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Return migration, transnationalism and development

**Social remittances of returnees from Sweden to Bosnia
and Herzegovina**

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the effects of return migration on development through the case of returnees from Sweden to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on thirteen in-depth interviews and observation, it examines returnees' 'social remittances', which consist of ideas, practices, and social capital (or social connections) that migrants bring to their countries of origin. The thesis adopts a transnational perspective highlighting returnees' simultaneous connections in their host and home countries. It identifies various types of social remittance transfers such as ideas and practices in the areas of health, the environment and work, as well as social connections with investors, business partners, and political and academic actors in Sweden. One major finding is that returnees' knowledge of the Swedish language, the market, work and business culture contribute to building trust with actors in Sweden, which facilitates trade and investment between the countries. The thesis also highlights a number of economic, political and personal constraints faced by returnees in their return process which, in turn, affect their capacity to transfer social remittances. It concludes that returnees can potentially contribute to development, but their contributions are largely conditioned by the existing social, economic, legal and political environment.

Keywords

Return migration, development, transnationalism, social remittances, social capital, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Summary

This thesis aims at looking at the effects of return migration on development through the case of returnees from Sweden to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Based on interviewing and observation, it explores returnees' 'social remittances' which consist of ideas, practices, and social capital (or social connections) that migrants bring to their countries of origin. While social remittances are transmitted in a variety of ways, the research focuses on social remittances transmitted in the context of returnees' professional activity. The thesis adopts a transnational perspective as it explores returnees' simultaneous connections in their country of origin and destination.

Section 2 provides a short historical background of Bosnia and its recent political and economic developments and introduces the country's emigration and return issues, with a focus on Bosnian migrants in Sweden.

Section 3 outlines the academic debate on migration and development and presents the main tenets of the transnational approach on migration. It pays particular attention to the concept of social remittances, which is the focus of this thesis. It ends with the definitions of 'development' and 'return migration' adopted in the research.

Section 4 discusses the research methods of interviewing and observation used in the thesis, makes some ethical considerations and introduces the research sample.

Section 5 presents the empirical results. It illustrates various types of social remittance transfers such as ideas and practices in the areas of health, the environment and work, as well as social connections with investors, business partners, and political and academic actors in Sweden. The section ends with a discussion of the main findings regarding returnees' social capital.

Section 6 outlines the principle obstacles faced by returnees, distinguishing challenges related to the returnees' country of origin (BiH), their host country (Sweden) and their personal life course trajectories. In a second stage, it presents two case studies of institutions – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Centres for Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs) – that provide assistance to returnees and seek to enhance the development effects of return migration. These case studies aim to further illustrate the returnees' challenges.

Section 7 discusses the research findings. It argues that returnees can potentially contribute to development, but their contributions are largely conditioned by the social, economic, political and legal environment. It also presents a number of policy considerations resulting from the research findings.

Finally, the last section details the main conclusions and contributions of the research.

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List of abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BHKRF	Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Association in Sweden
BHUF	Bosnian Youth Association in Sweden
CCSN	Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway
CISO	Centres for Information, Counselling and Training of Youth
CLDD	Centre for Local Development and Diaspora
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EUR	Euro
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIPA	Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IT	Information Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MHRR	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
MSC	Migrant Service Centre
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OHR	Office of the High Representative
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
RS	Republic of Srpska
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollars
YERP	Youth Employability and Retention Programme

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the research

Opinions about migration are often negative. In rich industrialised countries, migrants are frequently depicted as a burden to the welfare system and as a potential disturbance for society. In migrant-sending countries, large waves of emigration are seen as a sign of under-development resulting in the fleeing of the workforce. However, migration is also seen in a more positive light as an instrument for development.

Over the last two decades, the issue of migration and development has gained prominence both in policy and academic debates. Migrants are increasingly recognized as playing an active role in the development of their country of origin, notably through the sending of financial remittances, the establishment of trade connections and transfers of knowledge and skills (de Haas 2010; Faist 2008; Skeldon 2008).

In recent years, the 'migration-development nexus' became the focus of a number of international processes including the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) which published its final report in 2005, the United Nations High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development that took place in 2006 and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held annually since 2007. Discussions focus on the ways to increase the positive effects of migration on development, limit its negative effects, notably brain drain, and achieving a 'triple-win' situation that benefits migrant sending countries, receiving countries and migrants themselves (Piper 2009: 93-94; Skeldon 2008: 4-5). The issue of migration and development has also gained prominence in the Swedish debate. In 2009, the government appointed an independent Parliamentary Committee (2011) (the so-called 'Sweden's Committee for Circular Migration and Development') to examine the connection between circular migration and development. The Committee released its final report in March 2011 including policy recommendations to facilitate circular migration and increase its development effects.

In academic circles, the enthusiasm around migration's role for development has prompted more cautious responses. A growing number of empirical studies highlight that migration can increase economic dependency and inequality and argue that its impact on development varies both geographically and over time (De Haas 2010: 248-251; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 1; Raghuram 2009: 107). The rising interest in the issue of migration and development also coincided with a 'transnational turn' in migration studies which highlights migrants' simultaneous connections in their country of residence and in their country of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Ley 2009; Vertovec 2009).

The relationship between migration and development receives increasing attention in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)¹. With 1.35 million Bosnian people, or about 26% of the total Bosnian population, living abroad (BiH Ministry of Security 2010: 62), policymakers seek ways to involve the diaspora in national development. The links

¹ Hereafter Bosnia and Herzegovina will be referred to alternatively as Bosnia or BiH. Bosnian people include Bosnia's three main ethnic communities (Bosnian-Croats, Bosnian-Serbs and Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks).

between migration and development was the theme of a seminar organised by the Bosnian Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees in October 2011 which gathered policymakers, academics and members of civil society from the Western Balkan countries.

1.2 Aim of the research

With migrants being increasingly seen as actors of development in policy discussions, there is a need for exploring migrants' development-related practices. A significant amount of research in the migration and development field focuses on the practices of the migrants residing in the host country, particularly the sending of financial remittances. However, little research has been devoted to the potential contributions of return migration² on development (King 2000). In addition, the majority of studies on migration and development focus on migrants' economic contributions to development, notably financial remittances, while neglecting social ones (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 2; Piper 2009: 94).

This thesis aims to address these two gaps by looking at the effects of return migration on development through the case of Bosnian migrants who have lived in Sweden and have returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (hereafter Bosnian returnees from Sweden). Based on qualitative interviews and observation, it explores returnees' 'social remittances' which consist of ideas, practices, and social capital (or social connections) that migrants bring to their countries of origin (Levitt 1998: 927). The thesis adopts a transnational perspective as it explores returnees' simultaneous connections in their country of origin and destination.

While social remittances are transmitted in a variety of ways, the research focuses on social remittances transmitted in the context of returnees' professional activity. This focus is based on the assumption that such activities are likely to involve significant amounts of social remittance transfers, for instance in the form of knowledge, competence, ideas and social connections. The research has an explorative dimension because it investigates practices of social remittance transfers which have not, to date, been empirically identified and analysed in the case of BiH.

By investigating returnees' social, micro-level, contributions, this thesis challenges the narrow focus on the economic dimension of migration's impacts on development which dominates current academic and policy debates. However, migrants' social contributions to development are not independent from their economic contributions. Just as financial remittances have social impacts, social remittances can have economic outcomes (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 4). For example, migrants' entrepreneurial ideas and practices and their social connections with trade partners or investors in their host country can spur business creation, thereby generating employment opportunities. In that sense, the social and economic dimensions of the migration and development nexus are closely interrelated.

