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Diasporas and Transitional Justice:
Transnational Activism from Local to Global Levels of Engagement

Abstract

Scholarship on transitional justice, transnational social movements and transnational diaspora mobilisation has offered little understanding about how memorialisation initiatives with substantial diaspora involvement emerge transnationally, and are embedded and sustained in different contexts. We argue that diasporas play a galvanising role in transnational interest-based and symbolic politics, expanding claim-making from the local to national, supranational and global levels of engagement. Using initiatives to memorialise atrocities committed at the former Omarska concentration camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we identify a four-stage mobilisation process. First, initiatives emerged and diffused across transnational networks after a *local* political opportunity opened in the homeland. Second, attempts at coordination of activities took place *transnationally* through an NGO. Third, initiatives were contextualised on the *nation-state* level in different host-states, depending on the political opportunities and constraints available there. Fourth, memorialisation claims were eventually shifted from the national to the *supranational* and *global* levels. The article concludes by demonstrating the findings' potential for wider applicability to the analysis of similar global movements in which diasporas are directly involved.

Introduction

There is growing interest in the transnational involvement of diasporas in post-conflict reconciliation and transitional justice in divided societies. Works in the early 2000s viewed the traumatic identities and practices of diasporas as conducive to conflict perpetuation (Adamson 2005; Byman et al. 2001; Faist 2000; Koinova 2011a; Shain 2002). Since, scholars have emphasised that attitudes of conflict-generated diasporas do not always remain traumatic, but can be transformed. Diasporas can participate in moderate politics and promote peace-building and democratisation (Hall 2016; Koinova 2011b; Kostić 2012; Lyons 2006; Van Hear 2011). Some diasporas engage with truth commissions, challenge host-states to acknowledge their own participation in traumatic events, or invoke universal jurisdiction to prosecute war criminals (Hoogenboom and Quinn 2011; Roht-Arriaza 2006; Young and Park 2009).

Considering diaspora's increased role in transitional justice processes, this article takes a novel perspective by theorising how diasporas – as identity-based actors – play a galvanising role in initiating and sustaining transnational social activism in different contexts, while simultaneously helping to move contention across different scales of engagement. It contributes to a vibrant discussion on migrant transnationalism and globalisation (Cohen 2008; Faist 2000; Levitt 2001; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2006; Vertovec and Cohen 1999; Vertovec 2009) by demonstrating both contextual and transnational dimensions of diaspora activism in a single movement. More narrowly, it brings a social movements approach to a particular sub-field, transitional justice, where diaspora engagement processes are under-theorised. Our theoretical question asks how diasporas participate in the transnational emergence, sustenance and contextualisation of transitional justice initiatives, not previously theorised in a single framework. Empirically, we focus on a movement spanning multiple contexts to create a memorial at the former Omarska concentration camp in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The article takes a step further and demonstrates how diasporas become involved in transnational collective action on an issue of transitional justice and memorialisation, particularly on different scales of engagement beyond the state. Embedding actions in different scales, diaspora entrepreneurs are not simply 'rooted cosmopolitans' in Tarrow's (2005) terms, or 'thinking locally and acting globally', as Lyons and Mandaville (2010) put it. Host-state characteristics and the transnational social field in which they operate actively shape their actions.[1]

Omarska has been the focus of symbolic and interest-based politics of multiple actors, with diaspora networks playing a significant role in helping the claim-making process move from local through global scales of engagement. We inductively identify a four-step mobilisation process: First, the emergence of the Omarska camp memorialisation initiatives occurred after the opening of a *local* political opportunity structure in BiH, the 2004 purchase of the iron mines by the global corporation ArcelorMittal. During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995), the Omarska mine complex was used by Serb paramilitary forces as a concentration camp for Bosniaks and Croats. The purchase of the mines by the corporation as an external actor reinvigorated existing grievances. At the time, civil society and survivor networks were not yet politically organised. Hence, diffusion of knowledge among these transnational networks was the major mechanism driving the initiatives' emergence. Second, attempts at coordination of activities took place through an NGO, with initial active diaspora involvement. Third, after the NGO initiative failed, diasporas contextualised their mobilisation on the *nation-state* level of their host-states, acting on political opportunities and constraints available there. Fourth, facing a stalled political process, diaspora activists and other civil society actors sought new openings for activism and shifted their memorialisation claims to the *supranational* level of EU institutions, and to the *global* level, using a site of global visibility in 2012, the ArcelorMittal Orbit, known as the London Olympics tower.

This article provides analysis at the intersection of scholarship on diasporas and transitional justice, and on transnational social movements. The transitional justice literature provides the content-based theoretical basis to study memorialisation claims, while the transnational social movements literature gives insights into the political opportunity structures and constraints and the causal mechanisms concatenating into the mobilisation process. The article proceeds with a review of definitions and relevant literature and methodology, discusses the four mobilisation stages through a social movement's lens, and concludes by showing how the in-depth case study can be relevant to the analysis of other transnational movements where diasporas are actively involved.

Definitions

We 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 organisational framework and transnational links'. Diasporas are not unitary actors and can consist of different individuals and sub-groups, among them different migration waves and generations.

Scale is also an important notion, as we theorise about shifts of mobilisation from the local to the global levels of engagement. It is beyond this article's scope to engage debates whether scales really exist or are socially constructed, whether they are material or ideational and whether their hierarchies are to be viewed as ladders, concentric circles or through other metaphors (Herod 2011). For us, a scale is important as a spatially 'relatively closed… system, the majority of whose interactions remain within its boundaries' (Johnston 1973:14), a 'space envelope' (Lefebre 1974), where certain variables become more important for diaspora mobilisation than others. Since we are interested in how claims shift from one scale to another, we follow also Meentemeyer's understanding that the analysis needs to focus not on the delineation of scales, but on how changes in scale change the important relevant variables (1989; Herod 2011).

The local, national, supranational and global are all essentially contested concepts. While the 'local' can be often associated with the 'urban', here we consider the 'local' a specific place in the home-state where diaspora grievances originated, which has certain specific institutional characteristics, and which carries symbolic power for grievances to be sustained. The 'national' level refers to the host-state, characterised by nation-state level institutions and related socio-spatial relationships. The 'supranational' refers to the EU level, characterised by various institutions and policies which operate beyond the nation-state. While the 'global' is often considered part of a binary with the 'local' (Herod 2011), in this account 'global' refers to a place where global networks and globally relevant institutions operate with global visibility (Adamson and Koinova 2013). In this sense, context does not refer to any specific scale, but is associated with each scale, providing a different conglomeration of politically relevant factors for diaspora mobilisation.

Transitional Justice and Memorialisation

In the past two decades, transitional justice scholarship has grown exponentially around issues of war-induced crimes. These crimes stem primarily from violent interactions between ethnic or ideological groups within states, and often involve ethnic cleansing, mass atrocities and genocide. Punitive justice measures developed through trials of war criminals at the international criminal courts for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s and the Hague-based International Criminal Court after 2002. Restorative justice measures such as truth commissions, apologies, reparations and reconstruction of collective memory focus on the relationship between victims and offenders – a societal rather than legal alternative to redress the past.

