



# Divided Brothers: Ex-Double Towns Brod and Slavonski Brod

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**ABSTRACT** Brod (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Slavonski Brod (Republic of Croatia) towns were positioned in two different federal republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) divided by the Sava River as its natural boundary. They essentially represented almost a single, unified city, with a multi-ethnic structure of the population, and high production industrial capacity. The authors of this article use the conceptual model of *double towns* developed by Buursink, and Dębicki and Tamáska, applying it to the case of the above-mentioned towns. This article analyzes the current status of the towns in terms of the impact of war atrocities on their economic, cultural, urban and demographic resources and mutual cooperation. Emphasis is placed on the permanent damage caused by ethnic separation between these cities as well as the consequences arising from the division of industrial capacities, which determined the further development of these towns, their economic potential and urban sprawl, as well as the quality of life of the population. This research is based on *case study* methodology, with a focus on secondary data analysis. The results of the research show that the formation of new states and wars in the former SFRJ caused the division of economic and human capital, with severe consequences. The post-socialist transition and badly conducted privatization, together with the new national borders and ethnic separation, caused a division between these towns that resulted in a decrease in their mutual cultural and economic cooperation. However, a more favourable environment for life and development has been noted in Slavonski Brod (Republic of Croatia), which during the pre-war period had more economic and institutional capacity, as well as a larger population. Some of these advantages have become more important with the entry of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union, which turned out to be an additional factor of separation between these former double towns. Within this context, the authors identify patterns related to the revitalization of certain social ties that existed before the division.

**KEY WORDS** border twin towns, double towns, breakup of SFRJ, post-socialist transition, cross-border cooperation

## **(Divided) twin towns in the area of the former SFRJ**

Unlike divided cities such as Sarajevo and Mostar, which have attracted and still are attracting the attention of the global scientific community and the public, twin towns that divided after the Yugoslavia (SFRJ – Socijalistička federativna republika Jugoslavija/Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) breakup have not been the subject of scientific research or wider

interest until now. We hold the opinion that there are three main reasons for the very low level of their scientific and public visibility:

- Contrary to common presumptions, (divided) twin towns are not numerous on the territory of former SFRJ
  - Existing (divided) twin towns belong to the group of small or middle size urban areas/settlements and they mostly occupy peripheral positions within national-regional territorial structures
  - The scientific community on the territory of the former SFRJ is not adequately informed on the origin, development and current state in the field of research concerning twin towns
- Summing up the results of current discussions which tend to resolve the “terminological mess” on the meaning and scope of the concept of twin towns, Anischenko and Sergunin (2012) propose the following criteria for telling the difference between twin towns and other municipality units which participate in international cooperation:
- Towns have to be located a short distance away from the state border (so called “border towns”)
  - They are situated on opposite river banks, which has divided them through history
  - They share the same past (as one entity or opposed sides)
  - The population in twin towns is multiethnic and they are often bilingual
  - They currently tend to mutual cooperation
  - Mutual cooperation between twin towns should be based on a certain legal and institutional basis (Anischenko and Sergunin 2012: 20–21)

On the basis of the above-mentioned criteria, it is possible to identify three pairs of twin towns in the area of the former SFRJ. Two pairs are located on the international border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia (Brod and Slavonski Brod, Kostajnica and Hrvatska Kostajnica, respectively), as well as one pair between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Serbia (Zvornik and Mali Zvornik).

The SFRJ breakdown caused damage by which the nominal administrative borders of former federal units and socialist republics became the international state borders of newly developed countries. Within that context, it is possible to notice significant differences between the previously mentioned twin towns. The twin towns located on the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia, which used to be an almost unified urban area and local community situated in the inland part of Yugoslavia, suddenly became border towns/divided twin towns. The mutual cooperation of their institutions, organizations and citizens was hindered or stopped not only because of the transformation of border lines – from an open towards a closed model – but also because of political and armed conflict between Serbs and Croats, the two dominant ethnic groups in that area. On the other side, the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia retained most of its nominal features mainly due to the fact that Serbs represent the dominant ethnic group on both sides. Therefore, the towns of Zvornik and Mali Zvornik have the features of border towns but they cannot be described as divided twin towns.

Considering the fact that this is a pioneering project, and taking into account the available resources, the sizes of the towns and their similarities, as well as with help from local institutions, we have decided to focus our research on the towns of Brod and Slavonski Brod

as an example of divided twin towns in the area of the former SFRJ. Moreover, we will describe and explain the way in which mutual relations between citizens and institutions, as well as the urban morphology of these towns, are affected by the wider social context: socialist modernization and ideology of “brotherhood and unity”, war, postsocialist transition, and the entry of the Republic of Croatia into the EU.

## **Towards appropriate conceptual framework**

The previously mentioned “terminological mess” on the meaning and scope of the concept of twin cities/towns largely diminishes the concept’s explanation value. As the main reason for this, Joenniemi and Sergunin (2011) specify the multiple meanings of the concept and its identification with numerous (quasi)synonyms. They see a difference between three basic meanings of the concept in the scholarly literature:

1. In an intranational context – two cities/towns very close to each other that almost unify as a consequence of urban sprawl in certain period of time (e.g. Minneapolis and St. Paul in the USA or Manchester and Salford in Great Britain),
2. In a broad international context (synonyms: sister, connected, coupled, partner, friendship, brother or related cities/towns, etc.) – cities/towns which are not so close to each other, on the contrary, they are a long distance from each other or in different countries, but they have signed contracts for cooperation in the fields of culture and/or economy (for example, Milan and Melbourne),
3. In a narrow international context (synonym: border twin towns) – border cities/towns close to each other (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011: 121–122).

