conflict periods violence in the homeland can help sustain diaspora mobilization, but during reconstruction there is sporadic violence if any, and political interest shifts to demobilization, transitional justice, institution-building, and revival of the economy (Brinkerhoff 2008, Young and Park 2009).

The study uses the “most-similar systems design,” where cases are similar on several control variables but outcomes are different (“sustained” versus “episodic” mobilization) (Lijphart 1971). Rigorous comparisons are made when researchers “craft arguments with general variables or mechanisms, seek out representative variation, and select cases to maximize control over alternative explanations” (Slater and Ziblatt 2013). The Bosniak, Croat, and Serb diasporas share a number of elements: country of origin (former Yugoslavia); education and social backgrounds, value systems, traditions, and culture (Korac 2003); Slavic populations with titular republics from which new states emerged in the 1990s; participation in guest-worker programs in Western Europe; migration segments who arrived in the Netherlands (as refugees or voluntarily) driven by Yugoslavia’s wars. The Netherlands provided the same integration regime for all three and was not a former colonial power to them. Hence, causal factors could be isolated with greater precision.

The dependent variable is “types of diaspora mobilization.” I study only mobilized

groups who make claims for their original homelands: not groups, segments, or individuals who are not mobilized. This variable is nominal and dichotomous—“sustained” versus “episodic” mobilization. Sustained mobilization occurs when organization of claim-making and material and symbolic resources takes place without interruption to address a common issue. Despite inevitable competition among individuals, there are common grievances, targets, action-oriented frames, and formal and informal networks engaged to proactively channel discontent. Episodic mobilization takes place when claims are made and resources drawn as necessary for specific events. Grievances may exist, but not be common, and claim-making is mostly reactive. A key distinguishing factor is the durability of claim-making through perpetuation and interconnection of initiatives including organized gatherings, public statements, lobbying, books, blogs, and other activities reported by respondents or captured through secondary analysis. Such activities may occur during episodic mobilization, but as one-time events or separately from each other.

The independent variable is a “contentious traumatic issue,” an instance of unresolved conflict of direct relevance to diaspora, homeland, and host-land. The failure of Dutch peacekeepers to protect Srebrenica in 1995 concerns the traumatic identity of the conflict-generated diaspora, claims about genocide, and dealing with the past among institutions and policy-makers in the Netherlands.

This research was conducted in 2011-2012 through a questionnaire for semi-structured interviews across more than 40 individuals who remain anonymous to protect their privacy.<sup>2</sup> Nearly half identified with Bosnian, Croat, or Serb identities; others claimed mixed ethnic and regional origins, an old Yugoslav identity, or shifting identities over the years.<sup>3</sup> Some were formal leaders of diaspora and religious organizations; others were informally involved. The interviewees also included a Dutch MP and representatives of international governmental and

nongovernmental organizations. Each interview lasted 45-60 minutes and included open-ended questions. Data were also derived from secondary sources and participant observation in two events: the March 2012 Utrecht celebration of 20 years of Bosnia-Herzegovina's (BiH) independence, and the May 2012 Amsterdam commemoration of victims of the Omarska concentration camp in Prijedor.

### **The Cases in Brief**

Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians had experienced uneasy co-existence. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1939) had a multi-ethnic structure riddled by tensions among Serbs and Croats as titular nations, and Bosnians and other ethnic groups, not officially acknowledged. Inter-ethnic strife intensified during World War II, but subsided after the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was created in 1945 of six republics with Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs having equal status. Inter-republican tensions intensified after 1980, leading to SFRY's violent disintegration in 1992 and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995). The Dayton Peace Accords (1995) started a difficult post-conflict reconstruction riddled by pervasive nationalism.

Three major waves characterize migration to Western Europe (Koinova 2014b). The first was driven by the postwar need of booming Western economies for labor. By 1981 more than 875,000 Yugoslavs were working in Western Europe, organized in "Yugoslav clubs." The second was driven by the SFRY disintegration wars. In the late 1980s and early 1990s men of military age left to escape the Yugoslav military. Other refugees followed, especially after the 1992 breakout of war and the 1995 Srebrenica massacre (Valenta and Ramet 2011:9), with those

from BiH most numerous. The third wave followed the end of the war in 1995, mostly through family unification, “chain migration” (Halilovic 2013), and other individual patterns.

Table 1 is a “snapshot” approach to the 2011-2012 diasporas when this research was conducted, with a focus on size, spread, organizations, and issues of engagement. The Bosnian diaspora is larger than the other two. Size is important for mobilization but not a stand-alone factor. During the Yugoslav disintegration all three diasporas were highly mobilized, but in the 2010s activism dissipated among the Serbs and Croats, not among the Bosniaks. The three groups live throughout the country with some concentrations in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague, and all three have been rather well organized.