Even if war criminals are captured and tried and new institutions developed, numerous challenges remain. Transitional justice agents do not necessarily share the peace-building goals of humanitarian or development actors (Duthie 2011). Victims often prioritise acknowledgement and redress of suffering. Even if transitional justice, peace-building and state-building act in complementary ways, other agents in society, most notably ethnonational groups or nationalising states, may hold opposing views about the past and future. Reconciliation for them becomes problematic. Some argue that opening past wounds does not help real healing, but creates new social divisions, especially in fragile new democracies (Subotic 2009). Legacies of a conflicted past define identities and ideologies, and are often instrumentalised to meet social, cultural and political ends (Brown 2012).

Actors in a post-conflict society must navigate conflicted memories, views of victims and perpetrators and official and unofficial narratives. Society needs to arrive at shared visions of the past to agree on what will be remembered, celebrated, commemorated and thus privileged. Decisions on whether to remember, memorialise or forget traditionally fall on governments. They can sanction commemorative sculptures, monuments and peace parks or events around meaningful dates (Jelin 2007). They can also remain silent. When atrocity is acknowledged in collaboration, society has an increased capacity to move towards balance. Hence, government accountability is important for how memorialisation processes unfold and ultimately how they move towards reconciliation.[2] 'Sites of memory', places reminding of the past, whether in an official capacity or not, become vital in navigating the politics of memory (Nora 1989). In such sites, victims and former perpetrators can 'function as a means to the intergenerational transmission of historical continuities and discontinuities' (Jelin 2007:147). Yet sites often

become a subject of controversy. Interests over a specific territory or site of memorialisation may make the issue look indivisible and insolvable. As Goddard (2009) argues, territory may be treated as divisible at one time and not another. This means not that the physical site per se is indivisible, but that 'an actor's legitimation strategies can either expand the bargaining space among actors by convincing others of their legitimacy, or diminish room for compromise by appearing illegitimate to adversaries' (23). Time matters as well, as the longer mutually exclusive claims persist, the less likely a resolution will be found (Hassner 2006/2007).

Memorialisation continues to be politicised in BiH and throughout former Yugoslavia. Projects to acknowledge atrocities and victims are rarely made for minorities or other actors external to the political leadership. Memorials glorifying one group while discounting another further polarise fragile post-conflict societies (Pavlaković 2010). In the former Yugoslav space, there is still a need for a clear message to acknowledge the atrocities of the 1990s by the political elites. In the Omarska case, the state agents are predominantly from the Bosnian Serb dominated government of Republika Srpska, and have been hostile towards memorialisation initiatives driven by Bosniaks from the diaspora, local civic groups and returnees. Omarska thus remains a site of competitive memorial building.

In a globalised world, conflicted legacies do not remain confined to the local level. Simultaneity of communication allows diasporas to voice their versions of the past and associate with political and social processes in the original homeland. Several studies discuss how diasporas do this by participating in truth commissions. The Liberian Truth Commission systematically involved diaspora through its US-based branch. The Montreal-based Haitian diaspora was instrumental in the creation of Haiti's 1995 truth commission, as many diaspora members mailed testimonies or traveled to Haiti to give them in person (Hoogenboom and Quinn 2011). The East Timor commission interviewed refugees in West Timor, while the Sierra Leone commission reached out to neighboring diasporas (Young and Park 2009). Cambodia's truth commission also 'included displacement within its ambit' (Duthie 2011:245).

Diasporas can be involved in transitional justice initiatives further. They can aid litigation processes and use universal jurisdiction to inaugurate procedures against war criminals. The high profile case of former military dictator of Chile Augusto Pinochet is one such example. A diaspora lawyer filed a case in the victims' name in Spain, triggering solidarity and political mobilisation throughout Europe, South America and the US (Roht-Arriaza 2006). Victim

associations related to 1970s atrocities in Cambodia used universal jurisdiction in Belgium and France by filing cases in 1999 against Khmer Rouge leaders (Mey 2008). Diasporas can be involved in establishment of legal tribunals, as did the US-based Iraqi community for Iraq's special tribunal (Haider 2014).

From this short review, one can sense the case-based nature of current scholarship, and the need to theorise on the agency of diaspora members, states and NGOs involved in transitional justice processes. Further, this literature is not circumspect about different scales of engagement and the mechanisms through which diasporas and other actors become mobilised. Reference to states is by default of central interest, with little attention to local, supranational or global levels. We take this intellectual quest further, and demonstrate how mobilisation takes place across different scales.

Transnational Social Movements

A second stream of scholarship, on transnational social movements, provides theoretical leverage to address the four-step mobilisation process. Tarrow defines social movements as 'collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities' (2011:9). Series of contentious performances take place in campaigns, specific contentious repertoires and presentations of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (Tilly 2004). For social movements to *emerge*, a grievance must exist but is not sufficient. Political opportunity structures need to be present as well: opportunities and threats challengers can use to develop claims and mobilise resources (Tilly 1978). Injustice frames need to be shared publicly and identified through powerful emotions such as love, loyalty, reverence and anger (Tarrow 1992). Constituencies and enemies need to be identified, responsibility for the injustice attributed to those enemies and a solution proposed (Gamson 1992). Episodic contention can emerge when political opportunities and constraints change. But movements can be *sustained* if they are based on 'dense social networks and connective structures' and if they 'draw on consensual or action-oriented cultural frames' (Tarrow 1992:10) that give meaning to collective action. Sustained mobilisation also needs strategic objectives, not simple targets (Beinin and Vairel 2011). Classic social movement theories identify the state as target for contentious politics, with all contention taking place within the state. For a growing number of transnational movements, however, actors may be embedded in one context but target action in

another. Influential International Relations models show that through 'boomerang' (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and 'spiral' effects (Risse-Kappen et al. 1999), human rights activists in a state where reforms are blocked engage other states and organisations, which pressure the original state to introduce reforms. Transnational actors in different contexts adapt local and global strategies to the institutional and societal specifics of environments (Stroup 2012). Domestic claims are communicated to external partners through 'frame bridging', or the linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames (Snow et al. 1986). By linking local frames with those appealing to global audiences, local movements can 'market' their claims abroad (Bob 2005), a process in which local claims can undergo transformation (Tarrow 2005). Transnational social networks can facilitate such processes, often through 'brokerage', in which a social entrepreneur connects disparate networks, or 'diffusion' of ideas and modular action (Gamson 1992; McAdam et al. 2001; Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 2005). Various coalitions can be built across borders through more explicit negotiated solutions (Tarrow 2005). Through networks, coalitions, global framing and resource mobilisation, contention can undergo a 'scale shift' from local to global or vice versa (McAdam et al. 2001).