Using the results of the ESPON programme from 2006, Székely (2007) and Hardi (2010) explain more precisely the meaning of twin towns in the narrower international context. Apparently, in the framework of this three-point classification, which is based on the size of the towns, the distance between them and their distance from national borders, as well as the extension of their functional urban areas (FUA), twin towns represent only one of nine possible types of cross-border urban areas, and they are defined as “generally quite small, sometimes a former single city, cut by a border, each with their own FUA even if some transborder commuting is present” (Székely 2007: 3).

However, even the explicit reference to the meaning and scope of the concept of twin towns, such as the one given by Anishenko and Sergunin (2012), as well as other authors, (Jańczak 2014; Dołzbłasz 2015), it can be understood as inaccurate or misleading. Namely, Buursink (2001) considers that the “twin” metaphor cannot be projected onto every pair of cities/towns that are next to each other across a boundary line, because in that context “twinship” is not so much related to geographical closeness as it is to the quality of their mutual relations and similar characteristics (origin, age, size, appearance, culture, etc). At the end of the elaboration of this idea, Buursink as an alternative suggests the use of the concept of border-crossing cities/towns.

We hold the opinion that the concept of border-crossing towns would not be adequate for denoting pairs of border towns located next to each other across a boundary line, but that for some reason are divided, because the term “divided border-crossing towns” would represent

a *contradictio in adjecto*. On the other side, if we accept Buursink’s arguments about the misleading character of the twin metaphor, i.e. we do not assume the necessary solidarity and/or similarity of every pair of towns that are next to each other across a boundary line, then use of the term “divided twin towns” is justified only in cases of pairs of towns that once fulfilled the above requirements. In accordance with what was previously stated, and taking into account the observed specific features of the towns of Brod and Slavonski Brod, for the needs of our research we have decided to operationalize the concept of “double towns”. Apparently, this term not only denotes pairs of binational border towns which turned into one town (Buursink 2001: 16), which Brod and Slavonski Brod were during Yugoslav socialism, but it also does not have a connotation that implies any similarity between the towns. In this context, bearing in mind that the term “divided double towns” could sound confusing, we have decided to use the term “ex-double towns”. While operationalizing this concept we have used conceptual models made by Buursink (1994, 2001) and Dębicki and Tamáska (2014).

Buursink distinguishes two ideal-type models of neighbouring border towns: town couples and double towns. According to Buursink double towns tend to have mutual cooperation and they complement each other in infrastructure, public services, cultural institutions, and promotion of economic and touristic potential. On the other hand, town couples represent border towns that do not cooperate or are rivals in certain fields (Schultz 2002: 3–4).

Despite the fact that they use the same terminology as Buursink, Dębicki and Tamáska (2014) offer a typology of border towns which is operationally more satisfactory than Buursink’s. Apparently, their primary criteria in border town classification is not only the level of their mutual cooperation in certain fields, but also those moments which highly predict the historical course of events, such as the topological characteristics of the border towns and the mutual historic relations of ethnic groups which are their inhabitants. On the basis of these criteria, and through their concretization in the examples of three divided twin towns at river borders in the Visegrad countries and Germany, Dębicki and Tamáska suggest the following ideal-type characteristics of town couples and double towns:

**Table 1:** Ideal-type characteristics of town couples and double towns

	Town couples	Double towns
<b>Topography</b>	Wide distances, no bridges, (or) no urban space at bridgeheads	Real neighbourhoods in townscape, attractive places on both sides of the river
<b>National-ethnic borders</b>	No ethnic borders, (or) minority groups in mediatory position, (or) foreign language skills, (or) no traumatic historical heritage	Strong ethnic borders, no language competition, no historical traumas, ethnic conflicts or living stereotypes
<b>Mutual cooperation</b>	Family networks, friends, entertainment, shopping, work	No mixed marriages, no or little migration, no everyday traffic, no common cultural programmes, no possibility for shopping and entertainment on the other side

Source: Authors’ interpretation of Dębicki and Tamáska (2014)

These conceptual models will be used as the basis for developing an appropriate conceptual framework for the explanation of specific cases of “divided twin towns” situated in the area of the former SFRJ. Within that context, we hold the opinion that through the period of the mid-1940s until the beginning of the 1990s, the towns of Brod and Slavonski Brod achieved an enviable level of mutual integration, i.e. they could be seen as an example of a double town, as determined by Buursink. The SFRJ breakup led to losing that position; actually, they became ex-double towns such as those described by Dębicki and Tamáska. Due to the fact that mutual cooperation between Brod and Slavonski Brod ended suddenly and violently, affected by a dramatic course of events connected to the SFRJ breakup, as well as the subsequent slow process of reintegration (a process which has not finished yet), we consider that it is justified to talk about an “ex-SFRJ model of double towns”. We would like to highlight the following features of that model:

**Table 2:** Ex-SFRJ model of double towns

	Double towns (before the breakup)	Ex-Double towns (after the breakup)
<b>Topography</b>	Real neighbourhoods in townscape, attractive places on both sides of the river	Real neighbourhoods in townscape, attractive places on both sides of the river
<b>National-ethnic borders</b>	Ethnic borders loosened by ideology of “brotherhood and unity”, one language – Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian language, traumatic historical inheritance repressed under official culture of remembrance based on the heritage of the resistance movement against fascist occupation during World War II	Strong ethnic borders, specific language framework, culture of remembrance which promotes old and new historical traumas, ethnic conflicts or existing stereotypes
<b>Mutual cooperation</b>	Family relations, friends, entertainment, work, education, health service, culture, frequent (daily) migration	Far smaller number of new mixed marriages, far less frequent (daily) migration, average intensity of everyday traffic with lack of joint cultural events, taking the opportunity of purchasing and having fun on the other side

Further, we will concretize the proposed model. We will pay special attention to highlighting those social phenomena and processes which obstruct the reintegration of Brod and Slavonski Brod. Moreover, we will also point out certain aspects of social activity which are not in accordance with the above-mentioned trends.

