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BOSNIAN WOMEN MIGRANTS

MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Bosnian Women Migrants

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 1992 to 1995, many people became internally displaced persons, or migrated to other former Yugoslavian countries, and worldwide. In my MA thesis I will base on three women who, due to different life circumstances, migrated to Norway, Sweden and Croatia. All of them were victims of forced migration, since they lived in the town where they experienced ethnic cleansing.

My MA dissertation will contain interviews and statistical data. A part of it, I conducted during my Internship which took place in the small town in Norway in October 2010. The rest was conducted by interviews and estimates by the relevant institutions.

Key words: migration, women, migrants, Bosnian, refugees, war, Norway, Sweden, Croatia

IZVLEČEK

Bosanske migrantke

Med vojno v Bosni in Herzegovini od 1992 do 1995 je bilo veliko ljudi razseljenih znotraj meja države, veliko pa se jih je izselilo tudi v druge dežele nekdanje Jugoslavije in po celem svetu. V svoji magistrski nalogi se osredotočam na tri ženske, ki so se zaradi različnih okoliščin izselile na Norveško, Švedsko in Hrvaško. Vse tri so bile žrtve prisilne izselitve, saj so živele v mestu, ki je doživelo etnično čiščenje.

Moja naloga vsebuje intervjuje in statistične podatke. Deloma sem intervjuje opravila v času svoje raziskovalne prakse v majhnem mestu na Norveškem oktobra 2010. Podatke pa sem pridobila z intervjuji in ocenami na ustreznih institucijah.

Ključne besede: migracije, ženske, migrant, Bošnjaki, begunci, vojna, Norveška, Švedska, Hrvaška

Contents

PREFACE

In October 2009 I applied in Join Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations at the University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. The enrolment was much earlier, but there were three places left on mentioned university, and I was accepted. For the mentioned reason I was not able to attend Intensive program in Oldenburg, Germany, in October 2009, with other students, but I did it in Stavanger, Norway, in September - October 2010. My stay in Norway contributed to this thesis to be written. Namely, for my Intensive program's Final paper I wrote about a statistical data of the Bosnians in Norway. Also, I did my Internship in Norway where I spent three weeks living at one Bosnian family, a husband and wife who are due to different life circumstances, immigrated to Norway. I interviwed them by recording their stories, and later, writing their narrations on the data, which I used in my Internship report.

Since the students of Join Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations have been encouraged to develop a theme for the master thesis based on the internship experience, I thought these two works would be a good opportunity to connect my Internship report and master thesis. I was particularly interested to write about women, refugees and displaced people who survived the war, and their migration.

But as it is said that "behind every great man stands a great woman", I would add that behind every (great) woman stands a (great) man. Therefore, to be able to write my master thesis about Bosnian women migrants, I also wrote about their men, giving the whole "picture" of their life stories and reasons for their migration.

In my thesis I have written about Bosnians in Norway and Bosnians in Sweden and as well as in Croatia, the stories of women and men who live there. The exception is Croatia, since I was not able to interview the man who lived there, as will be explained later.

For more than a year I have been reading, writing and exploring about migration phenomenom. During my writing period of the thesis, I came across some obstacles, such as lack of literature and statistics. The main obstacle was lack of population census, as the last census was before the war, in 1991. So, a great part of data is the result of estimates by the relevant institutions. Thus, it took extra time and effort to make this thesis be sucessfully finished.

PART I

1. INTRODUCTION

As the MA Dissertation title says, Bosnian women migrants are the focus of my work. Although in the past the term migrant was considered exclusively man, it has been very much changed. In the past, men were those who migrated, especially for economic reasons in other countries, while women used to stay home and take care of children and the rest of the family. But in the last four decades women have been an important component of international migration. Over the past four decades total numbers of international migrants have been more than doubled but the percentage of the world population migrating has remained fairly constant. There are now 175 million international migrants worldwide or approximately 3.5 per cent of the global population - about half of whom are women, despite the common misconception that men are migrants (Jolly, Reeves, 2005, pp.1).

There are many reasons why women migrate – for traditional reasons, to join their husbands or fathers to 'modern' reason when women are migrating on their own as principal age-earnings. In my MA thesis I will focus base on those women who migrated voluntary as case of family reunification. Nevertheless, they also experienced forced migration during the war and lived outside their hometown as internally displaced people.

In order to write about these three Bosnian women migrants who migrated to Norway, Sweden, and Croatia, I will present some statistical data about Bosnians in these two Scandinavian and one neighbouring country. In my MA thesis I will do comparative research regarding the first Bosnians in these three countries and the situation today as well as three sets of life stories.

My MA Dissertation is consisted of two parts. In the Part I, I will briefly present Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country and write about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its migration issue. Then, I will do terminology part, presenting some definitions regarding different types of migrations, their causes as well as return and forced migration. In the last section of the first part of the thesis I will write about BiH diaspora. Part II is consisted of methodology work. I will present the first Bosnians who arrived in Norway as well as the statistical data about Bosnians for year 2008. Then I will be presenting Bosnian husband and

wife, separately, who live in Norway – their life stories, starting from the beginning of the war in their towns, how they arrived to Norway until nowadays. Afterwards, I will write about Sweden and its first Bosnians refugees as well as high immigration to Sweden during the 1990s. Then I will present statistical data about Bosnians in Sweden in showed tables. Afterwards, there will be discussion about return of refugees and displaced people in BiH. Then will be presented life stories of husband and wife from Bosnia who now live in Sweden. And in the last section of this part will be words about Croatia as a neighbouring country who accepted many Bosnians during the war, and the woman's life story.

In this work I have an aim, through the narrative, to explain different types of migration, such as: forced migration, return migration, economic and emotional migration of Bosnian women during and after the war.

The conflicts that occurred during the nineties caused the forced migration of large number of people within the region of former Yugoslavia and beyond. The highest proportions of the mentioned migration happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina. People were forced to flee their homes. Some of them have had the opportunity to voluntarily leave Bosnia because of fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones, while others were forced out of their homes and settled in other parts of the country. Most men were imprisoned in the concentration camps where they spent up to one year. Women were forced to provide an existence for themselves and their children, and their loved ones during this period. After the war most of the population returned to their homes where they were faced with other problems such as violation of human rights. Some families upon their return have immigrated to other countries for economic reasons, while individuals, especially women, have immigrated for emotional reasons.

The aim of my work is to present position of Bosnian-Herzegovinian women during and after the war in BiH. Therefore, I will answer two research questions: **to explain social-economic-psychological condition of migration of Bosnian women during and after the war?** and, **to determine current social position of these women?**

Based on the findings from my research work, I have reached some conclusions.

2. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina, (shorter BiH) or simply called Bosnia, is a country located in South-Eastern Europe, on the Balkan Peninsula. It is bordered by Croatia to the north, west and south, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the southeast. Bosnia and Herzegovina is almost landlocked, except for 26 kilometres of Adriatic Sea coastline, centered on the town of Neum. Its capital is Sarajevo.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to three ethnic groups, or so-called "constituent peoples“, a term unique for Bosnia and Herzegovina. These are: Bosniacs, the largest population group of three, in the English-speaking world known as Bosnian Muslims, with Serbs in second, who are Orthodox, and Croats in third, Catholics. Regardless of ethnicity, a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina is often identified in English as either Bosnian or Herzegovinian. The term Herzegovinian and Bosnian is maintained as a regional rather than ethnic distinction. The country is politically decentralized and comprises two governing entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, with a third region, the Brčko District being administered by both.

2.1. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is closely linked with the breakup of Yugoslavia. After the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in June 25, 1991, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was becoming more unstable.

The Bosnian authorities announced a referendum asking the population if it also wanted to secede from Yugoslavia and establish an independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Serb population in BiH announced that they would boycott the referendum to express their opposition. The separation was approved by Bosniacs and Croats, and in February 1992, BiH declared independence and was quickly recognized internationally. The Bosnian Serb leadership refused to accept incorporation in the new Bosnian state, declaring the establishment of a separate (unrecognized) state of their own. Also, in the absence of a guarantee that they would not be threatened, the Serbs, who were suddenly a minority in a separate Croatian state, declared secession from Croatia and took up arms (Kreimer, Muscat,

Elwan, Arnold, 2000, pp.20). According to the numerous International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia[1] judgments the conflict involved Bosnia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (later Serbia and Montenegro) as well as Croatia. According to an International Court of Justice judgment[2], Serbia gave military and financial support to Serb forces, which consisted of the Yugoslav People's Army, the Army of Republika Srpska, the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, and Serb Territorial Defense Forces. Croatia gave military support to Croat forces of the self-proclaimed Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia. Bosnian government forces were led by the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Three years of warfare, "ethnic cleansing", and its accompanying atrocities resulted in 250,000 Bosnian fatalities, massive internal displacement, and the exodus of one million refugees to mostly European safe havens (Kreimer, Muscat, Elwan, Arnold, 2000, pp.20). The biggest genocide after II World War was performed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, town called Srebrenica, when more than 8,000 Bosniac men and boys were killed in just five days, in July, 1995. During the war many men were put on concentration camps, and a large number of women were raped.

Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia have signed the Dayton Agreement in Paris on 14 December 1995, to end the war in BiH. One of the basic principles of the Dayton Agreement was based on division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two parts: 51% of the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 49% of Republika Srpska.

With the deteriorating situation in Bosnia, UNPROFOR was extended to facilitate the functioning of Sarajevo airport and the delivery of humanitarian aid, first in Sarajevo and its surroundings and then the whole of BiH. The mandate also included the protection of convoys, monitoring ban of flies, and protection so called protected zones - an enclaves. The mandate also included the use of force in self-defence and coordination with NATO with the of use air strikes by approving.

On 2 December 2004, 9 years after the war ended, the European Union launched a military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina entitled Operation ALTHEA. This followed the decision

[1] Available at http://www.icty.org/

[2] Available at http://www.icj-cij.org/homepage/index.php

by NATO to hand over its own peacekeeping mission that had maintained security in the region since the war ended.

The EU deployed a robust military force (EUFOR) at the same manpower levels as NATO's SFOR (just under 7,000 troops) to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton/Paris Agreement and to contribute to a safe and secure environment (SASE) in BiH.[3]

2.2. Bosnian migration

Migration is an issue of primary importance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina was and still is a country of emigration. BiH population migration trends are caused by different historical, political, social and economic factors. After World War II, the population from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina has mostly emigrated for economic reasons, or for the purpose of employment in the receiving countries. During the 1990s due to war events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a huge proportion of the population was forced to migrant around the world, while in the recent years emigration is related to economic reasons.

According to estimates of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees from 2008, the total number of people originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina who live outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina is about 1,350,000 people, which is about 26% of the total BiH population.

As for the status of BiH emigrants, according to UNHCR in 2008, there were 74,132 BiH refugees and 1,159 people who submitted a request for asylum. Over 90% of BiH emigrants in receiving countries solved their status through the acquisition of citizenship, employment and legal or other grounds specified by law. (Ministry of Security, Immigration Sector, 2010, pp. 61-62)

[3] Available at http://www.euforbih.org/

3. THEORETICAL CONCEPTS, METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

3.1. Definitions and types of migration

Before going any further it is important to define migration and its types due to better understanding of my thesis. Some defined types of migration will be used later in my work, especially through interview – life stories, in the second part of the thesis.

Migration means crossing the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period (Boyle et al. 1998, chapter 2). Internal migration refers to a move from one area to another within one country. International migration means crossing the frontiers which separate one of the world's approximately 200 states from another (Castles, 2000 pp. 269).

According to the Human Development Report (2010) movement can be: within or across borders; voluntary (for work, study or family reasons) or forced (as a result of conflict or natural disasters); regular (with documentation) or irregular (without documentation); and temporary, seasonal or longer term/permanent. Definitions can change during the process. For example, if a person on a seasonal work contract overstays her contract, she may become an undocumented migrant. In some instances, whole communities may be impelled to move due to conflict or natural disasters. If they remain within national borders, they are referred to as internally displaced persons (IDPs). If they cross international borders, they can become asylum seekers. If asylum is granted under the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), they are known as refugees. Three main types of migration are regular, involuntary and undocumented migration. Regular migration includes family reunion, education (labour migration, permanent residency and return or skilled migration), tourism and labour (temporary, circular, long-term labour migration, and permanent settlement. Involuntary migration includes IDPs, trafficked/abducted and asylum seekers/refugees. Undocumented migration includes smuggled, trafficked, bonded labour, irregular/undocumented labour migration and illegal adoptions (Human Development Report Office, 2010, pp. 3-4).

3.1.1. Return migration

Many migrants return to their home countries after having spent a number of years in the host country. Return migration is actually a manifestation of a basic human right. Part 2 of Article 13 of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that: "everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country".

There are several reasons why people choose to return permanently to their country and some of them are: failure to find a job or to assimilate in the host society, a yearning for home, accomplishing their goal to save a certain sum of money and retired people who want to spend their old age in their native land.

As already some mentioned, there are four different types of returnee, who, as Cassarino says, emphasizing their aspirations, expectations and needs (Cassarino, 2004, pp. 257-258):

Return of failure pertains to those returnees who could not integrate in their host countries owing to the prejudices and stereotypes they encountered abroad. Their difficulties in taking an active part in the receiving societies or in adapting themselves to host societies were enough to motivate their return;

Return of conservatism includes migrants who before emigrating had planned to return home with enough money to buy land. Conservative returnees only tend to satisfy their personal needs, as well as those of their relatives;

Return of retirement refers to retired migrants who decide to return to their home countries and to acquire a piece of land and a home where they will spend their old age;

Return of innovation refers to actors who are "prepared to make use of all the means and new skills they have acquired during their migratory experiences" with a view to achieving their goals in their origin countries, which offer greater opportunities to satisfy their expectations. These returnees view themselves as innovators, for they believe that the skills acquired abroad as well as savings will have turned them into "carriers of change".

3.1.2. Forced migration

Forced migration, including refugees, asylum seekers, internal displacement and development-induced displacement, has increased since the end of the Cold War. It has become an integral part of North-South relationship and is closely linked to current processes of global social transformation (Castles, 2003, pp. 13).

There are several types of forced migration (Mason, 2006):

Refugees: The term 'refugee' has a long history of usage to describe 'a person who has sought refuge' in broad and non-specific terms. However, there is also a legal definition of a refugee, which is enshrined in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as a person residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a 'well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a political social group, or political opinion'. Some 150 of the world's 200 or so states have undertaken to protect refugees and not return them to a country where they may be persecuted, by signing the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol.