Tarrow (2005) considers scale shifts not as simple reproductions of claims but targeting constituencies of one level onto another. During scale shifts, there are changes of 'meaning and scope of the object or claim', and engagement of different audiences. The current international system offers opportunities for 'upward' scale shift, where local issues are framed and expanded to constituencies on a higher level (national, supranational, global), but also through a 'downward' scale shift, where original meanings produced on a higher scale may diffuse and 'the forms of the organisation they produce may domesticate' (121). Brokerage and diffusion are crucial mediating mechanisms for scale shifts to take place. Framing issue at one level to appeal to audiences on another helps the attribution of similarities (McAdam et al, 2001, Tarrow 2005).

Transnational social movement literature has been used to some extent by scholars of diaspora mobilisation. Political opportunity structures have been identified as important for diaspora mobilisation (Baser 2015; Koinova 2011a; Sökefeld 2006; Wayland 2004). Networks as mobilising structures are also important, since collective action is spread through them, as critical events in the original homeland are framed and perceived to create or maintain an imagined community (Sökefeld 2006). Critical events can produce emotional responses among first and second generations through personal networks and global media, making them

rearticulate their 'roots' and shaping their activism (Hess and Korf 2014; Koinova 2011b). 'Frame bridging' occurred when US-based diasporas sought US intervention for political change in the Middle East during the 2000s (Koinova 2011b). 'Brokerage' became a powerful mechanism to link disparate diaspora networks whether in one location or transnationally (Koinova 2011, Adamson 2013). Coalitions – or 'collaborative, means-oriented arrangements permiting distinct organisational entities to pool resources in order to affect change' (Levy and Murphy 2006) – were built in the global city of London among a variety of groups, including diaspora members (Adamson and Koinova, 2013).

Our account theorising about the four-stage mobilisation process regarding memorialisation of Omarska presents a novel way of thinking about diaspora mobilisation. While we apply certain building blocks of social movement theory to the analysis, we demonstrate in a single framework how diaspora mobilisation emerges and is sustained, embedded in different scales and moving across them, a theoretical endeavor not developed previously.

Methodology

The research combines case study, process tracing and comparative methods. The transnational mobilisation around a memorial at the former Omarska camp offers a case study of a movement for memorialisation. Process tracing allows identifying explanations about specific relationships between actors and contexts in different episodes (George and Bennett 2005). The comparative method (Lijphart 1971) allows juxtaposing characteristics from the contexts of two host-states, the Netherlands and the UK, where diaspora mobilisation has been highly pronounced. This study uses semi-structured and in-depth interviews with diaspora entrepreneurs, activists and NGO officials conducted during multi-sited fieldwork. A key diaspora activist, Satko Mujagić, provided several documents. To maximise credibility, interviewees were asked about their sources of information and their own efforts. The authors were present at commemoration planning and events in 2012-2014, in the Prijedor area and the Netherlands. We analyzed local and international coverage in Bosnian and English, including press releases by diaspora activists and ArcelorMittal, and Guardians of Omarska's group Facebook activity.
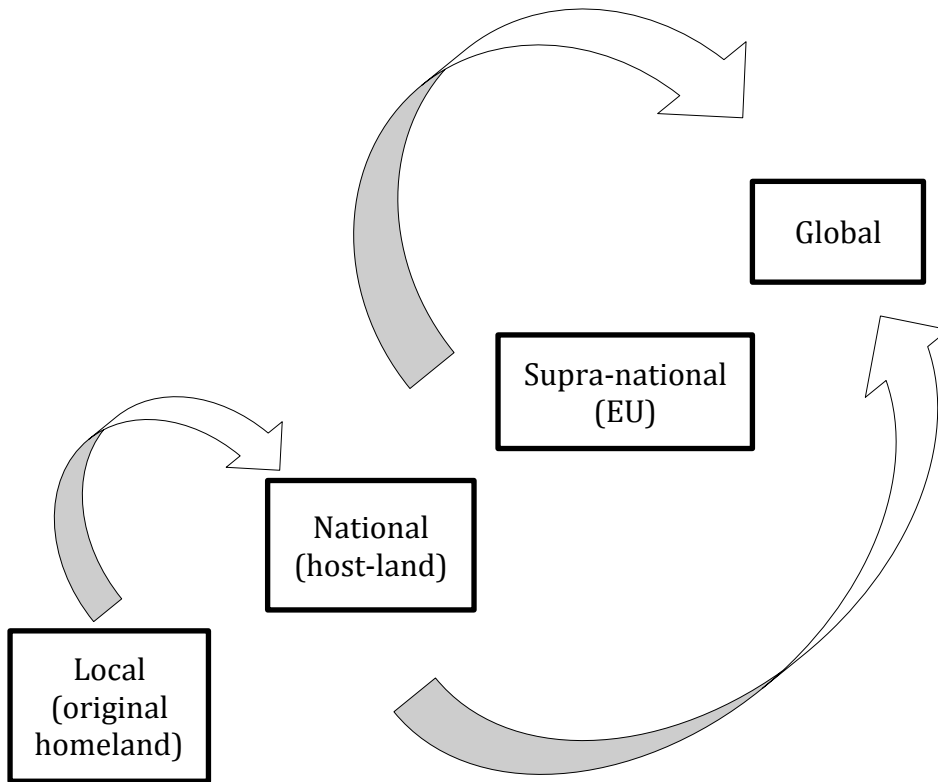
The Omarska Camp

The Omarska camp, along with three other detention centers in the Prijedor area, Keraterm, Trnopolje and Manjača, was set up in May 1992 by Bosnian Serb paramilitaries following their takeover of northwestern BiH. The camp, which held predominantly Bosniaks and Croats, was closed in August 1992 after worldwide broadcasts by British journalists publicised its existence through reports with pictures of emaciated detainees (Sivac-Bryant 2014). It is estimated that more than 5,000 individuals passed through Omarska, though how many died is difficult to determine.[3] Many remain unaccounted for, around 3,500 in the Prijedor area.[4]

In his book *Killing Days*, UK-based survivor and diaspora activist Kemal Pervanić chronicles his time in the Omarska and Manjača camps. To survive in Omarska, it was important to be 'invisible', not to incite the anger of former Serb neighbors who had new roles as guards, torturers and killers, or others allowed into the camp to settle perceived old scores (Pervanić 2000). This story is representative of the Prijedor region, in which 52,811 people were killed, missing, deported or fled by June 1993. More than 43,000 were Bosniaks, causing a heavy demographic shift in favor of Bosnian Serbs today (UN 1994). At present, there is silence about these crimes from the governments in Prijedor (local level) and Republika Srpska (entity level), despite ongoing attempts to gain recognition and build memorials for non-Serb (Bosniak, Croat and other) civilian victims. Memorials sanctioned by the local government only memorialise Serbs (R3, 5 and 6, 2013) and do not acknowledge grievances from the non-Serb returnee or diaspora community.

Four Stages of Mobilisation

This article argues that this transnational mobilisation process has four stages. First, a political mobilisation opportunity opened locally, allowing for initial diffusion of information to spread through transnational networks. Secondly, efforts were made to coordinate activities between local and global actors through an international NGO, initially including diaspora members. Thirdly, diaspora activism became increasingly embedded in specific host-land contexts. Stage Four involved attempts to shift mobilisation to the supranational and global levels. Figure 1 demonstrates the entire process, from local (home-state) to national (host-state) to supranational (EU) and global levels. Figures 2-5 zoom closer into each stage.