## Common history

According to archaeological remains, the territory of today’s towns of Brod and Slavonski Brod was first settled in the period of the new Stone Age. The first written document on the area refers to a Roman settlement called Marsonia, which was located nearby the historical (and current) town centre of Slavonski Brod (Zirdum 2001: 280). The name “Brod” refers to a place where there is a river crossing, and is mentioned for the first time in Bela IV of

Hungary's charter, referring to a village which was most likely established in the locality of today's cemetery in Slavonski Brod (Marković 2002: 335). In 1475 the fortress was built there but the settlement was conquered by the Turks in 1536, under whose reign it stayed until 1691. The same year, the Turks evacuated to the right bank of the Sava River where they built a fortress and established Turkish Brod (Basler 1989: 25). After the Turks retreated, Brod became known as Brod on the Sava River. According to the peace treaty of Požarevac in 1718, the settlement on the right bank of the Sava River belonged to the Austrian monarchy, and then, in 1739, it became part of the Ottoman empire again (Kruhek and Pavlović 1991). During that time, from 1715 until 1736, on the left bank of Sava, another huge fortress was built. After the Berlin congress, Turkish Brod passed to the Empire of Austria when it got the name Bosanski Brod. After World War I, Brod on the Sava River and Bosanski Brod became parts of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, i.e. the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, from 1929. In 1934, Brod on Sava got a new name – Slavonski Brod (Zirdum 2001: 285). During World War II, as part of the fascist Independent State of Croatia, Slavonski and Bosanski Brod were unified into one town called Brod na Savi. Just before the war ended, both towns were severely damaged as a result of being bombed by the Allies (Karakaš Obradov 2006). There followed a period of rebuilding, growth and integration within the country called Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, until 1991. At the beginning of World War II, the prefix "Bosanski" was replaced with "Srpski", while in 2009 it changed to the name Brod. During the wars on the territory of the former SFRJ, Brod and Slavonski Brod were among the most severely destroyed towns.

Under the reign of Austria-Hungary from 1878, Slavonski Brod and Brod experienced urban development. Due to their favourable geographical-political position, the buoyancy of the Sava River and road-rail bridge which was built in 1879, Slavonski Brod in that time became a large centre of trade, crafts and industry. Because of its strategic role in connecting the newly conquered territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the rest of the Monarchy, it was known as "Bosnia and Herzegovina's door". On the other side of the river, a gas refinery (1892) and train station (1896) were built. In that period these towns went through rapid urbanization followed by a significant increase in population. For instance, according to the census of 1880, the population of Slavonski Brod was 4 433, while according to the census of 1910 it had 10 200 inhabitants. This increase was primarily connected with a large number of immigrants from other parts of the Monarchy (Zirdum 2001: 285; Marković 2002: 341; Hrkač 2009: 274). In the same period, the population in Brod increased 375% (according to the census of 1880 it had 710 inhabitants), with 14 % of residents engaged in agriculture (Hadžibegović 2004: 34; Hrkač 2009: 275).

During World War II the towns experienced great human and material loss, as well as ethnic conflict caused by misdeeds of civilians (especially against Serbs by the Independent State of Croatia), which then led to the unexpected introduction into the era of the biggest development and mutual cooperation of these towns – socialist modernisation within the borders of the SFRJ. The basis of this process of cooperation was the ideology of "brotherhood and unity" and the system of government central planning of the economy and society.

The "brotherhood and unity" concept was originally developed as a slogan of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, directed towards overcoming the ethnic and religious divisions among

South Slav peoples with the aim of mobilising them in the fight against fascist occupation and domestic quislings. During and after the War, the concept developed and became the official ideology of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, as well as of the newly established socialist state. Created and promoted as an institutionalised culture of remembrance, based on glorification of the achievements of the people's fight for liberation and the "unity in distinctiveness" of the South Slav peoples, the ideology of "brotherhood and unity" represented a unique model and politics which was respected and accepted by the great majority of Yugoslavia's population. At the same time, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (from 1952 called the League of Communists of Yugoslavia) used the ideology of "brotherhood and unity" also as means of payback against political opponents and for maintenance of the existing system, actually as part of the repressive ideological system. Part of that ideology was the unique Serbo-Croat/Croato-Serbian language. Its success in overcoming ethnic and religious tensions in the area of Slavonski and Brod during the existence of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is clearly shown in the examples of frequent mixed marriages, family, neighbour and personal relations (Gililand Olsen 1986), as well as the significant number of citizens who declared their identity as Yugoslavs in the census (Table 3 and 4).

**Table 3:** Ethnic structure of Slavonski Brod, 1971–2011

	Year of census				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
<b>Number of citizens</b>	38 705 (100 %)	49 677 (100 %)	55 683 (100 %)	64 612 (100 %)	59 141 (100 %)
<b>Croats</b>	30 465 (85.7 %)	35 851 (72.2 %)	44 541 (80 %)	59 999 (92.9 %)	55 410 (93.7 %)
<b>Serbs</b>	4 955 (9.3 %)	3 824 (7.7 %)	4 685 (8.4 %)	1 557 (2.4 %)	1 156 (1.9 %)
<b>Bosniaks</b>	212 (0.3 %)	162 (0.3 %)	402 (0.7 %)	297 (0.5 %)	353 (0.6 %)
<b>Yugoslavs</b>	1 744 (2.1 %)	8 101 (16.3 %)	2 417 (4.3 %)	n/a	n/a
<b>Other</b>	539 (1.4 %)	526 (1.1 %)	3 638 (6.6 %)	2 759 (4.2 %)	2 222 (3.4 %)

Sources: Grabeljšek et al. (1991, 1994); Gelo (1998); Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske (2001); Buršić (2013)

The existence of a suitable social environment for mutual cooperation between Brod and Slavonski Brod was additionally strengthened by the system of government central planning, characteristic for socialist systems of that time. The local administration of Yugoslav towns was mostly subordinate to higher administrative units (the socialist republics), while having certain autonomy when it came to issues related to the local interests of communities. In that context one may expect to notice a different relation of the Socialist Republic of Croatia towards Slavonski Brod, compared with that of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Brod, which was connected with the roles of the towns within the regional/national area structures of their respective republics/SFRJ.