Asylum seekers: Asylum seekers are people who have moved across an international border in search of protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. As the numbers of asylum seekers rose during the 1990s and beyond, there was increasing scepticism from some politicians and the media, particularly in Western states, about the credibility of the claims of many asylum seekers. They have been labelled 'economic refugees' and 'bogus asylum seekers'. Asylum migration is clearly a result of mixed motivations. Most asylum seekers do not come from the world's poorest states, however many do come from failed or failing states enduring civil war and with high degrees of human rights abuses and, not surprisingly, significant levels of poverty. However, the number of people who are seeking asylum in Western states comprises a small fraction of the total number displaced around the world.

Internally Displaced Persons: The most widely used definition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is one presented in a 1992 report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which identifies them as 'persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic

violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who are within the territory of their own country.'

Sometimes referred to as 'internal refugees' these people are in similar need of protection and assistance as refugees but do not have the same legal and institutional support as those who have managed to cross an international border. There is no specifically-mandated body to provide assistance to IDPs, as there is with refugees. Although they are guaranteed certain basic rights under international humanitarian law (the Geneva Conventions), ensuring these rights are secured is often the responsibility of authorities which were responsible for their displacement in the first place, or ones that are unable or unwilling to do so.

Development displacees: People who are compelled to move as a result of policies and projects implemented to supposedly enhance 'development'. These include large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams, roads, ports, airports; urban clearance initiatives; mining and deforestation; and the introduction of conservation parks/reserves and biosphere projects. Affected people usually remain within the borders of their country. People displaced in this way are sometimes also referred to as 'oustees', 'involuntarily displaced' or 'involuntarily resettled'.

Environmental and disaster displacees: Sometimes referred to 'environmental refugees' or 'disaster refugees', in fact most of those displaced by environmental factors or disasters do not leave the borders of their homeland. This category includes people displaced as a result of natural disasters (floods, volcanoes, landslides, earthquakes), environmental change (deforestation, desertification, land degradation, global warming) and human-made disasters (industrial accidents, radioactivity).

Smuggled people: Smuggled migrants are moved illegally for profit. They are partners, however unequal, in a commercial transaction. This is not to say that the practice is not without substantial exploitation and danger. People who think they are being smuggled may run the risk of actually being trafficked (see below). And even if they are not, their personal safety and well-being on their journey and after arrival are not necessarily the smugglers' top priority. Smuggled migrants may include those who have been forcibly displaced as well as those who have left their homeland in search of better economic and social opportunities. The motivations are often mixed. As the borders to favoured destination countries have become

increasingly strengthened to resist the entry of asylum seekers, migrants of all kinds have increasingly drawn upon the services of smugglers.

Trafficked people: These are people who are moved by deception or coercion for the purposes of exploitation. The profit in trafficking people comes not from their movement, but from the sale of their sexual services or labour in the country of destination. The trafficked person may be physically prevented from leaving, or be bound by debt or threat of violence to themselves or their family in their country of origin. Like smuggling, by its very clandestine nature, figures on the number of people being trafficked are extremely difficult to obtain.

Estimates of people who were forced to migrate are often difficult to make since it is often physically difficult and politically complicated to collect the data. In those conditions, the primarily concern is survival and standard data collection processes are not permitted. According to the Reed, Haaga and Keely (1998) rapidly shifting populations, physical danger, and chaotic circumstances create difficulties for data collectors and affect the precision of the data, and the people who are collecting the data may not be adequately trained and supervised. Also, various political motivations can compromise the data collection and accuracy of the data, so precise data on forced migration may be impossible to obtain. Although for emergency relief it is sufficient to have approximate numbers of people, as well as to raise concern for a particular crisis and mobilize political attention, for historical understanding it requires accurate demographic data.

3.2. Diaspora

The term diaspora has acquired a broad semantic domain. It now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, and overseas communities. It is used increasingly by displaced persons who feel, maintain, invent or revive a connection with a prior home. Concepts of diaspora include a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return – which can be ambivalent, eschatological or utopian – ongoing support of the homeland and, a collective identity defined by the above relationship (Shuval, 2000, pp. 41). The word has come to refer to historical mass-dispersions of people with common roots, particularly movements of an involuntary nature, such as the expulsion of

Jews from the Middle East, the African Trans-Atlantic slave trade, or the century-long exile of the Messenians under Spartan rule.

According to Shuval, diaspora is not always a result of exile. It is correct that it is often initiated by processes of uprooting, pogroms, political, religious or racial oppression; however, some people may opt for migration as a result of political domination and repression, economic inequality, powerlessness or minority status (Shuval, 2000, pp. 45-46).

It is fact that most Bosnians have emigrated from BiH during the war because of fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones, and after the war, as a result of bad economic situation. According to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the division of Bosnian-Herzegovinian diaspora (taking into account only the emigration after World War II) in the period of emigration and push factors can be classified as follows (Pozzi, 2011, pp.5):

- Population that, in the sixties and seventies, emigrated due to bad economic conditions to countries in Western Europe (mainly to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands),
- Population who emigrated from 1992 to 1995 due war circumstances, and
- Population who emigrated after 1995 due to economic conditions and political situation in the country.

Since my thesis is related on war and post-war emigration, I will base on last two mentioned population. According to international estimates from 2009, the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina was 3,800,000[4], and number of people who live outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 1,461,000 (Pozzi, 2011, pp.4). Based on these data we can conclude that BiH diaspora is numerically very large in relation to the population.

According to the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina[5] from 2010 the total unemployment is 27.2%. The unemployment rate was highest among persons aged 15-24

[4]Source:http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934119980790880 6/Bosnia&Herzegovina.pdf

[5] Available at: http://www.bhas.ba/

years, and was 57.5%. The reasons for unemployment are multiple, but primarily cause is low economic activity in the country, and in the case of young population is also a lack of adaptability to the labour market. This suggests the possibility of departure of the young population in search for better socio-economic conditions (Pozzi, 2011, pp. 4).

There are three sets of actors that are relevant to diaspora theory. These are the diaspora group itself, the host society and the homeland which may be real or virtual (Sheffer, 1986). There is a complex triadic relationship among these actors each of which is differentiated into a range of sub-groups which may differ considerably with regard to levels of commitment, self interest, power and interest in each other. Diaspora have been mobilized to influence political outcomes in real home countries and to provide economic aid as well as military assistance to homeland (Esman, 1986).

From my personal experience, based on conversations with diaspora people, as well as local population, I can present several characteristics:

- Many local population (who may also present a large percent of BiH population opinion) share the belief that diaspora people are what they indeed are – diaspora. They, in some way, do not belong to "domestic" people since they cannot share and have the same way of living, experiencing dissatisfaction caused by bad political and economical situation.

- Target people are especially those who left BiH during the war, when the situation was the hardest. This group is criticized for escaping and later trying to improve the situation in the country by giving some their suggestions, ideas and help and not experiencing the same fate as those who stayed in BiH.

- Minimum is criticized group who left BiH recently, mainly as family reunification. In fact, many would like to leave the country in this way, hoping for better future.

- Diaspora is also criticized for not taking part (many percent of them) in elections, as well as reunification of BiH citizenship in order to get a citizenship of the country of residence. This refers to BiH diaspora who live in countries that do not have bilateral agreement on dual citizenship.

3.3. The case study methodology

A qualitative approach in methodology means primarly a focus of researchers on the narrative description of social phenomena and the explanation of the meaning and significance which certain events, processes, and artifacts have for those social actors who make or participate in their creation.

> "Qualitative research is increasing in use in a wide range of academic and professional areas. It develops from aspects of anthropology and sociology and represents a broad view that to understand human affairs it is insufficient to rely on quantitative survey and statistics, and necessary instead to delve deep into the subjective qualities that govern behaviours." (Holiday, 2007, pp. 7)

In my work was used a qualitative research approach on the planned pattern of five interviewees. I have focused on the narrative description of events during and after the war in Bosnia, using the method of oral history. I collected data through interviews.

> "Oral history was established in 1948 as a modern technique for historical documentation when Columbia University historian Allan Nevins began recording the memoirs of persons significant in American Life." (North American Oral History Association, as quoted by Thomson, 1998, p. 581)

As an interdisciplinary method, oral history is especially used in collecting data for a cultural history in recent decades. It represents a way of looking at different perspectives of past events, recording and analysis of individual memories of the past, or the testimony of different people about their experiences, feelings and attitudes. Data obtained through the interviews, are a precious resource in the study of social change. Thus, oral history becomes a tool in many research processes in different sciences and disciplines, and it encourages historical research and reveals the ways in which certain events affected the lives of ordinary people. In my work interviewees presented their views and experiences experienced during the war in BiH, as well as the postwar period. Their stories are important historical testimony of ordinary people about the events during and after the war in BiH.

> "Oral history is a very unique kind of interview situation because the process of storytelling on which it is based is distinct. There are moments of realization, awareness, and, ideally, education and empowerment during the narrative process. ...

> But it is not enough to say that we learn about the lives of our respondents as with other qualitative methods of interview and observation, oral history allows researchers to learn about respondents' lives from their own perspective—where they create meaning, what they deem important, their feelings and attitudes (both explicit and implicit), the relationship between different life experiences or different times in their life—their perspective and their voice on their own life experiences. Oral histories allow for the collaborative generation of knowledge between the researcher and the research participant. This reciprocal process presents unique opportunities, continual ethical evaluation (heightened in the electronic age), and a particular set of interpretive challenges. Predominantly a feminist method, oral history allows us to get at the valuable knowledge and rich life experience of marginalized persons and groups that would otherwise remain untapped, and, specifically, offers a way of accessing subjugated voices. Beyond contributing to social scientific knowledge substantively, the oral history process can be a rewarding and empowering experience for both the participant and researcher." (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, 2005, pp. 150-151)

Oral history is a process in which the memory of persons detected through questions in interviews are recorded on a dictaphone or written. It is a special kind of interview biography where the examiner spends a certain period of time with respondents in order to learn more details about their lives. Data are collected by interview, in order to use in the scientific purposes. Oral history is used to reconstruct the past as well as for analysis of human responses to specific events. This is a historical testimony of ordinary people whose life experience has remained unrecorded in the official history. As an informal way of collecting oral historical data, it represents the "told memory" of past events.

> "The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topic to be covered, often referred to as an *interview guide,* but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. But, by and large, all of the questions will be asked and a similar wording will be used from interviewee to interviewee." (Bryman, 2004, pp. 321)

Interviews must be carefully planned and skilfully managed. During the interview is an important overall impression of the examiner which he leaves with his performance, appearance and adaptability to the respondents in the interview. Knowledge of language and communication rules enables better flow of the interview. In my research by oral history method I used interview or conversation with one person in order to determine attitudes, behaviours, experiences and feelings of respondents during and after the war. Areas in which I directed the conversation were the experiences of respondents on the war in Bosnia during the forced migration, as well as after the war, during the return migration, emotional and economic migration. Respondents were asked to talk about the war in their town, the forced migration, their emotions and adaptation in exile and re-migration to their hometown, facing with the new problems, emigration out of Bosnia and adjusting to a new language and customs as well as current life.

> "The stories and memories which are collected are valuable not necessarily because they represent historical facts, but because they embody human truths — a particular way of looking at the world. As Ann Banks writes in First Person America, "The way people make sense of their lives, the web of meaning and identity they weave for themselves has a significance and importance of its own." The stories people tell, and the cultural traditions they preserve, speak volumes about what they value and how they bring meaning to their lives and to the lives of those around them." (Hunt, 2003, pp.12-13)

> "In a general sense, oral history provides a way to invite someone to tell their story—of their past, a past time, a past event, and so on. However, their individual story is always intimately connected to historical conditions and thus extends beyond their own experience. Oral history allows for the merging of individual biography and historical processes. An individual's story is narrated through memory. This means that their recollection of their experiences, and how they give meaning to those experiences, is about more than "accuracy;" it is also a process of remembering—as they remember, they filter and interpret. Having said this, there is a tension between history and memory, the collective recorded history and the individual experience of that collective history, that can be revealed, exposed, and explicated though oral history" (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, 2005, pp.156).

PART II

4. THE FIELD WORK

4.1. Empirical part of the work

I myself have survived persecution as a child from my hometown. In less than a month I should have celebrated my eighth birthday, I should have attended already the second grade, but all this was interrupted by the war.

Although I was only 8 years old, the memories have remained strong. I was not fully aware of what was exactly happening. With my family and other Bosniacs from Stolac I was expelled one day and the next eight years I lived in a village near Mostar called Gnojnice. There I finished primary school. It was hard to go to school while dropping grenades, when you have no books, nor even a pencil.

Returning to my hometown was the long awaited day. It was a difficult experience where we were faced with many difficulties. We were exposed to daily dangers; we were not able to move freely through our town. Many returnees, in order to ensure the existence, had to travel every day to Mostar for a job because they are not able to find it in Stolac. Upon the return, elementary school was founded on Bosniac curriculum while many children in order to acquire secondary education, including me, had to travel to Mostar. Due to the difficult economic situation in the town, and in the country, many people have migrated to other countries.

After finishing high school and faculty I stayed to live in Stolac. There are noticeable advances in the relationships with the pre-war neighbours. The period during and after the war, all three nations testify about "their history". Although there are many documents about the mentioned period, I consider that new research on the historical facts contribute to the better and more quality understanding of past events. Starting questions about past events influence for the better understanding of the history and development of critical attitudes about past events. Therefore I, as the victim of the war, decided to give my contribution. Through my master thesis I noted down facts, feelings and emotional states of women who during and after the war in Bosnia were exposed to forced, emotional and economic

migration. I wanted to show through "oral documents" using the oral testimonies of eyewitnesses how these events have influenced on the lives of ordinary people.

4.1.1. Preparation for the field work

As already mentioned, when I was in Norway I conducted some statistical data about Bosnians in Norway. While I was researching I was more and more interested in the matter, so I visited one Bosnian family there, whom I knew before. I spent 21 days living with the family, a couple, who due to different life circumstances have immigrated to Norway. When I was with this family I recorded their stories and in the mornings, while they were at work, I was listening the tapes and writing their narrations on the data.

A year later, in 2011, I began to conduct statistical data about Bosnians in Sweden and Croatia. While conducting the material in all three cases I have faced quite a few problems regarding literature accessibility. The main problem, in my opinion, is lack of BiH census. Without it, we are limited to dispose only of certain estimates by relevant institutions dealing with this topic. The last census in Bosnia and Herzegovina was in 1991. Although the census is urgently needed, it was not done. Demographic profile in comparison to the year 1991 is drastically altered due to ethnic cleansing, forced expulsion to other regions of the country, as well as outside BiH and emigration from BiH, in searching for a better life. Nevertheless, I managed to conduct needed information, more or less, especially thanks to Norwegian and Swedish statistics, and some authors whose works were also based on Bosnia.

Regarding the interviewers, it was really interesting to interview them. The focus of conversations was the events during and after the war in Bosnia, and life abroad. All their stories begin from the beginning of the war, what they survived until nowadays. While they were talking, it felt like that they re-lived those hard times several times. At those moments they were not able to talk for few seconds, as if they were having a rock in their throats. This happened with all five interviewers. Regarding the women, they were more emotional than men, shedding few tears.

