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Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Norway: upward mobility and social cohesion within the Norwegian society

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PREFACE

In February 2009 I applied for The Joint Master of Arts in Migration and Intercultural Relation at the University of Stavanger, Norway. A few months later I received the letter of acceptance. It was late August when I landed in Stavanger and shortly after I took my first classes in Migration studies. In the last year and a half I have been reading, writing, studying and talking about migration phenomena rather extensively. This Master Dissertation comprehends all the knowledge, experience and expertise I have gained and mastered during the MA program. A specific topic has been analyzed in order to answer questions about Bosnian diasporic experience and social mobility in Norway. A wide range of theories, scholarships and studies in social sciences have been addressed and embedded in my dissertation. The terminology used in the work has been defined in detail. Following theoretical framework, I conducted a fieldwork offering my own findings and conclusions based on interviews and participant observations. Immigrants, refugees, diaspora, integration, social cohesion, and upward mobility are some of the key concepts I have dealt with.

Namely, I examined the Bosnian and Herzegovinian immigrants to Norway whose integration process went fairly smooth. Immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina rapidly became a socially and financially functional part of the host society. However, there are no simple and comprehensive indicators that would help us understand the position of Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway. Thus, this work does not pretend to offer definitive and exclusive conclusions on the studied phenomena. I focused on the community that has rather complex in-group interaction, rooted in its distinct cultural code and specific context. Therefore, I aimed to grasp and point out some of the major outcomes of this transition from the Bosnian war refugees to respectable ethnic community in the Norwegian multicultural society. In other words, I was interested in comprehending the patterns of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians' social mobility and what kind of side effects it had on its actors and their internal relations. What have they *gained* and/or *lost* in the process of integration? How do they perceive themselves then and now, and what have changed, if anything did? These are some of the questions this work tried to answer. |

While I was focusing on the phenomena concerning the immigrant community of Bosnians and Herzegovinians, I decided not to say much about the Norwegian society in particular. In this way, very few digressions from the research topic were made, like references to the Norwegian immigration and integration policies, in order to contextualize Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugee inflows in early 90s. Apart from this, I purposely did not want to go deeper into discussion over some issues I believe to be relevant for my work. One of them is multiculturalism and its controversies. Norway has been a country of immigration for some time now. Facing with the challenges of immigrants' distinct cultural codes, the concept of multiculturalism became a hot issue in both academic scholarship and policy-making centers. Eventually, the Norwegian discourse on multiculturalism had its repercussions on all immigrant communities. It is important to have this in mind because, in my opinion, certain favorable decisions that regarded Bosnians and Herzegovinians war refugees were largely influenced by the general positive notion towards multiculturalism at the time. By this I primarily refer to the collective temporary protection granted to all Bosnians and Herzegovinians at the beginning of the 90s, which later was transformed to permanent resident permissions and eventually citizenships. Since multiculturalism opens many questions for discussion, I wanted to avoid the risk of a long digression about this topic. However, multiculturalism has been a sort of background framework to keep in mind in formulating my main research question.

PART I

1. INTRODUCTION

As the MA Dissertation title suggests, the Bosnian and Herzegovinian¹ community living in Norway is in focus in my work. Studying a given immigrant population that lives in a receiving country for a long period of time invokes just as many questions as one can think of; socio-cultural acclimatization, integration, identity negotiation just to start with the most obvious ones. On the other side, factors that actually caused the migration at the first place also require a proper analysis. If one truly aims to grasp a wider picture and to understand all the particularities that shape immigrants' lives, both sides of the migration equation should be taken into consideration. Having said this, my goal was to detect, systematize and explain all the political, social and economic factors that caused the formation of Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway. The core of the research, however, is the internal social cohesion of the community members opposed to the level of integration within the Norwegian society. What is meant by this is that strength and intensity of relations between Bosnians and Herzegovinians might have changed due to various reasons caused by integration and adaptation to the host society (i.e. new costumes, values, ethics and so on). My hypothesis is that rapid, but, of course, desirable integration of Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees in Norway shortly after their arrival affect their day-to-day social networks and in-group interactions. As I tried to show, the intensity of their relations in the first months after the resettlement was much higher than it is today. My informants suggested in the interviews that the main reason for such close interaction at the beginning was the common refugee experience and the uncertainty they shared in the new environment. However, as the time was passing, better jobs opportunities subsequently led to occupational and residential mobility. This initially triggered changes in the social cohesion among Bosnian community. People started to move out from the reception camps settling down

¹ Though the official term for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina is *Bosnians and Herzegovinians*, I will sometimes address them only with the abbreviated *Bosnians*, due to unnecessary repetitiveness. This is a common practice in the literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well. However, by doing so neither I neglect nor disregard in any form the *Herzegovinian* identity that many Bosnian and Herzegovinian immigrants in Norway do hold as an important part of who they are and where they came from.

across the country. Consequently, all the free time that was usually spent among fellow countrymen was reduced to the birthday's parties and other occasional celebrations, such as marriages or babies' showers.

Starting their lives from the beginning, all Bosnian immigrants had fairly same opportunities for integration and success in the Norwegian society. However, various factors influenced the outcome of the integration process. Social and educational backgrounds, as well as diverse working and skill competencies among the members of the community, determined their level of integration. Accordingly, my intention was to explore whether different material and social status polarized the members of the community and decreased the notion of closeness among Bosnians. In other words, how do economic growth and climbing on the social ladder affect the coherence and interaction within the Bosnian community? Therefore, my research question is: *to which extent does upward mobility within Norwegian society affect social cohesion among Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Norway?*

This research questions allows formulating two hypotheses, both tested in the work: 1) social cohesion among Bosnians and Herzegovinians was affected by social mobility of the group; 2) if it is true that group cohesion among Bosnians in Norway is connected with their social mobility, the cohesion is not necessary decreased by this mobility, but in some cases it could increase the strength of the in-group interaction.

Based on the findings from my fieldwork, I have reached some conclusions on both these hypotheses at the end of this work.

2. TERMINOLOGY

Before going any further, some terminology clarification needs to be done. In the field of migration studies there are certain terms and theories that are constantly redefine and renegotiated, and their meanings have been challenged in various contexts. The confusion in the scholarship is not rare. This mainly happens to terms which very often cross the boundaries of different disciplines in social science. Many authors today see possible solutions in embracing the multidisciplinary study approach, taking into consideration all the major standpoints; from history, sociology, demography, statistics, economy to the new technologies and modern means of communication.

For the sake of consistency and correctness, I will briefly present different definitions and understandings of the terms I used extensively in this dissertation. Though the minimum of consensus over the terms such as immigrants, (forced/voluntary) migration, integration, multiculturalism, diaspora and so on, has been reached among scholars and authors, there are still significant deviations in their approaches. For that matter, diaspora is probably one of the most ambiguously used terms in the migration studies. It has a wide range usage in the migration scholarship, as well as in the everyday discourse. The meaning of diaspora is still subject of numerous discussions unable to end up on a common understanding over its definition. Therefore, I will turn to the concept of diaspora more extensively later in my elaboration, when I will summarize its most distinct features. I will start clarifying the terminology I adopted in regard to the main subject of this paper; Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway.

2.1 TERMS OF FORMAL STATUS AND SELF-REPRESENTATION

Throughout my research I found quite a few labels that are used to describe and address Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway, such as: refugees, asylum seekers, Bosnians, ex-Yugoslavs, non-western immigrants, Eastern Europe immigrants, foreigners, minority persons, etc. Shifts in the labeling are due to two main reasons. Upon their arrival, Bosnians and Herzegovinians received the status of refugees, and, accordingly, in the early studies and articles

they were addressed as such. Only later, when the majority of the Bosnian refugees received a permanent residence in Norway, literature started to refer them as immigrants. The second reason for the terminology shift was the self-identification and the self-representation of Bosnians. As Marko Valenta (2008a) wrote in his PhD dissertation, for most of his informants who arrived in Norway as refugees or asylum seekers (including Bosnians and Herzegovinians) being a refugee was and still is not the most prominent aspect of their identity. “In their eyes, they stopped being asylum seekers and refugees. They define themselves as immigrants or in terms of their ethnic identities, rather than as refugee or asylum seekers” (Valenta 2008a, p.9). I received the same notion of self-representation from my informants. Primarily they addressed themselves and each other as *Bosnians*, and then as immigrants or members of the Bosnian diaspora. References to their refugee identity occurred only when we spoke about their experiences in the first years after the arrival. Hence, during our conversational interviews and informal discussions on social networking, the most common term in use was *Bosnians*. Other labels, such as non-western immigrants or foreigners have rarely been mentioned, while the term asylum-seeker never occurred as an option. To sum up, references to the members of Bosnian community in Norway changed over the past eighteen years. While the refugee status lasted for the first years after the arrival, the shift towards immigrant status took place rather soon. Today after the majority of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway has become naturalized Norwegians², the references to their ethnic identity and Bosnian diaspora are still the most often used terms of self-identification in everyday communication. However, the usage of the expression *Bosnian diaspora* in this context requires more precise clarification. I will turn to this in the chapter addressing the concept and meanings of diaspora.

2.2 CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

Terms like social mobility and social cohesion are not necessary analyzed within the same context in the existing literature. The occurrence of social mobility does not presume any

² *SOPEMI raport for Norway 2010* (Thorud 2010, p.41) shows that the number of nationals from Bosnia and Herzegovina is one third of what it was in 2001. This change is mostly due to naturalizations, and not to return-migration.

changes in cohesion of the given social group, and vice versa. However, in my hypothesis I assumed that upward mobility of Bosnians in Norway to a certain extent affected the community's social cohesion. Therefore, it is important to define these two terms properly and to analyze how they work before contextualizing them in the case of the Bosnian community in Norway.

2.2.1 SOCIAL MOBILITY

The interest in the phenomenon of social mobility has been present in the sociologists' studies since early years of 20th century, when the concept was initially defined and explained. It must be noted that there are different types and forms of social mobility. One can distinguish between horizontal and vertical mobility throughout the social strata, which will be explained later. Another important clarification is the one between intra- and inter-generational mobility. The former is defined as mobility *within* a generation, in other words, a change in one's social status over a single life-time. On the contrary, inter-generational mobility refers to an across generations movement and defines changes in social status that occur from the parents' to the children's generation. There are numerous other aspects of persons' social mobility; absolute and relative mobility, structural and exchange mobility, upward and downward mobility, to mention some of the most notable ones.

The literature on social mobility is quite extensive. As the concept itself is rather pragmatic and usually addresses specific groups in a given context, most of the works dealing with social mobility were brought out as field researches and empirical inquiries. Of course, proper theoretical postulates were needed to be established before studies took place. Pitirim A. Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Mobility* from 1927 is a pioneering book on the historical and contemporary dynamics of social mobility and one of the most prominent works in sociology. Sorokin encompassed all the aspects and angles of social mobility; he started by defining social space, social positions, social satisfaction and other subordinated concepts; then he distinguished between population occupying different social strata; he continued by explaining the forms of social mobility, and he finally ended with the results of social mobility. The author concludes:

“By social mobility is understood any transition of an individual or social object or value – anything that has been created by modified by human activity – from one social position to another” (Sorokin 1964, p.133).

Further on, there are two principal types of social mobility horizontal and vertical:

“By horizontal social mobility or shifting, is meant the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level. Transitions of individuals as from one citizenship to another, from one family (as a husband or wife) to another by divorce and remarriage, from one factory to another in the same occupational status, are all instances of social mobility [...] In all these cases, ‘shifting’ may take place without any noticeable change of the social position of an individual or social object in the vertical direction. By vertical social mobility is meant the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. According to the direction of the transition there are two types of vertical social mobility: ascending and descending, or social climbing and social sinking” (Ibid.).

Some other scholars understand the term in a similar way. In *The Concept of Social Mobility: An Empirical Inquiry*, Westoff et al. (1960) referred to James A. Barber’s definition of social mobility, for which the authors believe to be (in its substance) similar formulations appearing in nearly all treatises devoted to this topic:

“We have been using the term social mobility to mean movement, either upward or downward, between higher and lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively full-time, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower” (Westoff et al. 1960, p.376).

The authors further summarized five fundamental points in the conceptualization of *movement*:

a) *The Unit of Analysis*. Individuals, family or entire society can be in the scope of analysis. While overlapping is possible, most of the studies have been undertaken from a societal perspective; b) *The Direction of Movement*. It defines whether we are analyzing a vertical or horizontal social mobility; c) *The Reference Points of Movement*. Appropriate points of arrival and departure need to be defined in order to map the movement of individuals over time; d) *The*

Unit of Measurement in Movement. It stresses the importance of the distinction between the amount and the distance of mobility. *Amount* involves the proportion of individuals who are upwardly or downwardly mobile within some stratification system. The *distance* of mobility, on the other hand, is a measure of the number of steps of upward or downward movement traversed by an individual or a group; d) *The Visibility of Movement.* It shows the extent to which hypothesized subjective dispositions favoring vertical mobility dependably predict mobility achievement; and conversely, the extent to which a change in life, such as increase in income, will produce appropriate changes in attitudes and values (Westoff et al. 1960, p.376).