FIGURE 1: DIASPORA MOBILIZATON FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL

Stage One: The Local: Emergence of a Political Opportunity Followed by Diffusion

The process was initiated through a new local political opportunity: the 2004 privatisation purchase of the iron mine in the Omarska complex by transnational steel giant Mittal (now ArcelorMittal). The purchase triggered diffusion of information about the sale through various transnational networks (R3, 5 and 6, 2013) which led to organisation of domestic groups and diaspora actors for memorialisation initiatives in collaboration with the corporation rather than with the subnational, local government of the Republika Srpska.

**FIGURE 2: THE LOCAL: OPENING OF A POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY AND
INITIAL DIFFUSION**
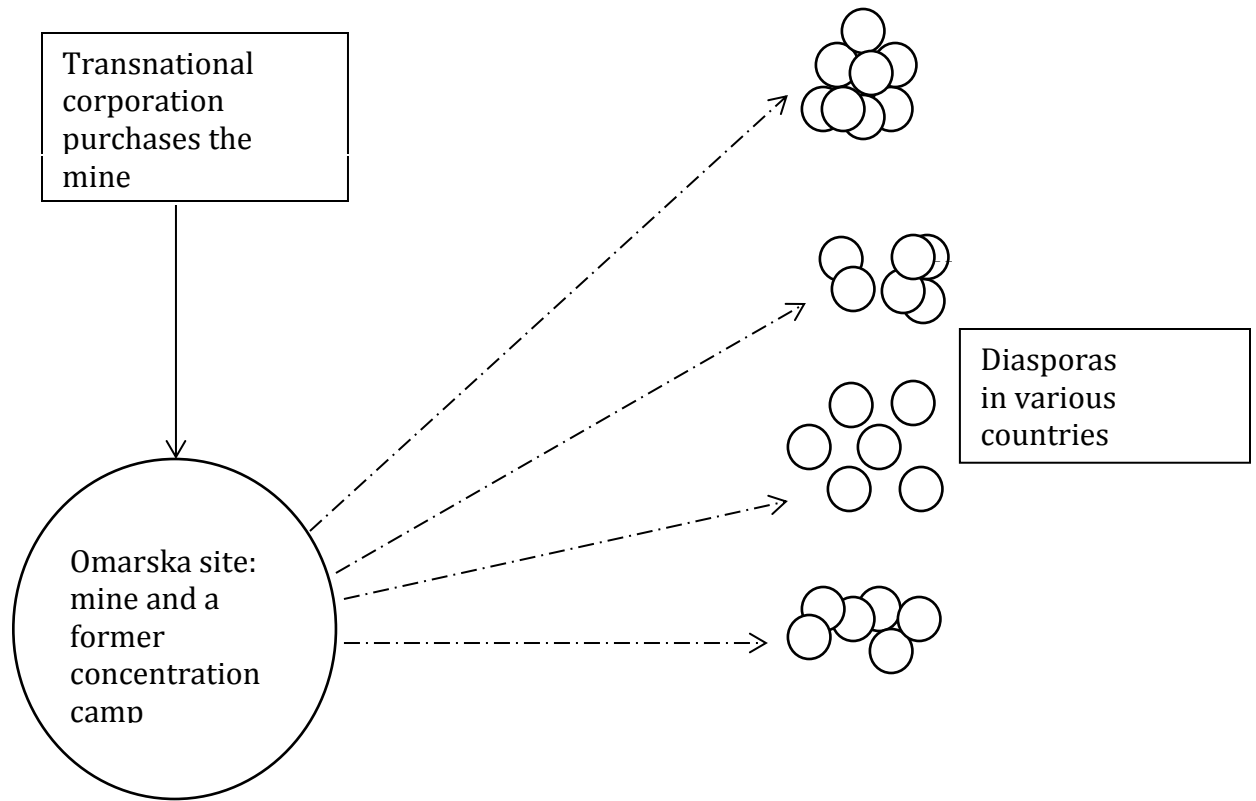
2004

Why did this event emerge as a political opportunity for mobilisation? We offer three potential reasons. First, as Tarrow (1998) notes, changing opportunities and constraints in established societal structures provide openings to engage in contentious action. Human rights-driven, resource-poor actors with blocked domestic access to politics are prone to seek external leverage for political establishment (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse-Kappen et al. 1999). Returnees, camp survivors and diasporas emerged as such following the sale of the mine, as they recognised the opportunity to engage a new actor towards memorialisation (Sivac-Bryant 2014). Secondly, a multinational corporation's activities may provide important leverage to change a domestic status quo. In this post-conflict society, it also raised the transnational visibility of domestic

politics, providing a potential platform for discussion. Thirdly, transnational visibility combined with traumatic past experiences of diasporas and local actors allowed renewed identification with domestic issues. A fresh grievance emerged through commercialisation of the place of their suffering. People raised legitimate concerns about the unfinished exhumation work in the area and were appalled by the nontransparent way the mine was purchased (R2, 2013).

Diffusion is a mechanism 'wherein new ideas, institutions, policies, models or repertoires of behavior are spread geographically from a core site to new sites' (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 286). It is 'mediated' when spread from emitter to adopter, and 'nonmediated' when spread through nonpersonal channels, most notably the media (McAdam and Rucht 1993). Transnational networks as personal and nonpersonal channels have become highly influential in fostering diffusion in global politics (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Saideman 2012). Thus, it is not surprising that diffusion of information, a causal mechanism, spread quickly through Bosniak refugee networks originating in the Prijedor area and scattered across the Western hemisphere during the early stages of mobilisation.

How can we know that diffusion through close transnational networks, not mediated diffusion or active resource mobilisation, took place at this stage? Empirical evidence suggests that in an environment of initial secrecy, information from BiH spread through tight networks of returnees and camp survivors to the greater transnational diaspora community. Media reports – usually deemed as allowing diasporas to mobilise in what Anderson (1998) calls 'long-distance nationalism' – did not facilitate the diffusion here. Media in Republika Srpska do not cover these issues effectively even today: the only effective channel is person-to-person networks, blogs and social media. A Bosniak journalist started writing in 2004-2005 after finding that the purchasing process went quickly and mainstream media were not covering it properly (R1, 2013). Diffusion was mediated through close networks of transnationally interconnected people from the Prijedor region, including family members (R3, 2013).

Diffusion allowed for loose connections to be (re)built among survivors in different locations. Activism emerged on an *ad hoc* basis in locations other than the primary site of developments in BiH. Despite sporadic events in diaspora circles, there was no organised group activism to establish a memorial at the site of the Omarska camp when ArcelorMittal purchased the mine. This was in part because returnees did not start arriving until the first years after 2000 and settled in neighboring Kozarac (R1, 3 and 5, 2013). Respondents from the Prijedor region

also confirmed that there was no formalised effort by local NGOs, despite a desire to create some sort of memorial, which ultimately led to the Association of Concentration Camp Survivors (R5 and 6, 2013). ArcelorMittal's purchase thus triggered initial memorialisation efforts in the diaspora and returnee communities for Omarska specifically. Around the same time, returnees, particularly women, Emsuda Mujagic notably, along with civic society groups, notably *Optimisti* (Optimists), encouraged memorialisation and planned events to highlight war atrocities against Prijedor's non-Serb population during the war on an individual basis.