**TABLE 1: POLITICALY RELEVANT FACTORS**

<i>Political Opportunities and Constraints</i>	<i>Explanation for Sustained Diaspora Mobilization</i>
Migration integration regimes	No: inconclusive results
Threats from the radical right	No: discursive responses only
Foreign policy stance by the host-land	Partial: foreign policy is not the only factor
Transnational influences	Partial: transnational influences are insufficient when homeland violence dissipates

### **Alternative Explanations**

I now turn to four clusters of factors presenting political opportunities and constraints and competing to explain why Bosniaks mobilized in sustained ways, while Croats and Serbs did so episodically.

**TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE DIASPORA CHARACTERISTICS**

Diaspora	Numbers c/a 53,000 Yugoslavs*	Spread (major cities)	Organizations (major)	Dominant Issues of Engagement
Bosniak	26,500 from BiH*, among them 24,700 Bosniaks**	Utrecht, The Hague, Delft, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Gouda, and 10 other locations	BiH Platform (umbrella for over 30 organizations), Mladi BiH, Guardians of Omarska, Islamic- cultural Association	Genocide recognition, memorialization of victims, transitional justice, human rights, integration, Islamic religion.
Croat	5,900*– 9,800**	Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague	[Croatian] Catholic Church and 14 Croatian organizations, mostly cultural ***	Cultural, linguistic, church-related, integration, EU enlargement
Serb	10,000* and around 10,000**	Rotterdam, Utrecht, Katwijk, Vlissingen, Hengelo, Zandaam	Serbian Information Network, links to Benelux' Milosevic.eu, Serbian Orthodox Church, ZID Theatre	Cultural, linguistic, church-related, integration.

\* Statistics Netherlands, in EU Web-magazine 2013.

\*\* community estimates: Bosniaks (Valenta and Ramet 2011); Croats (Mulalic et al 2004); Serbs (Serb Diaspora map).

\*\*\* Kantoci (2011).

Migration scholars often assert that *migrants' behavior is conditioned by the host-state's integration regime*, presenting institutional opportunities and constraints for mobilization.

Acquisition of citizenship on a *jus soli* (place-based) basis is more conducive to integration than on *jus sanguinis* (blood lineage) basis (Joppke 1999). Other institutional arrangements such as representational structures and multicultural versus assimilation policies also matter (Banting and

Kymlicka 2006, Modood et al. 2006). Scholarship is inconclusive as to how integration affects migrants' transnational political mobilization. In one view, clusters of institutional arrangements, collective identities, and homeland influences contribute to isolation and prompt migrants to make homeland-oriented claims (Ireland 1994, Koopmans et al. 2005). In another view, well-integrated individuals, especially from the second generation, are mobilized well (Lewis 2007, Baser 2012). From a third perspective, transnational engagement depends on the paths of migrants' "segmental assimilation" into a host society (Portes and Zhou 1993, Morawska 2004).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, none address whether mobilization will be episodic or sustained.

The integration regime does not exclusively explain the outcomes of diaspora mobilization. In the 1990s the Netherlands, in line with many European countries, initially offered only temporary protection to refugees from former Yugoslavia, but allowed permanent resettlement over time (Valenta and Ramet 2011). Respondents of all nationalities claimed they obtained citizenship around 5 years after arrival (see also Al Ali et al. 2001). But they also shared challenges. The Netherlands initially put the refugees in asylum centers (Korac 2013), and over time dispersed them among various cities to prevent spatial segregation (Koprivova 2011). The state treated them as subjects of integration policy, and the majority maintained a thick social boundary (Korac 2003). The first generation was most active to respond to these circumstances.

A second cluster of explanations features *a threat from the rise of radical right parties* across Europe: the parties of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria, and Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, among others. The radical right targets minorities and immigrants as "enemies within the state and outside the nation" (Mudde 2007:71). It reproduces a political myth that a homogeneous Western civilization needs to be reestablished by

excluding culturally alien migrants (Huysmans 2000:758). Radical right programs portray asylum as a security concern (Özekim 2013:924). Discursive threats in turn trigger security dilemmas among the targeted populations. The more durable the attacks, the more one might expect diaspora entrepreneurs to use homeland-oriented claims.

Scholars have paid little attention to how the radical right affects transnational diaspora mobilization. I asked diaspora entrepreneurs whether the statements of Geert Wilders, leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV), affect their mobilization. This party became third-largest after the 2010 general elections, supported a minority coalition government until April 2012, and remains politically important.