It was noted earlier that vertical social mobility can have two main directions: upward and downward movement on the social ladder. It is quite self-explanatory that upward mobility refers to a change in a persons' social status, which results in receiving a higher position in their status system. In other words, it means "any change in the occupational, economic or political status of individuals which leads to a change if their social positions" (Sorokin 1964, p.133). Eldon L. Wegner (1973) describes the term in this way:

"To be upwardly mobile means more than improving one's material comforts; it also entails changes in social relationships and alterations in life style [...] Upward mobility means leaving behind the familiar associations, the norms, the values and practices of a lower status. The newcomer into a more privileged class may have difficulty in being accepted as a social equal, and hence feel insecure about his claims to high status" (Wagner 1973, p.264).

Analyzing social mobility in industrial society, Lipset and Bendix described the term as:

"...the process by which individuals moves from one position to another in society-positions which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values. When we study social mobility we analyze the movement of individuals from positions possessing a certain rank to positions either higher or lower in the social system" (Lipset & Bendix 1991, pp.1-2).

According to Lipset and Bendix, there are two basic reasons why social mobility exists in every society. The first one is the *change in demands for performances*. This means that every society is in the constant process of change, and sooner or later social changes will lead to “a change in the demands which different position make on those who occupy them” (Lipset & Bendix 1991, pp.1-2). Groups who have inherited high positions may not have the competence to meet the responsibilities, which these positions entail, and, accordingly, it may create “tensions which will eventuate in the rise of a new social group and a subsequent attack upon the prestige of the hierarchy” (Lipset & Bendix 1991, pp.1-2). The second reason is *changes in supplies of talent*. The authors argue that an elite or a ruling class usually controls the disposition of talent and inelegance. However, changes are inevitable “as long as many of those with high abilities belong to the lower strata [...] there will be leaders who come from those strata” (Lipset & Bendix 1991, pp.1-2). Naturally, chances for successful leaders to climb up on the social ladder are fairly high. It is obvious that Lipset and Bendix operate with the presumptions of rigidly divided societies in which upper and lower classes are in constant renegotiations of their positions – an assumption that could be criticized. We could argue to which extent Lipset and Bendix are influenced by Marxist’s understanding of class clashes and whether the reasons they have outlined are applicable in all contexts. On the one side, the authors are right when they conclude that certain connection between society’s internal mobility and the stability of its political regime does exist in the contemporary societies. However, focusing too much on the political implications of social mobility would be wrong since the mobility itself (especially upward) does not cause particularly dramatic political turbulences. The United States could be a good example where “upward social mobility has traditionally occupied an almost sacred place among American values” (Wegner 1973, p.263). In the States, climbing on the hierarchy ladders often goes along with various psychological difficulties on the individual level, but it does not leave any unwished consequences on the political system in general.

A practical question that rises when social mobility is examined is what sort of indexes researcher should use to detect and measure social mobility. Westoff et al. assert that “there is a notable tendency in studies of social mobility to treat occupation as an adequate single index of social class” (Westoff et al. 1960, p.378). The authors further argue that use of occupation as an index in a social mobility measurement has many important advantages, and quote Joseph Kahl

who suggested that “the most practical procedure is to use a single measurement, rather than a complex index” (Ibid. quoting Kahl 1957, p.252). Critics, however, assert that change in occupational status may not necessary be accompanied by other relevant movements: for instance, if a person is upward mobile in the occupational hierarchy, this does not mean that this person will stop associate with the people who might occupy a lower social strata. In other words, it is rather doubtful that social mobility can be treated as a simple and overall movement. It has many variations largely determined by particular contexts. In my study, occupational mobility is an important factor of Bosnian social mobility within the Norwegian society, but it will not be the only one. Other factors will include income, education, political participation, etc.

2.2.2 SOCIAL COHESION

After upward mobility, social cohesion is the second critical concept in my work. In the last years it has been noted that the term “enjoys ever-increasing popularity” in the public discourse (Chan et al. 2006, p.273). It is not only the political aspect of social cohesion that makes policymakers to pay more attention to it³, but scholars, as well, are eager to reestablish long-standing definition of the term. The ambiguity over its definition is illustrated by the fact that various terms, such as solidarity and trust, have been used as an equivalent or/and alternative to social cohesion. Other theoretical approaches have linked the term to notions like inclusion, social capital, social integration and system integration (Chan et al. 2006, p.274). Obviously, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to find generally accepted definition of social cohesion, and subsequently, tools for its measurement. Therefore, I chose only some of the most used definitions in the relevant literature. The article *Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research* by Chan et al. (2006) is a proper start for defining the term. The authors outlined two traditions in the analysis of social cohesion:

³ Chan et al. (2006) noted that both the Council of Europe and the European Union (hereafter EU) have called for more attention to the issue of cohesion in setting public policy. The EU Cohesion Funds, in fact, are now one of the major items featured in the Union annual budget, while the idea of social cohesion is also coined by international organizations like the OECD and the World Bank.

the first one strives from the academic social science disciplines, while the second one was developed by policymakers and policy-oriented analysts. Definitions rooted in the first tradition are primarily influenced by sociological and psychological aspects of social cohesion. Sociologists, such as Berger, Gough and Olofsson, focus on the questions of social integration, stability, and disintegration. Referring to the achievements and understandings of the first group, Chan et al. write:

“One key feature of these works is that social cohesion is often analyzed in terms of the broader questions of social integration, stability and disintegration [...] A major characteristic with their analysis is that it is largely done at a systemic level, with little explicit reference to empirical individual level data” (Chan et al. 2006, p.275).

At the same time, psychologists contribute by exploring the concept of *cohesion* itself:

“[T]here are two perspectives to cohesion: objective and perceived. The former refers to some objective attribute of the group as a whole, and this involves some composite measures based on each member’s self-reported closeness to other members in the group. Perceived cohesion, on the other hand, is a function of each member’s perception of his own standing in the group” (Ibid.).

The second approach or tradition to the analysis of social cohesion reflects upon political aspects of the term, and it is not particularly relevant for my work. Shortly, the policymakers and social policy analysts are key actors here and the authors mainly focus on the case study of the Canadian federal government who introduced social cohesion onto its official agenda in the 1990s. Ever since, social cohesion has become an important issue for both governmental and social players. Jointly, they suggested that “social cohesion should encompass a wide range of elements, from income distribution, employment, housing, universal access to health care and education systems to political and civic participation” (Chan et al. 2006, p.278). What distinguishes the policy discourse on social cohesion from the academic approach, conclude the authors, is its problem-driven nature; “talk of “cohesion” is largely a reaction to the many new social cleavages” (Ibid.).

Chan et al. (2006) further discussed other authors' works and contextualized different components of social cohesion to finally end up with the following definition:

“Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations” (Chan et al. 2006, p.290).

Many other authors conceptualized social cohesion in their work. McCracken described the concept as “a positive characteristic of a society, dealing with the relationships among members of that society” (McCracken 1998, p.3). Kearns and Forrest offered the following definition; “a socially cohesive society is one in which the members share common values which enable them to identify and support common aims and objectives, and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behavior through which to conduct their relations with one another” (Kearns & Forrest 2000, p.997). The authors break down the concept into several elements in order to grasp its meaning. Hence, they outlined following constitutional dimension of social cohesion: “common values and a civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital; and territorial belonging and identity” (Ibid. p.996). Similar, Jansen also identified five dimensions described as binary oppositions: Belonging - Isolation; Inclusion - Exclusion; Participation - Non-participation; Recognition – Rejection; Legitimacy – Illegitimacy. These dimensions are important because they can serve as indicators of social cohesion measurements. For instance, belonging-isolation relation may be used to give a meaning of shared values, identity, feeling of commitment within referenced group.

Judith Maxwell described social cohesion as “building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community” (Janmaat 2010, p.62 quoting Maxwell 1996, p.3). Jan Germen Janmaat (2010) and Paul Dickes et al. (2009) approached the phenomenon from slightly different angle, focusing their inquiry on the measurement of social cohesion. Janmaat asserts the

confusion over the definition of social cohesion and “little clarity on its meaning” (Janmaat 2010, p.62). He claims that “contemporary scholars have only complicated the concept by showing the distinct propensity to understand social cohesion as a multidimensional and multilevel phenomenon representing some desirable state of affairs” (Ibid.). Therefore, Janmaat explored social cohesion as a real-life manifestation macro-level phenomenon. He pointed out two main perspectives of the concept: the universalist and the particularist perspective. The former understands social cohesion in a close relationship to stages of socio-economic development; “the more advanced a society, the higher its civic participation rates, the lower the trust in institutions, and the higher the levels of national pride” (Ibid. p.73). On the other hand, particularist perspective shows that solidarity and participation levels (subsequently, social cohesion) do not necessary reflect themselves in the stage of socio-economic development; unique historical trajectories in a given region have significant impact as well.

As Janmaat asserts, there is no agreement about the values that should be taken in account when measuring social cohesion. Considering numerous attempts aiming to determine proper indicators for measure of social cohesion, Dickes et al. developed a set of intermediate indicators in order to verify “whether these indicators empirically reflect/corroborate the multidimensional structure of the concept proposed by the theory” (Dickes et al. 2009, p.451). In their study, the authors used two categories of relations (formal and substantial), and three categories of domains or life spheres, economic, political and cultural (Ibid. p.459).

In conclusion, one should be aware that describing and especially measuring social cohesion is everything but a straight forward task, where one can simply apply the scheme or guidance offered by the theory. On the contrary, every society or group has its particularities that need to be taken into account; from different historical and cultural traditions which define their intergroup interaction, to various socio-economic and political factors that affect social cohesion on daily basis. As I will elaborate later, social cohesion and internal social networking among Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway depend on many indicators that cannot be explained by analyzing the particular factors only (economy, education, occupation, income, etc.), nor it can be simply attached to the group’s distinct cultural practices. Both should be taken into consideration before contextualizing Bosnian community within the wider Norwegian society.

2.3 DIASPORA – ITS MEANING AND THE QUESTION OF METHODOLOGICAL NATIONALISM

The meaning of diaspora is as wide as it is the scholars' interpretations on its empirical emergence. The term itself is based on two Greek terms *speiro* (to sow) and preposition *dia* (over). Judith T. Shuval opens her article on diaspora migration with an anecdote quoted by William Safran, which highlights the ambiguity and dynamism in conceptualizing the theory of diaspora:

“In an old Jewish joke from an Eastern Europe shtetl⁴, the husband asks his wife: ‘What will happen with the million zloty I invested in the business if the Messiah comes and we return to Jerusalem and I have to leave everything behind?’ The wife answer: ‘With God’s help, the Messiah will not come so soon’” (Shuval 2000, p.42).

Those authors who are “rooted in historical philosophical disciplines will have difficulty extrapolating the concept beyond its classical application to the Jews” (Rocha-Trindade 2000, p.34). Some of the early, but quite systematic attempts to define the phenomenon are offered by Safran (1991) and Cohen (1997), retrospectively. Analyzing the efforts for systematizing diaspora typologies, Roza Tsagarousianou outlines Safran’s list of characteristics linked to the concept of diaspora:

- the original community has spread from a homeland to two or more countries;
- they are bound from their disparate geographical locations by a common vision, memory or myth about their homelands;
- they have a belief that they will never be accepted by their host societies and therefore develop their autonomous cultural and social needs;
- they or their descendants will return to the homeland should the conditions prove favorable;

⁴ A shtetl was a small town with a large Jewish population in Central and Eastern Europe. It was very typical of that area until the Holocaust.

- they should continue to maintain support for homeland and therefore the communal consciousness and solidarity enables them to continue these activities (Tsagarousianou 2004, p.54 quoting Safran 1991, p. 83-84).

Another outstanding author, whose early definition of diaspora was fairly accepted, is Robin Cohen. He belongs to the group of scholars who consider that “an essential characteristic of diasporas to be that they are the result of a catastrophic movements of dispersion, with a deep traumatic component” (Rocha-Trindade 2000, p.34). Based on Safran’s diaspora characteristics, Cohen proposes additional elements that the definition of diaspora needs to consider:

- to be able to include those groups that scatter voluntarily or as a result of fleeing aggression, persecution or extreme hardship;
- to take into account the necessity for a sufficient time period before any community can be described as a diaspora. According to Cohen, there should be indications of a transnational community’s strong links to the past that thwart assimilation in the present as well as the future;
- a recognition of more positive aspects of diasporic communities. For instance, the tensions between ethnic, national and transnational identities can lead to creative formulations;
- acknowledgment that diasporic communities not only form a collective identity in the place of settlement or with their homeland, but also share a common identity with members of the same ethnic communities in other countries activities (Tsagarousianou 2004, p.55 quoting Cohen 1997).

While Safran and Cohen tried their best to outline the *diaspora checklist* and described the ideal type of diaspora community, some other authors put more emphasis on the spatial context of the term and its rather fluid and multiple natures. Discussing on cultural identity and diaspora, Stuart Hall (1993) writes that the diaspora experience is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity. Hall continues:

“I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea” (Hall 1993, p.235).

Rosa Tsagarousianou follows a similar line of thought. Analyzing the *question of home*, taken by default to be inextricably embedded to the notion of diaspora, Tsagarousianou discusses the overrated emphasis on the perceived nostalgic links and memories diaspora has of an original home or homeland (Tsagarousianou, 2004). Defining *home* in contemporary diaspora is a lot more ambiguous and complex than it used to be. Means of modern transportation and achievements of new technologies faded to the some extent a great notion of nostalgia towards exclusively one geographically located *home*. In other words, strong ties and relationships to a “multiplicity of locations through geographical and cultural boundaries” (Ibid. p.57) became one of the key characteristics of contemporary diaspora and probably the most remarkable shift from the traditional ideal type of diaspora outlined above. What Tsagarousianou sees as a crucial point in defining *home* is the level of one’s integration processes:

“Within the frame of contemporary diasporas, the notions of ‘home’ and when a location becomes home are therefore linked with the issues related to inclusion or exclusion which tend to be subjectively experienced depending upon the circumstances” (Tsagarousianou 2004, p.57).