Mujagić's sources point to attempts to negotiate a solution with ArcelorMittal in November 2004. After activists sent an official letter together with the first book about Omarska, *10th Circle of Hell* by Rezak Hukanović, to the company chairman in London and Mittal's CEO in Rotterdam, Mujagić and other activists were invited to a meeting in Rotterdam. He claims that during this 'constructive' meeting, several promises were made. First, survivors, family members and others would be allowed to visit the camp annually on 24 May and 6 August as chosen commemoration days, as well as on request. Secondly, the notorious 'White House' where inmates were tortured and killed would be preserved. Thirdly, the proposal for a memorial/museum at the 'White House' would be taken for further consideration to the company's London headquarters. According to Mujagić, despite early engagement with the corporation, ArcelorMittal moved from direct conversations with diaspora and returnees to the mediating services of an NGO (Sivac-Bryant 2014, R 3, 5 and 8, 2013).

Stage Two: Coordination through an NGO - External Actor in Local Processes

Soul of Europe, a UK-based NGO which mediates in post-conflict areas, was hired to help bring forward a memorial proposal at Omarska by ArcelorMittal. 'After a positive answer from our side', Mujagić (interview 2013) claims about his conversations with the corporation's Rotterdam-based office in May 2005, 'Soul of Europe started initial meetings with local NGOs and Omarska survivors in the Prijedor municipality'.

FIGURE 3: COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES THROUGH AN NGO
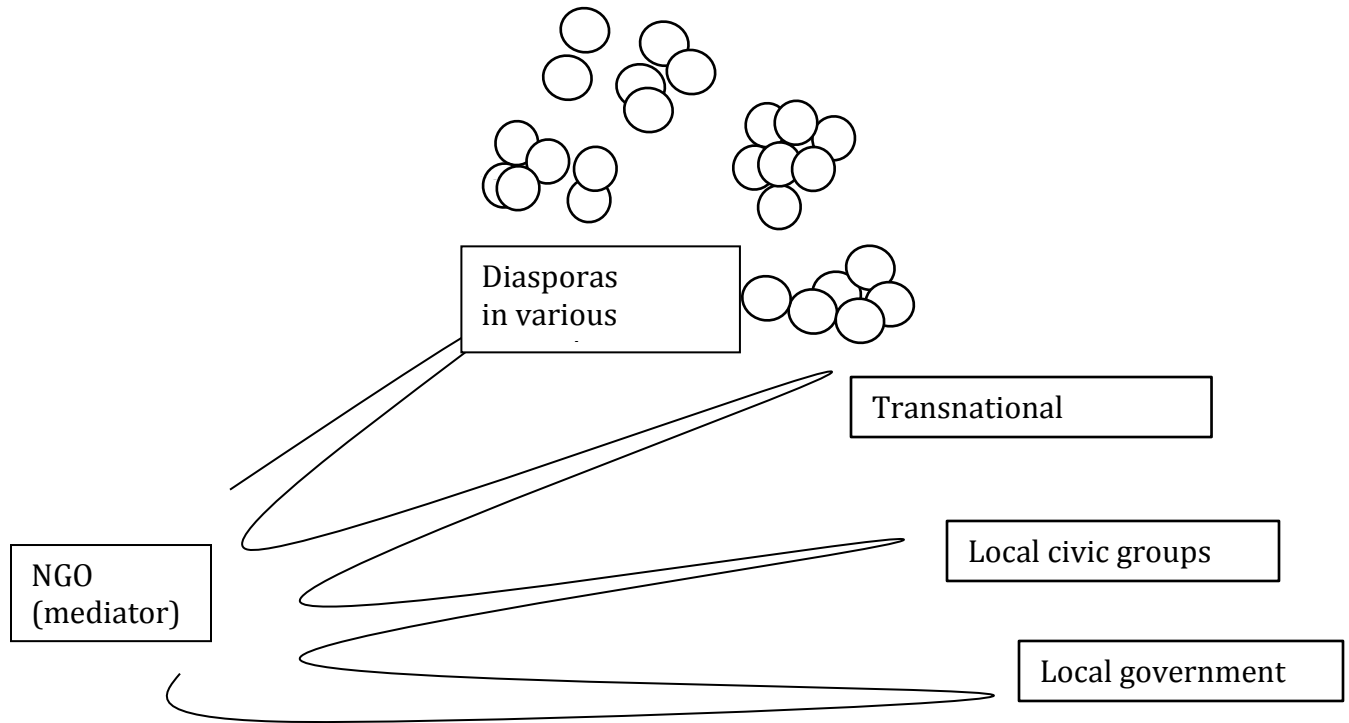
However, initial enthusiasm turned into doubt and growing criticism. The NGO became increasingly seen as not trustworthy, and criticised for being hired by the corporation and not involving enough returnees and camp survivors. Local and diaspora activists questioned Soul of Europe's legitimacy to be an impartial mediator as it was a paid consultant without roots to the community. Its hired representatives, one Bosniak and one Serb, were not considered adequate by the survivors and diaspora actors due to their youth and lack of personal experience in Omarska. The camp survivors did not feel they were adequately represented or their ideas properly incorporated into ongoing work. Due to the NGO's commitment to including Bosnian Serbs in Prijedor in the process, Soul of Europe lost further credibility among some of the diaspora activists and local civic organisations (R2, 2013). Later closed-door negotiations further discredited it (Sivac-Bryant 2014).

Meanwhile, the NGO considered camp survivor organisations, several diaspora actors and some Serb participants 'spoilers' of the mediation process (R3, 2013). More importantly, there was no official support from local politicians in Prijedor, but general hostility and denial regarding the traumatic past.[5] While a multiethnic narrative might have sounded good on the books, potentially widening the bargaining space to multiple groups in Goddard's (2010) terms,

crucial actors did not buy into it. There was little political will to address issues in an inclusive way.

Further, while the NGO initially gathered activists from BiH and abroad, over time mediators allegedly started to sideline voices which did not align with their vision (R3, 4 and 5, 2013). Discussions about memorialisation remained 'very vague'; the process became increasingly less transparent and took diaspora members out of any decision-making capacity (R1, 3 and 5, 2013). Thirdly, some who allegedly boycotted conflict resolution activities were branded 'radical Muslim diaspora' (R5, 2013). Diaspora activists disputed such associations, arguing that claims favoring Islam were not made. From their perspective, the discourse about 'hardline diaspora extremists' was an easy way to settle personal scores rather than address atrocities committed in Omarska. Finally, there were allegations the corporation was giving in to pressure from Republika Srpska, which maintained political control of the mine territory and undermined or denied events at Omarska (Vulliamy 2004).