The couple, who now lives in Sweden, was interviewed in Bosnia. I interviewed the woman while she was visiting her relatives in summer 2011, and her husband in Sarajevo, while he was waiting documents for family reunification, in December 2011. The wife I interviewed

twice and each conversation lasted 1 hour, while the husband was interviewed once and the conversation lasted one and a half an hour. Regarding the woman who was in Croatia, I interviewed her in her hometown of Stolac, a few times and each conversation lasted one hour, but her husband I was not able to interview since he did not live with her anymore. Namely, their marriage at that time was having a crisis and he moved to other town and found a job there. Recently, they submitted a request for a divorce. At my request to interview him, he rejected saying that he does not want any contact with his, soon ex-wife, not even to be mentioned in my thesis.

I have to mention that the interviewers did not want their real names to be published. They were familiar with my thesis, but as the issue of the war is still sensitive topic, even for me, I understand them and respected their decision.

5. NORWAY

5.1. The Bosnian refugees in Norway in 1993

In conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Norway has set annual quotas for resettled refugees. During the 1990s, the collective protection of refugee groups was granted on two occasions: during the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993 and Kosovo in 1999. Approximately 13,000 Bosnians (and 8,000 Kosovars) were given collective protection under these policy regimes. In principle, collective protection is temporary and is granted with the expectation that refugees return to their home country when conditions are deemed safe for return. But the prolonged crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to low return rates. Like many other refugee-receiving countries, Norway faced the dilemma of temporary protection; by late 1996, it made an important policy adjustment whereby it promised permanent residence permits to most Bosnians in Norway.

Out-migration Patterns among Refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina

				Among Out-migrants			
	Immigrant count	Mean year of immigration	At least one out-migration (%)	Moved to home country (%)	Moved to third country (%)	Unknown destination (%)	Remi-grated to Norway (%)
All	13,864	1993	23.7	71.4	16.6	12.0	18.7
Males	6,987	1993	24.2	71.2	15.7	13.1	18.7
Females	6,877	1993	23.0	71.6	17.5	10.9	18.6

Source: Çaǧlar Özden, Maurice Schiff, *International migration, economic development & policy*

Refugees from the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict are defined as those born in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the former Yugoslavia and who arrived in Norway between 1993 and 1995.

Less than 24% of the refugee from Bosnia and Herzegovina had left Norway by 2004, more than 10 years after the arrival. The Bosnian refugees happened to arrive in Norway in the middle of one of the strongest economic downturns since World War II- the unemployment rate peaked at 6.1 % in 1993. Despite the fact that the Dayton Peace Accord was signed in December 1995, the collective protection of Bosnian refugees was not lifted until the end of 1998. Meanwhile, the Norwegian authorities had granted permanent residence permits to Bosnians who had resident at least four years in Norway (Özden, Schiff, 2007, pp.273-275).

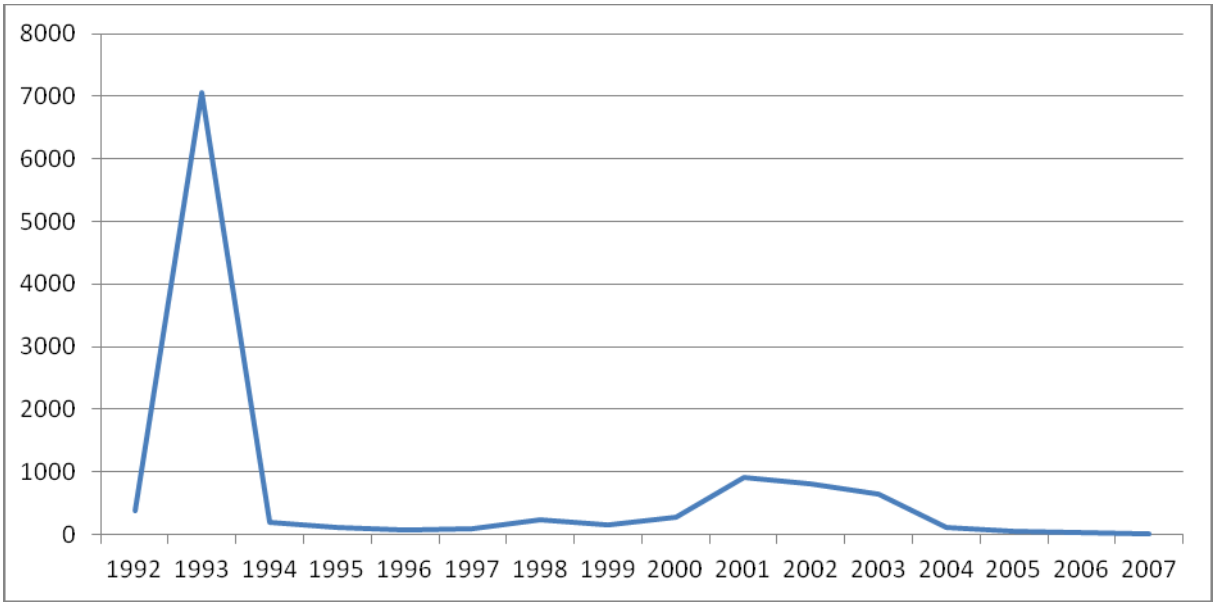
5.1.1. Migration as a social network activity

According to the Norwegian Central Statistical Bureau, the most Bosnian asylum-seekers were 1993, even 7051 of them, when was the biggest wave of the Bosnian immigrants in

Norway. The following years, that number was significantly reduced, but it was increased again in 2001. Regarding emigration, the most Bosnians emigrated 1996, 811 of them, and that number were gradually decreasing every year. The reason why many of them did not emigrated is that majority got the permanent residence permit and after the citizenship as well. They got a good education and were able to find good jobs and to have a good life, which in comparing the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was better. After the war, an economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was quite bad. It was very difficult to find a job; discrimination of the human rights was still high. Since every family in Bosnia and Herzegovina has at least one member of family living abroad, in this case Norway, there were a large number of family reunifications. This is one of the main reasons why there is more immigration to Norway than emigration.

Asylum-seekers from 1992 to 2007

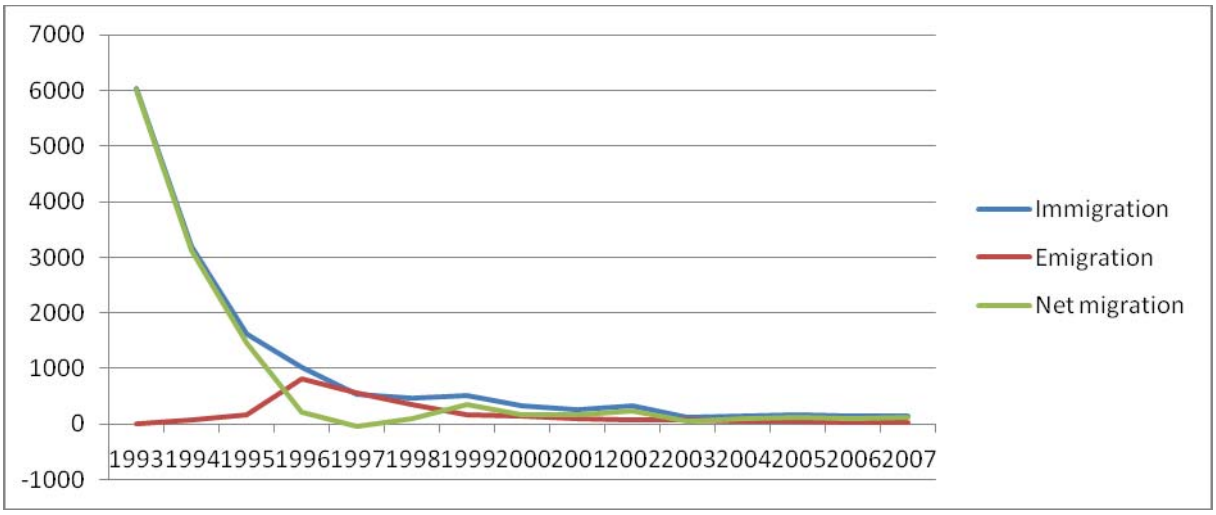
'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
390	7051	201	106	73	90	236	161	272	907	810	657	119	52	40	18



Source: Statistics Norway

The Bosnian's immigration, emigration and net migration from 1993 to 2007

	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration
1993	6031	16	6015
1994	3187	68	3119
1995	1626	160	1466
1996	1015	811	204
1997	533	569	-36
1998	461	355	106
1999	513	167	346
2000	325	155	170
2001	261	94	167
2002	322	83	239
2003	131	69	62
2004	150	53	97
2005	176	58	118
2006	143	32	111
2007	156	40	116



Source: Statistics Norway

5.2. Statistics on the Bosnians in Norway for 2008

In October 2008, the Norwegian Central Statistical Bureau [6] has published statistical analysis titled "Immigrants in Norwegian Communes" (Innvandrere and norske kommuner), which includes demographic aspects, living conditions and participation in working life of immigrants. In that year, there were 15,649 persons with the Bosnian roots.

The Bosnians live in 272 of 430 Norwegian communes. However, 59% of them were settled in only 20 communes. In the capital of Norway live 15% of the Bosnians, which is 2.386 of them. That is about 0.4% of the total population of Oslo. The next are Bergen, Sarpsborg, Drammen, Fredrikstad and Trondheim, each with over 500 people of B&H origin. The highest concentration of the Bosnians is in Sarpsborg and Horten, which is more than 1% of the total population of these communes.

When it comes to education, the Bosnian immigrants precede comparing other immigrant groups, and it can be said that they are on the level of total Norwegian average. Almost half or 46% of the population aged 19-24 was in school in 2007. 29% of them studied at college or university, and 17% were students of secondary or primary school.

Slightly more than half of the Bosnian immigrants, aged 20-45, were married at the beginning of 2008. It is roughly at the level that immigrants generally have and significantly above the Norwegian average of 36%. Similar, as with some other groups of immigrants (Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Somalia), a large number of the Bosnian immigrants find their partners among those who also come from Bosnia and Herzegovina, while living in Norway. In the period 2002 - 2007 it has been the case for 35 percent of women and 31 percent of men. For some immigrants from Asia and Africa was rather common to find a partner for someone who is not residing in Norway, but someone who already lives here. For the Bosnian immigrant was fully equal percentage of those whose partners resident in Norway, with those where the partner was residing outside of Norway.

Among the population of Norway, aged from 25 to 54, 85 % were able-bodied and 84 % were employed, while the jobless were 1% in the fourth quarter of 2007. The number of able-bodied among foreigners at this age was significantly lower and amounted to 70 percent, of

[6] Statistics Norway

which 73 percent of men and 58 percent women. In this same period, there were a total of 7565 registered immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, aged from 25 to 54, 3778 women and 3787 men. 80 percent of women from Bosnia and Herzegovina at this age were able-bodied (employed or registered as an unemployed person), which is well above the average for female foreigners in Norway (63 percent) and nearly equal to the average for women in Norway (82 percent). A total of 83 percent of men from Bosnia and Herzegovina was able-bodied, which is above average for foreign-men (78 percent) but slightly lower than average at the national level (87 percent).

Immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina had, at the beginning of 2008, the average duration of residence of 12.1 years. Although some groups of immigrants are with much larger "experience" in Norway, such as immigrants from Iran, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Chile, the percentage of able-bodied population among the Bosnians were much higher. This particularly can be said for women, who are at very considerable way, established themselves in the working life of Norway. Off all the Bosnians aged from 25 to 54 a total of 4 percent were unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2007, as of 7.565 about 300 unemployed persons. The percentage of unemployed Bosnians among able-bodied in this age is slightly higher and amounts to 5 percent. Average among foreigners is 7 percent, and the Norwegian average is 2 percent.

The Poles (19 percent) and the Bosnian immigrants (23 percent) had the lowest rate of persons between 25 and 54 years who are out of work life, and work are inactive. According to the number of those who are inactively lead the Somalis (62), the Iraqis (51), the Moroccan (47) and the Afghans (46 percent). The average for the whole country in this age group is 16 percent.

6. SMAIL'S AND JASMINKA'S LIFE STORY

6.1. Smail's life story

6.1.1. The beginnings of the war

April 3, 1992 the explosion of the cistern can be taken as an announcement of a state of emergency in Mostar, and Herzegovina, and immediately afterwards comes to direct aggression and shelling by the Yugoslav People's Army[7] (JNA). Soon, it comes to fire of the building downtown, in which the bank; the Chamber of Commerce, the insurance company, the commercial service of the Herzegovinian agricultural combine were placed. It stops the work of all public and state institutions in the Mostar region.

Smail's family goes in West Herzegovina, where the mother and brother of his wife were living. Smail stays alone in his apartment counting that it will come to an agreement and peaceful solutions of the conflict. However, it is when major problems arise. All the telephone lines were cut off and he was not able to hear from them. Only some institutions had the telephone lines, so Smail's wife called their neighbour at work to say that they are fine.

On June 14, 1992, was the day of the liberation of Mostar from JNA. In September Smail's two sons started to go to school in the small town in West Herzegovina.

Then, Smail's voice started to tremble as he continued with the story:

> "On the morning of May 9, 1993 there was shooting in the building, noise and the door bell. I was still asleep. The bell wakes me up. I open the door. There are masked soldiers in uniform with weapons. One of them is standing at the door and the other

[7] **JNA** - The **Yugoslav People's Army (Jugoslavenska narodna armija)** was the military of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. JNA was officially abolished in late May 1992 when from its residues appear the Yugoslav Army, the Army of the Republic of Srpska and the Army of the Republic of Serbian Krajina. The rest of the Army of Yugoslavia was renamed in 2003 in the Army of Serbia and Montenegro, and after 2006 the army was named the Army of Serbia, although there were suggestions that the armed forces of Serbia call the Serbian army.

on the stairway. One of them asks me: ’What is your name?’ ‘Who is with you in the apartment’?”

‘There is nobody, I am alone’, I answer.’’

‘Do you have any weapons, bring it here?’

‘There is none, I have never even used it for any sporting purposes.’

“He says: ‘Do not make me come inside and to look for it’!”

“I answer: ‘Please, here you are’!”

“He says: ‘Go inside, lock the door and do not go outside’!!”

That day, May 9, 1993 started the conflict between the Croats and Bosniacs.

Croatian Defense Council[8] (HVO) forces entered inside the buildings and kept the search on the east shore of the Mostar. (During the JNA’s aggression on Mostar, the Bosniacs and the Croats were together fighting against the aggressor, who was bombarding mostly the eastern part of the Mostar, where majority is the Bosniacs, Muslims, who with the Croats too, in that time went to the west coast of the Mostar.) In the neighbour buildings they carried out a massive expulsion of the Muslims on the east coast of Mostar. Many of them were taken to heliport and some other camps, were some were killed and tortured.