The term itself has been extended remarkably and tends to encompass various immigrants’ groups in different contexts. Roger Brubaker writes about the problem of the “latitudinarian” approach in the conceptualization of diaspora. Referring to Giovanni Sartori, who noted that the category of diaspora become stretched to the point of uselessness, Brubaker concludes: “If everybody is diaspora, then no one is distinctively so” (Brubaker 2005, p.3). The author sees no reason for “diasporization of every more or less displaced population since this *universalization* of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora” (Ibid.). This dispersion, continues Brubaker, is obvious not only in the humanities and social sciences, but also outside the academia, especially in media, on the web and “in the self-representation of a wide range of groups and initiatives” (Ibid. p.4). In other words, the number of actors claiming its diasporic nature has been rapidly growing over the last years, and there are no strict criteria, neither in the scholarship, nor within the popular culture which nominates groups with a diasporic condition.

But all discussions over diaspora inevitably lead us to a wider conceptual problem of diaspora theory formation. Taking the traditional notion of nation-state as the natural equivalence to

societies, early definitions of diaspora were significantly compromised by the influence of methodological nationalism. Quoting Ulrich Beck, Daneil Chernilo (2006) criticizes the methodological nationalism for taking the following premises for granted:

“...it [the methodological nationalism] equates societies with nation-state societies, and sees states and their governments as the cornerstones of a social sciences analysis. It assumes that humanity is naturally divided into a limited number of nations, which on the inside, organize themselves as nation-states and, on the outside, set boundaries to distinguish themselves from other nation-states” (Chernilo 2006, p.10 quoting Beck 2002, p.51.52).

So, natural questions arise; if one of the key characteristics of diaspora is that of the original community has spread from a homeland *to two or more countries* (Safran 1991, p.83), how then cannot methodological nationalism be inextricably embedded within the definition of diaspora? In other words, if the world is composed of many geographically, culturally and politically determined unites we call nation-state and if peoples displacement across these borders is a precondition for diaspora to occur, why would early concepts of diaspora be wrong? Is there anything inconsistent with this? The answer is probably yes and no at the same time. Yes, because widely used approaches in theorizing migration in general were greatly limited by nation-state spatial component. States as the natural units of comparative analyses are not capable anymore to encompass all social practices involving both national and transnational activities. The concept of *container society* is not sufficient to explain and grasp modern migration processes and the new approaches to migration studies are more than necessary. Lately, the alternatives to methodological nationalism have been attracting more and more attention, and the concept of methodological cosmopolitanism⁵ or methodological pluralism is being the most outspoken one. Nevertheless, the answer whether there is anything wrong with the methodological nationalism is no, as well. It is no because one cannot neglect the evident existence of the nation-states and their institutions, which still greatly interfere with the social sciences and academia studies. Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller noticed that in most

⁵ See Beck, U. & Sznaider, N., 2006. Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57 (1), pp. 1-23.

states, universities are linked to national ministries of education that favor research and teaching on issues of “national relevance” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, p.306). Discussing the possibility of transformation to methodological cosmopolitanism, Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller stressed that if we remove the blinders of methodological nationalism, we see that nation-state are still extremely important (Levitt & Schiller 2004, p.7). Moreover, “without a concept of the social, the relations of power and privilege exercised by social actors based within structures and organizations cannot be studied or analyzed” (Ibid. p.7). Finally, there are still many questions to be answered in regards to methodological cosmopolitanism, pluralism or universalism which pretend to become an adequate replacement for the usage of methodological nationalism in the social sciences, and of diaspora theory for that matter.

2.4 BOSNIAN AND HERZEGOVINIAN DIASPORA – CONCEPTUALIZATION

After having outlined some of the key concepts for my work, it is necessary to contextualize the Bosnian community in Norway. The first issue that needs to be determined is whether we can see Bosnians in Norway as an organized and structured diaspora in the terms that Cohen, Safran and others authors understand it or not.

The notion of tragedy, exile, flees, or any sort of catastrophic event is obviously an important factor for many scholars while defining diaspora. Thus, Cohen’s first predisposition for certain group to be labeled as diasporic is to be scattered as a result of aggression, persecution or extreme hardship. This was obviously the case with the Bosnian war refugees. From April 1992 until the late November 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a war-torn area that set on move a half of its pre-war population. In Norway, for instance, Bosnian refugees took a second place on the list of immigrants from non-Nordic countries with flight as reason for immigration (Daugstad 2009, p.44). This shows that the element of flee as the precondition in defining diaspora is obviously present. In addition, the numerous documented atrocities against human rights during the war in Bosnia also reflect Cohen’s first characteristic of diaspora – that is the result of catastrophic a movement of dispersion, with a deep traumatic component.

Cohen goes further in narrowing down his criteria in describing diasporic groups. It is essential that a sufficient period of time passes, before any community can be described as a diaspora. However, more importantly, there should be indicators, which show that a given transnational community still has strong links to the past that hampers assimilation in the present. I believe that practice of remittances would exemplify this. Between 2004 and 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina was among the world's top remittances receiving countries. The highest amount was recorded in 2008 when US\$ 2,735 million was sent back to the country (The World Bank 2011, p.77), while in the first quartile of 2011 Bosnia and Herzegovina received almost US\$ 590 million of remittances⁶. Why is this important in defining diaspora? My understating suggests that immigrants who are sending money back to the country of origin in such large amount surely did not loose links with their past. Based on conversations I had with the Bosnians during my work and my own observation as the member of this community, the conclusion I reached indicates that the majority of my informants keep regular relations with family and friends in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They pay visits to them at least once a year, if not more than that. Even though remittances and holiday visits suggest that many of the Bosnians in Norway maintain their tight connections with the homeland, it does not essentially affect their integration into Norwegian society, as I will demonstrate later. Hence, Cohen's assumptions of "thwart assimilation in the present as well as the future" (Tsagarousianou 2004, p.55 quoting Cohen 1997) due to strong links with past is probably too rigid and unlikely in today's multicultural societies, fluid identities and advanced communication technology.

Finally, Cohen's last, but not least important characteristic suggests that diasporic communities, apart from collective identity in the place of settlement, should share a common identity with members of the same ethnic communities in other countries' activities. In the context of this work, the question that rises is whether Bosnian community in Norway share the same identity features with Bosnian immigrants in other countries, or not. It is fairly difficult to evaluate the strength of someone's attachment to various identities (I use plural because I believe we all possess more than one identity) and to measure whether a person identifies him/herself with the one more than another identity. However, we can take some indicators into consideration and

⁶ Svjetski Savez Diajspore Bosnie i Hercegovine [World Diaspora Association of Bosnian and Herzegovina] <http://www.bihdijaspora.com/prva.htm>

threat them as valid. So, through which means do Bosnians and Herzegovinians preserve their ethnic belonging and exercise distinct ethnic practices? While many of them regulated their status in the receiving countries throughout naturalization process or double citizenship⁷, their Bosnian identity is still vivid. There are many organizations and associations that gather Bosnian communities, providing them with different services, benefits, opportunities or simply socialize them. Some are rather informal and usually do not have neither a defined mission nor specific goals, such as local sports, events, and gatherings. These types of voluntary based events do not require any memberships or extraordinary engagement. On the other side, there are several associations that strive to reach and organize Bosnians diaspora beyond the borders of the single country. One of them is Svjetski Savez Dijaspore Bosne i Hercegovine – SSDBIH [World Diaspora Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina], established in 2002 during its first Congress when more than 200 delegates participated representing different associations from 23 countries where Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora has an organized work.⁸ The Association aims to connect and coordinate the work of Bosnian and Herzegovinian associations all over the world and according to the Association's Statue and Declaration, crucial goals are exchange of information and ideas of interest to diaspora. The above overview of Bosnian and Herzegovinian associations shows that a certain awareness of common identity among Bosnians worldwide exists and it is not only on the level of folkloric representation. Formally structured organizations with defined vision and mission towards preservation of cultural identity, such as SSDBIH, clearly fulfill Cohen's last criterion for defining diaspora⁹.

⁷ According to Review of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Immigration (Sektor za iseljenistvo Ministarstvo za ljudska prava i izbjeglice BiH 2008), the majority of Bosnian immigrants have the citizenships of the countries of settlement. For instance, in Australia 80% of Bosnians have Australian citizenship; in Sweden 50.000 Bosnians have dual citizenship; in Germany 38.354 people abandoned Bosnian in favor of German citizenship.

⁸ Official Website of Svjetski Savez Dijaspore Bosne i Hercegovine [World Diaspora Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina] (SSDBIH 2009) <http://www.bihdijaspore.com/prva.htm>

⁹ There are many other relevant association I did not have time and space to address; Bosnian-Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Sciences – BHAAAS (www.bhaaas.org), Savez udruzenja i gradana Bosne i Hercegovine u Republici Austriji, [Union of Associations and Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Republic of Austria], Savez bosanskohercegovačkih udruzenja u Svedskoj [Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations in Sweden], Bosnia & Herzegovina UK Network Birmingham, etc.

At this point, I should also address briefly the Safran's list of diaspora characteristics. Safran's criteria are slightly different from Cohen's, but they remain the same in their key characteristics. Thus, he starts by underlining that original community should spread from a homeland to two or more countries. Again, this is the case with the Bosnian diaspora established by war refugees from early 90s. A second feature is that the would-be diasporic groups are bounded from their disparate geographical locations by a common vision, memory or myth about their homelands. Through my interviews, I noticed that many of my informants have quite same perceptions of both Bosnian and Herzegovinian past and present situation. I will not go in a deep analysis on whether they are right or wrong, seeing that their visions do not often coincide with my understanding, especially about the current Bosnian political situation. However, for sure they have common memories about the country they have left almost two decades ago, even if these memories might differ in their character from person to person. For instance, while some remember the former Yugoslavia and the life in pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina as the *good times*, others do not have same nostalgic feelings. But the myth of the country that Bosnia and Herzegovina used to be is in the collective memory of the Bosnian diaspora. Therefore, it is not surprising that every now and then people recall their memories of the homeland and try to revise and analyze them from the given time distance.

A belief among immigrants that they will never be accepted by their host societies, subsequently developing their autonomous cultural and social needs, is an important characteristic in the conceptualization of diaspora, which Cohen only mentions, while Safran addresses more thoroughly. How does this apply in the Bosnian case? One obvious parameter is immigrants' own impressions of the way they are perceived in the receiving society. While this could be seen as rather subjective indicator and empirically immeasurable, it is still a very important one. Answering the question about his life satisfaction in Norway today, one of my interviewee stressed: "My life in Norway is very satisfying; I have adapted to Norway and the culture. I accepted early that I am different in this society and I have found my place". In the light of the immigrants' autonomous cultural practices, I should mention that apart from the formal association, there are numerous informal social clubs that gather Bosnians in diaspora, organizing exhibitions, music concerts, book launches, humanitarian and fund raising events, etc., through which Bosnians and Herzegovinians satisfy their *autonomous cultural and social needs*.

The next Safran's criterion is very interesting as well. He assumes that diaspora people or their descendants will return to the homeland, should the conditions be proven favorable. If you would ask any Bosnian and Herzegovinian living abroad what the main reason for not coming back to homeland is, you would get different answers, but they all can be summarized in the following: "It is not stable there (in Bosnia); I would not have any job if I go back; I am not coming back because of my children – they go to school here, they have promising careers ahead of them, so why should I go back?". Obviously, they all acknowledge huge differences between the country of their immigration and homeland. Primarily, these differences reflect terms of material independence, political stability, and social care system – the three things that no one can guarantee them in Bosnia. Interestingly enough, many of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway and, I assume, in other countries of immigration as well, strongly believe that they will return to Bosnia upon their retirement. This is a sort of common belief, not only among my informants, but also among people I have personal contact with; my family, relatives and friends. Older generations, who manage to adapt to new societies and successfully integrate into them, look at their current life in diaspora as on episode, a stage of life with its both positive and negative sides, and eventually it will have its end. The plan (or hope) of coming back to Bosnia is what drives them forward. With the younger generation situation is different. For instance, I talked to many people who grew up in Norway and the ambivalence of their identities allows them to feel like home in both Norway and Bosnia. This is an interesting phenomenon that would require more space for elaboration.

Final Safran's feature of diasporic groups, similar to Cohen, is that these groups should continue to maintain support for homeland and therefore the communal consciousness and solidarity enables them to continue these activities. I elaborated above rather thoroughly the phenomenon of Bosnian remittance, which I believe represents an appropriate argument for both Safran and Cohen's criteria. To support my argument I summarize here some of the latest studies on the impact that remittances of Bosnian diaspora have on the homeland's economy. Nermin Oruc, a PhD candidate conducting his dissertation on the economic consequences of conflict-induced migration at Staffordshire University, UK, in his latest analysis asserts:

"Bosnia is the sixth leading country in terms of receiving remittances as a percentage of GDP, around 23%, (World Bank Global Economic Prospects, 2006). Annual inflows of

international remittances, through banking system only, are around 2.4 billion KM (BiH Central Bank, 2008). But the World Association of Bosnian Diaspora estimates these inflows to be at least 6 billion, as the majority of these remittances are sent as cash transfers through informal channels. These remittances inflows are a significant source of income for a large proportion of BiH population [...] There were no extensive analyses of the motives and use of remittances in Bosnia, but some evidence suggests that major part of them are spent on current consumption. The data from the Living in BiH 2004 survey shows, that approximately 11% of the households in Bosnia-Herzegovina receive remittances” (Oruc 2011, p.2).