While the activities of Soul of Europe served as a temporary focal point for mobilisation of local and global activists from different locations, its mission led to no action towards a memorial. Its heads ended up writing a book about their process and intentions, acknowledging mistakes were made which led to the project not being finished (Pelz and Reeves 2008). ArcelorMittal stated it remained available to support any future propositions as long these were 'decided in consensus with all parties'. (ArcelorMittal Press Release, May 2012).

ArcelorMittal continues to maintain this hands-off approach. When memorialisation comes up in official communication with the Association of Concentration Camp Survivors, the latter are redirected to seek discussions with RS and Prijedor authorities. Survivors criticise such an approach as irresponsible, but are countered by claims that the corporation only leases the mine and is not the outright owner of the land (R5 and 8, 2013). Perceptions that ArcelorMittal recognised and became more or less complacent with the resistance of the local authorities penetrated local and diaspora networks (R4, 5 and 6, 2013). Thus, activism shifted to host-countries where major diaspora activists have settled and took on characteristics shaped by those contexts, to be discussed next.

Stage Three: The Nation-state: Diaspora Activism in different Host-states

One of the innovative aspects of this article is to demonstrate specific ways claim-making was affected by the host-land context. In BiH, the political context generated antagonism between actors lobbying for the memorial and local authorities, leading them to spread their message to host-land audiences. The arguments in this section are based on the contextualisation of transitional justice initiatives in the Netherlands and the UK.

FIGURE 4: THE NATION-STATE: MOBILIZATION IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS
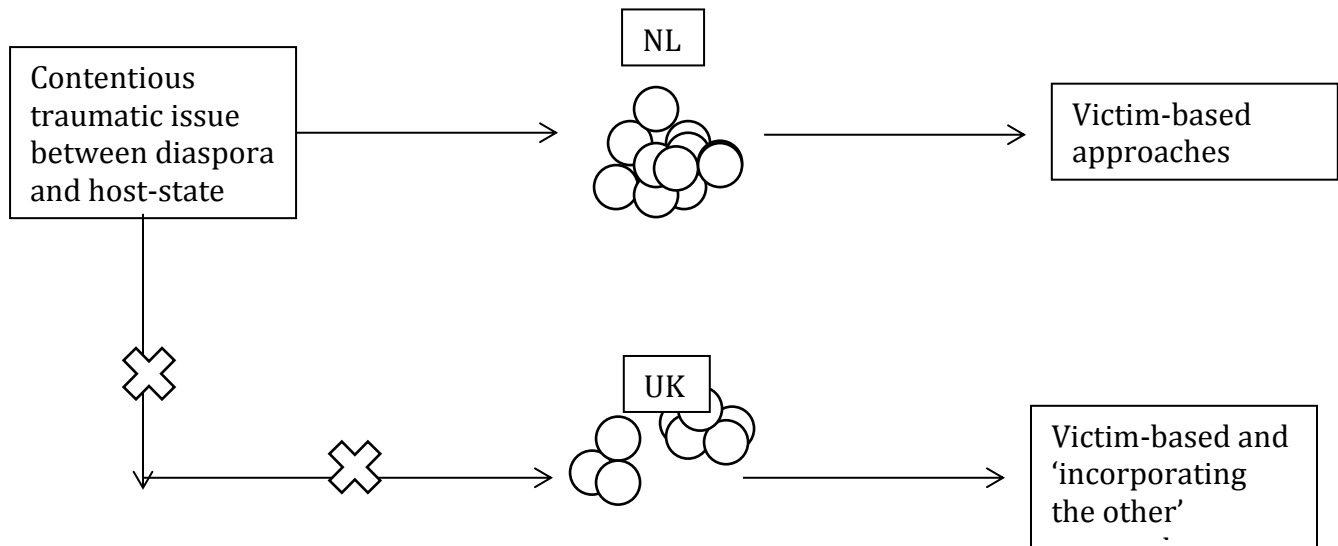
The Dutch political context became more conducive to victim-based claims than the British one due to a crucial factor: an unresolved issue between Bosniaks in the Netherlands and their host-state due to the failure of Dutch peace-keeping forces (Dutchbat) to protect the Srebrenica enclave in 1995. This gave rise to clustering of Bosniak diaspora activism around victim-based claims centered on recognition of atrocities in Srebrenica as genocide and on reparations to survivors (Koinova 2015). There was no such traumatic contentious issue in the UK. Much memorialisation activism was concentrated among activists in London, despite the existence of organised diaspora communities in Birmingham and other cities.[6]

       Previous research has argued that refugees from BiH who settled in Sweden managed to overcome traumatic attitudes and largely reconcile with their past (Kostic 2012). In the Dutch

context, two major factors did not allow traumatic identities to be shed among the Bosniaks: the failure of Dutchbat in Srebrenica and the proximity of the International Criminal Tribunal on Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. These factors are absent in the UK, where diasporas are not locked into dealing with traumatic contentious issues with the host-state.

Bosniak activism for transitional justice has been sustained in the Netherlands. Commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide is an important annual event, marked each 11 July in front of the Dutch Parliament. Several court cases were launched against the Dutch state, in which Bosniak diaspora members sought redress for the killing of their families in Srebrenica. For example, Hasan Nuhanović, a Srebrenica survivor, led a decade-long campaign. It included writing a book, *Under the UN Flag*, featuring international community complacency in Srebrenica, continued public engagement and court cases against the Dutch government. He holds the Dutch responsible for handing his family members to Mladić's paramilitaries, which led to their deaths. His engagement ended with 2013 Supreme Court and a 2014 District court decisions which ordered the Dutch state to compensate victims' families (Bowcott 2013; Boon 2014).

The proximity of the ICTY in The Hague also helped sustain Bosniak diaspora activism. The court proceedings were regularly covered in local media and public debates in addition to Nuhanović's continued lobbying and activism. No great travel was needed to stage ad hoc demonstrations in front of the ICTY when war criminals were detained or tried. This visibility guaranteed the issue remained current in the diaspora community. As discussed above, 'dense social networks and connective structures' are crucial to *sustain* mobilisation, along with consensual frames and strategic action (Beinin and Vairel 2011; Tarrow 2005). Largely present in the Netherlands context, this has helped to sustain mobilisation. While the Omarska memorial activism has been separate from that around Srebrenica, it has nonetheless been built around various overlapping intracommunal networks with grievance-based claims. Most important, events in Omarska and the greater Prijedor area, including the Keraterm and Trnopolje concentration camps, are discussed among activists in terms of genocide. The Omarska memorialisation is considered an important step in achieving transitional justice, with Srebrenica used as an example of successful recognition and memorialisation.

Satko Mujagić's activism in the Netherlands has been central to these initiatives. He started with NGO *Optimisti* in 2004 and founded a group called *Guardians of Omarska* in 2012,

focused on spreading information about the memorialisation efforts, mainly through Facebook. With nearly 8,000 sympathisers with Bosniak and non-Bosniak origins, the group is a transnational network of individuals interested in staying engaged: diaspora members, local activists, camp survivors, scholars and others. They primarily make victim-based claims and seek redress for the experiences of survivors and their families. Members are an organising force around commemoration activities, volunteering and generally providing logistical support. They provide information, news and discussion, and also rally for Prijedor-related issues. During the 2013 commemoration activities in BiH, volunteers responsible for logistical support were all Guardians of Omarska.[7] While a high number of Facebook supporters can hardly be guaranteed for future activities, it is clear the Netherlands presents an important context for launching and sustaining transnational claims.