“That day I started to think how to get in touch with my family. What am I supposed to do?! The neighbour continued to bring the news from my family for some time. Then, it started the hell for the Muslims. All the roads were closed. I was afraid to get out of the apartment. And I did not get out of my apartment until middle of June, 1993.

[8] **HVO** -The **Croatian Defence Council (Hrvatsko vijece obrane)** was military formation of the self-proclaimed Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia during the Bosnian War. It was founded on 8 April 1992, which is celebrated as the Day of the establishment of the HVO. HVO after the Dayton Peace Agreement is defined as a component of the Croatian Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and after the 2005 reform of defense, has been transformed into first Walking (Guard) regiment, one of three regiments of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

All the supplies of food that I had were gone. On the 7th or 8th day after the conflict with the Croats I saw the Croat neighbour in the building. Someone else was there with him. Then he said: 'You are still here?!'- I realized that I have to leave my apartment and go out from Mostar, if I want to live. Then I started to think how to "safely" leave Mostar, since all the roads were officially under the control of Croatian military and police. I thought that the only way to leave Mostar and to be in touch with my family is to ask my Croat neighbour from the building to take me to them. So, I did that. I left him the key of the apartment to use it until we return. He took me to my family in West Herzegovina."

"After five or six days we got the information that it is possible to go from Zagreb to Sweden. Then, I asked a taxi driver, whom I knew before, to bring us from West Herzegovina to Makarska, where we would take a bus and go to Zagreb. In Zagreb we were placed at home of a man who we knew before with the attention to go, as soon as possible, to Sweden. We have established contact with the organization that organized the departure of the Bosnian citizens in Sweden. However, in that first attempt we had no luck. Meantime, Sweden had closed the borders for the refugees from BiH. After that we have tried to find other solution being in contact with the Mostarians we have met in Zagreb. We have received information that there are various organizations that organize departure to Belgium, U.S.A, Norway and Netherlands. After 20 day of wandering, we went to the building of UNHCR, which organized departure to U.S.A. There we were interviewed, but we did not get the right answer about departure. Since we had already been one month in Zagreb, we were out of money and food, so with the other Mostarians we have decided to try to organize our departure for Norway. We were all individually required to provide visas to pass through Germany, Denmark and Sweden. In the Norwegian embassy in Zagreb, we got the document saying that we are allowed to go to Norway. On July 16, 1993 we left Zagreb and arrived in Norway on July 18."

6.1.2. Finally on safe

“The police was waiting for us in Oslo, where we gave our statements, and after that we were placed in Tanum at the collective accommodation of refugees. There we spent a week, where we shared the rooms, toilet and kitchen. Afterwards, we were placed in Geilo. That was a nice accommodation, we stayed there 3 months. There we were provided with linens, dishes; we prepared food for ourselves. We were given social assistance. There we had the best living conditions until now. “

“After Geilo we were placed in Lier where we and about 200 refugees, got the collective accommodation. Four of us were placed in one room, and we shared the bathroom and kitchen with the others. The conditions were bad. There were 2 building, in each 100 refugees.”

“Those were small apartments for the medical staff of the hospital which was in the neighbourhood. The children got enrolled at school and the adults started to attend the Norwegian language course. In Lier, we lived for one year. After certain time, some families were located in the communes, where they got individual accommodation in apartments and houses.”

“The children started immediately to attend the school with the Norwegian children. They were walking half an hour on foot from camp until the bus stop, and then they travelled 20 minutes by bus to school. The winter was very cold. It was very difficult for them and us to tread deep snow. The same “job” was waiting them when they returned home from the school. But the boys showed great willingness to learn and very quickly learned Norwegian. In the school they had a teacher of the Bosnian language, who helped them to quickly overcome other subjects too. They have very quickly adapted and engaged in extracurricular activities such as skiing and football.”

“Norwegian language course was organized for the adults in the camp. Although we had the classes regularly and did our best, it was very hard and took us a long time to learn it. Our thoughts were in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were ours families stayed. The situation was horrible there, a living hell, and we did not know anything about our loved ones. I had a small portable radio, which I brought from Mostar by which I could, in the rare moments during the nights, catch Radio Sarajevo. Although it mixed

with other radio stations, I could hear what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

"November 9, 1993, we got the news that The Old Bridge was destroyed. That news depressed the citizens of Mostar in the camp. It was dominated such a feeling as we had lost some of our loved ones. The first days after the news, the grief was gripped among the Mostarians, which spread to other residents of the camp. Many people in the camp had a feeling like the Bosnia and Herzegovina was destroyed too, and that it would disappear."

Many charity actions were organized and were collected financial support. Immediately upon arrival in Lier, the men from the camp were invited to assist in the loading of humanitarian assistance (food, shoes, clothing) which the Norwegian citizens gathered for the people of BiH. Since then the inhabitants of the camp, begin work on the collected financial and humanitarian aid to their fellow citizens in BiH.

"In Lier we finished the lower level of the Norwegian language course and we could very well communicate with the Norwegians who lived in the neighbourhood, and with whom we had a daily contact."

In November, 1994, they got an individual accommodation in Øvre Eiker commune in Hokksund. They were placed in really comfortable house. The boys got enrolled again in the school, and Smail and his wife started to attend the higher level of the Norwegian language course. They have lived on social support which satisfy the minimal needs for four-member family. The house was 4,5 km from the school so the boys had to walk again until the school. In the middle of 1995, they finished the higher level of the Norwegian language. Afterward, Smail attended many different courses which were organized for job seekers. The first job he got 1996 as a teacher of Bosnian language in the school, where he was teaching the Bosnian children in Øvre Eiker commune.

Meantime Smail got divorced with his wife, and the boys were living with their mother. He finished the highest level of the Norwegian language. Other job he got was in 1997 in Buskerudfylkes commune in sector for regional development as senior associate. The job was only for one year as a substitute.

From January 2001 until January 2002 Smail worked as consultant in Øvre Eiker commune. Also he continued working as a teacher of Bosnian language until 2002. After a small break he got a job for a certain period of time and in 2005 he got a full-time job.

Since 1996 Smail spends every holiday in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After 7 years of living in Norway he got the Norwegian citizenship.

When his older son had finished 3rd grade of high school, he went to live in Oslo independently. After his younger son had finished high school he also went to Oslo to study.

In 2005, while Smail was spending his holiday in Mostar, he met his future wife Jasminka. They spent a lot of time together. Even then they had a feeling that a relationship could be serious and long. After two years of intensive long distance relationship and mutual visits they got married. Soon after they got married, they filed an application for family reunification. In August 2008 Jasminka came in Norway.

6.2. Jasminka's life story

6.2.1. The beginnings of the war and forced migration

In June 1992, retreating from Mostar, JNA and reservists went through Stolac and then to eastern Herzegovina. With them the Serbs retreated from Stolac and other nearby places. At that time the Croats and Bosniacs cooperated and jointly opposed the Serbian aggressor. After a few days Stolac was covered in grenade shelling. On one occasion the Health centre was shelled where Jasminka was working as a nurse. The work for this health institution stopped and Jasminka was left jobless.

Jasminka lived with a daughter, her father and her seriously ill mother. Also work at other public and private institutions stopped as well. Due to war operations, most of the civilians left Stolac and surrounding areas. Jasminka's daughter left Stolac with her father, whom she was visiting at that time. Jasminka decided to stay because of her sick mother. Few days later she dies. Under the shelling rain, Jasminka, her brother and their father, buried her mother. The authority of the town takes HVO. The big problem for the population is the lack of water because the Serbs closed the water, which continued to be under their control. There was also

was a lack of food. Due to humanitarian organizations the population does not go hungry. Jasminka's daughter returns to Stolac.

HVO has been arresting and detaining the Bosniacs men in local concentration camps. In one of the camps Jasminka's brother and the father of her daughter were arrested and detained.

> "In late July 1993, the members of the HVO banged at the door and demanding to be opened", Jasminka continues the story with tears in her eyes. "I opened the door and in front me stood the HVO soldier and with insolent voice asking me: 'Who do you live with?' 'Is there any man in the apartment?' 'Do you have any weapons'?"
>
> "I answered: 'I live with my daughter and my old father, and we do not possess any weapons'. As soon as he saw my father he rudely asked him how old he was. My father was trembling and I told the soldier that he did not hear well so he repeated the question. Father answered that he was 68 years old. The soldier did not believe him he asked for his ID and said if he was lying that he would kill him. He told me the same. He said that if I was lying about having any weapons he would kill me. He was persuaded that we did not lie and went looking for the weapon in the apartment."
>
> "My 7 year old daughter stood watching what was happening. When the soldier searched the apartment he did not find any weapons, he said: 'Do not leave the apartment or you will be killed'!"
>
> Having already detained Bosnian men in concentration camps, there were stories that soon they will be detained too. Since hearing that Jasminka had prepared some food and clothes in case of emergency.
>
> "After five days, more precisely, 4th August 1993, at 6:00 a.m., we were woken up by loud banging noise at our door someone shouted: 'We are being thrown out!!' Ten minutes after, door bell rang. I opened the door. There stood a soldier, he asked me: ′What nationality are you?′ When I answered, he told me to leave the key inside the door and to take just two plastic bags with the things and to go out in front of the building within 10 minutes."
>
> "The same fate befell all the Bosniacs in Stolac. We were taken to the premises of a company and elementary school, where we were searched by taking the money and

gold. For those that are assumed to have had the money and gold they were stripped naked. After the thorough search, we were boarded on trucks, not saying where we are driven. Boarding us on trucks, the rare elderly men who were among us were especially abused."

"One of the soldiers started shouting and slapping my father and barely allowing him to come with us. We thought that he would be killed. However, we were kicked out halfway between Buna and Blagaj. Then the hell began for us. Another group of HVO soldiers took us over there and we were searched and harassed again. They were shooting above our heads and on the ground and demanding money and gold. Several underage girls were taken away and raped."

"That day it was very hot. There we drank the last drops of our water. Many weary and elderly ended their lives there because they were not able to continue walking. We continued our path through the hell to Blagaj, which was inhabited by Bosniacs. Along the way we saw the remains of the corpses of the refugees who had been there just a few days before and met their fate there."

"Arriving in Blagaj, we found out that there was no place for our accommodation because they had already received a lot of refugees and did not have enough food there. Exhausted, hungry and thirsty, we continued walking towards village of Dračevice, in which we considered to find accommodation. However, arriving there we did not find any accommodation. We stayed there by the side road because we did not have any strength to continue. When we thought that we last our last hope on our way a good samaritan stopped with his truck and transported us to the village of Kočine."

6.2.2. Life in exile

"There, we found a temporary accommodation for 3 of us in a room together with an older married couple. Immediately upon arrival at Kočine I joined the local health centre working as a nurse. I did home visits, so I did not have much free time. The

health centre belonged to the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina[9], and has been providing services to civilians and military. I was the only nurse there with work experience. At that time I was hungry and thirsty, I did not have adequate clothing or footwear, but I have been offering medical services at any time of day or night."

"After several months, three of us moved to another village Gnojnice, where the next 8 years we were living in one room. Most refugee families lived in one room. Apart from lack of food, we spent a winter without heat. My daughter started school under very difficult wartime conditions. My father, a retired teacher, took part in the organization and establishment of the Elementary school in Gnojnice. Due to lack of staff my father worked as a teacher."

Military operations were still waging in the vicinity and their movements were very limited. They were exposed to shelling and gunfire.

"After six months of daily uncertainty, we finally experienced the rare moments of happiness. From the concentration camps were released my daughter's father and my brother. My brother was so skinny, exhausted and beaten that, at the first meeting, we barely recognized him. But we were lucky that he is alive."

In 1994 they were being given a bit of humanitarian aid. The signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995 the situation for the population became tolerable. The war operations were coming to end. They got electricity, the movements became better, and they were receiving more humanitarian aid.

After a couple of months they submitted an application for repossession of the apartment in Stolac. They waited many years for that to happen.

[9] The **Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine)** was the military force of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina established by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 following the outbreak of the Bosnian War. Following the end of the war, and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, it was transformed into Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the State Defense Reform Law the **Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina** were unified in to a single structure OSBiH making entity armies defunct.

In the beginning of 1997 the first departures of the Stolac citizens were organized to visit their homes in Stolac. Although devastated and mined, people still wanted to see their houses, which soon they started to clean hoping to receive some humanitarian aid for building, and to return as soon as possible. “I went as a nurse in case if someone got hurt that I could help. The visit in Stolac at that time was only possible as organized visit and only in one part of the town, where before the war lived the Bosniac population majority. In other parts of Stolac movement for these people was very risky.”

That year Jasminka got a new employment in Mostar, where she was working as a midwife in the maternity department.

> “1999 my father got seriously ill and he did not live to realize his greatest wish to return to our apartment in Stolac. It saddened me too but together with my brother we succeeded in part to achieve his wish and we buried him in his home village near Stolac.”

The following year Jasminka’s daughter completed elementary school and went on to attended Linguistic high school for four years in Mostar.

6.2.3. Return to hometown

> “After eight years of persistent struggle, various proving and waiting to move out those who were forcibly moved in and when leaving devastated it, we finally were able to return to hometown and our apartment.”

> “We were faced with new problems over its renovation, fixing and supplying the most pressing home requisites. Salaries were small and insufficient and the prices of these items and services were very high. On the way back to our apartment we found many new neighbours Croatian nationality, which crossed from the surrounding villages to live in the town and to take the apartments for themselves. Also there were a large number of the Croat immigrants from Bosnia who have made houses in Stolac. As time passed, more and more of the old owners were returning, and new neighbours were gradually abandoning the occupied apartments. My daughter and I continued to

travel to Mostar. It was impossible to find a job in Stolac for the people of Bosniac nationality, which in large part is the same even today."

Time was passing; Jasminka's daughter finished high school and started studying at the university and Jasminka was still worked in Mostar. In the summer of 2005 she met her future husband and by the summer 2008 she went to Norway to live with him.

6.2.4. Living in Norway

"With great enthusiasm, persistence and a great help of my husband I managed to relatively quickly adapt to the new environment. Immediately upon arrival I started to learn Norwegian, first with my husband, and later, as soon as I got the right, I attended the Norwegian language course."

"But all this time I missed my daughter and was very difficult to be separated from her. Nostalgia and unemployment also negatively affected on my mood."

"While I attended the course I have encountered many obstacles. I was one of the oldest participants in the course. Others were much younger, the same age as my daughter; it was much easier for them to overcome the language. They knew the English language so they were able to communicate with others. Unlike me, I was studying French in high school."

"Once we had an Open day event on the occasion of the UN day. Some participants of the course recite their poems and exhibited about their country and hometowns. I was one of them. That day I felt special. I was proudly reciting the poem and exhibiting about my country and my hometown. It was the first time that I felt that in some way I belong to that society, that I am one of them, because my knowledge of the Norwegian language is better."