² Return migration refers to the process of returning to their home country after having resided abroad. A more detailed account of the conceptualization of return migration in this thesis will be presented below.

Although the issue of migration and development is prominent in Swedish policy discussions, there have been few efforts to empirically investigate the development contributions of diaspora groups in Sweden. This thesis thus aims to contribute to the academic research on migration and development in the Swedish context. The choice to focus on migrants from BiH in Sweden is motivated by their significant number. Sweden counts about 56,000 people from BiH, a majority of who have migrated as refugees during the Balkan war in 1992-1995 (Statistics Sweden 2012a). Bosnians in Sweden are the 6th largest group of foreign-born population in the country, and one of the largest Bosnian communities in the world. The end of the conflict has prompted the return of many refugees, although the majority of them have remained in Sweden³.

³ Only 2.6 % (or 1,329 out of 50,000) of Bosnian refugees in Sweden had returned to BiH by 2001 (Eastmond 2006: 146-147). Since then another 2,282 Bosnians have left Sweden, and presumably many of them returned to BiH (Statistics Sweden 2012b).

2. Situating the research: Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this section, I provide a short historical background of BiH and its recent political and economic developments. I also introduce Bosnia's emigration and return issues, with a focus on Bosnian migrants in Sweden.

2.1 Background of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The disintegration of Yugoslavia gave rise to nationalist sentiments between ethnic groups leading to the Balkan war that devastated the region between 1992 and 1995. Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed its independence in 1992, spurring the divisions among the three main ethnic groups present in the territory of the new state: the Bosnian-Serbs, the Bosnian-Croats and the Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks⁴. The conflict was characterised by indiscriminate violence, often targeting civilians, and resulted in massive destruction and human losses. It is estimated that 200,000 people lost their life or disappeared during the conflict. Another 2.3 million people, or half of the population, were displaced, including 1.6 million people who looked for refuge abroad. The fighting officially terminated with the signature of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) in December 1995, which was followed by a huge international reconstruction effort (Huttunen 2010: 44-45).

Many questions, however, remain unresolved and some of the tensions among ethnic communities have moved to the political level. The current state structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established by the Dayton Agreement, consists of two political entities – the Muslim Croat Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Serb Republic of Srpska (RS) – and the Brčko District, which is a self-governing administrative unit, under the sovereignty of BiH (see map in Figure 1). Each entity has its own structure and government (UN 2012)⁵. The central state, including a tripartite presidency, a bicameral parliament, and a Government with its Council of Ministers, is rather weak. The Dayton Agreement also established the institution of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), an international body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement. The OHR (2012) is vested with the highest executive authority in the country that enables it to draft and impose laws and to remove, suspend, or fine any elected and non-elected state official who obstructs the long-term goals of the Dayton Peace process.

⁴ The three main ethnic communities of BiH are largely divided along religious faith: Bosnian-Serbs are Christian Orthodox, Bosnian-Croats are Roman Catholics and Bosniaks are Muslims.

⁵ The FBiH has three distinct levels of administration: the entity government, cantons (10) and municipalities (79). RS consists of two administrative and political levels: the entity government and municipalities (62) (UN 2012).



Figure 1. Administrative map of Bosnia and Herzegovina (US Department of State 2012).

This complicated political system based on ethnic representation has strained the political life of the country. For instance, after the last elections of October 2010, the negotiations to form a central government lasted over 13 months, until a compromise agreement was finally found in December 2011 (Philips 2011).

The 1992-1995 war also left the country economically devastated, with the infrastructure and productive system being largely destroyed. The post-war reconstruction efforts primarily focused on the rebuilding of infrastructure and notably private housing, while neglecting investments in productive activities. Bosnia's economic reforms towards neoliberal marketization, overseen by the international community, prioritized property rights and private ownership over other issues, such as job creation and the rebuilding of the social welfare system (Eastmond 2010: 11; Jansen 2007; c.f. Huttunen 2010: 46). In addition, the sensitive political situation and complex institutional structure combined with persistent corruption continues to discourage foreign investment in the country⁶ (US Department of State 2012; Bukvic 2010). As a result, poverty and unemployment are high. It is estimated that 18.9% of the population lives under the poverty line, while the unemployment rate reached 27.2% in 2010 (Somun-Krupalija 2011: 1)⁷. It is particularly high among young people (aged between 15 and 24 years), reaching 57.5% in April 2010 (BiH Agency for Statistics 2010). Many people turn to the informal labour market to secure their livelihoods and many households rely on financial remittances sent by their relatives residing abroad. In 2009, financial remittances represented 13% of Bosnia's GDP (World Bank 2011: 14). It is worth noting that financial remittances received in BiH are significantly higher than Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). In 2010, remittances reached 2.2 billion USD whereas FDI only amounted to 174 million USD⁸ (Ibid.: 24;

⁶ Regulations on business registration and taxation systems differ in each entity (Bukvic 2010).

⁷ High unemployment rates are characteristic of the entire Balkan region. For an analysis of unemployment in the Balkans, see Udovicki and Knaus 2012.

⁸ Bosnia's situation is different from that of other developing countries where FDI is generally higher than financial remittances. In 2009 the total amount of FDI to developing countries

FIPA 2012). With this difficult economic context, much of the Bosnian youth wishes to emigrate abroad. It is estimated that 90% of BiH youth living in rural areas and 60% in urban areas would leave the country if given the chance. Over 55,000 youths left the country between 1996 and 2011 (Alic 2012).

2.2 Emigration from and return to Bosnia and Herzegovina

With about 1.35 million Bosnia-born people living abroad, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a major country of emigration (BiH Ministry of Security 2010: 62). Bosnian emigrants mainly consist of refugees fleeing the Balkan conflict in the 1990s but also of labour migrants who emigrated for the purpose of employment mainly in the 1960s and 1970s and from the 2000s onwards (Ibid.: 61).

Bosnia is the second country in Europe, after Albania, with the highest percentage (38.9%) of emigrants in relation to the overall population⁹ (MHRR 2011). Bosnia and Herzegovina's main emigrant receiving countries are Croatia (262,620), Germany (240,000), Austria (133,585), Serbia (131,108), USA (120,655), Slovenia (97,142), Switzerland (59,222) and Sweden (56,290) (Ibid.).

Despite of several programmes for assisted returns, relatively few war refugees returned permanently to BiH. Out of the 2.3 million people displaced during the war, only 400,000 have returned to their original places of residence while another 500,000 are internally displaced within the country (Halilovich 2012: 163). The issues of diaspora and return are complex and sensitive issues in BiH. Although the right of return is enshrined in Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement which guarantees the right of return to all displaced people, many political, economic and practical considerations complicate the return of Bosnian refugees (Ibid.). The political tensions and institutional division of the country along ethnic lines has discouraged so-called 'minority returns', i.e. returns of people who, in the post-war demography, have become members of the ethnic minority in their former home areas (Eastmond 2010: 10; Huttunen 2010: 46).