In the UK, in contrast, activism around Omarska's memorialisation has largely been concentrated among several individuals in London, not necessarily of Bosnian origin, without large organised group efforts by Bosnians living in the UK, who did not make a sustained effort to join. 'Perhaps they are afraid of being pressured as well for speaking out against a British company and human rights', an activist argued (R5, 2013). Another reason might be that activism originated from a select number of better educated camp survivors and foreigners with links to Omarska such as journalist Ed Vulliamy, who helped uncover the camp in 1992 (R3, 2013). Overall, the networks in the UK among diaspora are not as well developed as they are in the Netherlands, regardless of individuals' socioeconomic or educational backgrounds. The networks in the Netherlands are comprised of individuals from a variety of economic and educational backgrounds. We consider that the more important reasons for minimal activity in the UK relate to lack of a traumatic contentious issue between Bosnians and the UK government, making sustained activity more difficult than in the Netherlands. Further, Bosnian-born residents are dispersed around the country, rather than concentrated in London, a hub of diaspora activism and innovation, where many transitional justice approaches thrive.

Stage Four: ''Scale shift' to Supranational and Global Levels of Engagement

A 'scale shift' is a mechanism by which contention is transferred from one level of engagement to another. Such a shift occurred in 2012, when three events coincided: the 20th anniversary of BiH's declaration of independence, the closure of the Omarska camp and the London Olympics.

Commemorations were organised in BiH and other European countries, but activism shifted to the supranational EU level and a site of global visibility, the London Olympics tower (the Orbit), allegedly built in part with metal from the iron mines from the Omarska complex. These events served as political opportunities around which various global and local actors recognised the potential to engage larger international audiences even though their efforts were not initially coordinated.

FIGURE 5: SCALE SHIFT TO THE SUPRANATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS
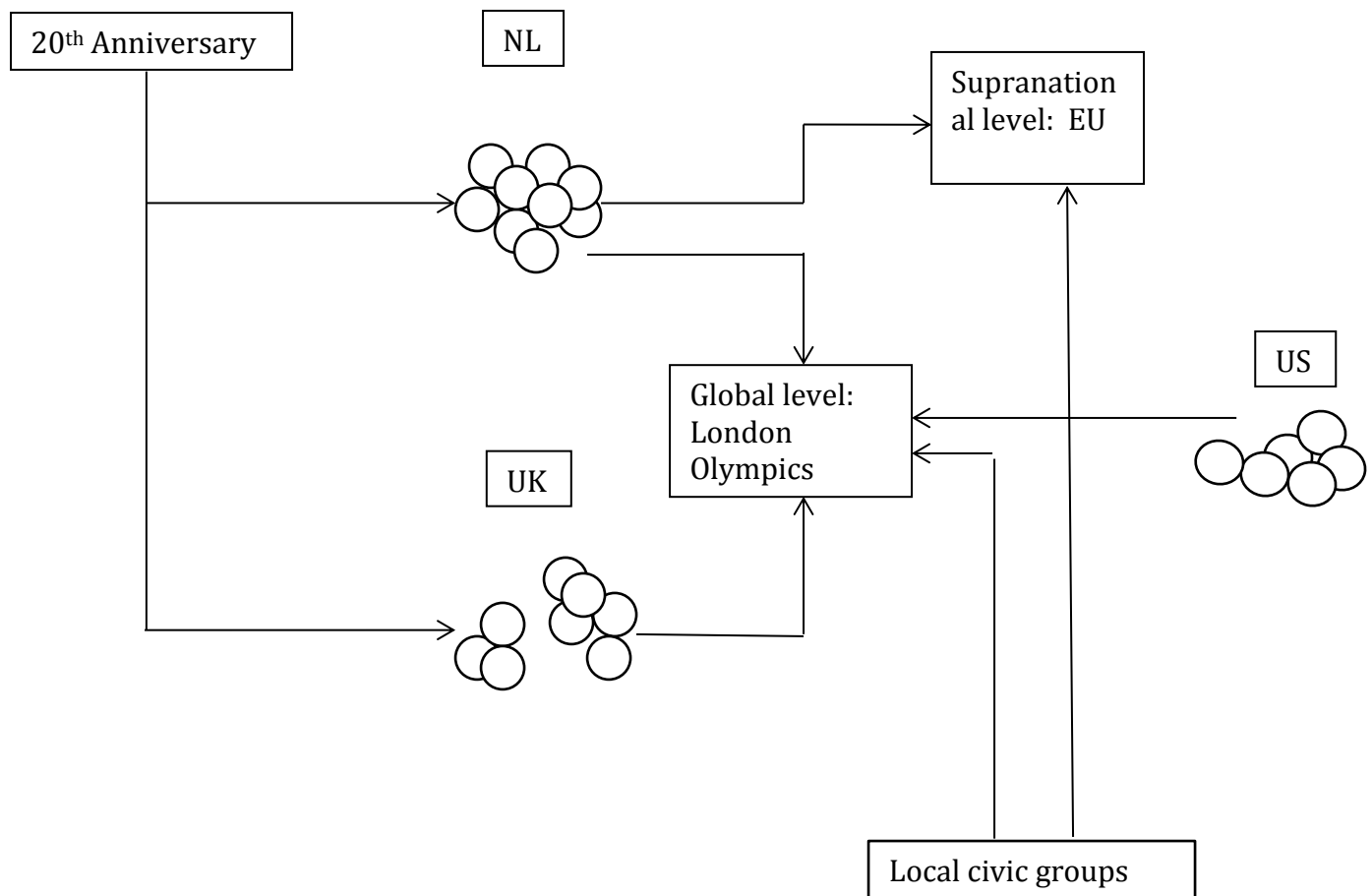
Shifting contention to the supranational EU level occurred because there was an enabling condition in place. In 2009, the European Parliament issued a resolution declaring the atrocities

in Srebrenica an 'act of genocide', called on the European Commission to commemorate the anniversary appropriately and stressed the importance of reconciliation as part of the European integration process. Seeking to exert pressure on Republika Srpska by way of Serbia, aspiring to join the EU, Mujagić and the Guardians of Omarska wrote to Commission President Barroso following a 2012 meeting between him and Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić. The letter was signed by close to seventy influential individuals and multiple organisations in BiH and abroad.[8]

The second opportunity to shift mobilisation to the global level presented itself as a result of the construction of the London Olympics tower. ArcelorMittal was a major contractor to deliver steel to this site. Diaspora activists, along with researchers from a London-based college, who had been denied access to the Omarska camp for research purposes, reclaimed the tower as 'A Memorial in Exile' for the camp (Scuppli 2012). They argued that profits extracted from Omarska were used to manufacture the monument. Milica Tomić, leader of a Serbian art initiative, stated: 'The thing that puts these sites and times together – Omarska KZ in Bosnia with the Olympic Village in London; 1992 with 2012 – is the ArcelorMittal Orbit' (BBC, 10/08/2012). Activists used a strategic frame to aid the 'scale shift': they linked the need to celebrate the beauty and physical abilities of the human body, an ethos of the Olympics, with the need to commemorate grave violations of the human body, tortured and killed in the concentration camp.[9] They aspired to use an event and site of global visibility to expand their message to larger international audiences.