After a year of attending the course and obtaining authorization for professional health worker, Jasminka got the practice in aged care in the same town where she lives.

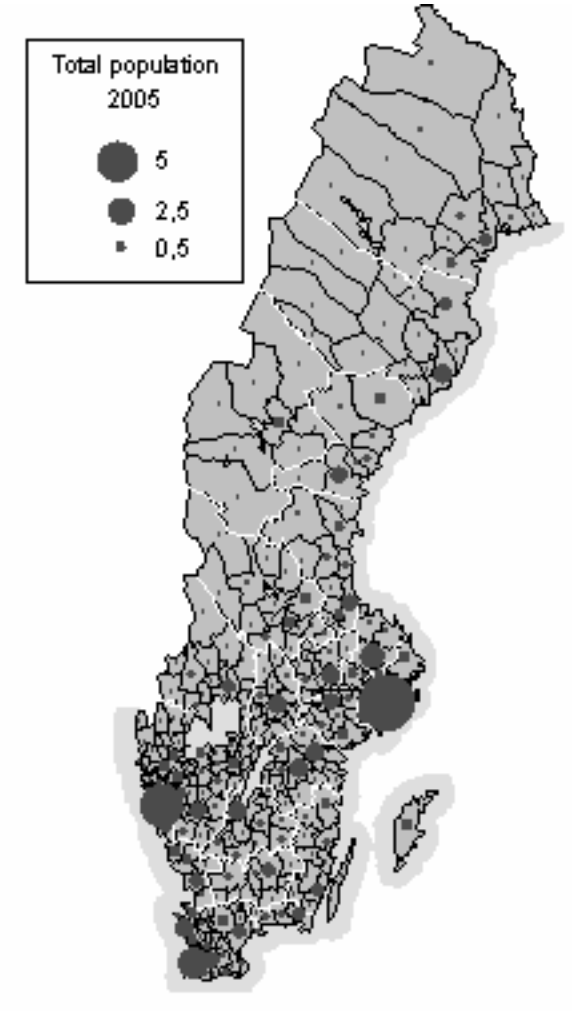
"It gave me back a self-confidence to return to an active working life as I had in my country. However the feeling of the certain uncertainty is present because I have not

got a permanent job, which is my most important goal. Optimism gives me a relationship with my work colleagues, who show a respect and desire to help me in every way, and it also motivates me to give my best to these old people whom I am helping to be completely satisfied."

7. SWEDEN

7.1. Sweden as a country of low population intensity

Sweden has low population intensity, with an average of 22 inhabitants per km^2. The population is very unevenly distributed across the country. The country is very long and narrow and most populated are southern parts of the country. Population who live in the far north, which makes 10 percent, are widespread across an area equivalent to more than 50 percent of Swedish entire area. This can be compared to the ten percent of the population who live the farthest south. These people share an area corresponding to around two percent of the country's total area. The map shows the percentage distribution in municipalities of the Swedish population. Together the different dots in the map make up 100 percent.



Source: Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistic, 2006

9 percent of Sweden's population live in the capital city, Stockholm, indicated by the largest dot. A full 21 percent of Swedes live in the county of Stockholm. Other large municipalities include Gothenburg and Malmö. A total of 17 percent of the population live in the country's three largest municipalities. (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp. 22-23)

7.1.1. High immigration in 1990s

During 1990s many immigrants, especially those from countries as the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran, Somalia and Lebanon, arrived in Sweden, as well as its neighbours Finland,

Norway and Denmark. During 1993 and 1994, 41 743 persons born in Bosnia and Herzegovina immigrated to Sweden, of which 18 495 immigrated in 1993 and 23 248 in 1994.

After the UK, Germany and France, Sweden has been for a number of years one of the countries in Europe with the most asylum seekers. This has been reflected in immigration from the Balkan countries during the 1990s. It should however be noted that only an eighth of all non-Nordic immigrants during the 1990s were refugees according to the Geneva Convention[10]. Roughly twice as many people received a residence permit in Sweden on humanitarian grounds. Many more, around 4 of 10, were able to stay in Sweden because of family ties.

In the 1990s, when the economy boomed, migration was intensified between the Nordic countries. At that time was specific labour immigration of Norwegians to Sweden. Lower costs of living in Sweden led to an increase in immigration of Nordic citizens to Sweden's border municipalities. The construction of the Öresund Bridge between southern Sweden and Denmark led to an increase in immigration from Denmark.

Both the flow of refugees and immigration to Sweden as a whole has varied considerably over the years. The level of asylum seekers and immigration largely reflects events in different parts of the world but is also influenced by migration policies and legislation that can, for example, lead to an increase or reduction in the flow of asylum seekers. The war, ethnic cleansing and eventual collapse of Yugoslavia caused around 140 000 persons from the region to seek asylum in Sweden during the 1990s. A peak was reached in 1992 with around 70 000 asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia, corresponding to 80 % of all asylum seekers in that year. During 1993, the total number of asylum seekers fell to 38 000, of which close to 80% came from the former Yugoslavia. The fall in the number of asylum seekers was partly due to the introduction in Sweden of visa restrictions for citizens from Bosnia Herzegovina and Macedonia during 1993. The total number of asylum seekers fell even further during 1994 and 1995 (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp.20).

[10] Bosnia Herzegovina was formed in April 1992 so it should be noted that those arriving before this date were registered as Yugoslavians.

7.2. The first Bosnian refugees in Sweden

2.2 million of Bosnian people, half of the population before the war, fled their homes from the outbreak of war in 1992. Around 1 million of Bosnians moved abroad, of what around 70.000 of them arrived to Sweden. Sweden now hosts around 5 per cent of all Bosnians who crossed state borders during their flight (Graham, Poku, 2000, pp. 82)

Having in mind this number, we wonder why so many Bosnians went to Sweden. How Bosnia and Sweden are connected? There were two links between these two countries. First, Sweden was an arms explorer to Yugoslavia. Second, and most important, the post- World War II economic boom in Sweden led to labour shortage which was met by recruitment tours to Yugoslavia. The previous role of labour importer provided to be an important factor for the refugees' choice of destination in the 1990s. Sweden was the place of friends and relatives, and consequently a place to turn on (Graham, Poku, 2000, pp. 82). When the Bosnian refugees arrived to Sweden, around 40.000 persons of Yugoslavian origin where already living in the country on a permanent basis (Graham, Poku quoting SOPEMI, 1992).

On 21 June 1993, the Swedish government granted a large group of Bosnian asylum-seekers permanent permits on humanitarian grounds (Noll, 2000, pp.4). During 1992-94[11], 47 796 people were granted a residence permit. The majority received decisions immediately. No special legislation was passed; the decisions were taken within the framework of the existing legislation. The number of registered people, i.e. those officially immigrating, during 1993-94 was 41 743 people (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp.27). At the same time, Swedish government decided to impose visa requirements for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the arguments behind the visa policy change was that the acceptance of refugees was not the best way to deal with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Graham, Poku, 2000, pp.83).

This decision had an unambiguous effect. The number of Bosnian asylum-seekers arriving in Sweden fell dramatically. The average monthly figure was barely 1 500 arrivals, compared to 7 000 a year earlier. While 25 110 asylum requests had been filed with the Swedish Immigrant Board by Bosnians in 1993, the corresponding figure in 1994 was down to 2 649.

[11] Bosnia Herzegovina was formed in April 1992 so it should be noted that those arriving before this date were registered as Yugoslavians.

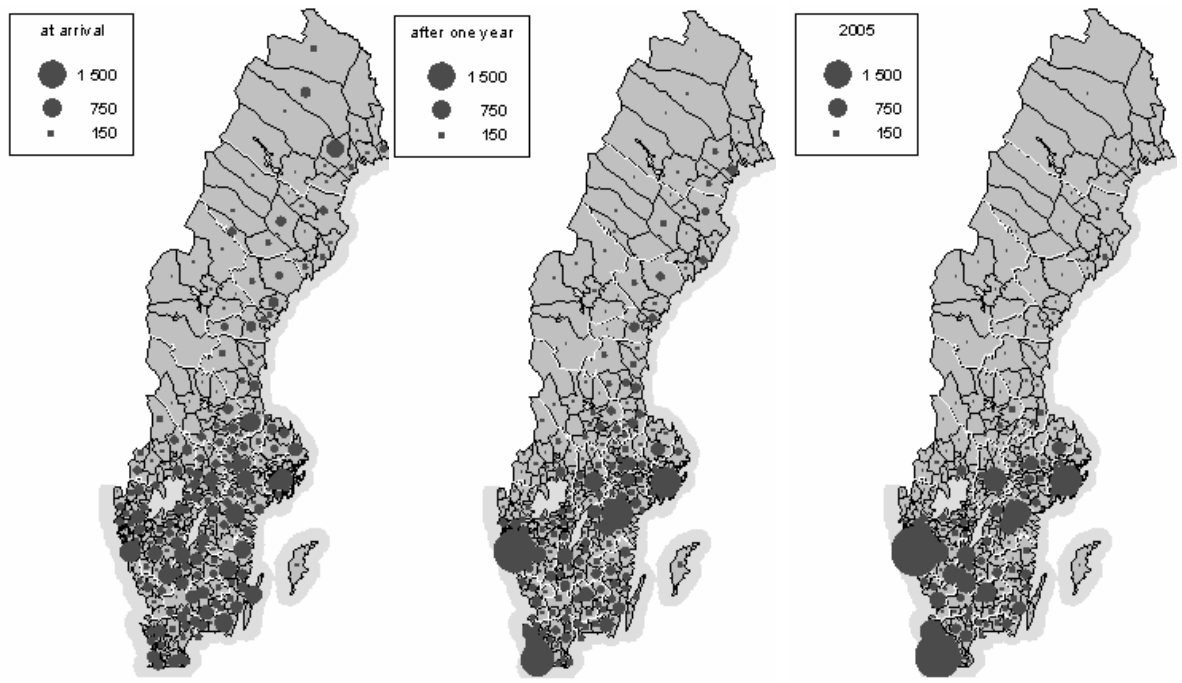
Apart from the imposition of visa requirements, no other facts had contributed to this decrease in numbers. Domestic legislation remained unaltered, and the conflict in the region of origin would continue to substantial numbers of refugees for years to come (Noll, 2000, pp.5).

7.2.1. Review of the first Bosnians in Sweden

The maps in diagram 1 show the distribution in Swedish municipalities of the people in the cohort. To illustrate movements of the cohort over time and changes in settlement patterns, different maps have been produced for the year of arrival, after one year in Sweden and for 2005.

When the refugees from Bosnia Herzegovina arrived in 1993 and 1994, obligatory relocation/dispersal within the framework of the countrywide strategy was still applicable once a residence permit had been granted. This meant that the newly arrived Bosnians were much spread out across the country, which can also be seen in the first map. The map shows furthermore that there was only a low concentration in the larger city regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, even in comparison with the total population (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp 28).

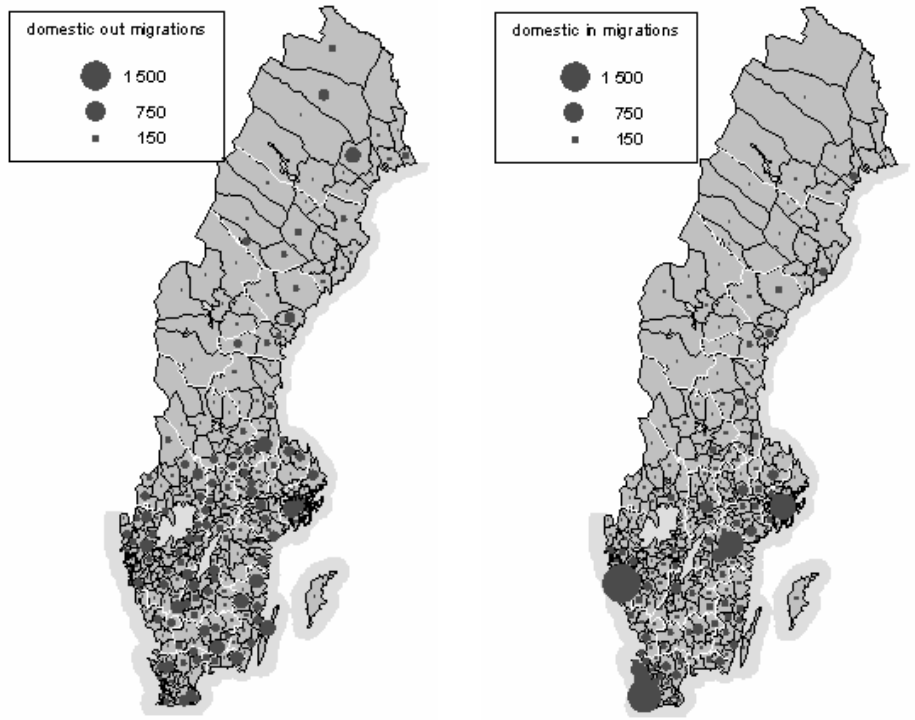
Diargam 1. Settlement of immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina -cohort of 1993-1994 - on arrival, after one year and in 2005;



Source: Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006

People in the cohort moved a great deal during the first year in Sweden (see maps in Diagram 2). Roughly 24 000 individuals, i.e. more than half of the entire cohort, changed municipality during 1993-1994. This is not surprising, keeping in mind that the first settlement was that of refugee reception and that people subsequently moved for work, studies etc. Although migration patterns show that people left small and midsize towns all over the country, in favour of the larger cities, the picture of a wide distribution across the country remained after one year (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp. 29).

Diagram 2. Domestic out- and in migration of immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, during their first year in Sweden; cohort of 1993-1994



Source: Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006

Many newly arrived Bosnian immigrants moved into areas on the outskirts of main towns and a relatively large share have remained in this type of areas. In this respect, Bosnians differ from the usual settlement patterns among immigrants. Foreign-born persons are generally under-represented in the smaller towns and in rural areas (Statistics Sweden quoting Bråmå 2004). The initial high degree of dispersal has remained to some extent and, after more than 10 years in Sweden, Bosnians who arrived in 1993-94 are still relatively spread out compared with other immigrant groups. When looking at where the people in the cohort were living in 2005, a concentration has built up in southwest Sweden, primarily in the Gothenburg and Malmö regions, and also in the medium-sized towns in the mid-south region (Jönköping and Kronoberg county). The share of Bosnians in the Stockholm region is however surprisingllow (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp. 30).

To briefly mention some findings on segregation, research shows that Bosnian immigrants are an exception in that they have not, as other newly arrived immigrant groups, tended to live in clusters during the expansion phase. The percentage of Bosnians (and Ethiopians and Chileans) living in own-group densities is low and these groups are rapidly de-clustering. A segregation index, produced by the Swedish Integration Board, points to a similar conclusion and shows a reduced segregation for Bosnian-born people during the 1990s (Sweden Statistics quoting *Brråmå 2004*).