The current economic climate, characterised by high unemployment and an unfavourable investment context, is a further obstacle to return. An online survey¹⁰ conducted among 449 young persons in the diaspora who are interested in returning and 113 young returnees, sheds light over the obstacles regarding return. The persons in the diaspora are mainly concerned about finding employment (25%), the unsatisfactory economic and business environment (24%) and the level of salaries (23%) (Oruč et al. 2011: 31). These concerns also correspond to the actual challenges faced by young returnees. 39% of the 113 returnees in the survey report to be unemployed (Ibid.: 24).

amounted 359 billion USD in 2009 and financial remittances 307 billion USD (World Bank 2011:17).

⁹ Statistics about the Bosnian population need to be taken with caution as no national census has taken place since 1991 (Phillips 2011).

¹⁰ The survey was conducted by the IOM in the framework of the project 'Youth Employability and Retention Programme' (YERP) jointly implemented by five United Nations Agencies, in partnership with government authorities, the private sector and civil society, with the aim of improving the employability of BiH youth.

The study also indicates that the fact of having family and friends in BiH, is the principal motivation to return (50%), followed by the willingness to help rebuilding the country (43%). 21% of returnees in the survey also wish to return because they do not feel fully integrated in their host country. However, only 3% of returnees are motivated by the inability to find a job in their host country (Ibid.: 31).

Beyond the question of return, emigration-related issues are a sensitive topic in BiH for several reasons. First, in the context of nationalism and ethnic divide the concept of 'Bosnian diaspora' is sometimes equated to 'Bosniak diaspora' as it is considered that that Bosnian-Croats and Bosnian-Serbs living abroad are more connected to Croatia and Serbia respectively (Boucault et al. 2010).

Emigrants also tend to have a bad reputation among 'homeland' Bosnians, who blame them for having 'escaped' from the war and possibly envy them for their higher living standards in their host countries. Some of the stereotypes associated with Bosnians living abroad include being snobbish and materialistic, unpatriotic or, on the contrary too ethnically oriented (Halilovich 2012: 164; Boucault et al. 2010; Eastmond 2006: 150).

Competence on diaspora and emigration issues in Bosnia lies at the BiH state-level with the Department for Diaspora of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR). Among others, the Department works on the inclusion of diaspora-related issues into relevant strategies¹¹, such as in the drafts of the Strategy of Development; Strategy of Social Inclusion and Strategy of Migration and Asylum. For instance, it has suggested concrete measures to improve conditions for diaspora's investments and savings and to facilitate transfers of knowledge and skills. In this regard, the Department has recommended the development of programmes stimulating the return, for a shorter or longer period, of experts and scientists from the diaspora. It also suggests supporting cooperation initiatives between experts in the diaspora and local institutions, for instance in the form of joint projects or scholarship for young Bosnians to study or do an internship abroad. The Department has also gathered information on highly-qualified Bosnians living abroad. They published a book with the CVs of PhD holders in the Bosnian diaspora and prepare another one about businessmen and workers in the finance sector. This information is aimed to be used for networking purposes both by members of the diaspora and the local population (MHRR 2011; Stanić 2011).

In October 2011, the Diaspora Department also organised a regional seminar entitled 'Linking Migration and Development of the Western Balkans Countries', Financed by the European Commission, the seminar gathered about a hundred policy-makers, academics and members of the civil society from the region. As I had the chance to attend the seminar, I noticed that the debates focused on migrants' financial remittances and savings and on the contributions of highly-qualified migrants, while paying less attention to forms of migrant contributions such as facilitating trade and investments.

¹¹ It is worth noting that due to the complex institutional structure of BiH, there are not only national strategies, but also strategies for the two entities – FBiH and RS – and the Brčko district. This represents a challenge to the development of a coherent strategy on diaspora-related issues.

It must be stressed that the Department for Diaspora faces a number of challenges. First, the diaspora and development-related issues are only a small part of the activities of the MHRR which primarily deals with the domestic issue of the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition, as mentioned above, the issues of diaspora and return migration are sensitive and closely related to the ethnic divisions in the country. It is sometimes considered that diaspora-related policies may favour a certain ethnic community over others. That is why a proposed national Strategy on diaspora issues did not get adopted by the Council of Ministers (Stanić 2011; Mraović 2011). Therefore, the Department opted, instead, to include diaspora-related issues in various existing strategies. Another challenge faced by the Diaspora Department relates to the insufficient funding for actions in the area of migration and development (MHRR 2011).

In addition to the MHRR, some aid donor countries, such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, also carry out projects to enhance the development effects of migration. However, this is not the case of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), which mainly works in the areas of democracy, human rights, market development and improvement of municipal infrastructure¹².

2.2.1 The case of the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden

Sweden counts about 56,290 people from BiH, most of who migrated as refugees during the Balkan conflict. As shown in Figure 2, Bosnians in Sweden are the 6th largest group of foreign born population in the country, amounting to 4 % of the total migrant population (Statistics Sweden 2012a). This figure only includes individuals that were born in BiH. When the Bosnian emigrants' descendants are also taken into account, they amount to 75,000 people (figure for 2006), which makes them one of the largest Bosnian communities in the world (BiH Ministry of Security 2010: 63). In addition, the individuals from former Yugoslavia, who amount to 70,050 people, also include persons born in BiH (as well as persons from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia) (Statistics Sweden 2012a).

¹² SIDA's Strategy for development cooperation with BiH does mention the potential role of the diaspora in development. It states that "the possibility of making use of the experiences of the Bosnian Diaspora in Sweden [within the framework of SIDA's projects] should be examined" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden 2010: 5). However, in a discussion in July 2011, Anders Hedlund (2011), Head of the Swedish Cooperation Agency in BiH admitted that the agency has little indications on how to translate this objective into practice.

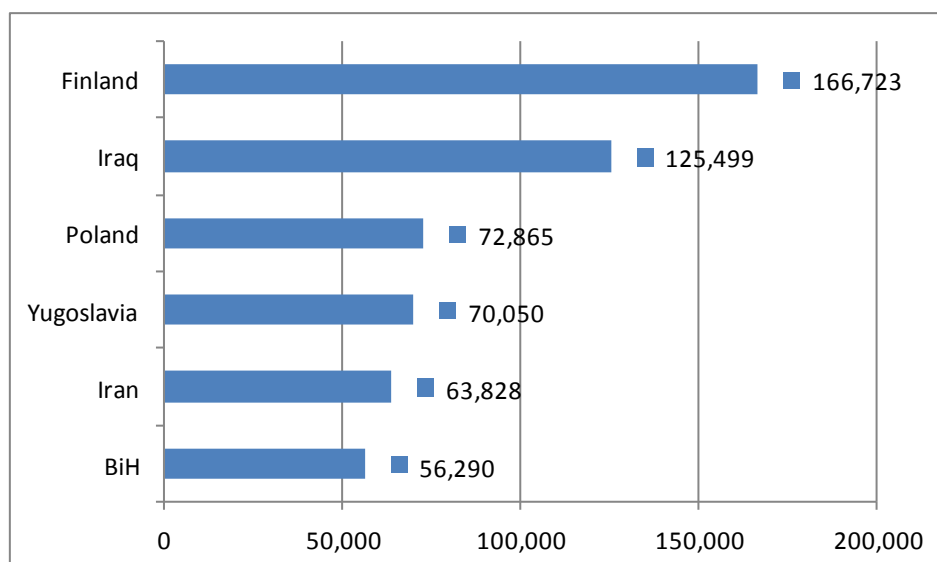


Figure 2. Largest foreign-born groups in Sweden in 2011 (Statistics Sweden 2012a).