It is unbelievable, concludes Oruc, that Bosnia, as a country with one of the largest diaspora as a share of country’s population, does not have an institution such as a Ministry of Diaspora. This sort of institutional state body is more than needed to coordinate and channel the obvious impact that remittances have on the country’s economic development.

In conclusion, my elaboration on diasporic features was primarily focusing on Cohen’s and Safran’s criteria. These authors addressed the phenomenon a systematic way which I found adequate and suitable for the conceptualization of Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway. Therefore, in the context described above, we surely can speak about Bosnians in Norway as a proper diasporic group. As demonstrated, all the criteria in defining diaspora were met and all the essential features that Cohen and Safran outlined were found in the case of Bosnians in Norway.

3. EXISTING STUDIES OF BOSNIANS AND HERZEGOVINIANS IN NORWAY

While conducting the material and structuring the outline for the study, I have faced quite a few problems regarding literature accessibility. A lack of available studies on Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway came as a negative surprise to me. Taking the current number of the community and the influence on the Norwegian immigration policy caused by refugees in 90s, more comprehensive studies of Bosnians and Herzegovinians would have been expected. The reasons for such shortage in both academic and empirical studies may be various, but in my opinion there are two most important factors causing such an outcome.

First, Bosnians and Herzegovinians are considered to be highly successful in the terms of integration into the Norwegian society and no significant turbulences in the process of integration have been occurred. Successful integration was the result of quite a few other factors. Karin van Salm et al. (1997), for instance, underline the way how Bosnians and Herzegovinians were accepted. In the study of life satisfaction and competency among Bosnians in Norway, Karin van Selm et al. note that “Bosnian refugees reported higher life satisfaction and higher feelings of competence when they experienced positive reactions from the majority group” (Van Selm et al. 1997, p.143). In this context, Svein Blom’s (2004) study on the labor market integration of refugees in Norway showed that sympathy and good will towards the Bosnians seem to have benefited not only Bosnians, but the refugees from other parts of the former Yugoslavia too. “The effect was, however, apparently stronger for refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, who were the focus of the organized campaign” (Blom 2004, p.27).

Hence, the positive result of integration and fairly high life satisfaction of Bosnians and Herzegovinians reported in the initial field works did not trigger the researchers’ curiosity. They focused their studies mainly on social anomalies connected to arriving immigrants and their failure to become functional part of the mainstream society. In the case of Bosnians and Herzegovinians the transition was not significantly dramatic. To quote Karin van Salm et al. (1997) “marginalization was not supposed to be a real acculturation option for Bosnians and Herzegovinians” (Van Selm et al. 1997, p.143). In the other words, the major characteristic of the Bosnians refugees upon the arrival in Norway was, indeed, the strong decision and willingness to integrate in the Norwegian society.

Looking at the work by the abovementioned authors, it would be wrong to say that studies and analyses of Bosnian immigration in the Norwegian context do not exist at all. One of the few qualitative studies conducted on Bosnians and Herzegovinians integration in Norway was *Refugee Families' Experience of Research Participation*, done by Kari Dyregrov, Atle Dyregrov and Magne Raundalen (2000) from the Center for Crisis Psychology in Bergen¹⁰. This was the follow-up of the 1997 Dyregrov and Raundalen's study on how parents and children had communicated about their decision to stay in Norway or return to Bosnia. As the authors noted, all the parents and teenagers missed their homeland and would chose to return to Bosnia if "everything could be as before" (Dyregrov et al. 2000, p.416). The younger children who did not remember Bosnia wanted to stay in Norway, that they now called their *homeland*. However, two-thirds of the adolescents had a strong wish to go back to Bosnia, but had to reconcile with the fact that it would be impossible to go back in the nearest future (Ibid. p.421). In connection with these new thoughts, they had also started planning for an education in Norway. The article by Laura Huttunen, although primarily reflecting the study case of Finland, presents an ethnographical study of life in the Bosnian diaspora in the Nordic region. The author analyzes the different power relations that structures interaction among Bosnian diaspora, more precisely "refugees' hesitation between their country of origin and their new country of settlement as their homes in a changing situation" (Huttunen 2005, p.177)

The second reason, in my opinion, for this relatively poor bibliography on Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway could be simply explained as the consequence of both shifts in the global political trends and local Norwegian socio-political discourses. Naturally, after the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, political and humanitarian interest in Bosnian crisis started to fade in favor to more acute and ongoing conflicts across the world. In the meanwhile, first Bosnian immigrants managed to settle down, learn the language, find jobs and establish social networks. A few scholars conducted studies afterwards, mainly focused their field of interest on psychological traumas of refugees' lives, more than on a social, cultural or/and

¹⁰ Most of the studies on Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway have been included in the wider research of immigrant population in Norway and they were mainly conducted by quantitative methodology concerning statistical data measurements (for instance, the work by Van Selm, Lackland and Van Oudenhoven, 1997. *Life satisfaction and competence of Bosnian refugees in Norway*).

economic integration¹¹. From 1998 onwards the increasing number of primarily Iraqi and Somali refugees, but of other immigrants as well, moved the attention of the relevant institutions and scholars from Bosnians and Herzegovinians to other groups because their *case* was considered to be closed.

¹¹ See Lie, L. and Laake, P. 2001. *Traumatic Events and Psychological Symptoms in a Non-clinical Refugee Population in Norway*.

4. PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF THE BOSNIANS AND HERZEGOVINIANS IN NORWAY

4.1. WHY NORWAY?

I will briefly describe the context of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian immigration to Norway. The logical question here is what distinguishes Norway as one of the first Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugee's choices in mid 90s for the longer if not permanent settlement. What differentiates Norway from the other two Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark? Despite their common history, shared cultural values, and humanitarian orientated social traditions, Denmark, Sweden and Norway significantly differ in the terms of immigration policies. Not only the generally accepted opinion that all Scandinavian countries are uniformed in the way they perceive immigrants is wrong, but it could be stated that the discrepancies in the policies actually divide these countries into three different immigration practices. Of course many similarities do exist; the continuous public discourse over the immigrants' impact on the future of the welfare state system is the most noticeable one. All Scandinavian countries acknowledge the welfare system as one of their most important achievements in preserving the fair social distribution of rights and duties. Therefore, the frequently raised question is whether it is possible to reconcile the functionality of the welfare system on the one side and the growing numbers of immigrants on the other side. The issue has been differently addressed and maintained in Sweden, Denmark and Norway, respectively.

Sweden has the longest immigration experience within the Scandinavian context; from the postwar labor immigration in 1950s, over family reunification process towards most recent asylum and refugee crises. This might be one of the reasons for a quite flexible immigration policy in Sweden. The rights of ethnic minorities and the cultural diversity are seen as matters of highest national interest by the state. Hence, it is not surprising that Sweden is one of the few countries that proclaimed multiculturalism¹² its official state policy. On the other hand, Denmark

¹² It could be argued if this formulation is valid. For instance, one of the most prominent critics of multiculturalism, Brian Barry, questions the use of "multiculturalism" to refer to a state of affairs and a political program (see Barry B. (2001). *Culture and Equality, An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*).

differs radically in its current immigration policy and stands for one of the most demanding country for immigrants to integrate. For instance, the notion of *equality* in the Danish context means strict acculturation and full assimilation within the Danish society. Most recent amendments to the policy imply even further restrictions; including that of Danish citizens who are themselves immigrants or second-generation immigrants have to be judged whether they have stronger links with Denmark than any other country (Joumaa 2009).

Norway is a rather specific case. Addressing the immigration challenges Norway is facing, Grete Brochmann descriptively highlighted that “the *welfare state*, the *nation* and the *labor* are the triangle that has defined the scope for immigration in the modern Norway” (Brochmann 2003, p.7). The Norwegian peculiarity is based on several factors. As the official immigration policy lies somewhere between Danish heavy restrictions and Swedish flexible multicultural approach, great focus is given to limited immigration with equality of opportunities. It means that a reason for limited number of immigrants lies between the Norwegian welfare capacity to absorb and maintain the newcomers, on the one side, and the resources for creating the equal opportunity for those who are *accepted*, on the other. To underline Brochmann’s words, “the fundamentally generous welfare model, which embraces everyone but which can be undermined by excessive burdens, necessitates selection and delimitation in relation to potential new members from elsewhere” (Ibid.). In addition to this, the immigration policy makers continuously emphasize importance of immigrants’ duties and obligations. Participation in the society is the crucial prerequisite for maintaining the control over the inflow into Norway.

The number of immigrants in Norway today is still relatively small. According to official Statistics Norway, between 1990 and 2009, a total of 420 000 non-Nordic citizens immigrated to Norway and were granted with the residence. There are 500 000 immigrants and 100 000 Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents living in Norway. Together these two groups represent 12.2 per cent of Norway’s population¹³.

Historically, Norway was never a major receiving country in the way that other European countries were after the World War II (namely, Germany and France). During the 50s and until beginning of 70s “a common Nordic labor market was established among Sweden, Denmark,

¹³ Official website of Statistics Norway (Statistics Norway n.d.).

Finland and Norway” (Brochmann 2002, p.59). Even though the scale of immigration compared to others was significantly smaller, Norway followed the predominant pattern in most European immigration countries promoting an *immigration stop* policy, introduced in mid 70s. But the problem was, as Brochmann writes, “to restrict immigration while at the same time letting in labor related to rapidly expanding off-shore oil industry”. While policy regulating labor immigrants changed over the years, the core of the regulations remained much the same. Lately, the visa policy is used rather frequently in order to regulate immigration; therefore, all persons who want to work in Norway (except the EEA citizens) need to have a work permit. On the other hand, the settlement permit was introduced with the Immigration Act of 1988 and it encompasses residence and work permit. Nevertheless, it is the asylum and refugee policy that attracts most of the attention and provoke controversies. The primary reason for a change of direction in the Norwegian refugee policy at the end of 20th century is the Bosnian war, which Brochamann labeled *a marker in Norwegian Refugee Policy*. She continues:

“...these changes were engendered by the situation in the former Yugoslavia, but should also be seen as reflecting something more than this. The authorities have wanted to extend the range of solutions available to them as far as types of protection are concerned, as well as pave the way for greater flexibility in enforcing policy” (Brochmann 2002, p.62).

The way in which Norwegian authorities extended their range of solutions was to amend the Aliens Law from 1988. The amendment suggested that refugees should be granted with the collective temporary protection. It happened only twice that official immigration policy made this, both times during the 90s; first with the wave of refugees from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993, and second time in 1999 after the conflict on Kosovo (Bratsberg et al. 2007, p.274).

4.2. THE BOSNIAN REFUGEES AND SETTLEMENT

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of 90s made half of the pre-war population of Bosnia and Herzegovina resettled; either fled from country or internally displaced. More than a million people (out of 4.4 million) fled to other countries and at least a further million were

internally displaced (Sektor za iseljenistvo Ministarstvo za ljudska prava i izbjeglice BiH [Immigration Department, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugee] 2008, p.4). Neighboring countries, such as Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia, hosted almost 40% of the total number of refugees, while Germany (with 157,000) and Austria (with 132,000) received the majority of Bosnian refugees among the European countries. At the same time an outstanding number of Bosnian refugees have been received in USA (390,000), Canada (60,000) and Australia (50,000) (Ibid.).

On the other hand, Norway did not stand out by the quantity of the received refugees, but still it played a very important role for Bosnian refugees in mid 90s. The numbers that Norway accepted were not negligible and for the Norwegian context they were impressive. In the recently updated publication by Statistics Norway *Immigration and Immigrants 2008*, Bosnia and Herzegovina took a second place on the list of immigrants from non-Nordic countries with flight as reason for immigration (Daugstad 2009, p.44). The peak year was 1993, when more than 10 000 Bosnians and Herzegovinians found their salvation in Norway. In total, 14 846 persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina immigrated in Norway between 1990 and 2007. This is the fifth largest immigration group in Norway in that period (Ibid. p.49). Today, Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway numbers 15 918 (Ellingsen et al. 2011, p.22).

As the official immigrant policy for settling refugees in Norway in 1990s was based on the model of dispersion, the political consensus of the authorities was that refugees should be settled in smaller communities as well as in larger cities all over the country (Lie et al. 2001, p.276). In other words, the Norwegian government did not want to reinforce social exclusion of the immigrants. This would, eventually, lead to ghettoization and (maybe) even bigger social restlessness. However, refugees are regarded to be especially vulnerable due to the involuntary and often traumatic nature of their migration, which could lead to adaptation problems (Van Selm et al. 1997, p.143). This is most obvious in the very first months upon the arrival and the Bosnians were not an exception.

“Unlike other refugees in Norway (e.g., Vietnamese refugees) who have the right to stay in the country as long as they desire, the temporary protection granted to Bosnians entails that their eventual repatriation is not theirs to decide. This is to be determined by the

Norwegian government. Not knowing when the government will deem their repatriation possible may put these refugees in a state of uncertainty” (Van Selm et al. 1997, p.143).