**Table 4:** Ethnic structure of Brod, 1971–2013

	Year of census				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2013
<b>Number of citizens</b>	10 003 (100 %)	12 506 (100 %)	14 098 (100 %)	n/a	8 563 (100 %)
<b>Croats</b>	4 166 (41.6 %)	3 812 (30.5 %)	4 086 (29 %)	n/a	n/a
<b>Serbs</b>	3 229 (32.3 %)	3 505 (28 %)	4 373 (31.2 %)	n/a	n/a
<b>Bosniaks</b>	2 093 (20.9 %)	1 682 (13.4 %)	2 246 (15.9 %)	n/a	n/a
<b>Yugoslavs</b>	376 (3.8 %)	3 406 (27.2 %)	2 760 (19.6 %)	n/a	n/a
<b>Other</b>	86 (0.9 %)	48 (0.4 %)	633 (4.5 %)	n/a	n/a

Sources: Grabeljšek et al. (1991, 1994); Državni zavod za statistiku Republike BiH (1993); Agencija za statistiku BiH (2016)

The Socialist Republic of Croatia intensively invested in the economy and infrastructure of Slavonski Brod; because of its natural resources, good transportation infrastructure and appropriate number of inhabitants, Slavonski Brod had the potential to become a regional centre. The best example of the investment policy was the location there of the industrial giant called “Đuro Đaković”, which manufactured locomotives, bridges, steel structures, agricultural machinery and weapons, and which was the backbone of development for the whole Posavina region (Table 5). Apart from the Đuro Đaković company, economic growth and development in Slavonski Brod were based on the Jasinje agricultural company, the Slavonija wood industry and the Oriolik furniture manufacturing company (Grad Slavonski Brod 2012: 14).

**Table 5:** Changes in the number of employees at the “Đuro Đaković” company, 1923–2015

Year	1923	1986	1990	2004	2015
Employed people	1 200	16 339	11 000	2 200	940

Sources: Đuro Đaković Holding (2016), Pavičević (2016)

On the other side, because of the proximity and development of Slavonski Brod, the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not need to make big economic and infrastructure investments in Brod, since there were no administrative or legal barriers for its citizens to cross the border and use public and other services in Slavonski Brod. The most important company in Brod was the oil refinery. Important also were the Bosna Socks Manufacturing Company, the Metal Emajl sanitary facilities and equipment factory and the construction and industrial company called Građevinsko Industrijski Kombinat Brod (GIK Brod). Like many other pre-war enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a consequence of the unsuccessful privatization process, these three enterprises are currently bankrupt (Donais 2002; Čaušević 2015).



**Table 6:** Changes in the number of employees and current state of ownership of companies in Brod, 1990–2015

Company name	Actual ownership state	Number of employees in 1990	Number of employees 1995–2015
Oil refinery	Privatized	2 300	1 150 (currently)
Bosna	Facing bankruptcy	450	130 (before bankruptcy)
Metal Emajl	Facing bankruptcy	660	167 (before bankruptcy)
GIK Brod	Facing bankruptcy	400	127 (before bankruptcy)

Source: Brod Municipality (2016)

These circumstances created a situation in which the citizens of Brod and Slavonski Brod had equal access to public services in both towns. For instance, inhabitants of Brod went to doctors in Slavonski Brod. Furthermore, pupils from Brod attended high schools in Slavonski Brod. The mutual complementation of Brod and Slavonski Brod could be noticed in the exchange of human capital, because residents from either town, depending on their needs, profession, knowledge or personal affinities, were able to work in companies and institutions in both towns, no matter where they lived. According to available data, at the beginning of the 1990s there were 3 000 people from Bosnia and Herzegovina employed in Slavonski Brod, while several hundred from Slavonski Brod worked in companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Barać 2014).

The shared history of Brod and Slavonski Brod during the 1990s is marked by a series of negative social phenomena and processes: pre-war and wartime events (in the area of the former SFRJ); forced migration; numerous civil and military victims; renewal of old and the development of new ethnic stereotypes and divisions; slowed post-socialist transition; badly conducted privatization; and damaged family, friendship and neighbourhood ties (Gililand Olsen 1993). The complete breakdown in communication between the towns, with the exception of combat activities, happened in the period between 1992 and 1995, i.e. from the time the bridge on the Sava River was destroyed, and then only partly enabled for the needs of peace-keeping operation forces (IFOR). In 1997, the bridge started to be used by civilians, but it was not completely repaired until 2000 (Nadilo 2000: 182–183). However, during that time, the production capacities of the large companies in Brod and Slavonski Brod never recovered, which can be seen from the data shown in Tables 5 and 6. Also, many victims of forced migrations still have not returned to their homes, which can be seen in the data on demographic changes in these towns (Tables 3 and 4). The depopulation trend was especially experienced in Brod, as seen in the results of the first post-war census in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013. Although the complete results of the census have not yet been published, on the basis of available data (regarding the number of inhabitants in Brod) it is possible to conclude that the number of inhabitants in Brod is almost twice as small today as it was in the nineties, as well as that the demographic picture of Brod has changed in terms of ethnic composition (looked at the level of Municipality of Brod) with Serbs comprising 69 %, Croats 19.8 %, Bosniaks 9.1 % and other 1 % of the population in Brod (Agencija za statistiku BiH 2016).