Sweden granted permanent residence to all refugees from BiH residing in Sweden during 1993-1994 (Eastmond 2006: 145). During their first years in Sweden, Bosnian refugees faced difficulties to integrate in the Swedish labour market, especially as they arrived at a period of economic crisis in the country. A research published in 2000 indicates high unemployment rates and low incomes among Bosnian refugees (Ekberg and Ohlson 2000: 237). Since then another, however, the situation has improved. In 1996 up to 90% Bosnian refugees received social assistance while 10 years later only 10% were assisted (Hedberg and Malmberg 2010: 45). Today Bosnians in Sweden and in Scandinavia more generally are considered as one of the most successful and educated Bosnian communities in Europe. Around 25% of the Bosnian population in Scandinavia has a tertiary education (MHRR 2011).

Bosnians in Sweden have established a large number of cultural associations which are largely, but not exclusively, organised along ethnic lines. However, the majority of Bosnian people are not involved in any association (MHRR 2008: 59-61).

Relatively few Bosnian refugees in Sweden have returned. Despite programmes for assisted return¹³, only 2.6 % (or 1,329 out of 50,000 people) had returned by 2001 (Eastmond 2006: 146-147). Since then, another 2,282 Bosnians have left Sweden, and presumably many of them returned to BiH (Statistics Sweden 2012b). Despite the low rates of return, many Bosnian people in Sweden seem to be willing to return. A research, carried by the office for voluntary return of the City of Stockholm, among 502 Bosnians residing in Sweden, indicates that about 70% of them wish to return to BiH someday (CLDD 2010).

¹³ SIDA implemented a large project in the area of assisted return for displaced persons and reconstruction of housing and infrastructure, which was completed in 2008.

3. Theoretical framework: Return migration, transnationalism and development

This thesis investigates the development contributions of Bosnian returnees from Sweden through a transnational perspective. It examines how social remittances, defined as ideas, practices and social capital, are transferred from Sweden to BiH in the context of the returnees' professional activity and discusses their impact on development. In this section, I outline the academic debate on migration and development and present the main tenets of the transnational approach on migration. I pay particular attention to the concept of social remittances, which is the focus of this thesis. Throughout the section, I specify how this theory and concept are used in the present research. Finally, I end with the definitions of 'development' and 'return migration' used in this thesis.

3.1 The migration and development nexus

The conventional conception of the relationship between migration and development has evolved through three phases. First, in the 1950s and 1960s, migration was perceived as having a positive effect on migrant-sending societies. It was thought to increase the productivity of labour in those societies through a reduction of their spare labour force and, hence, lead to an increase in inbound investments. This first wave of optimism was rooted in the 'developmentalist approach', whereby migrants' (developing) countries of origin were expected to follow the same pathway of industrialisation and modernization as the (developed) countries of destination. In that perspective, economic growth was the key indicator of development (De Haas 2010: 231-232; Faist 2008: 24; Willis and Kumar 2009: 112). Second, in the 1970s and 1980s, a more pessimistic approach perceived emigration as a sign of underdevelopment and desperation. The outmigration of qualified workforce, or so-called brain drain, was particularly criticised. The present enthusiasm for the development potential of migration introduces a third phase starting in the early 1990s and linking back to the optimism of the first. The focus is now placed on the transfer of financial remittances, knowledge and skills from the migrants' country of residence to their country of origin and the celebration of temporary labour migration, often referred to as 'circular migration' (Faist 2008: 23-26; De Haas 2010: 229-241; Samers 2010: 80-85). This new wave of optimism departs from strictly economic accounts of development by situating the debate in the context of a bottom-up perspective of community empowerment and grassroots participation. However, migrants' contributions to macro-economic development, notably financial remittances, remain prominent in the debate (Piper 2009: 94; Raghuram 2009: 111-112; Skeldon 2008: 7).

Migrants' financial remittances to developing countries, which amounted to 325 billion USD in 2010¹⁴, represent a significant source of foreign income for many receiving countries (Mohapatra et. al. 2011). In many cases, official remittances amount to a large share of GDP and sometimes exceed the level of FDI as in the case of BiH. Given the significance of remittance flows, governments in receiving countries are seeking to devise mechanisms for attracting and directing them towards productive investments (De Haas 2005: 1279). Their growing popularity has even given remittance flows the label of 'new development mantra' (Kapur 2004a: 2). Critics however argue that financial remittances may lead to dependency, create inflation and increase income inequality between receiving and non-receiving households (Cohen 2005: 103-104; De Haas 2010: 249; Samers 2010: 81).

Researchers also highlight the linkages between migration flows and investment and trade relations between sending and receiving countries. These studies indicate that migrants' knowledge about markets, business cultures and language can facilitate trade and investments (Gould 1994; Hadzigeorgiou 2010; Jansen and Piermartini 2009; Sanderson and Kentor 2008). Such studies, however, are limited in number and tend to focus on macro-economic trends rather than on processes at the micro-level (Ionescu 2006: 8-9).

Another strand of the migration and development debate highlights the role of migrants, especially highly-qualified ones, in transferring knowledge and competences to their country of origin (Portes 2007: 25-30)¹⁵. Advocates of 'circular migration' argue that increased mobility among highly-qualified migrants will foster such transfers (Faist 2008: 22). Yet, they can also occur by distance, facilitated by the recent improvements in communication technologies (Ley 2009: 389).

Finally, a limited strand of research examines migrants' 'social remittances' or the ideas, practices and social capital that flow from migrant receiving- to sending-country communities¹⁶ (Levitt 1998: 927). As the concept of social remittances is the major focus of this research, it will be further outlined below.

Many scholars point out that the current enthusiasm around migration's role for development has an ideological dimension. It reflects a neoliberal shift in development policy and research from government-led development towards market-led development with emphasis on community empowerment and grassroots participation. In a context of a relative retreat of the state from the development arena and privatization of social welfare, migrants come to assume increasing responsibility for the development of their country of origin¹⁷ (De Haas 2010: 257-258; Faist 2008: 24-

¹⁴ It must be noted that this amount only represents a fraction of the sums actually remitted, as large amounts of money are transferred through informal channels (De Haas 2005: 1276-1277).

¹⁵ This strand of literature emphasises opportunities for 'brain gain' in contrast to the pessimistic views, which were particularly prevalent during the 1970s and 1980s, that focus on 'brain drain' (Faist 2008: 22).

¹⁶ The concept of social remittances encompasses knowledge and competence but it has a broader scope as it also includes ideas, values, practices and social capital.

¹⁷ Some authors associate the recent optimism around migration and development with the communitarian Third Way approach, initiated by Tony Blair, Gerhard Schröder and Bill Clinton in the 1990s, which is considered as a compromise between socialism and neoliberalism. Third-Way politics are based on the theorem 'No rights without responsibilities' which implies that individuals should not only expect benefits from the social community, but also contribute to it

25; Kapur and McHale 2003: 50-51; Piper 2009: 98; Raghuram 2009: 104; Skeldon 2008: 14). As Skeldon (2008: 14) puts it, “the responsibility for development is being increasingly placed on the agency of migrants rather than on institutional structures”. In the same vein, Kapur and McHale (2003: 51) argue that, by sending financial remittances, “[i]mmigrants, rather than governments, [...] become the biggest provider of foreign aid”.