Fortunately, the authorities soon recognized the problems refugees were facing and acted promptly. Just upon their arrival, the majority of Bosnian refugees were settled in the regions nearby Oslo where they arrived by planes¹⁴. After few days in Tanum municipality, they were offered to choose between several reception centers¹⁵ situated all over the country. During their stay at these centers Bosnians and Herzegovinians shared common facilities, spent most of their time together and interacted intensively before they were permanently settled in the various municipalities. Regarding my own informants, the majority of them were settled at the refugee reception center at Dale in the Sandnes municipality. After eight months in the center, the first Bosnians started to move out from Dale finding their own place in Stavanger, Sandnes and other neighboring towns.

As I addressed briefly above, some major changes in Norwegian immigration policy took place in 1990s in order to cope with increasing numbers of refugees. Primarily due to the influx of Bosnians, Norwegian authorities amended the Aliens Law from 1988 to allow the granting of temporary protection to specific refugee groups in situations of mass flight¹⁶. The collective protection was initiated as a temporary solution and it was granted upon the expectation that refugees would come back to their home country after an improvement of the conditions. However, the war in Bosnia lasted longer than everyone expected. Even the war aftermaths did not give much hope for the normalization of life in Bosnia, and the Norwegian authorities found themselves in the dilemma over the collective protection. By late 1996, Norway “made an

¹⁴ Most of the data regarding the Bosnian refugee reception in Norway have been collected through conversations with my informants. While personal experiences vary from one individual to another I tried to present some of the common pathways shared by majority of Bosnians upon their arrival in early 90s.

¹⁵ Note that upon the arrival in Norway not all of my informants were settled in the reception camps for refugees. Some of them were reunited with the family members who arrived earlier and arranged the accommodation on their own.

¹⁶ Web Archive: (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,USCRI,,NOR,3ae6a8cf0,0.html>).

important policy adjustment whereby it promised permanent residence to most Bosnians in Norway” (Bratsberg et al. 2007, p.273 quoting Brekke 2001). Lie et al. also stated:

“The Bosnian refugees coming to Norway in the period 1991-1994 were granted temporary protection for 12 months. After some months in reception centers they were settled in municipalities throughout the country. Later they could apply for and were all granted, permanent residence on `humanitarian grounds” (Lie et al. 2001, p.277).

It must be noted that the regulations of the Norwegian immigration policy at the time were fairly favorable towards refugees from Bosnian and Herzegovina. Even though the Dayton Peace Agreement which ended the war in Bosnia was signed in December 1995, the collective protection of Bosnian refugee was not lifted until the end of 1998. This circumstance allowed many Bosnians more time to adopt and integrate. Hence, after the protection was outlawed and the regulations predict that return migration should take place, very few actually came back. Analyzing the figures of the return behavior among refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo, Bratsberg, Oddbjørn and Sørliie showed that less than 24% Bosnians had left Norway by 2004, more than 10 years after arrival. In comparison, 63% of the Kosovars left Norway within four years from their arrival (Bratsberg et al. 2007, p.274). Bratsberg et al. note in their conclusion that the changes in the Norwegian refugee policy and differences in economic and political conditions in Bosnia and Kosovo, retrospectively, were among the most plausible explanations of the diverse paths that these two groups took when it comes to process of repatriation. However, if we further analyze the process of integration among Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees, this conclusion may not be the only reason for significantly low return rates. The local Norwegian circumstances were not that great for immigrants’ settlement, either. At the time of Bosnian and Herzegovinian resettlement in Norway, the country was “in the middle of one of the strongest economic downturns since World War II (the unemployment rate peaked at 6.1 in 1993)” (Ibid.). The economic situation and the uncertainties over their resident status encouraged Bosnians and Herzegovinians to take prompt actions regarding their future lives. Early initiatives in the job market and eagerness in learning the Norwegian language emphasize the Bosnians and Herzegovinians willingness to integrate as soon as possible, to become independent and

subsequently to avoid possible repatriation. Finally, the low number of returns shows that they have pretty much succeeded in this.

4.3. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

Education, employment and household income are the most often scanned and analyzed areas to detect immigrants' integration in a new society. Education is especially an interesting parameter because it can show some future trends in the immigrants' development. The Norwegian statistical analysis *Immigration and Immigrants 2008* (Daugstad 2009) shows that the largest group of immigrants in tertiary education, aged 19-24, is from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ibid. p.56). The number of students between 24-29 years is lower, but still fairly high (Ibid. p. 80). Equally important is the report's labor statistic which shows a high level of Bosnians and Herzegovinians enrolled in the labor market. On the list of employed immigrants, Bosnians and Herzegovinians rank at the fifth place, but they are first among non EU/EEA countries immigrants (Daugstad 2009, p.102). According to the Norwegian statistic report, when it comes to gender equality in the Norwegian labor market there are significant differences in the level of employment among women with different country background. Here too Bosnians are ranked fairly well:

“...we see a high level of employment among women from the largest Eastern European group, which is also heavily dominated by refugees, namely Bosnia-Herzegovina. A total of 63.6 % of the women were employed in this group, while men had a share of 66.6 %. In other words, the group is equal with regard to gender employment levels” (Daugstad 2009, pp.89–90).

Karin van Selm et al. offered an explanation for such gender balance and positive integration of Bosnian refugees into the Norwegian labor market. They assert that it “may be the consequence of a relatively small cultural distance between Bosnia and Norway, so that gender roles in Norway are hardly different from those in Bosnia (for example, women's participation on the labor market may be comparable in the two countries)” (Van Selm et al. 1997, p.147).

Another integration parameter goes hand in hand with employment: the household income. Immigrants' average net household income is markedly lower than the average income for the population as a whole (Thorud 2008, p.44). However, immigrants, as a whole, are very heterogeneous group and their incomes vary significantly. A household income varies due to country of origin, length of residence in Norway and the reason for immigration. Naturally, immigrants from Nordic countries and Western Europe who came as working migrants with pre-established contracts have a median income at the same level as the local population. Further statistics show that immigrants and Norwegian-born from immigrant parents with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian background are ranked at the very good fifth place, right after United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and Germany (Daugstad 2009, p.110, Figure 5.1). While some immigrant's groups are exposed to a high risk of having a household income below the low income threshold, the report excludes Bosnians from the list, stating that most of their income comes from paid work (Daugstad 2009, pp.116–117, Table 5.4). On the other hand, the general conclusion is that Norwegian-born from immigrant parents have an higher income than their parents. This is rather understandable, and the case of Bosnian immigrants proves the same. Hence, "those with parents from the Philippines and Bosnia-Herzegovina also have higher incomes than the whole population in the same age group" (Ellingsen et al. 2011, p.106). I found this particular statistics quite useful as an argument that younger generations of Bosnians in Norway are less burdened in the terms of incomes and financial stability, which results in stronger cohesion among them in contrast to their parents. I will elaborate this later, but what I believe is happening is that first immigrants (refugees) from Bosnia and Herzegovina lost their initially strong connections and cohesion partly due to financial struggles they went through in the process of adaptation and integration to Norwegian society. Their children were spared from that side and job opportunities for them were and are much wider.

Regarding the political participation and representation, Bosnians and Herzegovinians are not significantly successful in this field, comparing to other immigrant's groups. Prior to the 2007 election, almost 1 800 immigrants and Norwegian-born from immigrant parents were nominated in the electoral lists, among which most candidates were from Iran (100), followed by Bosnia (77) and Pakistan (59) (Daugstad 2009, p.129). However, a rather small number of Bosnian candidates was elected (only 6%), which confirms very low participation of Bosnians and

Herzegovinians in the voting process. One of the reasons for poor voting participation might be connected to the electoral tradition back in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The quite stagnant political atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the war, despite the government transitions, made people start doubting in their power to make changes through the vote. It is surprisingly, however, that Bosnians who have lived in Norway for almost two decades follow the same pattern.

4.4. SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ORGANIZATIONS

Similar to other countries of Bosnian and Herzegovinian immigration, Norwegian Bosnians do not have a strong organization, which gathers all the members of the community. Again, this should not be taken literally since there is a difference between formally organized associations and informal groups. Officially, World Diaspora Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SSDBIH) is one of the strongest associations, in Norway, as well. Most of the local organizations and social clubs have joined the SSDBIH and subordinate their work under this umbrella association. Among others active organizations are Stecak – Bosnian-Herzegovinian Youth organization in Norway, Udruzenje Gradjana Bosne i Hercegovine Trondheim (Association of Bosnians and Herzegovinians Trondheim), Bosnisk-norsk handelskammer BNHK (Bosnian-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce BNHK) Islamska Zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine u Norveskoj (Islamic Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Norway)¹⁷. The common interest of all abovementioned associations is to promote the Bosnian culture in diaspora and to preserve the Bosnian language and traditions. If we take in consideration similar organizations in neighboring Sweden, for instance, we can argue about the success of the Norwegian organization in reaching their goals. For example, Bosnien-Hercegovina riksförbund i Sverige – BHRF (Bosnian-Herzegovinian Association in Sweden) was established in June 1992 and it is one of the first associations registered in diaspora after the Bosnian and Herzegovinian independence in March that year. Today it gathers 105 local Bosnian organizations with more than 16 000 members; it has full time employee personal and 35 supplementary schools in which

¹⁷ Official websites: Stecak <http://www.stecak.no/>, Udruzenje Gradjana Bosne i Hercegovine Trondheim <http://www.ugbih.com/>, Bosnisk-norsk handelskammer BNHK <http://www.bnhk.no/>, Islamska Zajednica Norveske <http://www.izbih.no/>

children with Bosnian background can learn or improve the proficiency of their mother language. So what makes such a huge difference between Norway and Sweden? Obviously, the first thing is the number of diaspora in these two countries. While there is somewhat less than 16 000 Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway, Sweden's diaspora numbers more than 70 000 (Sektor za iseljenistvo Ministarstvo za ljudska prava i izbjeglice BiH 2008, p.58). In such circumstance it is understandable that BHRF is that superior in comparison with any other Bosnian organization in Norway. But what I understand as equally important is the structure and historical background of the Bosnian diaspora in Norway and Sweden, retrospectively. In Norway, it was a young, first generation diaspora which flew from war in the 90s and settled in the county without any knowledge of what to expect. A very few have regulated their status as asylum seekers, through family reunification or in some other arrangements. In Sweden, on the other hand, situation was slightly different. During the 60s and 70s when the labor immigration bloomed in the Western Europe, Bosnians were settling down in Sweden as a part of labor migration from former Yugoslavia. Though the numbers were not significant, the experience this small group of guest workers shared with the refugees in 90s surely made their arrival and adaptation much more comfortable. Hence, it is not surprising that BHRF is one of the best organized associations of Bosnian diaspora not only in Scandinavian context, but worldwide.

As I stressed earlier in this work, aside from officially registered organizations, there is quite a large social network of informal connections and relations among Bosnians in Norway. These relations are based on common interests and personal preferences. Several indicators determine this polarization. First, if we analyze the structure of the refugees arriving at the beginning of 90s, it is noticeable that these groups were fairly coherent in the terms of their geographical background. In other words, it is possible to, quite precisely, divide Bosnian community in Norway according to their place of origin in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hence, we can distinguish several major subgroups: Hercegovci (inhabitants of south Herzegovina region), Kraisnici (inhabitants of west Krajina region), Istocnjaci (people from east of Bosnia) and Posavci (people from north region of Posavina). Furthermore, another classification can be drawn based on the cities and towns that Bosnians are coming from. Some of the major groups are from Mostar, Capljina, Prijedor, Kozarac, Bihac and so on. Many of Bosnian refugees arrived in Norway in groups consisted of people from the same areas as they are; they flew together from Bosnia and eventually they were allocated in the same reception centers upon the arrival in Norway. All

these experience tightened their internal relations. As result, even today small informal groups of Bosnians coming from same town gather separately from the rest of the community. For instance, a football game is organized every Sunday for all Bosnians in Stavanger. As I was told by my informants, apart from this one there is another team that plays on Thursdays and it is consisting of Mostaraca (people from Mostar). Though it might seem as a trivial example, I believed it can be useful to show my point.

Another factor that reinforces engagement in informal social networking rather than formal is the *way of life in Norway*. This phrase has been repeatedly used by majority of my interviewees to described one of the main reasons for the weakness of the community cohesion. First of all, by using the *way of life in Norway* as an argument in their answers, my informants did not necessarily imply anything negative. My understanding was that usage of this phrase has neutral rather than negative meaning on the connotative level. It presumes that *way of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina* was different from that in Norway. “Life in Norway is different in that way that we have to work hard to secure our children’s future because we do not have many family and friends here”, asserted one of the interviewees. I am not going into deeper elaboration of different perceptions between the lives back in Bosnia and here in Norway; I will reflect upon this in my analysis of interviews later on. For now it is worth noticing that while it causes less often and less intense social life within the Bosnian community, the *way of life in Norway* has many positive sides. Beside its fundamental benefits of freedom, security and stability, quite a few of my informants insisted that they are now paying more attention to the nature; “we spend more time in long walks in the nature, outdoor activities, hiking and in general we appreciate the opportunity of the better life conditions we are able to have in Norway”.