The rise of the PVV did not induce sustained diaspora mobilization. Its impact was strongest for Bosniaks, attacked on both Muslim and immigration grounds (Croats and Serbs are immigrants but Christians). Radical right attacks fostered responses that preserved their conflict-generated identity. But only one Bosnian respondent from the second generation claimed these events prompted him to join a Dutch political party (R2). Some Bosniaks said they had built thicker links with other Muslim groups (R1, R3). But it remains unclear whether they did so because of Islamic faith or in reaction to Wilders. Other interviewees said they strongly disagree with Wilders, but behave as “good members of Dutch society” and hope their Dutch colleagues and friends realize how “unsubstantiated his claims” are (Koinova 2014b).

A security dilemma emerged based on painful memories, but reaction among the three groups was limited to discourse and did not become sustained. Bosniaks made discursive links between Wilders’ hate speech and that of nationalist leaders during Yugoslavia’s collapse, most notably indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic (R2, R11). A respondent argued:

“When I talk to Dutch people, they do not see Wilders as harmful and dangerous to

society. They argue: “one can say what one wants.” But ... this talk ... causes that [Bosniak] people do not talk about other Dutch politicians, but Wilders. ... Bosniaks were earlier murdered because they are Muslim. Now they are attacked because they are Muslim...” (R1).

Wilders’ speech bothers Serbs and Croats as well (Vitkovic 2012, R13). An interviewee of Serbian origin drew similar parallels between Wilders’ statements and nationalist rhetoric during Yugoslavia’s disintegration (R6). But his attacks did not spur political activism. Croats and Serbs forged nonpolitical associations with peoples from Eastern and Southern Europe, and occasionally from Latin America (R4, R5).

The *foreign policy of a host-state* towards the original homeland is the third factor offering political opportunities and constraints for diaspora mobilization. So far most scholars have sought to explain foreign policy outcomes of ethnic lobbying. If the host-land government is receptive to diasporas’ goals, and if diasporas are well organized on foreign policy issues, promote policies government already favors (“strategic convergence”), or find points of “permeability of and access to the government,” then lobbying can be successful (Haney and Vanderbush 1999, Shain and Barth 2003, Rubenzer 2008). Diasporas can even “capture” host-state policies, and prompt intervention in conflicts abroad (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007).

Little is known about when “foreign policy” becomes a factor inducing diaspora mobilization, not an outcome of ethnic lobbying. Arguments about Dutch foreign policy help elucidate the difference between two potential explanatory factors: foreign policy and a traumatic contentious issue that binds diaspora, homeland, and host-land. Foreign policy is formulated by states for other states. During the Yugoslav wars the Netherlands participated in peace-keeping missions, NATO operations, and hosted refugees. Since then it prohibited Yugoslavia’s successor states from advancing towards EU accession unless they submitted war criminals to

the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). This stance prevented Croatia's and Serbia's progress until recently.<sup>5</sup> Some in the Croatian diaspora organized to lobby for accession (R4), while Serbs were less organized (R6). But there was no clear relationship between foreign policy stances and how sustained or episodic mobilization would be.

It is also unclear whether Dutch foreign policy has been strategically convergent or divergent regarding BiH, but diaspora mobilization has been sustained. The Netherlands has not supported BiH's EU accession, more for reasons of failed institution-building than for noncompliance with the ICTY. But the Netherlands was the fifth largest international donor of development aid to BiH (EUFC 2007).

A brief counterfactual regarding Dutch foreign policy vis-à-vis Macedonia, another post-conflict state in the Western Balkans, demonstrates why foreign policy is only a partial explanation. Foreign aid to Macedonia is focused on generic issues such as implementation of a peace agreement, education, and rural development (Koinova 2014b). In contrast, foreign aid to BiH has a sectoral focus on Srebrenica, aiming to ameliorate the effects of Dutch peace-keepers' failure. Funds were spent on Srebrenica-related aid in addition to governance, human rights, peace-building and refugee return (EUFC 2007).

*Transnational influences from the original homeland* can be independence struggles, intra-ethnic conflicts, foreign occupation, civil wars, and oppressive dictatorships (Koopmans et al. 2005). They can be specific events, such as onset of violence in the homeland, when diasporas often radicalize by expanding claim-making to more moderate members. They can be specific initiatives inaugurated by homeland "diaspora directorates," or by political parties, and cultural and religious associations with branches abroad (Hägel and Peretz 2005).