7.2.2. Statistics on the Bosnians in Sweden

Foreign-born persons (Bosnians) by sex, age and country of birth (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in the whole country, Dec. 31, 2009

Age	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	35-39	40-49	50-64	65-79	80-
Male 27689	14	28	45	132	174	473	1238	2897	2897	2610	6056	6063	2130	293
Female 28438	12	18	59	111	163	442	1051	3044	3044	2713	6101	5782	2962	563
Total 56127	26	46	104	243	337	915	2289	5682	5941	5323	12157	11845	5092	856

Table 1 Source: Statistics Sweden 2010

The table 1 shows that by December 31, 2009, 56127 Bosnians born in BiH live in Sweden, of which 27689 male and 28438 female. The largest generation of 12157 is age 40-49. The smallest is age 0-3 of 26.

Foreign-born persons (Bosnians) and persons born in Sweden with both parents born abroad by country of origin, sex and by age in the whole country by Dec. 31, 2009

	Age									
		0-2	3-4	5	6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-17	18-19
Foreign born Male	27689	8	13	10	11	45	132	174	473	1238
Female	28438	7	10	6	7	59	111	163	442	1051
Born in Sweden Male	8768	1626	1130	522	497	1265	1297	1745	378	31
Female	8183	1528	983	474	486	1229	1192	1636	348	29
Total	73078	3169	2136	1012	1001	2598	2732	3718	1641	2349

		Age								
		20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-64	65-
Foreign born Male		2837	2897	2699	2610	2974	3082	2814	3249	2423
Female		2845	3044	2572	2713	3016	3085	2612	3170	3525
Born in Sweden Male		55	52	68	58	37	7	-	-	-
Female		49	49	69	75	32	3	1	_	_
Total		5786	6042	5408	5456	6177	6177	5427	6419	5948

Table 2 Source: Statistics Sweden 2010

The table 2 shows that by December 31, 2009, there were 16 951 person born in Sweden, with both parents born abroad (in Bosnia), of which 8768 male and 8183 female. The larger generation is 0-2 years of 3169 persons, of which 1626 male and 1528 female. The smallest population is age 50-54 with only 1 female, while age 54 and more has none person born in Sweden.

In general, the Bosnians in Sweden are young; a large majority is under 50 years of age. Most are couples with one or two children. The educational level is high, with approximately 90 percent having more than 9 years of education. Education with a technical orientation seems to dominate (Statistics Sweden, Population and Welfare Statistics, 2006, pp. 28).

7.2.3. Return of refugees and displaced persons in BiH

The return of refugees and displaced persons has been a strong priority in the international commitment to reverse ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war.

The Low of Refugees from BiH and Displaced persons from BiH („Službeni glasnik BiH“, br.: 23/99, 21/03 i 33/03) defined the terms: refugees from BiH, displaced persons and returnees in BiH:

Refugee from BiH is a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, located outside of BiH, who, due to the conflict, was expelled from his residence or left his residence in BiH and escaped abroad after 30 April, 1991 (Article 3).

A displaced person is a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, located in BiH, who was expelled, as a result of the conflict, from his residence after 30 April, 1991, fearing justifiably that he will be persecuted because of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or his political opinion, and who is unable to safely and dignified return to his former place of residence, nor has voluntarily decided to take up permanent residence elsewhere (Article 4).

A returnee is a refugee from BiH or a displaced person who has expressed, to the competent authority, willingness to return to former place of residence and who, in the process of return,

as refugee from BiH and as displaced person, has returned to his former place of residence (Article 8).

According to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the return in BiH started immediately after the war ended. The largest number of returns was in the first three years after the establishment of peace, 570925 registered people, which makes more than half, or 56% of the total number of returns in BiH. On official list of displaced persons in BiH, which was completed at the end of 2000, was recorded 556.214 internally displaced persons, or 183.355 persons (Nenadić, Džepar-Anibegović, Lipjankić, Borovčanin, Spasojević, Pobrić, Kovač, 2005. pp.81, 207). That was the period when the return of refugees and displaced persons returned to their homes by the principle of family reunification. Even today, a large number of refugees and displaced persons of BiH are still out their pre-war homes. Some of them are still waiting their homes to be rebuilt.

The early recovery of one's pre-war house is an important but not in itself sufficient incentive for refugees to seek permanent return, especially so for members of ethnic minorities in areas where economic crisis and nationalist politics work against resuming normal lives. Instead, when those house owners sell or exchange their property to facilitate relocation to areas where they will be part of the majority, this may well reinforce the ethnic demography of the war (Eastmond, 2006, pp. 143). This can be seen in the example of Mostar and Stolac, where a large number of Serbs have sold their houses and apartments and now live in Republika Srpska, or Bosniacs and Croats who exchanged them. There are many families who would like to return, but since it was, and still is, really difficult to find a job, they decided to stay abroad. Regarding Stolac, the town of three protagonists, there were several families who returned a few years after the war, but as they were not able to find a job, and have a proper standard of living, they went abroad again. Regarding displaced persons, almost all citizens of Stolac have returned to their pre-war homes. Some of them bought or built a house in Mostar, or pay a rent, as most of them have lived there after they were forced from Stolac, found a job and decided to stay there. Those people usually come to Stolac on weekends, while the Bosnian refugees abroad kept ties to relatives in the home country alive, through remittances, their own house-building projects, and annual holiday visits.

Bosnian returns must be seen in relation to their prospects of building new lives there, but also in relation to their situation in the country of asylum. Encouraging the return of Bosnians was

motivated as part of the commitment to the reconstruction of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, until 1997, very little concrete assistance was actually targeted at individual prospective returnee. The prospects for education in Sweden compared to Bosnia today is a strong factor in the decision of some refugees to stay in Sweden. At the same time, the difficulties of recovering a "normal life" in Sweden has probably helped sustain the community-wide discourse about return. By 2001, only 1,329 out of some 50,000 Bosnian residents had returned, most of them to areas where they form part of the majority population. From the perspective of Bosnian refugees' abroad, official programmes offer insufficient support for return and, like property restitution, appear to have come too late to be real incentives to return. After five or more years of living abroad, return may be seen to involve too much of a risk, especially if it means giving up residence in the country of asylum (Eastmond, 2006, pp.147). According to Eastmond, there are two kinds of return strategy. Both strategies suggest that return may extend over a long period of time, and may involve different stages and members of the household and require considerable back and forth movement. Individuals and households in the first category seek to establish a more permanent base in the country of origin and after returning maintain active connections and mobility to the outside, in particular to the country of asylum. Doing so, these returnees become "transnationals at home". The second category comprises those who return temporarily to Bosnia and Herzegovina, through regular visits or longer stays, while maintaining their base in the country of asylum. There, as residents abroad, they also constitute the links that help support family and kin in Bosnia, including those who attempt to return. Such temporary visits may also imply an option of returning permanently at a later date, at which time these individuals then also become "transnationals at home", but now from the Bosnian side. Both categories of open-ended return are based on a secure basis for continued residence in the asylum country. In a paradoxical sense, acquiring citizenship in the asylum country makes return to Bosnia more possible because there is a fallback position in case of failure (Eastmond, 2006, pp.148).

Some returnees, especially those who will soon retire, plan to return permanently. Some of them are torn between their children and grandchildren abroad and their homes in BiH. These people want to live their last years in BiH. Younger generations are not as much interested in return as elderly people, at least not in near future. They do annually come on their summer vocations and some of them even came with the intention to marry. Most of young people

want to marry a Bosnian boy or a girl and not to be in marriage with foreigner. Those youth are aware that the dream for a better future, as well as many people of their age in BiH, is to go abroad. Thus, almost all of them who find a partner in BiH continue their lives living abroad. In the example of Smail, he and his wife plan, once they retire, to return to BiH. On the other hand, his sons do not have the same plans. They are satisfied with their lives in Norway and they only sometimes go to Bosnia to visit their relatives. One of his sons lives with the Norwegian girl and has a son with her. But, they plan to get marry in BiH.

Bosnian refugees who escaped during the war and went abroad feel a special obligation for those who have had to remain behind. So during the war they sent money and whatever was possible to their relatives in BiH. This continued to the present day, especially for those families who are financially unstable, unable to get a job, or are in retirement. Bosnians who live abroad also bring many presents once they come to visit their relatives in BiH.

For the majority of Bosnian refugees in Sweden, it appears that returns are ideally short term or seasonal, today facilitated by dual citizenship and by retaining a house or a flat in Bosnia. For the first-generation refugees, at least, it may also represent keeping options open for later return. Even if there are tensions between those who return on vacation and those who never left, the former promote reconstruction at home in a variety of ways and keep Bosnians there connected to the world outside. Remittances and other forms of support from those living abroad contribute to social and economic life in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Eastmond, 2006, pp. 157-158).

8. MEDINA'S AND SEMIR'S LIFE STORY

8.1. Medina's life story

8.1.1. Medina's childhood was stopped by the war

Medina was just five years old when the war started. She lived with her parents and her two-year younger brother in Stolac.

> "Even though I was just five, I could notice that some things were changing. The kindergarten was closed so I played with other children in the neighbourhood. But as the days passed, the number of children decreased. Some of them just disappeared or vanished. Later, when I was older I realised that they were Serbs, and just like the other Serbs in Stolac, they just vanished one night. Stolac was shelled so we left to a small village near Čapljina."

Medina stayed in that village several months while the situation in Stolac has not abated. There were several families from Stolac, so she still had some friends to play with.

> "When we returned to Stolac, it was no longer the town as it was few months ago. Many buildings were shelled, and the park where I used to play was partly destroyed. The grown - ups became more serious, but had positive thoughts that the situation in the country will be better."

One year later, Medina, together with her mother and brother, was expelled from Stolac while her father, several days before that, was taken to the concentration camp.

> "I remember that we were in some trucks together with other people from the town and taken to a place called Blagaj. We were there for few days. I know that everyone was worried and I found my mother crying a few times. There could be many reasons for that but I suppose she was worried about us, since there was not enough food and also because she hasn't heard from my father, if he is alive."

After being few days in Blagaj, they moved to Bijelo Polje, a place situated on north of Mostar, where they stayed for 9 years.

> "We began a new life there. It was hard, but we never gave up. We, Bosnians, are people who never gave up, who always see the light at the end of the tunnel, and even in the hard times we make jokes and hope and believe in a better tomorrow."

> "A few months later, on one evening someone knocked on the door. My mother was busy, doing something in the kitchen so she told me to open the door. There in front of me was standing a man, the man who, as soon as I opened the door, hugged me and started crying. I was so confused, I did not recognize him. As soon as he uttered my name and looked me in the eye, I recognized him. It was my father. It was no longer my father from a few months ago. The man, who hugged me, uttered my name and was crying, was thin, pale, with some bruises and cuts on his face and hands. I screamed saying: 'Dad, dad.... You are alive! I love you so much! We were waiting for you. We knew that you would come.' My mother heart that so she came in the room, as well as my brother and hugged him. That night we were crying, happy tears, and talking. I remember that I was feeling as the happiest girl in the world."

After Medina's father had been released from the concentration camp, their life became easier. They moved to a "better" house, soon got electricity and water. Medina started to go to primary school, and soon after got one more brother.

> "I was so happy, first when my mother told my brother and me that we will get brother or sister, then when I finally hold him in my arms. I remember I was dreaming of returning to our home in Stolac, to walk with my brothers and to show the park to my baby brother. But that was only a dream. For reality we had to wait several years."

When Medina finished primary school in Bijelo Polje, they returned to Stolac. Her father worked as a truck driver and her mother as a secretary in the military. She started to go to high school in Mostar.

> "At the beginning it was hard. Even though I had the same friends in my neighbourhood, since they lived near us in Bijelo Polje, we had some problems with Croats. Teenagers did not know where to spend their free time, except in nature, since we did not have any clubs, halls or any other places to hang out. I travelled to Mostar every day and on weekends I used to go out with my friends. At that time I started to

like a guy, so we like started dating. But, looking in retrospective now, it was just as a child play, child love"

8.1.2. Medina's teenage years

"I can say for myself that I was everything except a typical teenager, at least not in my time. In elementary school I started to write poems, which I do even today. In high school I participated in several school competitions and even won a few prizes for my poetry. I published several works in one of Herzegovinian cultural magazine. My themes were usually about my hometown, Stolac, the war, my generation – the war's children and sometimes love. I do not remember when exactly and how I started to write. One day I just took the pencil and expressed my emotions on paper. I realized that everything that was bothering me, which I was not sharing with anyone, I put on paper and I felt much better. In the beginning I did that from time to time, but later, especially when we returned to Stolac, I used to write almost every day."

When Medina returned to Stolac, she was living with her parents, two brothers, grandparents, her mother's parents. What others did not know is that this girl was suffering from bad relationship between her parents. From day to day her parents were quarrelling. She used to lock herself in her room and listen to music or write her poems just not to listen to them. She promised herself that she will do her best to avoid the marriage like her parents had.

"I believe that this situation in my family has contributed me to early mature early and think like an adult and not like a teenager, who thought how to spend her weekends and have fun. I started to earn my own money by writing for bestseller newspapers in BiH. I was a correspondent who was writing about any significant news happening in Stolac."

8.1.3. New life

Over the weekends, Medina very rarely went out with her friends to cafes. Instead she started to go to mosque and stayed at home reading the Quran. Her relationship with her friends stayed the same.

> "Some friends of mine told me that, no matter what my lifestyle is and where I am, I will always stay the same – my character, my positive thinking, and my struggle for better life will never die."

Even I, who knows Medina for many years, have the same opinion. Medina is a person, with whom every person can talk to, she is the one who is able to cheer you up when you are sad, or give you an advice and listen to you if you have a problem. But, let's go back to her story...

As time was passing, Medina was more dedicated to faith. One day she told her family that when she reaches 18, she will start to wear a hijab[12] (scarf).

> "My family was surprised; they did not expect me to wear a hijab, especially since nobody in my family wears it. But they accepted my decision and they had nothing against it."

> "Then something unexpected happened when I was in fourth grade of high school, on winter holiday, I went to Sweden to visit my uncle, with my grandmother. There I met a boy, from Montenegro, and we spent every day together, talking, walking, and going to cinema. We have fallen in love with each other. We agreed to get married. In summer, he will come to Bosnia and we will get married. Until then, I will be adult and be able to do it without a signature of my parents. We agreed not to tell to our parents straight away, but prepare them first. We knew that it will not be an easy thing to do."