In contrast to excessive optimism around migration and development, a growing number of empirical researches suggest that there is no universal and automatic positive effect of migration on development. Instead, migration can *potentially* contribute to development provided that certain favourable economic and political conditions are fulfilled. The development impacts of migration are thus heterogeneous and contingent on spatial and temporal scales of analysis (De Haas 2010: 248-251).

The present research also recognises the heterogeneity of migration effects on development and therefore endorses a pluralist conceptual framework, suggested by the human geographer Hein De Haas (Ibid.: 253-256), that emphasises the contextuality of migration impacts and privileges multiple scales of analysis. De Haas' framework aims to challenge the dominant trend in migration literature that tends to separate the study of the determinants of migration and that of its effects¹⁸. Instead, De Haas argues that the causes and impacts of migration are closely linked and should therefore be analysed together. As he explains, “migration is not an independent variable 'causing' development (or the reverse), but is an endogenous variable, an integral part of change itself and a factor that may enable further change” (Ibid.: 228). This implies that the general developmental conditions in migrants' countries of origin are likely to influence the development impact of migration. For instance, migrants tend to be more engaged and invest in their country of origin if favourable political and economic structures are in place (Ibid.: 249-251, 256). Therefore, for De Haas, the relevant question is not whether migration has positive effects on development, but “under what conditions are migration and development more positively correlated than under others?” (De Haas 2005: 1275).

De Haas' approach distinguishes itself both from naive optimism and excessive pessimism with regards to the migration-development interactions. Drawing on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, it takes into account both migrants' agency and structural constraints. It draws attention on the structural social, political and institutional context of the migration and development relationship, while at the same time recognizing individuals' agency or their “*limited but real* capacity [...] to overcome constraints and potentially reshape structure” (De Haas 2010: 241-242). One of the theoretical perspectives that De Haas considers compatible with his pluralist framework is the transnational migration theory, which is the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis (Ibid.: 242, 246-248). The main tenets of transnational migration theory are described in the following sub-section.

(Giddens 1998, 52). For a more thorough account of the link between the appraisal of migration and development and Third-Way politics, see Kapur & McHale 2003.

¹⁸ The determinants of migration tend to be studied by development scholars and its effects by migration scholars. Migration and development studies have traditionally been two separate strands of research (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 19; Piper 2009: 95).

3.2 Transnational migration theory

In recent years, migration studies in general and research on migration and development in particular are undergoing a 'transnational turn'. Until the early 1990s, migration research predominantly studied issues of migrants' settlement and integration in the host country while the situation of migrants' countries of origin was the focus of development research. The migration and the development literature have traditionally been two separate areas of study. In recent years, however, transnational migration theory has questioned this separation by examining migrants' simultaneous connections in their host and their home countries¹⁹ (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 19; Ley 2009: 388; Portes et al. 1999: 217-218; Vertovec 2009: 13-14). Different types of connections analysed through a transnational lens include contacts with friends and relatives (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Eastmond and Åkesson 2007), sending of financial remittances (Guarnizo 2003; Cohen 2011), migrant entrepreneurship²⁰ (Faist 2000; Guarnizo 2003; Landolt 2001; Portes et al. 2002; Zhou 2004) or migrants' involvement in social, cultural and political affairs of their country of origin (Levitt 1998; Nyberg-Sørensen 2010)²¹.

Transnational migration theory highlights that the lives of migrants are characterised by circulation and simultaneous commitment to two or more societies. From this perspective, migrants can be integrated in their country of residence while at the same time being engaged in various social, economic or political processes in their country of origin. These transnational ties are significantly facilitated by improvements in communication techniques and decreasing transport costs (De Haas 2010: 247; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 12; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 130-131; Ley 2009: 388; Nyberg-Sørensen 2010: 7; Vertovec 2009: 13).

The theorists of the transnational perspective give particular emphasis on social ties and networks across borders (Faist 2000b: 189; Portes et al. 1999: 220; Vertovec 2009: 38-39). Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004: 9) introduced the concept of 'transnational social fields'²² to describe the "networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed [...] and connect actors, through direct and indirect relations across borders". Transnational social fields are occupied by both migrants and non-migrants and emphasise the reciprocal effects of migration here and there (Ibid.: 18-20; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007: 142).

¹⁹ Despite the rise of the transnational perspective on migration, the divide between scholars focusing on what happens to migrants in their country of destination and those concerned with the development situation of their place of origin still persists (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 19). Nicola Piper (2009: 95) deplors "a lack of comprehensive and sustained dialogue between migration and development experts".

²⁰ Transnational migrant entrepreneurship goes beyond ethnic or migrant entrepreneurship because it does not only focus on migrants' host country but also emphasizes the intense exchanges linking migrant's societies of origin and settlement (Zhou 2004: 1055-1056).

²¹ For a typology of transnational practices see Portes et al. 1999: 222 and Al-Ali et al. 2001: 619.

²² Beside the concept of 'transnational social field', authors have also proposed the concept of 'transnational social space' (Faist 2000a, 2000b) and 'transnational social formation' (Guarnizo 1997).

In this research, I explore the social contributions of Bosnian returnees from Sweden to Bosnia's development from a transnational perspective. I examine how the fact of having resided in Sweden influences their current work, with potential positive effects on development. In other words, it highlights the continuous significance of Sweden in the returnees' professional activity in BiH.

Consistent with postmodern thinking, the transnational perspective seeks to transcend existing binaries (Cloke and Johnston 2005: 1-18). By examining the multiple ties and interactions of individuals across the borders of nation-states the transnational perspective on migration moves beyond the dichotomies between place of origin and place of destination and between 'temporary', 'permanent' and 'return' migration (De Haas 2005: 1273; Faist 2008: 27; Levitt and Glick 2004: 13). It abandons 'methodological nationalism' or the assumption that the nation-state is the natural container within which social life takes place (Nyberg 2010: 6; Levitt and Glick 2004: 6-7). In addition, by emphasizing migrants' simultaneous affiliations across national borders, transnationalism reflects the postmodern shift from an abstract to a relational conception of space (Warf 2009: 70-76). Space is no longer considered as a fixed surface waiting passively to be filled by transnational individuals and institutions but as a dynamic network constituted by the relationships and flows linking people across borders (Huang 2009: 308).

Some critics of transnationalism question the novelty of migrants' transnational activities underlining that migrants have historically maintained transnational connections. Theorists of transnationalism however respond that the scale and intensity of contemporary transnationalism – facilitated by the advancements in communication and transportation – make it qualitatively different from earlier forms and a justifiable new object of study²³ (Ley 2009: 391-392; Portes et al. 1999: 219; Vertovec 2009: 14-15).

Critics also stress that not all migrants are transnationally active and that transnational ties tend to fade away with time (De Haas 2010: 252; Vertovec 2009: 17). In response, Portes et al. (1999: 219) propose limiting the concept of transnationalism to activities that involve a significant proportion of the population and that require regular and sustained social contacts over time. Other authors argue that 'features of transnationalism' can be identified among groups or communities that do not necessarily fulfil the conditions to be considered as a 'transnational community' (Al-Ali et al. 2001: 632). In this research, I also seek to highlight 'features of transnationalism' rather than discussing whether the Bosnian community in Sweden is a 'transnational community'. In my view, arguing about the transnational character of the Bosnian community would require a more extensive research, which is beyond the scope of this thesis²⁴.