Transnational homeland influences galvanized the three diasporas, but did not foster

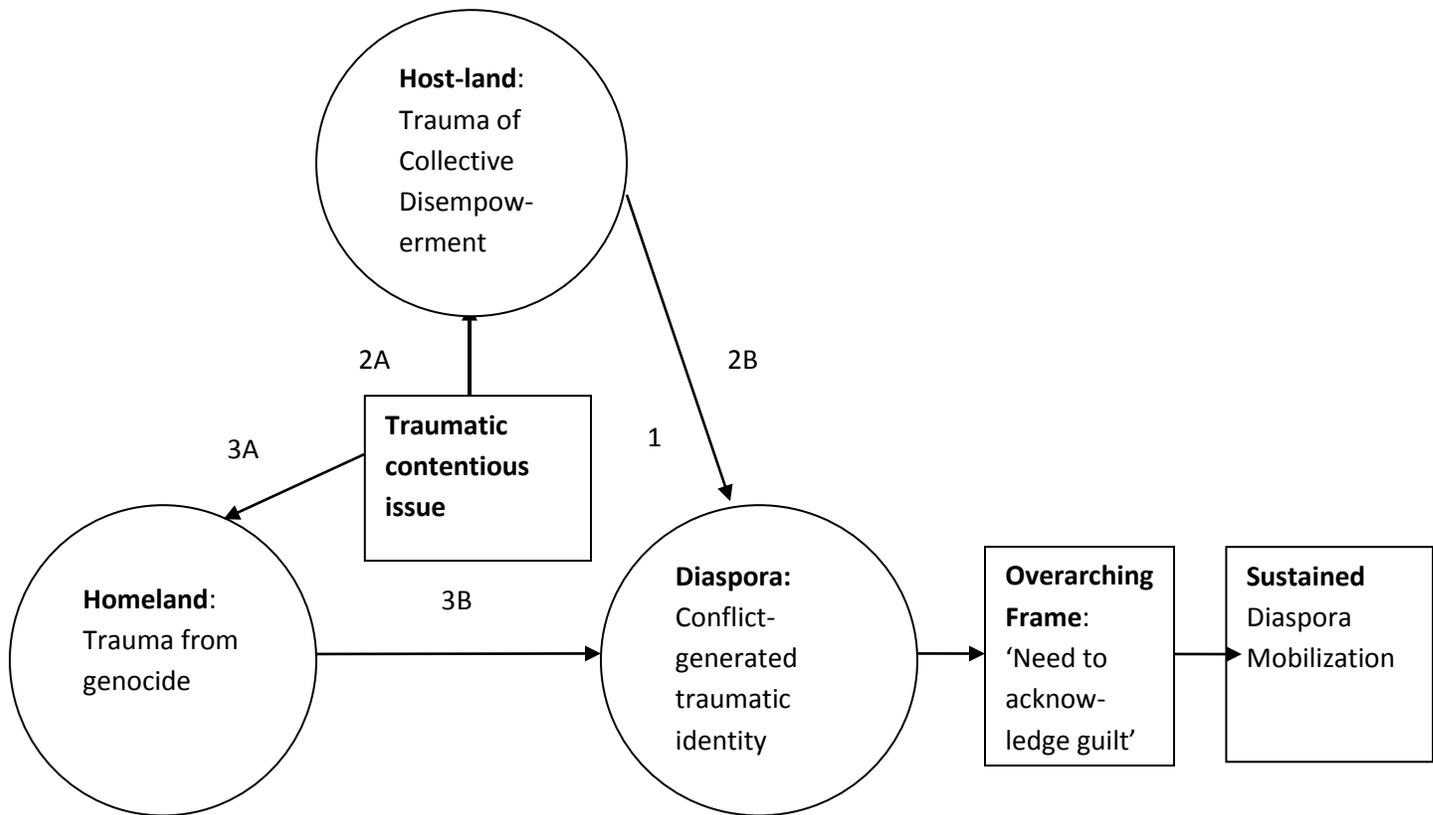
more sustained mobilization by one of them. Yugoslavia's disintegration was mirrored by the disintegration of "Yugoslav clubs" and schools in the Netherlands (Vitkovic 2006, Kantoci 2011). Many Yugoslavs abroad became gradually Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, after long-distance association with the emerging homeland nationalist movements (Skrbis 1999:133). During the war, all groups were highly politicized, with branches of political parties operating on Dutch territory. In the absence of violence after the war, transnational influences continued, but less intensely and more focused on diaspora contributions for economic reconstruction with remittances (R16) and community-related aid (R3). During the 2000s many Croat networks demobilized (Kantoci 2011), activism was weak among Serbs (R7, R8), but remained sustained only among Bosniaks.