The protests involving the London Olympic tower attracted media attention and attendance by diaspora activists from the UK, the Netherlands, the US, Serbia, other locations and the aforementioned researchers.[10] The tower's global visibility was a magnet for the temporal unification of multiple actors, who explicitly stated in interviews that they were not part of a unified movement but were engaged in a series of initiatives to build the Omarska memorial. Multiple actors, visions and lack of sustained coordination presented obstacles to unification. Yet, the London protest provided an example for successful interactions in a transnational field where advocating for memorialisation was central. This was a one-time event. When it dissipated, the movement lapsed to more individual initiatives.

Additional attempts at gaining international visibility came from an online petition, ultimately supported by 2,708 signatures, and an op-ed by Refik Hodžić, originally from Prijedor and currently Communications Director for the International Center for Transitional Justice in

New York. The initiatives sought to highlight the inaction of ArcelorMittal regarding the Omarska memorial.[11] Criticism was directed at ArcelorMittal, which had blocked entrance to the camp to researchers and survivors and started requiring permission to visit the site (Hodžić 2012). At present there is an intricate process for survivors to receive permits to visit the former concentration camp for commemoration activities (R5 and 7, 2013). For example, in 2013 the Association of Concentration Camp was only officially granted permission to enter the premises a few days before the commemoration activities were scheduled (R6, 2013). A Bosnian diaspora organisation from the Netherlands, SEDRA, donated the helium and balloons to be released, one for each Omarska victim. Camp survivors from the US, the UK, the Netherlands and BiH attended, along with US Embassy and Council of Europe representatives. [12] Many gave statements to the press, or spread the word through personal networks and social media.

Memorialisation claims have been sustained for eleven years despite the stop-and-go motions of transnational mobilisation and are expanding to wider international audiences. The next stage of transnational activism is hard to predict, but it may well have been set in motion when the Tomašica mass grave was discovered in the Prijedor area in September 2013. Expectations that remains of more Omarska camp victims will be found there creates a new potential opportunity for mobilisation and collaboration with diaspora activists.[13] With regard to future collaboration with diaspora activists, a local respondent put it: 'Let's work together – we who understand what happens on the local level and they who have the connections on the outside (R5, 2013)'.

Conclusion

The movement for building a memorial at the site of the Omarska concentration camp in BiH in 2004-2013 provided the opportunity to explore how series of transitional justice and memorialisation initiatives with substantial diaspora involvement emerge are sustained, and simultaneously embedded in different contexts. We consider how transitional justice claims move across different scales, from the local to the nation-state level of host-states, to the supranational and global levels of engagement, and unpacked each stage in turn. We stress that specific host-land contexts can create conducive environments for mobilisation that may not be available in other contexts. We offer an area for future research to understand the causal mechanisms at each stage, and to extrapolate them to other cases from a similar universe of cases

(Gerring 2004). Given that diasporas become increasingly involved in transitional justice, knowledge about *how these processes take place* is important for scholars and practitioners.

How can the findings of this research have wider validity beyond this case? Our account can offer analytical leverage to unpack processes of diaspora engagement with the earlier mentioned truth commissions in Liberia, Haiti, Sierra Leone, East Timor and Cambodia, among others. While we are aware that not all transitional justice and memorialisation initiatives will directly correspond to our model, it is important to understand how mobilisation becomes contextualised at different scales, and how diasporas shift contention from one scale of engagement to another. In Tarrow's terms, the series of 'scale shifts' discussed in this article present an 'upward scale shift' expanding local messages to global audiences. Hence, our findings have the potential for wider applicability to the analysis of similar global movements in which diasporas are directly involved, the Palestinian Boycott and Divestment Movement, for example.

Diffusion of information through transnational diaspora networks is a plausible mechanism to consider when analyzing the initial emergence of a movement and its scaling up. When opportunities for mobilisation are blocked in the home country, diasporas are highly receptive to grievance claims, even before other formal organisations enter the contention. NGOs could become engaged as well, and potentially play a constructive role, but could also fail, if they are considered biased actors to the parties involved. Our account is further outspoken about the need to consider how claims could be sustained in the absence of a formal organisation or process by becoming contextualised in different host-countries. We do not only confirm that diasporas are 'rooted cosmopolitans' as Tarrow put it, and 'think locally, act globally', as Lyons and Mandeville argued, but demonstrate how their specific positions in certain contexts (Koinova 2012) and relationships with those contexts impact on the forms in which contention will be sustained. Finally, we show that even if helping to sustain mobilisation on the national (host-state) level, diasporas can be engaged actors in seeking to expand it to the supranational and global levels. Hence, the existing transitional justice and memorialisation literature more narrowly, and the transnational social movements literature more broadly, need to analytically integrate the role of diasporas and how they contribute to the emergence, sustenance, and shift of contention from one scale to another.

[1] Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2006 define a transnational social field as 'a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed'.

[2] See further De Brito et al. 2001.

[3] Vulliamy (1992). Female victims were often raped as part of camp detainment. See Kirshenbaum 1997.

[4] At a mass grave at Tomašica near Omarska, more than 400 bodies were exhumed by November 2013 (with estimates of close to 800). Of these, 284 were laid to rest in six cemeteries in the vicinity of Omarska after a mass funeral ceremony in July 2014; Sito-Sucic 2014.

[5] Information from Soul of Europe website, http://www.soulofeurope.org/the-process-for-the-omarska-memorial-project/, accessed 21 October 2013; Reeves and Pelz, 2011.

[6] There is an umbrella organisation for the Bosnian diaspora, headquartered in Birmingham, Svjetski Savez Dijaspore Bosne i Herzegovine, and smaller local organisations scattered throughout the UK.

[7] The group's Facebook presence can be found on https://www.facebook.com/groups/336748579716975/.

[8] This letter was obtained in 2013 through Satko Mujagić's personal archive.

[9] This reasoning was reiterated in BBC documentary, 'Omarska Memorial in Exile 2012', Rachel Wright, http://vimeo.com/47299561, accessed 26 April 2013.

[10] Representatives of Prijedor survivors were also invited but could not attend due to visa regulations.

[11] The petition can be found at http://www.change.org/petitions/arcelor-mittal-a-uk-based-company-the-largest-steel-producer-in-the-world-give-victims-access-to-omarska-concentration-camp-arcelor-mittal-purchased.

[12] Participant observation, Bosnia-Herzegovina, August 2013.

[13] For example, a letter (http://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Prijedor-Bosnia-Herzegovina-Letter-New-2013.pdf) was sent out on behalf of the ICTJ urging Mayor Pavić of Prijedor to enlist more political capital in reaching out to victims' families.

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