## Spatial structure and quality of life

Historically, the socio-spatial structures of Brod and Slavonski Brod, until the nineties, were not very differentiated in terms of social class or national or religious identity, because these categories were subordinate to single-party political domination with regard to decision-making, development and the looks of towns themselves. This condition was excused by the socialist system, in which there was a tendency to promote workers into the middle class and the abolishment of class society on the one side, and intolerance towards religious beliefs on the other side. We should not forget the fact that in the area of the former SFRJ when it comes to urban development, the political subsystem was dominant over other subsystems, as seen in the crucial influence of the system of central planning we have already mentioned (Vujović 1986; Sjoberg 1999). In that sense, the official conception of Yugoslav self-governed socialism was not completely egalitarian because of the strong domination by the political elite. Material inequalities caused by unequal positions in the social division of work, as well as one's position in the Party, led to the phenomenon of class differentiation – but differences were concealed by the establishment of homogenous housing settlements.

The process of under-urbanization, characterized by disproportionate investment in the industrial rather than the housing sector, was a main feature of socialist towns (Szelenyi 1996; Pickvance 2002), and is also visible in the example of the development of Brod and Slavonski Brod. Industrial giants such as “Đuro Đaković” and the oil refinery in Brod attracted a great number of people from rural areas who were able to work and who inhabited the new workers' settlements, mostly built according to the principle of building flats owned by the state itself. Although in the former SFRJ private initiative in building flats was much bigger than in other socialist countries, it was limited due to the domination of the political establishment and repressed market mechanisms of supply and demand. In that context, during the period of industrial growth and development, flat building was most intensive in the vicinity of industrial zones. As in other larger ex-socialist cities, the inadequate use of urban areas was recognizable in loads of green surfaces and public places and lack of functional variety, especially in commercial facilities and in wholesale and retail trade (Sýkora 1998; Stanilov 2007; Tsenkova 2007). Clearly observed and divided business zones can be seen in most of the towns on the territory of the former SFRJ (as is the case with these two towns), but the fact is that the most important functions (services, administrative, cultural, educational etc.) were positioned on those spots with the biggest number of inhabitants. In the case of both towns, those activities gravitated towards the Sava River, incorporated together with inhabited settlements, while behind them were industrial plants. In that sense, the spatial structure of the towns corresponds with Homer Hoyt's sector model theory, which is based on the assumption that the development axes of cities are characterized by a radial and radial-concentric system (Hoyt 1939).

The bridge on the Sava River was strongly integrated into the urban structure. In Brod, the bridge is part of the urban centre, which actually reveals the earlier complete unity of these two towns, as well as the fact that the bridge never represented an administrative-political border between two federal republics. Despite the fact that the bridge today is used as a border crossing between two countries (the one which is part of the European Union – Croatia – and the other, which is not – Bosnia and Herzegovina/Republika Srpska),

the problem of traffic density and frequent traffic jams in and around the town centre shows that the primary purpose of the bridge was not the international transit of people, goods and services, but primarily the everyday communication of human capital. In Slavonski Brod, the bridge which is today used as a border crossing between two states is 500 meters from the fortress where the town government is located (Barać 2014), which means that even before the bridge was built, this town had developed spatial planning regulations of urban development. Border access to the bridge is, in terms of infrastructure, by far more organized and avoids traffic congestion because of a well-built road network which connects a transit road with a nearby highway.

From the perspective of the morphological structure of the town in which planning regulation has the main importance (Vresk 2002: 143), certain changes in both towns can be noticed compared to the period before the wartime 1990s. Nevertheless, as in other post-socialist cities (e.g. Prague, Warsaw, Sofia, Budapest and others), the goal is to meet the needs of new market demands based on principles of supply and demand aimed at adjusting to the capitalist way of entrepreneurship (Petrović 2005; Tsenkova 2006; Stanilov 2007). This issue led to reconstruction of existing structures in order to build new business areas in urban zones nearer to the town centre, as well as creation of new business zones in both Brod and Slavonski Brod.

In the urban and regulative plans of Brod, most dominant are parcels offered to potential investors for investments in the industrial sector and production activities in zones which are located behind bigger housing settlements and which were partly used for the development of economic activities in the pre-war period. This planned regulation shows the considerably poor economic situation, as well as the stagnating prospects for development, because there is no need to plan residential zones due to the fact that large numbers of young people are leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, in Slavonski Brod, there are strong efforts to strengthen infrastructure by using European funds for the town's development, which can be seen in the activities of the Slavonski Brod Development Agency. Thanks to the Agency, and the status of Croatia as a candidate to join, and later member of, the European Union, projects connected to energy efficiency, public lighting, reconstruction of kindergartens and schools, reconstruction of heating systems, intermobility etc. were realized (Grad Slavonski Brod 2012). Moreover, in the area of Slavonski Brod, more intensive commercialization of the town's centre and renovation of unused real estate into repurposed, profitable spaces can be noticed. Certain areas of Slavonski Brod, according to business plans, have become building zones available to investors for opening business offices and offering services in different fields, as is another part of town called "Jelas" (Grad Slavonski Brod 2012).

The historical core which maintains the cultural heritage of the town dominates the centre of Slavonski Brod. There is located the town government, as well as zones of light industry and heavy industry, mostly privatized but with significantly less capacity than in the past. A business zone called "Kolonija", which is located in town, is supposed to be the place for smaller companies and it is connected to the bigger "Đuro Đaković" industrial zone. The "Bjeliš" business zone is mostly positioned south of the main route connecting Slavonski Brod to other urban centres, and is nearby an already existing route for industrial and cargo traffic. This zone is also connected to railway transport, and the plan is to build a new border

crossing between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Development Agency of Slavonski Brod 2010).