Transnational influences can also emanate from the international system and its geopolitical and normative context. Some geopolitical considerations might have favored better Croatia than Serbia, since Croatia is predominantly Catholic and culturally closer to the Netherlands, while Serbia was considered the main culprit in Yugoslavia's wars. Some even argue that the Dutch were not entirely neutral, but sided with pro-independence factions (R17). Such an explanation is unsatisfactory, as both diasporas had episodic mobilization, while the political opportunity structures were relatively open for Croats and closed for Serbs. The international normative context enabled but did not cause sustained mobilization among Bosniaks. The ICTY and International Court of Justice declared the 1995 Srebrenica events "genocide." The international community further used these events to support initiatives for constitutional changes in BiH (Nettelfield and Wagner 2014). Yet in the Dutch context, the peace-keeping failure that enabled the Srebrenica genocide, not the genocide itself that became an international issue, has been at the core of sustained mobilization.

## Sustained Diaspora Mobilization

I argue that a “traumatic contentious issue” that brings together homeland, host-land, and diaspora is central to the sustained diaspora mobilization among Bosniaks in the Netherlands. The failure of the Dutch peace-keeping forces (Dutchbat) to protect the UN enclave of Srebrenica in 1995 originated in challenges to UN peace-keeping, but became deeply embedded in Dutch domestic politics. The Bosniak diaspora became locked into a traumatic identity, exacerbated by homeland transnational influences, where movement to further recognize Srebrenica as “genocide” (Nettelfield and Wagner 2014) has been growing. Figure 1 summarizes the political process.

**FIGURE 1: SUSTAINED DIASPORA MOBILIZATION**



In July 1995 Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces under command of Ratko Mladic, currently on trial at the ICTY, overwhelmed the lightly armed Dutchbat, seized the UN “safe-area” of Srebrenica, inhabited primarily by Bosnian Muslims, and killed about 8,000 men and boys (Simons 2013). For more than a decade, until rulings by the Dutch Supreme Court in 2013 and a District Court in 2014, the government denied responsibility, emphasizing that Dutchbat was part of a weak UN-sanctioned mandate.

The failure of Dutchbat to protect Srebrenica had tragic implications on the Bosniak diaspora (Link 1, Figure 1). Refugees from Srebrenica were not the most numerous (around 500) compared to Sarajevo (2,753), Zenica (1,919), and Prijedor (1,117) (Mulalic et al. 2007:37). But their traumatic experience, coupled with killings and torture in concentration camps, were amalgamated into a traumatic conflict-generated identity among refugees.

The traumatic events became especially important for Bosniaks as they became embedded in Dutch domestic politics (Link 2A, Figure 1). A mechanism facilitating this embeddedness was what Zarkov (2002) and Rijdsdijk (2012) called “Srebrenica trauma” in Dutch society. In Zarkov’s words, this was “the overwhelming feeling of Dutch soldiers and Dutch military stationed in Srebrenica, and the sense of humiliation of the Dutch nation, in the eyes of the world.” Dutch commitment to human rights norms, international law, and naming and shaming of noncompliant states sharply contrasted with Dutchbat behavior in Srebrenica, leading to an increased sense of guilt and need to “recapture the lost sense of international acclaim” (Subotic and Zarakol, 2012:930-32).

Numerous government and societal initiatives were launched to approach Dutchbat involvement in Srebrenica. A 2002 investigative report by the Netherlands Institute on War Documentation (NIOD) “drew fairly hard-hitting conclusions” and caused the Wim Kok

government to fall (Van den Berg 2010). Political and academic institutions became involved in inquiries about the peace-keepers (Zarkov 2002). In 2002 the highly rated television series *The Enclave* featured the Bosnia war and Dutch involvement (Zarkov 2014). Reconciliation programs worked through Dutch NGOs such as Inter-church Peace Council Netherlands (IKV), Press Now, and the Netherlands-Srebrenica Working Group (EUFC 2009).

Nevertheless, for more than a decade the trauma of Dutch society and the Bosnian refugees offered no foundations for closure (Link 2B, Figure 1). Until the court rulings in 2013 and 2014 there was no official acceptance of guilt or apology. The government resignation aimed to bring closure to the political debate, not to apologize to the victims. As Van der Berg argues, questions by survivors were largely ignored, and the official narrative became embedded in government responses. Public debates slightly opened after emotional meetings between former Dutchbat soldiers and survivors in 2007 and 2009 (2010:22), but political elites remained closed (Nobles 2008:3) and far from supportive. Even with the latest decisions, the judiciary, not political figures ruled in favour of the aggrieved. Thus, the diaspora resentment continued.