Finally, another common critique of the transnational perspective is that it over-emphasizes human agency while overlooking migrants' numerous political, economic and social constraints. Nation-states, for example, continue to exert control and authority over their national borders (Huang 2009: 406-407; Ley 2009: 392; Samers 2010: 114-115). In this regard, Hedberg et al. (forthcoming) argue that while structural

²³ For a detailed account of the difference between contemporary transnationalism and earlier forms of transitional connections see Vertovec 2009: 14-15.

²⁴ For a discussion about the transnational character of the Bosnian diaspora, see Al-Ali et al. 2001 and Halilovich 2012.

constraints are inherent in the concept of transnationalism, they tend to be neglected in empirical researches. I will seek to address this critique by combining the transnational perspective with de Haas' pluralist framework for analysing migration and development, which simultaneously takes into account the agency and structure. Just as De Haas (2010: 242, 246-248), I believe that this pluralist framework is compatible with transnationalism as it highlights the contextual nature of migration-development interactions. This understanding of transnationalism as a compromise between agency and structure is also shared by other theorists, such as Michael Peter Smith (2005: 237-238) who's account of transnationalism – *transnational urbanism* – also stresses that the actions of transnational actors are socially and spatially situated. As he expresses it, “no matter how much spatial mobility or border crossing may characterise transnational actors' household, community and place-making practices, the actors are still classed, raced and gendered bodies in motion in specific historical contexts, within certain political formations and spaces”.

3.3 The concept of social remittances

In order to explore returnees' social contributions to development, I use the concept of social remittances, which is typically analysed through a transnational perspective in the migration and development debate (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 3). I adopt Peggy Levitt's definition (1998: 927) of social remittances as “the ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from migrant receiving- to sending-country communities” contributing to social change in migrants' community of origin. Levitt, who first coined the term, developed the concept in a 1998 article based on her multi-sited ethnographic research of migration links between a village in the Dominican Republic and a neighbourhood of Boston (Ibid.). According to Levitt, social remittances are “a local-level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion” (Ibid.: 926). They are transmitted when migrants visit or return to live in their communities of origin, when non-migrants visit their migrant family and through exchanges of letters, emails and phone calls (Ibid.: 936).

Levitt distinguishes three types of social remittances: 1. normative structures, 2. systems of practice and, 3. social capital (Ibid.: 933-936). Normative structures are ideas, values and beliefs, including ideas about human rights, gender equality and democracy, principles of community participation and organisation and norms of interpersonal behaviour (Ibid.: 933; Faist 2008: 22; Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen 2004: 8). Systems of practice are the actions shaped by normative structures such as patterns for the division of household tasks or for religious and political participation (Levitt 1998: 934)²⁵.

Social capital, the third type of social remittance suggested by Levitt (Ibid.: 935), refers to the potential benefits available to individuals due to their belonging to social groups and communities. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1992: 119), considered as one of the founders of the concept, defines social capital as “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance

²⁵ Normative structures and systems of practice are no new concepts in the migration literature. Previous studies have referred to them without calling them social remittances (Levitt 1998: 933).

and recognition”.²⁶ This definition stresses individuals’ capacity to mobilize social contacts and networks as a means for accessing resources. For Bourdieu (1986: 47), social capital constitutes one form of capital among other forms – economic, cultural and symbolic capital²⁷– that can be converted into one another. In particular, social capital can be transformed into economic capital. This implies that the transfer of social capital in form of social remittances can have economic outcomes (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 4).

In the transnational migration literature, the concept of social capital is often referred to in relation to the migrants’ multiple social connections both in their country of origin and destination. Thomas Faist (2000a: 122-123) discusses it in the context of cooperation and mutual assistance among the members of ethnic communities abroad. He argues that social capital can attenuate the risks involved in the migration process as established migrants often assist newly-arrived ones to establish in the host country, for instance in finding accommodation or employment. Faist nuances that social capital is hard to transfer geographically because it depends on fragile systems of social transaction. It is therefore primarily a local asset. Yet, when migration chains develop and migrants maintain ties with their country of origin while, at the same time adapting in their host country, social capital becomes transferable across national borders. At this stage, social capital does no longer function as a local asset but as a ‘transnational transmission belt’ that bridges groups and networks in host and origin countries.

Social capital is also a recurrent concept in the literature on transnational migrant entrepreneurship²⁸, which contends that social capital, in the form of kinship and ethnic networks, plays a central role in facilitating such entrepreneurship (Faist 2000a: 216-17; 2008: 31; Landolt 2001: 231). As Zhou (2004: 1058) explains, “traditional trade and economic networks are based on trust and enduring moral ties dictated by a common ethnicity or cultural heritage – origin, religion and language”. This strand of literature particularly stresses the benefits of social capital in the context of intra-ethnic social connections, for instance in the case of the Chinese, Turkish or Mexican diasporas.

The work of the Danish anthropologist Peter Hansen (2010: 145-146) is particularly relevant for the present research as he discusses the role of social capital specifically in the case of returnee entrepreneurs. Using the case of returnees from Scandinavia to Somaliland, he stresses returnees’ particular position as they accumulate social capital and other forms of capital, both in the host and origin country. As he puts it, “returnees present an interesting combination of having both accumulated economic, cultural and social capital in the West, and of being well embedded in local realities and agendas”

²⁶ There is a variety of understandings and uses of social capital in academic literature and policy (Bebbington 2009: 165). While Bourdieu views social capital as useful social contacts, James Coleman considers it as a certain form of family structure and Robert Putman as civic engagement. In addition, Bourdieu and Coleman view it as the property of an individual or group and Putman as that of a community or nation (Bourdieu 1992: 119; Coleman 1988: 109-113; Putman 1992: 167). This thesis uses Bourdieu’s definition of social capital.

²⁷ Economic capital refers to economic resources and cultural capital consists of the knowledge, competences, ideas, values and social practices (Bourdieu 1986: 47-51).

²⁸ Transnational migrant entrepreneurship refers to migrant-established businesses that create intense connections and exchanges between migrants home and host countries. It goes beyond ethnic or migrant entrepreneurship because it is not only based in the migrant’s host country but its success depends on links and contacts with the country of origin (Zhou 2004: 1055-56).

(Ibid.: 145)²⁹. He gives the example of a returnee from England who started a transport company transporting European food aid to Ethiopia via Somaliland. On the one hand, he enjoys social capital in Somaliland by being the member of a respected family which makes him trustworthy in the business sector and helps him gain information about the market and investment opportunities. On the other, his social connections in Europe contribute to make him a trustworthy partner to European humanitarian agencies.

In this thesis, I draw on Levitt's typology of social remittances – distinguishing normative structures, systems of practice and social capital – to sort the different examples of social remittances identified in my empirical research. As systems of practice are shaped by normative structures, I consider these two categories jointly in my analysis. Social capital is also closely related to the other two types of social remittances. First, social capital is based on norms and values (Levitt 1998: 935). Second, it is inherent in normative structures and systems of practice as they emerge and evolve through social interactions. Therefore, one example of social remittance may include all three types. Yet, for the purpose of clarity, I will examine social capital separately in my analysis.