There have not been any significant investments in improving infrastructure and communal service (especially transport) in Brod for a long time. Specifically, a former railway which was used by the oil refinery and goes through the centre of town is no longer usable and represents a physical obstacle to developing a more adequate urban plan for the town’s development. Besides, the Spatial Plan of Republika Srpska (2015–2025) is not in accordance with that of Croatia, which is evidence of the negative effect of ethno-national governmental structures on more intensive reintegration of former double towns.

To compare, we will pay some attention to the quality of urban life in Brod and Slavonski Brod. Therefore, apart from the listed elements of spatial structure in our analysis we will use data on unemployment in the towns as a relatively reliable (i.e. objective) indicator of the quality of urban life (Stimson and Marans 2011).

**Table 7:** Unemployment rates in the municipality of Brod and the town of Slavonski Brod, 2010–2015

Year	Municipality of Brod	Town of Slavonski Brod
2010	28.6 %	14.2 %
2011	31.6 %	14.3 %
2012	32.7 %	14.3 %
2013	37.6 %	14.7 %
2014	37.8 %	12.4 %
2015	n/a	8.7 %

Sources: Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje (2010–15); Investiciono razvojna banka Republike Srpske (2016b); Brod Municipality (2014); Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske (2017)

According to the data in Table 7, we can conclude that, unlike the Municipality of Brod, which has lately been confronted by an increase in unemployment, in the last two years Slavonski Brod has had a significant decrease in unemployment. The reasons behind this are: a larger amount of foreign investments in Slavonski Brod and the Republic of Croatia, since it has become a new member of the European Union; the opening of a large transit centre for immigrants from the Middle East in which approximately 4 000 people were employed through public works (opened in November 2015, closed in April 2016); as well as the removal of unemployed persons from the register, most often due to emigration. It has to be said that the unemployment rate in Slavonski Brod has been under that for the Republic as a whole for years (for instance, in 2013 the unemployment rate in Slavonski Brod was 15 %, while in the Republic it was 20.3 %), which cannot be said for Brod-Posavina County, which is an administrative centre and has an unemployment rate significantly above the national average (Vidov 2014). More specifically, at the end of 2015 the unemployment rate in Brod-Posavina County was 25.6 %, while for the Republic of Croatia it was 16.9 % (Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje 2016). On the other hand, according to official data, Brod Municipality had an unemployment rate of 37.8 % at the end of 2014, which was near the average of Republika Srpska at 37.7 %, and below the national average of 44.5 % (Investiciono razvojna banka

Republike Srpske 2016a). It is important to remember that official information about both towns and countries should be taken with a certain reservation due to a number of people who work in the grey economy or abroad but at the same time appear in the unemployment register simply to receive social support guaranteed for the unemployed (for instance, health insurance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and some financial help in the Republic of Croatia) (Balen 2017; Kremenović 2017b).

If the factors of spatial structure and unemployment represent relatively reliable indicators of the quality of urban life (Stimson and Marans 2011: 44–47), the “divisiveness” between Brod and Slavonski Brod represents an absolute indicator of decrease in the quality of life of the towns’ inhabitants. Not being able to use certain public services and resources from Slavonski Brod undisturbed (such as the hospital, high schools and colleges), most inhabitants of Brod do not have much choice. If they are or were not able to obtain Croatian citizenship (on the basis of origin, birth on Croatian territory, or naturalization), their needs for education, health services, and some other services which are not available in Brod, can be met only by moving or temporarily staying in other local or regional urban centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (such as the local urban centres of Derventa, Modriča and Gradiška; the regional centre, Doboj; and Banja Luka, the largest urban centre in the Republic of Srpska). Having in mind the extremely low living standards for the majority of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some residents of Brod face an insuperable barrier.

**Table 8:** Road distance between Brod and surrounding urban centres

Route	Road distance
Brod – Derventa	30 km
Brod – Modriča	48 km
Brod – Doboj	67 km
Brod – Gradiška	89 km
Brod – Banja Luka	108 km

### Cross-border cooperation

During the last twenty years, from the end of the war until today, there has been a trend of improvement in cross-border cooperation between the local institutions of the Municipality of Brod and the town of Slavonski Brod. The most successful form of mutual cooperation occurs two times a year when the two local administrations promote the economic potential of the Posavina region as organisers or participants at the Katarinski Crafts, Small and Medium Size Business Fair in Slavonski Brod, as well as at the Economy, Agriculture and Tourism Fair in Brod. Still, the cooperation is mostly of a formal character since the joint activities of the two local administrations have not achieved results which would serve as a good basis for intensifying similar attempts in the future. The most obvious example of this is the unsolved problem of air pollution, caused by activities at the Brod refinery, which affects both towns (Dusík et al. 2015). In 2007, the Russian Zabureznjeft company became the owner of the Brod refinery. Unfortunately, it still has not modernized the production facilities in accordance with

European standards for environmental protection (the current law on air quality in Republika Srpska is also not in accordance with EU standards). Although there is frequent disapproval of this situation from residents and the local government of Slavonski Brod, as well as an initiative by the government of the Republic of Croatia to solve the air pollution problem by gasification of the Brod refinery (i.e. connecting it to the natural gas network of Croatia), for some economic and geopolitical interests, the government of Republika Srpska continues to support a questionable solution – gasification of the Brod refinery by connecting it to a gas pipeline which would connect Serbia and the so-called “Turkish Stream”. The previously mentioned economic and geopolitical interests are connected not only to the refinery business, but should be considered within the context of the effort of the government of Republika Srpska to maintain its independence in the area of gas policy; the federal level of governance – in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the Republic of Croatia – is still taken as a potential threat to the national interests of Republika Srpska (Kremenović 2017a; Pavlic 2017). Local authorities in Brod are supportive of the stance of the government of Republika Srpska (Grbešić 2017). These circumstances have affected the cancelation in 2011 of a planned project to build a regional gas line connecting Slavonski Brod (HR), Brod (B&H) and Zenica (B&H) to the Western Balkan Investment Framework (WBIF) (CePPEI 2013); as well as the decision of the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of Republika Srpska in December 2016 to extend the environmental permit for the Brod refinery until 2020 (Spasenić 2016). At the same time, most of the citizens of Brod recognize the problem of air pollution but consider it less important than the refinery’s economic significance for their town (Grbešić 2017).