The impression that I received from my contacts, in Stavanger at least, is that no one is against any form of association which would bring together Bosnian community members. On the contrary, many have stressed that such organization is more than welcome, if not needed. But, at the same time, my impression is that no one is ready to dedicate her/his free time for such project, even when it is nothing more than participation in a collective annual dinner. Bosanskohercegovacko Udruzenje Stavanger (Bosnian-Herzegovinian Association Stavanger) has been organizing the annual gathering of Bosnians in the past years, but according to their experience the feedback was disappointing: “In the previous years, we have been organizing this

dinner expecting for many people to respond. Unfortunately, last year we have prepared the food for at least 150 people, and only 30 have showed up”¹⁸. Based on my own experience and my research, I will elaborate in the conclusion chapter of this thesis what I believe to be the reasons for such situation among the Bosnian community.

¹⁸ The organization’s official website, 2009 http://bihudruzenjestavanger.com/BiH_udruzenje/Arhiva.html.

PART II

5. THE CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

5.1. PREPARATION FOR RESEARCH

My case study is represented by the Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Stavanger, Sandnes and surrounding areas, where the majority of my informants were coming from (although other places were not excluded). The initial contact with the sample group was established through family and friends' suggestions and recommendations. The interviews were anonymous, though the sample was selected with the respect of age, sex, marital status and educational background. In total, 30 people were involved in the research.

A study that deals with individual's everyday life experience, social networking, interaction and internal group cohesion requires usage of several methodological tools. As I noted before, my personal background allowed me to study my informants not only by what they were answering in the questionnaires, but also to analyze their behavior, the why they engaged into our conversation, their non-verbal expressions and so on. This was obviously possible because both my interviewees and I speak the same language. Nevertheless, I did need a decent preparation before I started collecting the data. While preparing for my work, I searched for similar studies done by other researcher and tried to identify which methods of data collection would be the most appropriate for my case study. The lack of studies focusing particularly on Bosnian community in Norway forced me to look for a wider perspective. Hence, I decided to go deeper into studies that were dealing with the immigrants to Norway in general and then make use of those parts relevant for my research. Eventually, the study of the social integration of first generation immigrants and refugees in Norway came out as a great finding. This PhD dissertation done by Marko Valenta helped me to identify major methodological approaches to my referent group. As the author stressed, experiences, meanings and presentations of self in everyday life are abstract concepts; in order to understand them usage of methods that focus on the qualitative rather than on quantitative aspects of the phenomena are required.

5.2. CHALLENGES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

In general, the comparison between quantitative and qualitative research methods is a never ending debate. Many disagree about the usage of these methods in the research field. It is essentially important to understand how quantitative and qualitative research represents a very different way of thinking about the world. While quantitative methods suggest that reality can be measured by usage of the right research instruments, the qualitative doctrine teaches us that realities of the research settings and the people involved are mysterious and can only be interpreted. There is no exact and accurate finding independent from particular areas of social life and the context of the study. Therefore, qualitative methods suggest open-ended approaches, where researchers are invited to go deeply in their study and explore all possibilities and variables. Holliday (2007) underlines that there is nothing wrong in taking an advantage of the personal connections and everyday life circumstances in which researchers might be involved. He called this *opportunism*, but at the same time, “the judicious balance between taking the opportunity to encounter the research setting while maintaining the principles of social science” (Holliday 2007, p.8) is highly required from the researchers. Usage of opportunism in the research field, however, raises the question of subjectivity. While subjectivity is a relevant approach in qualitative research, it is its main challenge, as well. It is not always clear where researchers can draw the fine line between being opportunistic and being blind on the circumstance which can compromise the research.

I have outlined these theoretical views on different methodological approaches in order to show my own concerns while defining research methodology for this work. What has arisen as a conclusion is that one should not understand the division between quantitative and qualitative research as a rigid categorization. The overlapping between these two concepts is most likely to occur in almost all anthropological, ethnological and sociological studies. Holliday (2007) concluded that qualitative research would always encompass some of the quantitative elements, and vice versa. Addressing the connection between natural science model and qualitative research, Bryman also emphasized that “qualitative research frequently exhibits features that one would associate with a natural science model” (Bryman 2004, p.439). The author, however, further suggests that qualitative research too frequently addresses meanings and very often tends

to assume certain notions, rather than demonstrate them. On the other hand, quantitative statistics are really helpful in grasping, for instance, numbers, volumes and other measurable variables, but they do not reveal fullness of the intentions and motives behind the Bosnian immigrants' behaviors and decisions. Moreover, the reliability of personal information presented in statistics is questionable, seeing that many respondents might have various reasons to conceal or misreport their biographical data. Obviously, the combination of these two approaches was the most appropriate way to work in my research. It gave me ability to utilize all the advantages from both methodological approaches. Of course, the convenience of combining qualitative and quantitative research tools comes with certain challenges.¹⁹ However, even when the researcher chooses one method over the other, there is no guarantee that he would not face some other methodological challenges while conducting the work in the field.

5.3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

Research methods do not need to be seen as mutually exclusive (Denscombe 2007, p.134). Therefore, for my study work I decided to combine different qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the social science researches, this is known as methodological triangulation between methods, and the key to this form of triangulation is to use approaches that are markedly different and which allow the researcher to see things from as widely different perspectives as possible (Ibid., p.135). I used many available statistical data from the official Norwegian Statistics annual publications since they offered a valuable insight into Bosnian immigrants' pathways and their level of integration in Norway. At the same time my primary interest was the analysis of the Bosnian community's internal relations, and to do so I needed more than charts and figures. I looked upon Marko Valenta's methodological solution, seeing his work closely related to mine. He wrote:

¹⁹ For more detail analysis see: Kukushkin, Vadim, "Revisiting Quantitative Methods in Immigration History: Immigrant Files in the Archives of the Russian Consulates in Canada", in *Building New Bridges: Sources, Methods and Interdisciplinarity*, ed. by Jeff Keshen, and Sylvie Perrier (2005, pp. 125-142.)

“I also needed methods and tools that could give me detailed insight of the structure of immigrants’ social world and reveal different distinctive structural and interactional characteristics of immigrants’ personal networks. My ambition here was to use the network concept as an analytical tool rather than as some general metaphor. Therefore, I combined interviews and participant observations” (Valenta 2008a, p.41).

Before I determined my own methodological tools, I had to understand three main types of qualitative data; interviews, observations and documents (Patton 2002, p.4). These three differ by approach to data collection:

“Interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people’s activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions [...] Document analysis includes studying excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records, official publications and reports [...]” (Ibid.).

When I decided to do a field work and to conduct interviews, I was in dilemma which interview tactics I should deploy in order to receive reliable answers from my respondents. The variations of qualitative interviews are numerous, but Patton (2002) outlines three basic approaches to collecting data through open-ended questionnaires: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. For my field work I choose the informal conversational and standardized open-ended interviews. The former “relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of and interaction”, while the latter consist of “a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions” (Patton 2002, p.342). Conversational interviews allowed me to be as much flexible as possible during my work and I used this approach extensively when participating in the group events among other Bosnians and Herzegovinians. Valenta (2008a) asserts that situations which were not defined as formal interviews, such as conversations during observations in the field, were an important source of information. I found myself quite often in the similar situation when my role

“as a researcher was not overtly stressed [...], but the informants knew that I was asking them certain questions because of my scientific work” (Valenta 2008a, p.42). During the gatherings, sports events and coffees I had with my friends, I tended to discuss about the thesis and to ask my friends to express their thoughts with this regard. Even before I officially started with my research, I took the advantage of the events to interact with the potential informants and to establish a network for conducting my interviews. I recall now some of the conversations I had at the time, explaining people the purpose of my work. These conversations helped me to design the outline for my questionnaire, but moreover they provided me with the valuable insights into the groups discourse on how Bosnians perceive themselves as a community in Norway, both externally, in the relation to domestic society, and internally, in the relation among each other. I also used the inputs I was receiving to rearrange my MA thesis and to modify some perceptions and notions I had prior to these interactions. For instance, while talking about the present cohesion among those Bosnians who were received in the same reception centers, my informants asserted that even back then, as it is also today, people from same place of origin in Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to form their own groups within the community. This information opened a new dimension in my study and suggested that I need to consider more indicators when analyzing the relationships among Bosnians in Norway. Furthermore, I use the experience and knowledge gained through these conversations to structure questions for my interviews. After I conducted a several open-ended standardized interviews, it was suggested to me that certain questions might be misinterpreted by the interviewees and could mislead them in their answering. For the sake of clarity, I rearranged and restructured the position of some questions in order to obtain a more natural flow of answers from the interviewee. However, it must be noted that the initial idea and logic behind the questionnaire were not changed and all my respondents had the same opportunity to express their thought and opinions.

Being a part of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian community which I was analyzing, the participant observations as a tool of data collection came forward as a quite convenient method for my study. Becker and Geer defined participant observation as follows:

“By participant observation we mean the method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or

covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time” (Becker & Geer 1957, p.28).

It needs to be said that there are four different roles of observation in the qualitative research. The researcher in the fieldwork may have a role of: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer (Valenta 2008a, p.48 quoting McCall and Simmons 1969). This classification shows different levels of the researcher’s involvement in the referent group interaction. The term *participant observation* covers the first three types, while the last type may be considered as non-participant observation (Ibid.). Hence, I carried out my study using the former; participant observation approach.

In my interaction with the informants and interviewees I tended to start by explaining the topic of my research. In these introductory conversations my prime intention was to bring the thesis’ theoretical framework down to empirical level in order to make sure that my informants could understand what I wanted to achieve through these data collection. This process was followed up by a standardized open-ended questionnaire which I then hand out to my informants to fill in. Some of them answered directly while we were talking, while others used some time to think and they sent me the answers via email or in person. However, my position of participant observer allowed me sometimes to be more flexible in the fieldwork. One of the attractions of this approach is that it relays on the researcher’s *self*. The key instrument of participant observation methods is the researcher as a person (Denscombe 2007, p.221). For instance, while being part of the group interaction, not always had I to introduce myself and explain what I was doing. Quite often I was part of some gathering of Bosnians or an event where only few knew about my research. In these situations I took the advantage of my participant observer commodity. Hence, I was undisturbed to collect my own observations, to memorize certain dialogues and thoughts and to take some notes. I realized only later that participation in these interactions was enormously helpful in the analysis of the open-ended questionnaire. I was able to *read* between the lines many unwritten messages that my responded for various reasons did not want to express or they have simply disregarded them as they were not important.

When it comes to advantages and disadvantages of deployment of participant observation, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration. Marko Valenta underlines that it is important to distinguish between two main positions in the relation between a researcher on the one side, and informants and the study topic, on the other. These two are insider and outsider position:

“Several researchers argue that insidership has several advantages compared to being an outsider [...] Outsidership may limit the understanding of hidden meanings and a deep level of trust with the informant. Their assumption is that the insider’s privileged access offers the researcher insights that are difficult or impossible for an outsider to access. On the other hand, many studies claim that the outsider will be more able to acquire objectivity. Since outsiders will be unrestricted by commitments to the community and any prejudiced practice, they may be able to raise questions that are unlikely to be raised by insiders who are members of that community” (Valenta 2008a, pp.54–55).

It was very relevant, for my study, to look closer at this distinction that Valenta stressed. In his study of the first generation immigrants in Norway, Valenta did a great job in detecting the key advantages and challenges of being an insider-researcher. I found numerous similarities between my own research and the abovementioned. Obviously, the first challenge I faced is that my position of an insider might significantly compromise the final outcome, or rather, the overall picture of the research. Therefore, it was extremely important to define where I should stand in the relation with my informants. Many of my informants and interviewees I have known from before; some of them were close family friends, others were friends I made through the weekly football game and other social gatherings, and some of them were friends of the friends whom I did not know in person, but I did have certain notion of closeness with them. The reason why I emphasize this is that majority of my informants were in the various relations with me and I definitely felt like insider in many ways. In addition, being an immigrant myself who shares the same cultural background with the informants underlined my insidership and gave me a specific position within my own study. The advantages of insidership that Valenta outlined, such as greater access to informants and their willingness for more open discussion on intimacies and social life, I recognized as well, during my interviews and observations. It was obvious that I had a chance to obtain further insights about the informants’ every day experiences and practices,

something that would not be possible if I was an outsider. One sentence from Valenta's observation caught my attention in particular. Explaining how his informants were willing to abandon self-protective behavior because they believed he had a similar social practice to theirs and he was an insider with knowledge about the back stage of immigrants' social life, Valenta stresses that several times he "heard people say: 'I would never say that to them because they would misunderstand me, but you understand what I mean'" (Valenta 2008a, p.55). I experienced exactly the same thing in conversations with my informants; they were *more opened* to me since I can understand what they *mean* by "saying certain things which would be totally misinterpreted by my Norwegian friends" (abstract from questionnaire). In other words, we were *connected* in different dimensions, which allowed me to utilize all the hidden meanings and encrypted messages which could be understood comprehensively only by *one of its one*, only by insider.

On the other hand, disadvantages that go hand in hand with the participant observation are noticeable, as well. Being an insider comes with the risk of putting your own experience above those of others. Referring to Hammersley and Atkinson, Valenta asserts that "researcher may lose the humility and professional caution in her approach; the humility that may characterize a researcher who steps into the field for the first time" (Valenta 2008a, p.56, quoting Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). Several authors underlined that those researchers who are too much involved in the culture they are observing, risking of *going native* (Denscombe 2007, p.222).

"The success of participant observation relies on the researcher's ability, at one and the same time, to be a member of the group being studied and to retain a certain detachment which allows for the research observation aspect of the role. It is vital, in this respect, that the researcher does not lose sight of the original purpose for being there and does not get engulfed by the circumstances or swallowed up" (Ibid.).