Levitt's definition of social remittances does not specify the nature of the ideas and practices and social capital constituting social remittances. Other authors, however, give a normative dimension to the concept of social remittances by associating them with something 'positive' or development-inducing. Thomas Faist (2008: 22), for instance, qualifies social remittances as "the flow of ideas and practices which are 'good' and to which nobody in his or her right moral mind would object". Similarly, Castles and Wise (2007: 274) describe them as "knowledge and development-friendly attitudes to countries of origin by migrants and returnees". In contrast, Levitt (1998: 941-943) argues that social remittances can have both positive and negative impacts. The values of materialism, consumerism and individualism, for example, are referred to as negative social remittances (Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen 2004: 8). Following Levitt's line, this research recognises that social remittances can have both positive and negative outcomes. Yet, as it aims to explore returnees' contributions to development, it focuses exclusively on social remittances with potentially positive effects on Bosnia's development³⁰.

Although the concept of social remittances has existed for over a decade, it has only been employed in a limited number of researches. Nevertheless, a significant number of studies explore the social dimension of the migration and development relationship without using the term of 'social remittances' (Levitt 1998: 933; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 4). The remaining of this section shortly reviews the literature that specifically refers to the concept of social remittances.

A number of authors discuss the impacts of social remittances in the context of transnational family life. The anthropologist Lorena Núñez (2010: 190) argues that the sending of financial and social remittances help migrants to reproduce and maintain

²⁹ Hansen (2010: 144-146) distinguishes returnees' 'diasporic' and 'local capital'. Diasporic capital refers to the economic, cultural and social capital accumulated in the diaspora and local capital to that accumulated in the country of origin.

³⁰ What constitutes 'development' is a normative question. The definition of development that guides this research is detailed below.

family relationships across borders. Angeles and Sunanta (2009: 549) discuss the role of the economic and social remittances sent by Thai women married to a foreign husband in connecting their local villages to the global.

Some authors explore the impact of social remittances on gender relations. Taylor et al. (2006: 41) argue that migrants' transfers of gender norms enable a gradual challenge and erosion of traditional gender roles in Guatemala. Ge et al. (2011: 140-141) have a more cautious stance maintaining that the transfer of social remittances in the form of new knowledge, skills and social capital, by migrant returnees in rural China is constrained by deep-rooted traditions in the community of origin.

From an economic perspective, Devesh Kapur (2004b: 367) discusses the role of the social remittances, or ideas, transferred by foreign-educated Indians in reforming India's economic policies.

The role of social remittances is also debated in the political field. Levitt (1998: 941-943) argues that the social remittances of Dominican migrants in the US prompted demands for more organized and more equitable political system in their community of origin. In the same vein, a study by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe³¹ explores the social remittances of the African diaspora in Europe arguing that migrants' contributions in the political field, including policy reforms, democratic attitudes, and peace-building ideas and practices, can play a role in building and strengthening political and governance institutions in their country of origin (North-South Centre 2006: 13, 32).

The present research will highlight cases where returnees transfer ideas and practices in the areas of health, environment and 'meaningful work', as well as social connections with investors, business partners, and political and academic actors. The identification of development-inducing social remittances in this thesis is based on specific understandings 'development' and 'return migration', which are detailed in the two following sub-sections.

3.4 Defining development

Development is a complex and multidimensional process. As discussed above, the academic and policy debate around migration and development tends to emphasize the economic aspects of development, with migrants being portrayed as primarily 'economic agents' (Piper 2009: 96-98).

This research attempts to highlight the social and micro-level aspects of the migration and development interaction. Therefore, it adopts Amartya Sen's broad definition of development that puts forward the social dimension of development. Sen defines development as a process of expanding people's freedoms and capabilities to lead worthwhile lives. In his view, economic growth does play a significant role in expanding

³¹ The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe is an autonomous agency of the Council of Europe based in Lisbon and mandated to provide a framework for European co-operation designed to heighten public awareness of global interdependence issues, and to promote policies of solidarity complying with the Council of Europe's aims and principles—respect for human rights, democracy and social cohesion (Council of Europe 2012).

people's capabilities and generating wellbeing but it cannot be considered, in itself, as a guarantee for development. Development also implies social wellbeing, human rights, gender equality, access to healthcare, education, meaningful employment and environmental protection (Anand and Sen 2000: 2031-2033). According to Sen, economic indicators of development must be complemented by social ones focusing on individuals' social wellbeing and their ability to enhance their choices and control their own life. Development understood as the expansion of people's freedoms and abilities is commonly qualified as 'human development'.

Following Sen's approach, this research explores the role of social remittances in enhancing human development, both for themselves and for others. Using the concept of social remittances allows examining both social and economic aspects of development. My empirical analysis includes examples of returnees' ideas, practices and social capital that expand people's social wellbeing by improving the social sectors of health, environment and 'meaningful work'. It also includes examples of social remittances contributing to economic development by stimulating entrepreneurship, foreign investments and trade, thereby generating income and creating employment.

Finally, contrary to the current debate on migration and development that tends to situate development processes exclusively in migrants' countries of origin, this research applies a transnational approach on development viewing it as a process that can occur simultaneously in both home and host countries. In the case of social remittances, this implies that they can have effects on development both 'here and there'. They do not only flow in one direction but in two ways, linking the home and host countries in a reciprocal manner (Faist 2008: 27; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 3, 19; Piper 2009: 98). Although this research will focus on the developmental effects of social remittances in BiH, it also acknowledges their potential role enhancing development in Sweden.

3.5 Defining return migration

As stressed above, the transnational perspective on migration moves beyond clear-cut categories such as 'temporary', 'permanent' and 'return' migration, emphasizing that the life of migrants is increasingly characterised by circulation and simultaneous commitment to two or more societies (De Haas 2005: 1273; Faist 2008: 27; Levitt and Glick 2004: 13). Following the transnational perspective, this thesis conceptualizes 'return' as a dynamic and open-ended process rather than a once-and-for-all move from the host to the home country. Such an approach recognizes that 'return' may not necessarily be permanent and often involves mobility between the host and home country. This understanding of 'return' from a transnational perspective has been advocated by a number of studies focusing specifically on the return of Bosnian refugees (Eastmond 2006: 141; Huttunen 2010:56-57).

4. Methodology and research design

4.1 Methods used

As the purpose of this research is to explore the practices through which Bosnian returnees from Sweden contribute to Bosnia's development, I opted to use qualitative research methods which aim to achieve an in-depth understanding of social processes (Nayak and Jeffrey 2011: 308). In contrast to quantitative research which seeks to reveal general patterns and trends, qualitative research emphasizes the complexity of human behaviour and draws attention to the importance of meanings, values and goals to understand human practices (Ibid.: 53-54; Cloke and Johnston 2005, 8; England 2006: 291). Returnees' social contributions to development, or social remittances, are complex social phenomena that, contrary to financial remittances, are not quantifiable. They therefore require a qualitative approach that seeks in-depth understanding of social processes and the reasons behind them. This research is based on the qualitative methods of interviewing and observation, which are critically discussed in the following sections. This section discusses the methods of the research, makes some ethical considerations and introduces the research sample.

4.1.1 Qualitative interviews

4.1.1.1 Reasons for conducting semi-structured interviews

For this research, I conducted 13 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with professionally active Bosnian returnees from Sweden. The interviews took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina from June to August 2011.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews for exploring returnees' development-related transnational practices because they allow in-depth and detailed understanding of social processes (Valentine 2005: 110-112). Focusing on the subjective opinions, meanings and perceptions of the respondents, they aim "to explore and understand actions within specific settings, to examine human relationships and discover as much as possible about why people feel or act in the way they do" (McDowell 2010: 157-158). Therefore, they are well-suited for exploring returnees' development-related practices and transnational engagements, which are both varied and complex social phenomena. Qualitative interviews allow emphasizing returnees' own perspectives on their return and contributions to development and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Cloke et al. 2004: 150-151). They can shed light on their motivations, opportunities and obstacles faced.