We have already mentioned that citizens of Brod who do not have Croatian citizenship are not able to use certain public services and resources in Slavonski Brod under the same conditions (e.g. hospital treatment, secondary school education, higher education etc.). The main obstacle to integration of the local communities is undeveloped bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. This can be concluded on the basis of signed bilateral agreements and legal acts by the two countries concerning health insurance and education. For instance, citizens of Brod have the right to free health treatment in Slavonski Brod only in case of emergency provided they already have a special certificate issued by the local branch of the Health Insurance Fund of Republika Srpska (Predsjedništvo Bosne i Hercegovine 2001). Unlike Croatian citizens, Croats from other countries, and children whose parents are citizens of countries that are members of EU who can get free secondary education, the children of Brod residents who do not fulfil the above-mentioned conditions, and want to attend secondary school in Slavonski Brod, must pay fees and have their residence status regulated in accordance with legal regulations that determine the status of foreigners in the Republic of Croatia (Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta Republike Hrvatske 2015). Moreover, if Brod residents want to enrol at some of the faculties of the University in Slavonski Brod (e.g. mechanical engineering, agriculture, management etc.) but who do not fulfil the requirements, do not have a right to subvention of the fees and organized student meals during their studies there (Središnji državni portal 2015). Apart from these facts, citizens of Brod without Croatian citizenship have difficulty in finding jobs in Slavonski Brod because of the condition to obtain permission for staying and working, or because of the annual quota for employment of foreigners in working fields and professions determined by the Government of Republic



of Croatia (Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje 2017). Keeping in mind that due to measures for the stimulation of employment of its own citizens, the government of the Republic of Croatia has restrictive policies on the issue of annual quotas (for instance, in 2016 that number was 3 115 and in 2017 it is planned to be 7 026 employment positions on the whole territory of the Republic of Croatia), a certain number of citizens from Bosnia and Herzegovina work in Slavonski Brod without being counted in the official statistics (there is no official estimation, but this is a practice which occurs frequently in border areas, especially during holidays and construction work season) (Poslovni dnevnik 2017; Vlada Republike Hrvatske 2017).

In contrast to the policies of their local institutions, the inhabitants of both towns intensively use the available potentials of their neighbours across the border, primarily in shopping, personal service and entertainment. In that context, certain circumstances related to the non-existence of a language barrier (because of the great similarity between the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian languages), the relative closeness of locations for shopping and entertainment, as well as the unenviable material position of most citizens on both sides of the Sava River, allow residents to overcome barriers in the shape of international borders as well as the existing ethnic divide and stereotypes. The development of these forms of cross-border cooperation was made significantly easier by the regime which was bilaterally applied for years, which allowed individuals to cross the international border with only an identification card. After the accession of Croatia to the European Union in the middle of 2013, however, this became impossible for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to available data, it is possible to notice a tendency in the total number of Croatian citizens to increase; e.g. personal vehicles with Croatian registration plates that cross into Bosnia and Herzegovina on the borderline in Slavonski Brod. However, in the time period from 2010 to 2015, the percentage of Croatian citizens who cross the border, compared to the total number of crossings (6 322 728 in 2010, and 7 370 904 in 2015) has increased from 45.7 % to 59.9 %, with minor oscillations. At the same time, the percentage of cars with Croatian plates crossing the border, compared to the total number of cars crossing (2 071 118 in 2010, and 1 906 340 in 2015) has increased from 51 % to 58 % (Policajska uprava brodsko-posavska 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016a).

Although there is no official evidence of the reasons for crossing the border, the unofficial judgements of authorities show that a significant portion of those crossings (at least one quarter) is made by residents of Slavonski Brod who most frequently go to Brod to purchase cheaper goods – such as gas, those most commonly used goods that have a value added tax (VAT) return for foreigners, certain services (for instance, auto mechanics), as well as to visit relatives and friends. The economic importance of this practice for both local communities is shown by the fact that a great number of small businesses and inhabitants of Brod for years resisted the plans of their local government to move the local flea market from a location near the bridge/border crossing to a new, better-equipped but also more distant location out of fear that the change would cause a dramatic decrease in the number of buyers from Slavonski Brod. After moving the market in December 2015, it turned out that their fear was unjustified, and there was even a need to expand the existing selling capacity. Apparently, besides 28 business spaces inside and 62 open-air stalls, because of the huge interest of businessmen from Brod, the local government of the Municipality of Brod in March 2016 published



a public advertisement for 26 more parcels for stalls in an open-air market. The “openness” of the Bosnia and Herzegovina border for Croatian citizens is also shown by the mismatch in official statistics. When we compare the total number of people crossing the border between Slavonski Brod and Brod during the first six months of 2016, we notice a difference of 1 015 575 crossings of foreign citizens, and 889 790 crossings of personal vehicles (Table 9), which can probably be explained by imprecise recordkeeping on the number of Croatian citizens who cross the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina using only their ID.