Winter holiday finished fast and Medina and her grandmother went back to BiH. She did not tell anyone about her future husband. After two months Medina had a birthday party, her 18th birthday, and on that day she put a hijab on her head. That day she officially started to wear a

[12] The word **hijab** refers to both the head covering traditionally worn by Muslim women and modest Muslim styles of dress in general.

hijab. Soon she told her family about the boy, Emir, whom she met in Sweden and their plans to get married in summer. Her parents were shocked, especially her mother.

> "Even today, I remember my parents' reaction, especially my mother's. She was in shock. She did everything to discourage my decision, at least to postpone marriage, to get to know Emir better. But she knew that she did not have the "right" to tell me anything, that I will not listen to her, since she did the same. As soon as she was 18, she got married, so the history was repeating its self. She told me that it is not necessary to hurry, but nothing helped. I made the decision and nothing could change it."

8.1.4. Life in Sweden

Summer came soon, Medina finished high school and the wedding day came. Medina saw Emir last time in Sweden and next time on their wedding day.

Medina was very nervous; especially because it was the day her family met Emir. First they had civil marriage and then religious one. After wedding ceremony, Medina and Emir, together with Emir's family, continued to celebrate for 3 days in Montenegro, as it is tradition there. They spent several weeks there and then Emir went to Sweden and Medina back to Stolac, where she was waiting for the visa. She ceased writing for newspapers, and eagerly waited to be with her husband.

After 4 months she got visa and went to Sweden. At the beginning it was hard to assimilate to new country, language, society, but soon she overcame all obstacles.

> "First year we lived with Emir's parents. Emir brother was just 18 and has already married. I started to go to school, where I learned Swedish. I did my best. I passed all the exams and finished all language levels. I can say that I spoke Swedish better then my parents – in- laws, who were living there for 10 years."

> "Then my plan was to continue my education, so I enrolled university and majored in psychology and pedagogy, which lasts for 3 years. My parents -in -laws were against, they thought that it would be waste of money and time, but I did not let it affect on my plans. I even did not have support from my husband. He was satisfied with his job. He

was a bus driver and he never thought to do anything else that would improve his career."

"To be financially independent and to pay university fees on my own I started to work in kindergarten, where I washed the dishes, as well as in a restaurant. I managed to do two jobs and to be present for lectures and to study. I actually did not have any free time, but I never regretted it."

Talking with Medina about her life in Sweden, she stated several times that wearing the hijab in Sweden did not present her any obstacles. She could easily study and work.

"People who I met at work or university did not make many comments about the hijab when they got to know me as a person. They see the hijab as a part of me and I guess that without it they could not imagine me, as well as I cannot see myself without it"

Following year Medina and Emir moved three times, until they found a small apartment to live in. She successfully passed all the exams and enrolled the second year. She also did not neglect her poems, so she often wrote poetry ant night.

"My husband did not understand my passion for writing poetry; he was not interested in it at all. As time passed I realised that we do not share the same interests. He was only interested in cars and football. As we did not have free time, we would see each other at nights, as we were working by days. At nights he would eat and watch TV and then go to bed. We had lack of communication, and did not have any plans for the future. And I hated that. I was not satisfied with my marriage, but I thought it would be better. The only thing we agreed on is not to have a baby, since we were young and I wanted to finish my university and find a stable job."

Medina, during her study, also wrote for local Swedish newspapers. Her themes were usually about Bosnians in Sweden. She also went to Bosnian meetings, dinners and etc. She met many people; some of them helped her to publish her book. In year 2007 her first, and for now the only, book was published. It was printed in BiH, in Mostar.

"Book promotion's day was very important and interesting day in my life. My parents and my best friends were there. I was indescribable happy. My parents were very

proud of me. This important day I could not share with Emir, since he could not get any free time from his job."

Encouraged by publication of the book, Medina enrolled another university and began to study literature. By then, she was in her third year in course of psychology and pedagogy.

8.1.5. Hard times

"At the end of 2009 my father got diagnosed with lung cancer. It was a shock for the whole family. As soon as I got this bad news I took the first flight to BiH to be there for him. During my two-week stay his condition got worse. In February 2010 I went there again. This time his appearance was visibly deteriorated. All the time I was with him, knew that this may be our last moments together. One evening he said goodbye to everyone as he knew that he was going to die soon. As I am the oldest of his children, he told me to look after my mother and my brothers, to help them when they need it. He told us that he is sorry, if he done anything bad to us, hurt us, and he asked to forgive him. We all cried, tried to keep him calm. That was the goodbye."

Medina was truly shocked by her father's death. Even this time she did not have a full consolation of her husband. All this feelings affected Medina and she seriously started to think about divorce. She neglected her study and was in great sadness. Her marriage became worst, they argued every night and moved out to her uncles.

"I tried talking to my husband, to solve the problems but it was like talking to the brick wall. I filed for divorce. As soon as I found an apartment I moved out. It was hard to tell my mother about the decision I made, but she gave me all her support. As I did not have enough money I sold some of my jewellery that was gold. In May 2010 I was officially divorced. I became more dedicated to my studies and passed all the exams from my third year and some exams from literature. It was hard to accomplish all this by my own but I did not want to give up."

8.1.6. Better times and new love

Medina continued to work for the local newspapers and washed the dishes in kindergarten. One day she met a man on social network site called Facebook through their mutual friend. In the beginning it was a typical conversation, they got to know each other. In time it becomes something more serious.

> "Semir and I started chatting in August and in November. I went to BiH to spend Eid with my mother and brothers. I also went to visit some relatives in Sarajevo. During my stay there I met Semir in person. We hang out together for 10 days. We got to know each other better and had a wonderful time together. When I returned to Sweden we stayed in touch to with each other. In the meantime I graduated psychology and pedagogy. As I did my best during the study I was offered to enrol master which would be partly funded by the university and working there as an assistant. I was happy. I finally found a man who understands me who I can talk to about everything. Also I liked my job."

> "When I told my mother about Semir she was not very happy. She thought that it was still early to have someone. She was afraid for me not to make the same mistake and to regret it later. She wanted me to be careful this time since I have already divorced once. I understood her."

> "She is my mother and it is normal that she wants only the best for me. What she was worried about was also what people would say. Yes, what people would say! In Bosnia people always count on that. On what others will say. But I did not care. And never did. I live my life for myself and always did what I thought is best for me. Sometimes I was wrong but you learn on your mistakes. I am only human. We all make mistakes. And if we are smart enough we will learn on our own mistakes. I sure did. I was careful this time. I did not want to rush and make the same mistake. But I really thought that Semir is "the right one". And I was right. Once my mother met him she realised how nice of a person he is. She gave us her blessing."

> "In February 2011 Semir came to Sweden. As soon as he got off the plane we took taxi and went to imam to marry us. As both of us are religious, we did not want to live together unmarried, as it is considered a sin. Semir stayed for 2 months. We had a

really wonderful time together. In August 2011 we got married in Bosnia. It was a small ceremony with small circle of relatives and friends."

Since October 2011 Semir has been living in Sweden with Medina. During my interview with her she indicated that she was still working at the university. Regarding her study in literature, Medina finished the first year. Her plans for future are to continue writing her poetry and to publish another book. She would also like to work as journalist. One day she would like to have a baby. For now she does not plan to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina for good as it is hard to find a job there. Medina says that her life in Sweden is good now actually it is much better then how it used to be. She thinks that if she had stayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, she would have finished the university too and found a job. But the question is how long and how much would it take to find a job, especially without bribery.

8.2. Semir's life story

8.2.1. The war in Visoko

Semir comes from Visoko, a town in Bosnia. When the war started Semir was 11 years old, living with his parents, twin brother and older brother. In Visoko the most population were Bosniacs, as well as today. The second on census (in 1991) were Serbs and then Croats.

"I was fifth grade when siege of Sarajevo by Serbs started. Soon the school was closed and many men went to Sarajevo to help the citizens with food and military giving them some weapons. Many Serbs and Croats left Visoko. Visoko was shelled by Serbs and blockaded. People from Visoko did the best to defend themselves. Those men in army who helped in defending Sarajevo were even commended by commanders of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

"My father, who was also in the army, participated in defending Visoko. Those 2 years, 1992 and 1993, three of us, brothers, were with our mother. My father was still in the war, coming home from time to time. In February 1993, conflict between

ARBIH and HVO started. Our luck was that, during the war, we stayed in our homes. We were not thrown out like many people in my country."

"In July 1993 my brother was born. We were indescribably happy. Fortunately, we never had any serious problems with the purchase of food or water. I moved in with my grandparents to help them, they lived in a village. I helped them with planting of fruit and vegetables, as well as guarding chickens and cows. "

"In September the school started, I continued living with my grandparents. When the war ended I was second grade of high school. During the war we finished two grades in one year since there were times when we were not able to attend school or it was closed. The war finished and my father returned home. He started working in Electricity Company where he still works today,"

"My mother was at home, taking care of my younger brother, and my older brother started working as a waiter in one of the restaurants. I lived with my grandparents and I helped them. You know, it is said that grandparents love their grandchildren more than their own children. Maybe that is not true, but the fact is that, once you are grandparent you have more free time to spend with you grandchildren than you have it with your children. So, they pampered me, especially my grandmother by cooking me my favourite meals whenever I wanted. So, now you know why I stayed with them", said Semir with a big smile on his face.

8.2.2. Semir in Sarajevo

Semir enrolled at the University of Political Science in Sarajevo, so the next four years he lived there. He was studying very hard and passed all the exams on time. During his stay in Sarajevo he was more devoted to the faith.

"My family is one of those families who practice religion from time to time. To paraphrase, we celebrate two Eids, fast during the month of Ramadan, and some other principles of the Islam. We did not used to pray five times per day, as it is prescribed by the Quran. My brothers and my father always pray on Fridays at noon since that pray is just for men and it is called Jumu'ah. But when I moved to Sarajevo soon I

started to pray five times a day and went more often to the mosque. At the university I met some colleagues, now my friends, with whom I hung out during out free times. Sometimes we went together to prayers to the mosque and volunteered in one humanitarian organization. Some of the works in that organization were visiting nursing homes and homes for abandoned children. Those old people were indescribably happy just to have someone to talk to and spent time with them. And I loved seeing children happy. Children are innocent and sincere and every moment spent with them is precious."

"During my life in Sarajevo, I worked so I could pay my rent and the university fees. I worked on renovation of apartments, jobs such as painting, setting the aperture and plumbing. Those works were without agreement, i.e. works without social and health insurance. But it was good and quick earnings which I needed. While I was in Sarajevo I had a few girls, but those were short relationships, especially because we had different views on life."

8.2.3. Back to Visoko

When Semir graduated he returned home to Visoko, this time to his parents house. Country economic situation was not any better Semir was unable to find a job in his profession, so he continued working mainly on the renovation of houses and apartments in Visoko and sometimes in Sarajevo.

"Although I have not had a permanent job, I was pleased. Many people were unemployed, it happened, and even today the situation has not turned for the better, that nobody in the family has worked. Many have lived with assistance of relatives living outside BiH and by temporary work without agreement. Of course I hoped that I would find a job in my profession, but I was satisfied because my father and brother have been working too and we had a decent life."

"As the years passed I sometimes worked. I had one serious relationship with the girl from Visoko. We were together for two years and we even got engaged. One day she just left. Her father got job relocation to another country. As they were more patriarchal family, her father decided that his daughter is still too young to get married

and they all moved. We continued our relationship but long distance was between us, so we decided to end the relationship. I was not able to visit her as I needed a visa, and her father would not let me to stay at their house as unmarried couple. We moved on. It was very hard in the beginning. I really thought that she was the right one."

"After that, I enjoyed being single. I worked I helped my grandparents in the village, went out with my friends. I did not think about love, as I thought that it would happen when you least expect it. And it really did."

8.2.4. Semir and Medina

"I met Medina on the internet and we chatted almost every day. Even then I realised what a great person she is. We talked about everything: life, Bosnia and Herzegovina, war, school, love, etc. I got used talking with her and if one or two days passed I didn't talk to her I felt lonely and I missed her. She was much more mature for her age and that was what attracted me to her the most. It is not only her beauty but also her intelligence. It is so easy to talk to her. I didn't mind that she was married before. That marriage made her even stronger, although she was a strong person. And the day when we finally met! Oh, my God! I felt like I was in seventh heaven, like I was hovering. I realised that it is a pure love. After a few days I finally told her that I loved her. I admitted to her that I love being with her, in her company and that I would like to be with her forever. Medina felt the same, but I could see that she did not want to rush. She wanted to take things easy, let things happen naturally. I agreed."

"When she went back to Sweden we continued our relationship by talking every day. We agreed to get married. First, we had religious wedding and then the civil one. I had support and blessing of my family and it meant a lot to me. As soon as I got my visa for Sweden I went there and we got married. I was very happy. It did not care where I was, just wanted to be with her. I enjoyed every day with her. We talked a lot about our future. We agreed that it would be the best for us to live in Sweden, as I had never had a permanent job in Bosnia. We both are resourceful and we considered that it would be easier for me, first to learn Swedish and then to find a job in Sweden than for her to find a job in Bosnia, especially having in mind how many problem I had

finding a job there. We agreed, if we are not good in Sweden, we can always return to Bosnia. In summer, Medina arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina and we got married in Visoko. We spent few days there and then we went back to Sweden."

In the meantime, Semir returned to Bosnia, as he had to collect several documents for family reunification. He was told that there would not be any problem, just to be patient and that soon he will be in Sweden with his wife.

9. CROATIA

9.1. Croatia – a neighbouring country

In the period from 1992 till 1995, the most common destination of temporary admission of refugees were counties in Western Europe, while also a significant number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted the traditional overseas immigration countries: USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

As for neighbouring counties, FR Yugoslavia[13] and Croatian accepted almost 40% refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Nenadić, Džepar-Anibegović, Lipjankić, Borovčanin, Spasojević, Pobrić, Kovač, 2005. pp 46.).

When in April 1992, war erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina; it resulted in huge population displacement. According to the UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency, in the course of the conflict, Croatia alone accepted some 403,000 refugees from its neighbouring countries. Only from Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was recorded 170.000 refugees from 1992 till 1995. Many Bosnian refugees experienced Croatia only as a transit country in an attempt to reach some rich countries of Western Europe, or a third country, as final destination.

Those who changed host country, in this case Croatia are 52.000. The number of repatriation to BiH from 1996 till 2005 is 56.000. In 2005, the number of Bosnian refugees in Croatia was

[13] **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Savezna država Jugoslavia)** was established in April, 27, 1992 as common state of Serbia and Montenegro. On day 3. April 2006, Montenegro declared its independence and Serbia on 5. April, 2006. On 5 April, 2006, both countries were declared as independent countries.

62.000 (Nenadić, Džepar-Anibegović, Lipjankić, Borovčanin, Spasojević, Pobrić, Kovač, 2005. pp.48).

Given the large number, displaced persons and refugees have become one of the biggest problems and concerns of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. In Croatia were organized many centers for reception and residence of displaced persons and refugees. For this purpose, many hotels, restaurants and other convenient facilities, such as barracks and resorts, were used, or were built new settlements.