"It [going native] means over-identifying with the respondents, and losing the researcher's twin perspective of her own culture and, more importantly, of her 'research' and outlook" (Denscombe 2007, p.223 quoting Delamont, 1992).

In conclusion, what literature suggests is that conformity of insiderness and researcher's ability to identify himself with the subject of the study may lead to blindness towards potential anomalies of the study group, something that is not likely to happen to an outsider. In order to avoid this unwanted circumstance, I tried to stay in line with "professional standards - rigor, coherence and consistency" (Denscombe 2007, p.329) and to maintain a high level of research ethics. At the same time, however, it was impossible for me to overcome my insiderness and to move towards an outsider point of view, seeking for the fairness and objectiveness. I looked in some other studies where participant observation was deployed as a major methodological tool, and I found out that researchers openly wrote about their position of insider. Again, Valenta's work on immigrants' day-to-day life experiences was my major reference since I found remarkable accordance with what I have experienced in the fieldwork. He believes that it would be unfair to interpret his position of the insider and member of the researched community as disadvantage. On the contrary, Valenta felt that "insiderness and subjectivity were an important basis" of his work and it should not be a problem as long as the researcher constantly question and reconstruct its own point of view, assumptions and judgments. While I was conducting my interviews, I questioned myself several times whether I have outlined my questionnaire in a too suggestive way. In other words, had I made my informants answering in the way I wanted them to rather than how they have experienced certain events? This was possible, of course, since we shared same cultural knowledge, and I had some previous insights into their immigration experience before I started my research. However, I ended up concluding that my insiderness did not significantly interfere with the interview's outcome primarily because my concerns that some questions were too suggestive were only that – concerns. The variety of answers from the respondents showed me that my understandings of certain immigrants' experiences were not exactly correct. The assumptions I based on the cumulative knowledge gained over the years through the interaction with friends in diaspora seemed to be inadequate. I was aware that my own immigration experience did not have much in common with those of Bosnians arriving in Norway in early 90s, but I did not expect to find myself in such ignorance. Hence, in many occasions I felt more of the outsider than the insider during the study. Finally, each of the immigrants had his/her unique experience. While I may have narrowed my questions towards the topics I was interested in, this did not simplify nor uniform the answers I got from the respondents in any way.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS AMONG BOSNIANS AND HERZEGOVINIANS

Immigrants create friendships with locals as a part of their attempt to reconstruct their identities and social life after resettlement (Valenta 2008a, p.59). I would add that while reconstructing their identities and social life with locals, immigrants also renegotiate relations with their own ethnic community in the receiving country. These negotiations can result in either strengthening the internal ethnic and group relations or weakening them. Whether the former or the latter prevails, it depends on the social cohesion within the observed community. This is what I wanted to investigate in my fieldwork research.

6.1. THE REFERENT GROUP

Having in mind that it is the interaction and in-group relations what I was interested in, I gather data mainly through qualitative interviews and participant observation. Before I started with the interviewing my major concern was how to select the referent group and how to approach it. The dilemma was embedded in the fact that my interviewing may not result in the wanted fashion due to several reasons. First, I was concerned with whom I should talk to; only those Bosnians who arrived as refugees or those who came through family reunification. Should I be focusing on *older* generations who arrived as grown up and formed individuals, or should I take into consideration younger informants, as well, who were children during the resettlement? Another set of questions was related to the methodological approach which I elaborated in the previous chapter, i.e. how to remain serious and professional with the people who were my friends and acquaintances.

The initial contact with the sample group was established through family and friends' suggestions and recommendations. The interviews were conducted anonymously. The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, although in many cases in discussions with my respondent raised some additional questions, as well. The sample was selected with the respect of age, sex, marital status and educational background. In total, 30 people were involved in the research, of which majority lived in Norway more than 15 years. Twenty were men and 10 were women.

6.2. THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaire outline was structured in two logical and thematical blocks. In addition to introductory demographical questions, the first set of questions was focusing on refugee's personal experiences upon the arrival in Norway, more precisely in the reception centers. For instance, one of the questions was if the respondent has known anybody else in the reception centers and how he/she would describe his/her first impressions after the resettlement. The idea behind was to grasp the notion of social networking at the time and to investigate how important it was for them to have someone whom they can socialize with and talk to.

“We arrived in 1993, together my daughter, wife and I. The first thought that crossed my mind was that I came into unknown. Fortunately, I have an acquaintance in Oslo and I knew I can count on him if I needed anything. I did not care too much about the accommodation; it was nice for a reception center. Besides, I was not expecting to spend too much time over there, hoping I will leave that place very soon. My wife and I did not know many people in the camp, just a few who I knew because they were coming from the same part of Bosnia as me. We became friends with three other families on our floor. We shared common facilities; we cooked and did our laundry together and we drank lot of coffee, too. Basically, all the other activates man could do in such extraordinary circumstances we actually did together” (Abstract from the interview).

“I came directly from the war zone; everything looked like paradise to me and nothing could be wrong after the reunion with our children who immigrated to Norway two years earlier at the age of only 15 and 17. My wife and I stayed at their apartment for a while, and after four months I and my wife rented own apartment. We made friends with the four Bosnian families from the same building. Later on, we met more Bosnians and also a couple of friends from the Norwegian Language course” (Abstract from the interview).

The second set of questions was more related to social cohesion and the intensity of the relations back in 90s and today when all Bosnians and Herzegovinians have moved on and settled down

on their own. In addition, I wanted to explore whether these links faded or not, and what were the reasons (in their opinion) for the possible changes that took place over the years.

“At the beginning, of course, we spent much more time together. Taking that there were people from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina with different social backgrounds, education, and age, the relations were better than anybody would expect. By the time these connections were becoming weaker, people did not have that much time, children started with schools, we found jobs, started to work and so on. People were taking loans, they bought houses, worked a lot to pay off and the differences among Bosnian community became more noticeable as the time was passing. We lose our common *line* – we were no longer Bosnians from Dale²⁰, each family was on its own, alienating itself from the *Dale community*” (Abstract from the interview).

“I would say that ‘birds of feather flock together’. At the beginning it looked like everybody was communicated with everybody, but soon it was obvious that people from the same regions in Bosnia and with similar level of educations inclined to more close relations with each other. For example, within the main organization of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Trondheim established in 1993, certain *regional clubs* were established as well, based on the members’ city of origin: Mostar, Banjaluka, and Sarajevo” (Abstract from the interview).

Everyday life practice presupposes knowledge about norms, values and traditions that are important parts of culture of this society (Valenta 2009, p.181). Feeling of insecurity in everyday life, continues Valenta, and a sense of cultural subordination in relation to the locals, may be amplified if these experiences are combined with difficulties in communication. Analyzing the interviews I noticed that knowledge of the Norwegian language had a significant effect on Bosnian community’s social cohesion and social practices. By mastering the language skills, the Bosnian refugees were no longer dependent only on the internal relations within the reception camp. Gradually, they started to leave the *safe environment* of their ethnic group boundaries and engage themselves in interact with the Norwegians in a much more direct way. One thing led to another, and those who had learned Norwegian soon found themselves fairly competitive in the

²⁰ Dale was a reception center near Sandnes where the majority of my informants were settled.

job market. Reflecting on her experience and the importance of learning the language in the early stage upon the arrival, one of my informants said:

“When we came to Dale at Sandnes municipality, it was a very well organized refugee reception center, and we started learning Norwegian almost from the very beginning. I had already acquired a textbook in Norwegian and also found that watching films on TV was a good way to pick up the language. Soon after that, I got my first job” (Abstract from the interview).

Another respondent who settled in Norway only recently, suggested:

“After only three years that I spent living Norway, I can say that I am satisfy with my life here; both in the terms of the economic stability and my social life, as well. I learned Norwegian good enough so it does not represent any obstacle to me on my job, or in everyday life routines. I found the job fairly soon after I arrived, and in result my life satisfaction grew up significantly” (Abstract from the interview).

Obviously, two main benefits of being able to interact and communicate with the locals would be the feeling of independency and the notion of acceptance by the Norwegian society. Many of the interviewees stressed that they are aware that they will never become entirely Norwegian no matter how much he or she may want it. However, I did not sense any animosity towards Norwegians due to this fact, nor did I get impression that any of them felt excluded from the mainstream society as the result of being Bosnians.

The age classification among the informants was important for my work. The reason is that I wanted to see if there were any difference in the degree of social cohesion among younger generations of Bosnians on one side, and the older, on the other. I got the impression the in-group relation among those Bosnians who were children at the time of arrival is, to the some extent, stronger than relation among their parents. My understanding is that parent generations had totally different integration pathways from their children. The former came in Norway in rather specific situation, at the age when in normal circumstances they would have achieved

certain life goals; a house, a job, careers, maybe some savings, and so on. But in their case the war and the forced migration created new circumstances which demanded a lot of sacrifice. At this stage of life it is not easy to adopt all the cultural codes of the host society. Unlike the younger generations, whom I will address later, the middle-aged people found the integration period quite difficult:

“I came to Norway pretty old (50 years old) and very sick as the result of the war aftermaths. Thus, I never found a steady job, which eventually caused a lot of frustrations and poor economy. On the other hand, in the first years I had a lot more of social activities, comparing to today. Now, I have less capacity and strength than before because of my age and also because I have managed to find a partial job recently. This reduced a number of organizations I usually support and actively take part in” (Abstract from the interview).

Establishing their lives again in the unknown Norwegian society, Bosnian immigrants did not have much of the free time for socializing. Paradoxically enough, those shared memories of the refugee experience that were a sort of glue which kept Bosnian refugees together upon the arrival in Norway, only reinforced the declining of the group ties in the years that came. One interviewee stressed:

“I believe that we all wanted a fresh start; a way to start over, to forget about the hurtful past, the refugee camps, the poverty, and so on. Each and every Bosnian friend also reminds you on the war and all those memories which can be partly suppressed by avoiding much contact with them” (Abstract from the interview).

Employment and participation in the job market are important moments in every immigrant's life. Throughout the migration literature, the widely present idea is that immigrants who are active in the workforce have a better chance of making new connections and becoming involved in the host society. The conclusion seems to be that the degree of immigrants' inclusion or exclusion is largely dependent on what paths of economic integration are open, and the level of access to work (Valenta 2008b, p.3 quoting Næss, 1997; Hosseiny-Kaladjahi, 1997). Referring to

this conclusion, I suggested at the beginning of my thesis that social cohesion of Bosnian diaspora in Norway is may be partly affected by its members' upward mobility. I tried to investigate if the access to better job positions and the career uplift are possible reasons for changes in the community cohesion. For the reason I could not understand, a strange notion of *rivalry* occurred among Bosnians and Herzegovinians in the Norwegian diaspora, at least among those I have the chance to interact with. My personal impression, also supported by some answers I collected from the informants, suggests that relations within the Bosnian community started to fade after people moved upward. In other words, after some of the community members found good jobs, bought or built new houses, moved to fancy neighborhoods, purchased new cars, and so on, a sort of comparisons on who *succeeded the most* became a popular topic among Bosnians. According to some people I talked to, this social mobility inevitably led to very subtle competitions and rivalries within the community. It even went so far that these comparisons caused a sort of jealousy and resentment between some members of the community. Of course, not all behave the same and one should not generalize this about the whole Bosnian community. From my point of view, it even was not necessary negative phenomenon, although some of the informants said to me that they felt "a sort of pressure from the community and need to justify their decisions and moves". However, it is hard to empirically measure and evaluate this phenomenon.

On the other hand, the conclusion I reached is that social bonds among younger generation of Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway seems to be slightly stronger than those of their parents²¹. The integration pattern they followed was different and easier comparing to that of their parents. However, it is hard in many ways to compare these two generations. I believe that children had much stronger ability of learning the language, and throughout the education system, as well, they managed to integrate significantly smoother. Of course, they also faced stereotypes and prejudices in schools of being *the other* and different from mainstream, but at the same time growing up *among and with* Norwegians made the integration easier. In addition, the multicultural society in Norway played important role in shaping their future social networks:

²¹ I have to clarify that I purposely do not talk about first and second generation of immigrants, seeing that most of those I refer as younger generation were actually born in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They have migrated as children and practically they are can not be defined as a second generation of immigrant parents.

“I was only 5 years old when we came to Norway. We came to a big residence in or outside Oslo. This was I believe a hotel which was made into a reception center for all Bosnian fleeing from war in the Balkans. I do not know if it was only Bosnian there but this is the impression I have. However, today I have friends from many countries; Norway, Bosnia, Turkey, Pakistan, Albania, Russia, just to name some of the more frequent ones. They all have bigger or smaller differences but I have gotten so used to adapt to them that I even do not notice it. I find myself in a melting pot and this does not bother me” (Abstract from the interview).

Speaking of younger generations of Bosnians, I have to touch upon an interesting observation in regard to Bosnians’ intimate relationships with the locals (i.e. marriage and dating). Valenta (2008a) suggests that immigrants may also interpret the fact that he/she is married with the native person as an important symbol of acceptance. However, I noticed that very few Bosnians I had chance to interview have Norwegian partners. It is not that my informants did not have close relations with Norwegians; on the contrary, many of them have Norwegians as best friends (for instance, made of honor and/or best man in their wedding). Nevertheless, only two of them happened to have long and serious relationship with Norwegian partners. Even more interesting is that those two have absolutely different notion of social cohesion within the Bosnian community. One of them asserts that his Bosnian ethnic background and culture are very important in his life, and the relations with the community he belongs to are highly valued. On the other hand, the second respondent stressed that she does not pay too much attention on her bonds with the community as she does not see her ethnic background as her major identifier. However, neither of them felt excluded from the Bosnian community due to fact of having a Norwegian partner.