**Table 9:** Mismatch of official statistics from the border crossings at Slavonski Brod and Brod on the total number of foreign citizens and personal vehicles in the first six months of 2016

Border crossing	Total number of foreign citizens	Total number of personal vehicles
Slavonski Brod	3 148 827	1 822 620
Brod	2 133 252	932 830
Difference	1 015 575	889 790

Sources: Policijska uprava brodsko-posavska (2016b); Jedinica granične policije Brod (2016)

According to the available data, in the first six months of 2016, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were three times less likely to cross the border in Brod than were Croatian citizens to cross the border in Slavonski Brod. Apparently, during this period, at the border crossing in Brod, 1 021 434 citizens from Bosnia and Herzegovina crossed the border. On the other side, 3 151 779 Croatian citizens crossed the border in Slavonski Brod. Although there is no official count of the number of crossings made by inhabitants of Brod and Slavonski Brod, we strongly believe that it is justifiable to conclude that people from Slavonski Brod more often visit Brod, than vice versa. We assume that the reasons for this may be found in the smaller number of inhabitants in Brod, their lower standard of living (the average monthly salary in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015 was about 400 Euros, while in the Republic of Croatia it was about 700 Euros [Investiciono razvojna banka Republike Srpske 2016a]), far more strict rules for crossing the border into Slavonski Brod, as well as the specific needs of Brod inhabitants. Apart from a certain number of Brod residents who work in Slavonski Brod (whose number is insignificant compared to the pre-war period), the most frequent visitors from Brod to Slavonski Brod are young people. They go to Slavonski Brod mainly because of the opportunity to go to large shopping centres, where they can buy branded clothes and shoes, unavailable in Brod, as well as to entertainment facilities (e.g. cafes, discotheques, cinemas etc.).

## Conclusion

The shared past still greatly determines the present and future of Brod and Slavonski Brod. The previous level of integration, as well as the relatively distant past, simultaneously represent barriers to and create the preconditions for the recovery of old forms and developing new types of cross-border cooperation. In the case of Brod, barriers can be seen in under-urbanism, i.e. in the town’s previously existing infrastructural and economic dependence on

Slavonski Brod. In such circumstances, which are aggravated by the peripheral location of Brod in the regional spatial structure of Republika Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina, the local administration and citizens are still dependent on Slavonski Brod. Their dependence is experienced in the sphere of maintaining basic existence and is not oriented towards real improvement of the quality of life of the citizens or urbanization of the town. Paradoxically, one can get the impression that despite the existence of newly relevant state and ethnic borders, Brod is now more dependent on Slavonski Brod than it was in the past.

Croatia's accession to the European Union contributed to the situation. This event prevented most of the citizens of Brod from crossing the border into the Republic of Croatia without any difficulties, but at the same time it has been considered a definite sign of the strengthening of political stability in the region and a chance to intensify cooperation between local governments, institutions and citizens' associations. Such cooperation may be achieved through the mutual application and realization of projects of cross-border collaboration in the field of pre-accession programmes financed by the European Union (IPA II/INTERREG etc). The reasons for lack of cooperation in this field can primarily be found in the usual lack of political consensus at the state level in Bosnia and Herzegovina when it comes to different interests of entities; namely, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (for example in the unsuccessful gasification of the oil refinery in Brod), and in the failure of reforms that would improve conditions for gaining funds from European pre-accession programmes, as well as in the insufficiently developed organizational and technical capacities of local governments, institutions and citizens' associations in Brod in preparation for and in the realization of projects funded by pre-accession programmes (Deronja Suljić and Čilimković 2016).

Moreover, both towns still feel the consequences of wartime destruction, civil and military victims as well as forced migration, which ended numerous friendships and neighbourhood ties. Still, on the basis of the intensity of observed interactions between the citizens of Brod and Slavonski Brod, we can conclude that the process of their reconciliation is ongoing, but at a slow pace. Although most of these interactions tend to satisfy the needs for shopping and entertainment they represent a good basis for improvement of mutual cooperation in other spheres of social activity and life in general.

In the context of the previously mentioned facts, it can be seen in the example of Brod and Slavonski Brod that there is a certain incongruity between the stasis of state and the dynamic of ethnic borders. The observed intensity of social relations between members of different ethnic groups shows that a certain number of citizens is, more or less, ready to put into brackets the ostensibly primordial and insuperable barriers connected to prevailing everyday ethnic divisions and stereotypes. Their readiness to cross state borders daily leads to the conclusion that the "narcissism of minor differences" (Ignatieff 1998; Kolstø 2007), as a basic principle of different nationalistic ideologies, which through history promoted conflicts between South Slav peoples, especially Serbs and Croats, during periods of peace recedes and takes on only latent features. In these circumstances, the undeniable linguistic and cultural similarities, as well as the proximity of urban areas on both sides of the Sava River, encourage mutual communication. In that sense, our research results show that Brod and Slavonski Brod possess much more potential for (re)integration of their townscapes and local societies, than among the divided twin towns at river borders between the Visegrad

countries and Germany (Dębicki and Tamáska 2014) or in some other parts of Europe (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2012; Płoszaj 2013).

According to the analysis presented here, we conclude that at present, the cooperation between the towns Slavonski Brod and Brod is not at a high level. However, under the influence of relatively inevitable supra-regional and supra-national processes of integration, the towns have the potential not only to renew some old ties, but also to develop some new forms of cooperation. For example, the citizens of both towns would benefit from the entry of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union. Although it is a process that could last (according to some predictions) between 10 to 20 years, when it comes, the local institutions and inhabitants of Slavonski Brod and Brod could once more build mutual confidence within a shared economic and legal-administrative framework. It could be the start of a new period of mutual integration and development.

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