The tragic events in Srebrenica became embedded in the relationship between host-state and home-state (Link 3A, Figure 1), and between home-state and diaspora (Link 3B). Bosniak elites, institutions, and wider society became increasingly concerned about “genocide denial” from Republika Srpska, a Serb-dominated part of BiH, and from Serbia’s Tomislav Nikolic in 2012. The Bosniak diaspora participated in a series of transnational activities to counter such claims, emanating predominantly from BiH, and to spread the “genocide” message to wider international circles. Bosniak diaspora entrepreneurs had further incentives to organize activities around an overarching need to “recognize guilt.” This frame gives meaning to collective action in a triple direction: to maintain a diaspora’s conflict-generated identity, sustain resentment

against unapologetic elites, and promote need for genocide recognition.

The Bosniak diaspora resented the lack of interest of Dutch officials in the most important annual event, the July 11 commemoration of Srebrenica (Koinova 2014b). They also organized in a targeted way. The major focus of several youth working groups has been to pursue the genocide recognition of Srebrenica, and even link it to the Armenian genocide (Respondents 1 and 2). Such appeals have been strengthened by two factors. In 2009 the European Parliament passed a resolution declaring the Srebrenica events an “act of genocide” and called on the European Commission to commemorate the anniversary (European Parliament 2009). Diaspora activism increased to broaden appeal through EU lobbying and involvement of sympathetic politicians in communal events, most notably Emine Bozkurt, representative of the Dutch Labor Party in the European Parliament.<sup>6</sup> In September 2010 she organized with Mladi BiH and the BiH Platform the first European Parliament conference of the Bosnian diaspora (Congress of North American Bosniaks 2010) and continued to lobby for BiH reforms (Bozkurt 2012).

Hasan Nuhanovic’s activism was among the most sustained. Nuhanovic was a UN interpreter with Dutchbat in Srebrenica. His entire family were handed to Dutchbat and murdered after seeking refuge in the UN protected area (Nuhanovic 2010). He testified before the ICTY, wrote a book *Under the UN Flag*, helped establish the BiH Srebrenica memorial, and forged close collaborations with transnationally active survivor groups. He also launched a decade-long “lonely campaign” to “force the Dutch state to accept at least some responsibility for the deaths of his family members” (Dobbs 2011). His court campaign started yielding substantial results only in 2011, when a Hague-based appeals court overturned a lower court that acquitted the Dutch government from responsibility (Comiteau 2011). The 2013 Supreme Court decision is

considered “historic,” since it ordered the Dutch state to compensate victims’ families, and demonstrated that “people participating in UN missions are not always covered by the UN flag” (Bowcott 2013). In a case filed by Mothers of Srebrenica, a 2014 Dutch District Court found the Netherlands responsible for 300 deaths, but not for another 7,000 people over whom Dutchbat had no direct control (Boon 2014).

An uneasy relationship remains between the Bosniak community and former Dutchbat soldiers. A 2014 Facebook photo posted by a former soldier shocked the Bosniaks, as it featured a soldier lifting three fingers, a Serb paramilitary victory sign. In a meeting of Association of Srebrenica Survivors with more than 200 people, a discussion was launched to send a protest letter to the Defense Ministry. Emin Hasanovic reveals that such behavior is not isolated, and the community wants to signal it will not be tolerated (NPO 01/20/2014).

The focus of diaspora organizations and informal leaders on raising awareness of Srebrenica is a hub for activism on other traumatic issues. The Islamic-cultural Association of Bosniaks sends contributions to support war-affected families in BiH (R3). Omarska camp survivor Satko Mujagic leads initiatives to develop a memorial at the site, and the Facebook group “Guardians of Omarska” (R12). Although Mujagic’s activism is not directly related to the Srebrenica genocide or the Dutch government, it operates in a political context where victimhood claims are sustained through traumatic experiences among related diaspora networks. Book discussions featuring war memories are common in Amsterdam’s DeBalie Forum. On one occasion, Hamdija Draganovic, an Omarska and Manjaca camp survivor, mentioned: “in order to heal, one needs answers,” but he “has not received such answers yet.” Ara Hadzic, a Trnopolje camp survivor, added, “we have a role as ambassadors” to bring these memories to the Dutch public (DeBalie 2014).

### **Episodic Diaspora Mobilization**

The absence of a traumatic contentious issue to interconnect diaspora, homeland, and host-land is visible among the Croats and Serbs in the Netherlands. There has been no unifying grievance around which diaspora entrepreneurs could rally wider networks, leaving activism episodic, related to communal and church events and to ICTY developments.