Finally, I try to demonstrate that shifts in the level of social cohesion within Bosnian community in Norway are evident. The relations between my informants today compared to the first years of the resettlement are hardly the same and my prime interest was to understand why this happened. It looks like as a self-explanatory and perfectly normal process that occurs once immigrants settle down in a host society. However, being a part of the community I studied, I was familiar with the distinct Bosnian mentality, which usually implies a high level of group cohesion and

even intimacy. This is the reason why I assumed that the Bosnian community would *do better* to preserve internal bounds and connections. But almost all of my informants stressed that work, career and consequent lack of free time made them less active in the group events and social gatherings. To be fair enough, and I elaborated this earlier in the work, there are no many active Bosnian organizations that would initiate and maintain these gatherings more often. The early attempts to organize an annual joint dinner which would gather people, in this case from Stavanger and Sandnes, failed and many gave up from further similar projects. At the same time, all of my informants touched upon the issue of *losing the bonds* regardless on topic we were talking about, stating that it is a shame that “we are not better organized”. I wanted to emphasize further the importance of this problem by addressing the question of possible reasons for loosing the bonds with other compatriots. The range of variety in the informants’ answers shows the complexity of the phenomenon:

“We are getting ‘diluted’ by the Norwegian culture and the roots with the homeland are getting weaker. I believe this is the nature of living abroad. Time has this effect on us. In the same time the culture is changing in Bosnia, as well, and we are not part of this change. Also, today we do not live in the *Bosnian* camps anymore; we are spread all over Norway which makes it more difficult to keep in touch” (Abstract from the interview).

“Since we left the camps the strong bonds between us slowly vanished. When my parents decided to move to Stavanger we lost even more contact with the ones from the first year. The same kids I used to play football with every day, now I have only as friends on Facebook and we have only talked once or not at all. Today I have more Norwegian friends than I had back then” (Abstract from the interview).

“Yes, I believe that our relations becoming weaker and they continuously go downwards. One of the crucial reasons is that Bosnians stick together very close during and soon after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They talked a lot about the situation in Bosnia, hoping to find out something new about what was happening back there. But it has been more than 16 years since the war ended, and while many hoped to return, eventually very few did. In the *new home* and in the pretty much normal circumstances

we lost the solidarity and the compassion we were so ready to share in the war time” (Abstract from the interview).

“A lot of time has passed, and people have gone their separate paths. Children have grown up, made their own families, and integrated well into the Norwegian society, got Norwegian friends and jobs. Now there is nothing holding them together except a common history” (Abstract from the interview).

“I do not see why it happened, but it just did. We all went in different directions. For instance, I have put down my socializing with other Bosnians on minimum, only few I knew even before we came to Norway are still my regular friends. It must have to do something with the people’s characters and probably with their backgrounds. I am not saying that I am superior or anything, but obviously my interests and priorities are a bit different from others. Some talk only about what happened back in Bosnia, what politician said or did this or that, and so on. Do not get me wrong, I am Bosnian and I love that country, but I love Norway as well, I live here and I cannot look back all the times” (Abstract from the interview).

“I do not think there is anything special I can tell about our [Bosnian] relations here in Stavanger. Things changed; it was different situation in Dale, we were different... Today we are part of this society; we are not just some refugees that need help from others. It would be wrong if we stayed the same: jobless and dependent. I am glad we are moved forward in big steps. Of course, we do not hang out as we did before, but I ensure you we all know what is going on in each other lives [smile]” (Abstract from the interview).

So, what can be interpreted in conclusion as a major reason for Bosnians and Herzegovinians having their social cohesion weaken throughout last 18 years or so? Based on my study I am fairly convinced to say that level and intensity of the in-group relations have changed and that today people interact significantly less than before. It is, however, very difficult to simply name one denominator which would explain this phenomenon. It is rather a set of complex events, circumstances and process that are common for all immigrants’ community, and Bosnians in

Norway were not an exception. There are, of course, many particularities related to the specific immigrant community and the given context they find themselves in. In this case we might talk about the relatively favorable Norwegian immigration policy towards Bosnian refugees after their resettlement. It surely had a great effect on the integration process and subsequently the internal group cohesion. Still, all these particular indicators need to be drawn into a wider picture, and only then we can understand the complexity of relations within diasporic communities.

7. CONCLUSION

In the last chapter of this work, I will present some conclusions through which I believe to explain the internal changes of Bosnian and Herzegovinian community in Norway. Before proceeding, I will first summarize the major concepts addressed in this work and remind of the key question I aimed to answer.

Following the introduction where I described the background and contexts of the both Bosnian immigrants and the host society, the terminology chapter aimed to clarify the meanings and usage of the terms I dealt with throughout the work. I started by analyzing the notion of self-representation among Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway. I suggested that shifts in the way Bosnian community negotiated its collective identity largely depended on how they were perceived by the host, and additionally what their formal residential status at the given moment was. Today, references to the refugee identity occur only when Bosnians address the experiences from the first years after the resettlement. The *Bosnian diaspora* and their ethnic group belonging are the most often used terms of self-identification in everyday communication.

Further on, the concept of diaspora was probably the crucial point for my work. In order to conduct any serious research on Bosnian diaspora in Norway, I had to define it first. In other words, any would-be diaspora must have its theoretical foundation and framework. Certain criteria must be met before an immigrants' community can claim to have diasporic features. For my study I decided to focus on the Cohen and Safran's classification, which can be seen as a sort of *diaspora checklist*. The question was whether we can see Bosnians in Norway as organized and structured diaspora in the terms that these two respectable authors outlined. Analyzing the empirical indicators and opposing them to the theory, I showed that Bosnian community in Norway is, indeed, a proper diasporic group. All the major requirements for immigrants' group to being classified as diaspora were met and validate (being displaced as a result of fleeing aggression, spread from homeland in several countries, preserving a common vision and memory about the homeland, organized as distinct ethnic and cultural community, maintain support for homeland, and etc.). In addition, I believed it was important to describe a pattern of the Bosnian and Herzegovinians immigration to Norway. I abstracted some of the key points: war in Bosnian as a push factor, reasoning behind Norway as their final destination, Norwegian immigration

policy at the beginning of 90s, integration process and its indicators, and the present Bosnians and Herzegovinians participation in the host society.

Defining Bosnian diaspora in Norway was important for my work from the conceptual point of view, whereas my empirical study needed a clear definition of phenomena such as social mobility and social cohesion. The former was defined as any transition of an individual or social object or value from one social position to another, while the latter was described as a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society characterized by distinct attitudes and norms, such as a sense of belonging and willingness to participate. What I wanted to show is that these two concepts were interconnected in the contextualized case of Bosnian diaspora in Norway. I argue that traces of social mobility are more than obvious if we closely analyze Bosnian diaspora through the period of time. From reception camps where their social positions and the roles they performed were rather marginal, they moved forward tremendously. Today a case of Bosnians' integration into Norwegian society is a quite successful story. Not only, had all of my informants expressed their belief that Bosnians are now fully accepted by Norwegians, but also many official data support such assumption. The SOPEMI Report for 2010 (Thorud 2010, p.41) revealed that the number of nationals from Bosnia and Herzegovina is one third of what it was in 2001 and this is due to naturalizations, and not to return-migration. The positive results are visible also when it comes to education, labor market, household income, participation in the society and so on.

As I noted, my intention was to investigate whether this upward or vertical mobility affected social cohesion among Bosnians. First of all, I believe it did; not necessarily as the main reason for weakening the community's bonds, but surely it did have an effect. I would argue that a better social positions and subsequent higher income became the main reference among Bosnians in Norway in order to measure life satisfaction and success. One's own success or failure is validated not primarily against standards of local Norwegian community, but rather in comparison with other Bosnian compatriots. This may also explain the rivalry among Bosnians that some of my informants mentioned during the interviews. But I also see these comparisons as an indication that there is still a strong notion of the community belonging among Bosnians. In other words, seeking for validation and confirmation of the personal success from other

community members shows that many Bosnians do care about the image and reputation they have among others. Their day-to-day relations may be faded during the years, but, in my opinion, none of my informants was absolutely uninterested and ignorant towards the interaction within the community. As one of them stressed; “we all know what is going on in each other lives”.

Speaking of group cohesion decrease, all of my informants named the lack of free time to be their primary cause for poor networking and socializing with the compatriots. Obviously, long working hours, children, homework and so on, are relevant justifications, but, on the other hand, I argue that *free time* is matter of time management. I got the impression that many of the people I interviewed would rather go on tour in nature, for instance, than paying a visit to friends. While absolutely greeting the active and healthy way of life, I must admit that this was surprising to me. Again, it is just matter of personal choice and preference if and with whom one would like to spend free time.

Yet, another reason my informants stressed is the quite bad condition in which Bosnian and Herzegovinian social organizations and clubs are at the moment. I elaborated this topic extensively in my work; I will only remind here that there are circa fifteen Bosnian association and clubs in Norway, out of which only few are properly active. In my conclusion, I would argue that such poor formal organizing is rather consequence than cause of the in-group cohesion decrease. What I am saying is that weakening of in-group interactions and connections led gradually to the disintegration of many Bosnian associations and social clubs, and not vice versa. In my observation and interviews, I noticed that people were too often ready to criticize the work and purpose of the associations, but at the same time their willingness to take a proactive role in making these associations and clubs stronger was minimal. Again, the reasons for not doing so are personal in their nature. As some respondent said, the painful memories from the war could be discussed in these gatherings, and many would like to avoid this by simply not taking part in the associations and clubs’ activities.

In summary, the answer on my research question - to which extent does upward mobility within Norwegian society affect social cohesion among Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Norway? – is not simple and straight forward. First of all, I have to admit that the question itself

was rather clumsy constructed. It was quite narrowed in its scope, whereas the fieldwork I carried in the real circumstances turned to be complex. To start with, I assumed that upward or vertical mobility will be the main cause for the decreasing notion of social cohesion in Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Norway. While I proved that it did take part in the lives of majority Bosnians since their resettlement, the changes in the groups' social cohesion were due to many reasons and most certainly not exclusively due to the community members' upward mobility. It was only one of the processes that Bosnians went through in their integration period. Having this said, I do not imply that upward mobility occurred in each individual case of Bosnian immigrants to Norway. However, almost all of my informants expressed satisfaction with their current life standard, seeing themselves in pretty much high position in the social ladder.

At the very end, I should give a final comment on the two hypothesis I outlined in the introduction: 1) social cohesion among Bosnians and Herzegovinians was affected by social mobility of the group; and 2) if it is true that group cohesion among Bosnians in Norway is connected with their social mobility, the cohesion is not necessary decreased by this mobility, but in some cases it could increase the strength of the in-group interaction.

From this point it was naive to expect that Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway would maintain a same degree of group closeness as they had just after resettlement. As presented, one of the factors that contributed to the community cohesion shift was indeed upward mobility. It was not the main cause, or maybe not even the prevailing one, but I showed in this work that there was no one main cause that determined the trend of changes in the internal relations of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Norway. Therefore, the first hypothesis proved to be confirmative.

On the other hand, it is not possible to understand the change of Bosnians' social cohesion rigidly as an increasing or decreasing process. The compromise among my informants on the issue of the community's cohesion level and intensity is fairly clear; certain changes are evident

and there is no question about it. Moreover, the majority is confident that ties and relations are significantly weaker than before, and some would argue that is going even weaker. This would suggest that the community interaction is decreasing. We might take this as a true statement, but only partially. As one of the interviewee observed it is important to distinguish between the volume of social cohesion and its intensity. In other words, there is a difference between the number of people one interacts with, and the strength of one's connections with those he/she interacts. While we can acknowledge that the volume of one's internal contacts is decreased, this also can result in the increased intensity of the relations with those who are in the one's personal social network. "Actually, the bonds with my compatriots are not always weaker", stressed one of my respondent. As he explained, they are just reduced to a fewer number of people (five to ten), but these connections are stronger ones. "Because, after sometime you understand that everybody does not suite to everybody" (Abstract from the interview). For this reasons, the second hypothesis from the above is also confirmative, but only partially.

Social cohesion is determined by the time and context in which is analyzed, and the only way to comprehend its cycles is to look at the wider picture of socio-political and economic trends in the given society. I tried to investigate and explain the phenomenon that is probably common for most immigrants' communities. What made Bosnian case different was my assumption that being *one of them* I would see something that an outsider would not notice. The fact that I knew distinct culture, mentality, values and circumstances of the group I studied gave me a reason to believe that no question will be left unanswered and all unknown will be revealed. To which extent I managed to reach this goal is arguable since my findings were not straightforward as I was expecting them to be. However, what I hope I had accomplished with this work is to show that life in diaspora entails certain features the distinguish members of a given diasporic community from their compatriots in the homeland. Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway and those living in Bosnia obviously share the same cultural code, but the life in Norway significantly shaped diasporic community's views on the world. Sometimes this results in miscommunication and misunderstandings between the two. Therefore, I would like to see this work as a useful reference in the process of reestablishing and straightening the connections not only among Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Norway, but also between them and their compatriots in the homeland.

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