Due to major funding, Office for displaced persons and refugees of the Croatian Government[14] had to have organized list, in 1992 and 1994, to determine the actual situation. List from 1992, showed that in Republic of Croatia in organized housing disposed 196.870 displaced persons and 183.038 refugees (mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina) or a total of 379.908 persons.

Using statements from the Informative weekly enclosure of immigrants "Home and the World" ("Dom i Svijet") number of refugees from BiH to Croatia by municipalities of expel on the day of 20 April, 1994, according to the Office for Displaced Persons and refugees of the Croatian Government, is following:

Among the refugees and displaced persons were persons of all age groups. Most were children and young people aged 8 – 18 years. Women, along with children, are the second biggest victims. They were exposed to the most terrifying torture and threats, abuse, pressure. In addition to all this, they feared for their children, parents, brothers and sisters, and husbands. The social structure of the refugees was very complex. Over 400.000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croats, Bosniacs, Serbs and others, passed through Croatian territory to go to third countries. To all of them, Croatia has provided temporary shelter. Croatia has provided accommodation and food from entering Croatia to exiting to the third countries. So many people in transit demanded by the Croatian authorities a big commitment and it downplayed the possibility of solving other problems.

Displaced persons and refugees were housed in 415 refugee centers. Croatia, only to its accommodation, spent 1.4 billion USD. Croatia, for the Bosnian refugees, until October, 31,

[14] The Government of the Republic of Croatia http://www.vlada.hr/en/naslovnica

1993, spent 773 million USD, and the United Nations about 400 million. A total world's aid for refugees to Croatia until the end of 1993 amounted only 48.6 million USD, while Croatia on a month was spending between 60 and 90 million USD.

According to the UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR Croatia significantly broadened its activities in order to support the Croatian Government in providing protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. UNHCR and the main national and international actors provided humanitarian aid, food, shelter and other types of assistance to the ever increasing number of those in need. Amongst those involved was the Croatian Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees (ODPR), the Croatian Red Cross (CRC), the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Securing the admission of refugees and the prevention of deportation known as non-refoulement has always been among the prime tasks of UNHCR, thus the Agency enhanced its cooperation with the Croatian authorities in order to ensure safety and protection for Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees.

The UN Refugee Agency began to seek solutions for refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina by assisting the Croatian Government with voluntary return or transfer to third countries. From October 1992, UNHCR began to promote temporary protection abroad by urging third countries to host refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Thereafter, the programme for the resettlement of Bosnian refugees also included refugees who had special protection needs or who were especially vulnerable and would not have been able to return to their places of origin. Between October 1992 and December 1994, the programme for temporary protection resettled some 30,000 persons in third countries.

The situation after the end of the five-year conflict resulted in a shift of UNHCR's activities, and the Agency began to seek durable solutions for the then still half a million displaced persons. About 200,000 Bosnian refugees remained in Croatia. Most of the refugees who were of Croat ethnicity had obtained Croatian citizenship and began the process of gradual local integration. However, those of non-Croat ethnicity remained under temporary protection by the Government and required further assistance and a solution to their plight.

Eighteen years after the beginning of the conflict, the vast majority of displaced persons and refugees in Croatia have found permanent solutions. For the fewer than 2,500 internally displaced persons today, solutions are currently being implemented. Since April 2009, the

remaining refugees under temporary protection from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which number some 1,300, can regulate their stay and access social and economic rights and subsequently integrate locally.

10. HATIDŽA'S LIFE STORY

10.1. How it all started...

On the first of July, 1993, HVO blocked Stolac's roads; there was no exit on the main road. That day, the Bosnian members of the HVO, as they were together with the Croat members, were taken to the concentration camps. Firstly, educated people were taken there and then the others. In the flat under Hatidža's it was HVO command center.

> "We realized what was going on. Maybe we would be killed or imprisoned in one of the camps. My husband and I and our three children, decided to leave Stolac. As the main road was closed, correctly speaking under control of HVO, we went through the forest, to Croatia. We arrived to Drvenik, a small town on Dalmatian coast. We were given an accommodation and were nicely accepted by the locals, as well as the other refugees from BiH."

> "The day after we arrived to Croatia, my brother was imprisoned in concentration camp by HVO. Soon after, I found out that my mother was killed by a shell and my father imprisoned by JNA. Their house was in the middle of the battlefield between HVO and JNA. I am not able to describe how I felt at that moment. I felt that my life was falling apart. It was horrible."

> "While we were in Drvenik, we were given food by many countries. We had to pay rent after 6 months. The locals helped us. They gave us seasonal jobs, so we were able to earn some money for ourselves. One month after we arrived there we found out that Stolac's citizens, the Bosnian, were thrown out. We were not able to establish any contact with our relatives and friends who stayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We knew that they were located somewhere near Blagaj. We sent letters via Red Cross,

hoping to get a response, if not from them than from someone who knows them, just to know that they are alive. When we got a reply we were very happy to know that they are alive. Some replies made us sad, because they were asking us to send them some money, if possible to buy some food, since they did not have anything to eat. In Red Cross worked a man we knew, so through him we sent some money and medicine, as much as it was possible to put inside the envelope. We also sent some packages of food to them via some humanitarian organizations, but it was all taken by customs."

10.2. Visit to the concentration camp

"After five months I tried, with some soldiers from Croatia, to visit my brother in the concentration camp. I arrived there but I was not allowed to get inside, they just took the food I had for him, he never received it. At the entrance of the concentration camp was a small room where the infirmary was located. There I saw some prisoners who were beaten and were fighting for their lives. In the concentration camp were several hangars, whose prisoners were waiting for the papers for Croatia and some other countries to go, which were allowed to visit, and I could see some of them outside. But later I found out that the hangar where my brother was not allowed because the HVO commander was for some reason upset."

"After seeing some friends of mine and neighbors, their physical appearance, the way how they were exhausted, beaten and skinny like the skeleton. I was feeling so sick, horrible. I got a strong headache and I vomited several times."

"In those moments I was praying to God to help me to go back, as soon as possible, to Drvenik. If any HVO solder had realized that I am from Bosnia and Herzegovina and not Croatia, they would have thrown me out to Blagaj."

10.3. The first news

"Few days later I got information that the Red Cross prisoners from the prison's infirmary, located in hospital in Split on intensive care unit. I went to visit them, but

unfortunately they had no peace even there. They were maltreated by wounded HVO soldiers so they were urgently transferred to Scandinavian countries to continue treatment. Many of them live there today, with their families."

"Several days later I got a letter from my brother which he sent through a man who worked near the concentration camp. A note was written on the cigarette's paper, saying that he is alive and asking me for some money and food. Nine months later a postman told me that my brother called the post office and said that he is located in a refugee camp in Croatia and is waiting for the papers to go to Norway"

"I felt a great relief and I was happy that he was no longer in that hell. Today, he lives with his family in Norway."

After being imprisoned for 14 months, Hatidža's father was exchanged with some civilians and was located in Montenegro. He stayed there for 2 years with other people from BiH who were imprisoned in the camp. Through humanitarian organizations he went to Norway to Hatidža's brother. Two years later he returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina and he now lives in his house where he lived before the war. He is finally back home.

10.4. Back to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Hatidža and her family were in Drvenik for 4 years. Bosnian Elementary school was formed soon after the refugees arrived there, her son and younger daughter were attending it, but the older one had to wait for 2 years to attend High school. After two years of attending High school it closed. Donation from Arabian countries stopped coming, and to be able to continue the education, Croats asked the children to bring baptismal certificate. As the children did not have it, as they are Muslims, the High school was closed.

"Since the war stopped and the children were not able to attend school, we returned to BiH. We arrived in Bijelo Polje, a place near Mostar and settled in an abandoned, devastated house. There we provided ourselves with a room to live in. The living conditions were very bad. The room was without windows, we had to put nylon in the frames. We had no electricity or running water. Somehow later through the ground, we

conducted electricity. We stayed there for 4 years. Children continued their education in Mostar."

"When it was possible, together with other Stolac citizens who lived in Bijelo Polje, I visited Stolac, with a police escort. I was not able to go to my apartment, since some Croatian family lived there, and our movement was limited only to one part of the town. In Stolac, Bosniacs houses were devastated and robbed. All those things that reminiscent to Bosniacs, were mined, four mosques, the old Muslim houses, the entire town center, everything which was built during the Ottoman Empire."

"After four years of occasional visits, I returned to Stolac to my apartment with my husband and son, while my daughters in the meantime got married in Mostar. The apartment was devastated, and in it, until we came, lived Croats from the nearby village. We had to supply the basic home requisites."

"It has been 10 years since we returned and the situation has not much improved. Government is lead by Croats so that employment is almost impossible, which contributes to the closure of pre-war factories. When the High school for Bosnian was organized I managed to get my old job back that is rare to get. Also, I have to add that I still go every summer to Drvenik to work for the family where we stayed for a while, in our worst times."

11. CONCLUSION

In my work I have showed the social position of Bosnian-Herzegovinian women during their migration and subsequent adaptation to the new environment. All three women have experienced forced migration from their hometown during the war because of religious and national affiliation. Due to the forced abandonment of their homes, they were exposed to psychological trauma, uncertain existence and adaptation to the new environments. As the war was in progress, they were daily in danger of losing their own lives and the lives of their loved ones, relatives, friends and acquaintances, which left deep and indelible consequences. When the war ended they adapted to the new environment always with hope and desire to return to their hometown.

Shortly before wartime events, most of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina lived in the belief that the war will not come. All people in Bosnia and Herzegovina lived in good neighbourly relations; security in the former country was at a high level, most or almost all population was in good economic position. People did not look themselves through religious and national affiliation.

At the very beginning of the war, people did not realize the seriousness and reality of the new situation. The majority of the population lived in the belief that the war events are of short duration and that everything will be solved peacefully. Politicians and the media have contributed that the population slowly divide themselves in their own national groups, but still having daily communication with people of other nationalities. The first apparent division occurred when the Serb population left the town of Stolac, as well as other parts of Herzegovina, literally overnight, and began shelling the towns from which they left. Then the Croats and Bosniacs united in defence of their town fighting against the aggressor. Since most of the male population was military active, women were mostly at home or in basements exposed to risk and daily worry for their husbands who were on battlefields, but also for the lives of their children, relatives as well as for their own lives. Even then there were a shortage of food, water and electricity.

While there was a conflict with the Serbs, the relationship between the Croats and Bosniacs was getting worse. The Bosniac men, those who were on the battlefields, as well as those at

homes, were taken to the concentration camps, where they were exposed to daily physical and mental torture. In the meantime, women, children and older people were often subjected to psychological torture. The soldiers, members of Croatian nationality, often entered into Bosniacs' homes asking for money, gold and weapons. Soon it comes to the persecution of the Bosniac population who were just in one day, examined in detail by the HVO in the quest for money and gold, and were taken to the area of Blagaj where many of them stayed, while others went to other places nearby Mostar where was Bosniac population.

In the new environments, women were the ones who fought for the survival of their families. Not knowing anything about their husbands, brothers and other male members of their families, whether they were live at all, they were left alone. They took care of the children, parents and other older members of their families who did not end up in the concentration camps. They took care about the procurement of food, water, clothing and footwear. Although they were exposed to daily risk of being killed by shells or bullets, they did not give up helping, not only to their families, but also to other people. We could see that in the example of Jasminka who worked in Health centre and often walked long to help patients and wounded soldiers. Also, Hatidža came from Croatia to the riskiest place in Herzegovina, to the concentration camp, just hoping to see her brother and give him some food. Only luck was on their side and nothing happened to them.

In exile, people shared the same fate. They lived from day to day, not knowing what tomorrow brings. In such a situation, people became closer helping each other, struggling together for their existence. After men were released from concentration camps, though in poverty, people were happy because they were alive, healthy and together. Medina, whose child's play was replaced by fleeing from bullets, was finally happy when she saw her father again. The war has contributed to grow up quickly, no more fantasizing about toys but about peace and her hometown. Hope of returning to their hometown has never been lost. They were so close to their home, about 40 km and yet so far away because it took a couple of years that some residents, with police escort, enter their hometown.

Return was slow, but according to some statistics the largest number of refugees who returned in their pre-war residence in the Federation BiH is just in Stolac. Women returnees were faced with new problems such as adaptation to their "new" town which was destroyed and whose population was much changed. There was a bad economic situation; Bosniacs were the

minority with regard to the Croats so that employment in this town for Bosniacs was not possible, except for those who started a small private business. Soon after the return, primary school for Bosniacs was re-established, whose teaching in the beginning was held in houses, and then a part of the school building was ceded with separate entrance, and even today Bosniac children attend classes in that part of the school but with separate entrance for them, in order to have as less physical contact with the Croatian children as possible. Most people who have worked or attended school in Mostar travelled every day, as Jasminka, her daughter and Medina. Soon after returning home to Stolac a High school was re-established for Bosniacs. In the beginning there was a small number of students, there was scepticism whether the school will subsist due to numerous obstacles so Jasminka's daughter and Medina continued attending their school in Mostar. From year to year the number of students increased, but some problems have never been solved as an example of two schools under one roof.[15] Soon after re-establishing the high school, Hatidža started to work there. She worked there before the war.

At the beginning, the communication with pre-war and new neighbours was difficult, but later the situation gradually improved.

Although a large number of refugees returned to Stolac, there were still a large number of those who continued to live in other parts of the country and in abroad. After the war a certain number of people have migrated to other countries thanks to their relatives, who have accepted them in those countries. New friendships and acquaintances were created; new loves were born that often ended in marriages. Couples often decide to live outside Bosnia because of a safer existence. This was particularly the case for the women who, due to patriarchal relationships, find job much harder. They had to take care of children and other family members as well as do domestic work. Because of these obligations, the employer rather gave jobs to men.

[15] In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are a certain number of schools where children of two nationalities attend classes in the same building, but psychically separated from each other and taught separate curriculums. Children from one ethnic group enter the school through one door, while the children of other ethnic group through another, or they attend the school in two shifts.

Jasminka and Medina agreed with their spouses to continue their lives together outside BiH because they thought that it would be easier for them to find a job in countries of their spouses, than that the job in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In both cases women are fairly well adapted to new environments. They quickly learned the language, Jasminka immediately thereafter began to work and Medina continued her education and got a job as assistant in college. New neighbours and work colleagues accepted them nicely even though they were foreigners.

Regarding Hatidža, she remained in Stolac and continued to work in high school. Relationship with neighbours Croats are greatly improved, they regularly socialize, visit each other on religious holidays, weddings and other celebrations, as well as mourning, such as funerals. Although the economic situation in the town, as well as throughout the country, continue to be bad, Hatidža is pleased with her life since her family is with her and she has a job.

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