Croat diaspora mobilization is sporadic. Fourteen organizations currently exist to maintain Croatian identity, but many are inactive (Kantoci 2011), apart from cultural and educational institutions and a basketball club (R13). Major political organizations, including branches of Croatian parties, most notably Franjo Tudjman's HDZ, and Rotterdam radio ceased to exist by 2008-2010 (Kantoci 2011, R13). Core organizational activities have been carried out by the Catholic Church, which attracted BiH Croat refugees during the war (R13, R14), and gathered diaspora contributions for humanitarian projects. The Catholic Church is a major institution for Croats at home and abroad, even if resented by some for its strong involvement in politics (R14). Some individuals became active to bring more attention about Croatia to European institutions and networks (R4). Lobbying involved the Christian Democrats and Green Left, but was also sporadic (R14).

Mobilization in the Serb diaspora is sporadic too. In 2011 the Serbian Information Network included dialogue between the Serb diaspora in the European Parliament, and a meeting with students from the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica in Kosovo (SIN 2013). Some links were forged with a Brussels-based organization to organize Serbs from Benelux countries (R7), but the diaspora is not well organized (R7, R8). Current activities fade against the past when Serbian political parties had representatives (Koinova 2014b), war criminal Zelko Raznatovic-

Arkan was illicitly active (R17), and politicians from Serbia and Krajna visited (Vitkovic 2006). The Serbian Orthodox Church continues to be an important institution. In cooperation with diaspora individuals it helped build a monument for Serbian soldiers from World War I (R17). During the war the Church attracted Serb refugees from BiH and Croatia (R6), engaged the community in sending aid to Serbia, Krajna and Republica Srpska (Vitkovic 2006), and often defended Serbian nationalists. Some hesitate to associate with church-related networks, to “avoid questionable influences” (R6). Many hesitate to organize publicly because of a feeling of stigmatization, rooted in public perceptions of atrocities and criminality during Yugoslavia’s wars (Vitkovic 2012).

The most contentious yet episodic mobilization evolved around developments at the Hague-based ICTY. Its presence on Dutch territory took on a special meaning: ICTY is located in The Hague, considered by some the “legal capital of the world,” and its proximity gave opportunities for activism (Koinova 2014b). Diaspora networks were organized especially when war criminals were indicted, brought to trial, or given verdicts (R8, R9). Large demonstrations took place when Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian general Ante Gotovina were put on trial, and when Mladic and Karadzic were captured. Of high significance to the homeland, these events were often coordinated from there or a third location. For example, when Gotovina was captured, the Dutch-based diaspora did not lead the main effort. Organizers were from Croatia proper and other Europe-wide Croatian organizations, most notably from Germany (R9). Similar reports exist among Bosniaks. When activists from BiH were bussed to the Netherlands to protest against Karadzic, diaspora activists were little prepared to properly field events (R1). Compared to the other diasporas, Serbian activists have kept a relatively low profile. But a Serbian priest has reportedly provided church services to the indicted (R7).

Unlike the peace-keeper's failure in Srebrenica, which interlocked issues for all three actors, ICTY events were contentious, but contextualized in the Netherlands episodically through the public sphere (Koinova 2014b). Criticism exists that Dutch media cover primarily when someone is captured, indicted or tried, but present the ICTY mainly in a positive light, despite worldwide criticism for its politicized conduct (R17). Bosniak diaspora activists considered ICTY's work as satisfactory to prosecute war criminals, but were dissatisfied with the "soft ways" to handle war criminals, including their length of sentences (R2, R15).

In contrast to the Bosniaks, Croat activists voice dissatisfaction that the indicted were not tried in Croatia. A respondent found that connecting delivery of war criminals with EU integration is problematic:

"Law and politics need to be separated.... It was a mistake to connect the tribunal to the EU.... The Croatian government delivered [general] Gotovina... and later paid for his defence. The government claimed they were forced to do so under pressure, not because they were convinced he was criminal: "our boys cannot be criminals, they cannot be guilty" (R13).<sup>7</sup>

Another activist argued that had it not been for the ICTY, full integration of Croats in the Netherlands could have happened much earlier (R4). Even more dissatisfaction was voiced in the Serb diaspora, where the ICTY is considered an instrument of great power politics and its legitimacy strongly questioned (R7). All respondents disapproved of the blurring of international law and politics and the long time the ICTY took to complete proceedings. One person called it "a museum of war... with no real effect" (R6). But no sustained action followed.

## **Conclusions**

This article uses a social movements approach to answer *why* some diasporas originating

from the same homeland continue to mobilize in sustained ways during post-conflict reconstruction, while others do not. A crucial factor for sustained mobilization is an unresolved traumatic issue that binds diaspora, host-land, and homeland. Dutch peace-keepers' failure to protect the Srebrenica enclave in 1995 was not an issue of domestic politics such as the radical right emergence, which concerned host-land and diaspora but not homeland. It was not an issue of state-to-state relations such as Dutch foreign policy, which concerned the host-land and homeland but rarely factored the diaspora. It was also not a simple issue of diaspora response to transnational political processes. Deeply embedded in the domestic politics of the host-state, the contentious issue prompted the diaspora to act. Such an issue did not exist for the Serbs and Croats. They had organized conflict networks during warfare, but mobilized episodically during the research period.

How do we know such a traumatic contentious issue is not confined to this case? Controlled comparisons can derive external validity from a universe of cases to which the original cases belong. I offer plausibility probes for cross-country and cross-group comparisons. The cross-country comparison engages the same group in a different host-land, the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden. Unlike the Netherlands, Sweden was not negatively implicated in the Yugoslav conflict. Studies of post-Yugoslav diaspora attitudes in Sweden refuted an argument that traumatic identities of conflict-generated diasporas are less reconciliatory than those of co-nationals in the homeland (Hall and Kostic 2009, Kostic 2012, Hall 2015). Why, then, were people of the same Bosniak origin more challenged reconciling in the Netherlands? While further in-depth comparison is due, new research shows that even when mobilizing for remembrance of the Srebrenica genocide, some cultural initiatives have a reconciling function in Sweden, attracting Bosniaks and individuals of other ethnicities from BiH (Karabegovic 2014). It

is likely that the absence of a traumatic contentious issue, in which the host-land is directly implicated, may facilitate closure of war-related traumas.

Cross-group comparison can further shed light on the importance of the host-land's involvement in a traumatic issue. Consider some preliminary research on Palestinian mobilization in the Netherlands and the UK. In numerous narratives of Palestinian diaspora, Britain is considered the country that created the problem, by permitting the formation of Israel during its mandate. Thus, Britain is targeted to "take the blame" and apologize (Nabulsi 2006, Safieh 2010). Although UK-based Palestinian mobilization is not focused on this issue only, but builds on others related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its salience is high in the UK, not in the Netherlands. Like in Britain, Palestinian diaspora activists in the Netherlands lobby to change their host-land's foreign policy, considered pro-Israeli, and seek to advance homeland-oriented claims. But in the Netherlands diaspora activism is minimal, much less covered in the media, and without narratives about historical guilt or need for apology.<sup>8</sup> Hence, a traumatic issue linking the diaspora with the host-land is analytically important.

Finally, this article sheds light on scholarly concerns on how to factor in the "presence within" liberal states of nonliberal subjects, among them some diasporas. Homeland political processes influence diaspora mobilization, but little is known about how these influences interact with the host-state's political context. I maintain that homeland influences can be magnified when a traumatic contentious issue connects the diaspora with its host-state. Even if diasporas are well integrated in liberal societies, the issue remains in the public sphere and is challenged and contested. Even moderate sustained diaspora mobilization can help further victim-based approaches in a receptive environment. Unless there is a concerted effort for closure, mobilization is likely to sustain.

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<sup>1</sup> Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) are the most engaged in claim-making about Bosnia-Herzegovina, hence this article further concentrates on their mobilization.

<sup>2</sup> ERC ethical regulations require anonymization of respondents. I referred directly to 17 respondents, but drew background information from many others.

<sup>3</sup> On Yugoslav identities in the diaspora see Koinova 2014b.

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<sup>4</sup> “Segmental assimilation” refers to how migrants adapt to their host society. Some accept the majority culture and follow an “upward mobility” assimilation path into the middle class. Others reject the culture and follow “downward mobility” into the underclass. Some become “upward mobile” only within their ethnic community (Portes and Zhou 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Croatia joined the EU in 2013. The prospects for Serbia’s accession were blocked until April 2013, when Serbia and Kosovo signed an agreement to normalize relations.

<sup>6</sup> Author’s participant observation, Utrecht, March 2012 and Amsterdam, May 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Croat activists did not comment on the ICTY acquittal of General Gotovina in 2012, which took place after the research period. Croatia accepted Gotovina as a hero, while his acquittal was condemned in Serbia and was questioned internationally.

<sup>8</sup> The author conducted a set of interviews among Palestinian diaspora activists in the Netherlands in 2013.