Prior to the interviews I determined a list of issues that I wished to address. The emphasis was laid on the interviewees' professional activity, but I also questioned my informants about their experience of migrating to Sweden and returning to BiH. During the interviews, I tried to remain flexible and leave room for unanticipated themes to arise (Valentine 2005: 111, 122). This was particularly relevant because of the explorative character of my research: I did not know in advance what types of social remittances that would come to the fore during the interviews. The variety of

professional activities among my interviewees also demanded a certain openness and flexibility. I therefore adapted the questions to the particular professional situation of interviewees, e.g. in terms of to their sector of occupation and according to whether they were employed in a Bosnian company, a Swedish one or were self-employed. Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to reformulate a question that might have been misunderstood or to return to a certain issue (Ibid.: 122). This proved useful because of the often abstract nature of the topics discussed. Throughout the interview, I strived to formulate clear questions avoiding complex academic terms. For instance, instead of using the term of social remittances, I referred to 'activities that contribute to BiH's development' or 'are positive for BiH'³². Similarly, in order to enquire about transnational engagement to Sweden in the professional context, I asked whether the fact of having lived in Sweden was an advantage in their professional activity and in what ways.

4.1.1.2 Selecting informants

With the focus of my research being the returnees' development-related practices in the context of their professional activity, I sought to interview professionally active individuals residing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and who had previously lived in Sweden. These selection criteria thus excluded returnees who were studying, unemployed or retired. I also decided to only interview returnees that were younger than 50-year-old because I assumed that Sweden would have a stronger significance in their life experience and personal development. Also, as older returnees are likely to have studied and worked in Bosnia before migrating, I expect that Sweden has less influence on their personal development.

Moreover, as I aimed to highlight a variety of social remittances, I sought to achieve a relative balance among the informants in terms of gender, age and type of employment, i.e. whether they are employed in a Bosnian company, a Swedish one or are self-employed. A detailed description of the research sample is provided below.

I used various strategies in order to identify potential informants. First, a number of individuals employed in Swedish companies were identified through telephone interviews conducted in May 2011 by Ajla Alic from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Sarajevo with the directors of the seventeen Swedish companies present in BiH, the list of whom was provided by the Swedish Trade Council. These preliminary telephone interviews resulted in identifying four returnees working in a Swedish company and one self-employed returnee whose company is the Bosnian distributor of a large Swedish company.

Second, I asked for suggestions of potential informants to a number of 'gatekeepers' i.e. individuals in organisations that have the power to grant access to people for the purpose of research (Valentine 2005: 116-117). These included members of Bosnian networks in Sweden, such as the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Association in Sweden (BHKRF), the Bosnian Youth Association in Sweden (BHUF) and the APU

³² As stated above, the definition of development used in this thesis is the broad definition of Amartya Sen, who considers it as the freedom to lead a life worth living.

Network³³, and members of the staff of the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo, the Bosnian Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) and the IOM in Sarajevo. Four informants were identified in this way. I also found two informants through the social networking website Facebook by posting a short announcement on the page of a group of 'Young expats in Sarajevo'. Finally, I used the method of 'snowballing' which involves asking each informant for suggestions of potential informants. Arguably, the snowballing method increases the risk of interviewing only individuals with the same background (Valentine 2005: 117-118). Yet as I used multiple channels for finding interviewees, I expect this risk to be considerably diminished.

In general, the persons I approached for an interview were eager to answer my questions. They seemed pleased to 'be given voice' or the possibility to tell their stories (Cloke et al. 2004: 151). Only one person refused to participate to an interview.

Given the specific criteria for selection of my research sample – being a Bosnian returnee from Sweden, younger than 50-year-old and professionally active in BiH – finding informants was rather challenging. No governmental institution could provide me with a list of returnees from Sweden. For instance, I asked for suggestions to the Centres for Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs), which provide assistance to returnees including from Sweden, but they told me that a confidentiality agreement forbids them from sharing personal information about their clients. A further difficulty in finding informants was related to the fact that my field research took place during the summer, which is a typical holiday period in BiH. Therefore, a number of potential informants were unavailable.

However, I consider the size of my research sample as appropriate for an in-depth analysis of returnees' social remittance transfers. After having conducted a number of interviews, I noticed a certain 'redundancy' or 'saturation' in the data as no new type of social remittances was emerging. This suggests that my empirical data is credible and sufficiently extensive (Baxter and Eyles 1997: 515).

In addition to interviewing returnees, I also conducted interviews with persons working with issues related to migration and/or development in Bosnia. Among others, I was in contact with representatives from the Department for Diaspora of the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees in BiH (MHRR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Sarajevo, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in BiH, the Centres for Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs) in BiH, a diaspora organisation in Sweden, an NGO founded by returnees, as well as a Bosnian researcher specialized in migration issues³⁴.

4.1.1.3 Context and challenges of interviews

Given the relative difficulty in finding potential interviewees fulfilling the criteria of having resided in Sweden and being professionally active in BiH and younger than 50-

³³ The APU Network promotes academics, entrepreneurs and artists originally from BiH. Its members carry out projects and activities of economic, social and charitable purposes for the country (Šimunović 2011).

³⁴ In addition to the interviews I conducted myself; I was also given access to three interviews conducted in May 2010 by Charlotta Hedberg, my thesis supervisor, with key actors in the area of migration and development in BiH.

year-old, I did not set geographical limitations to my research. My case study area is the entire country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, all interviews took place in Sarajevo and its surroundings, with the exception of one which was conducted in the city of Mostar. This is certainly related to the fact that during my field research I was residing in Sarajevo and based at the Sarajevo office of the IOM. Therefore the vast majority of my social connections took place in that city. It is also probable that a large number of professionally active returnees, from Sweden or elsewhere, reside in Sarajevo, the country's main economic centre. The concentration of interviews in the Sarajevo area may have resulted to a relative 'urban bias' in the research. The potential development contributions by returnees residing in the countryside are thus outside its focus. The fact that Sarajevo is part of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) is also likely to have led to an ethnical homogeneity among interviewees – the vast majority belonging to the Bosniak (Muslim) community³⁵.



Image 1. Picture of Sarajevo in August 2011.

The informants were given the freedom to choose the location of the interview. Some interviews took place at the informants' working place, but the majority of them were held at the terraces of Sarajevo's numerous cafés. Despite their charm, terraces of cafés can be challenging environments for interviews because they often involve a certain amount of background music and noise. Yet, it did not prevent the audio recording of the interviews and created a relaxed atmosphere which seemed to have made the informants to feel more comfortable about telling their story.

The interviews generally lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. They were audio recorded and transcribed literally, including emotional expressions such as laughter. This

³⁵ This fact does not affect the research aim which is to explore practices of social remittances transfers among returnees from Sweden. Yet it may be interesting for future researches to adopt a comparative perspective between Bosnia's three main ethnic groups.

allowed me to use verbatim quotes in my empirical analysis, which reduces the risk of misleading interpretations and increases the reliability of the study (Baxter and Eyles 1997: 516). The use of the audio recorder was mostly accepted by the interviewees under condition the interviews would remain anonymous. The advantages and disadvantages of anonymity will be discussed in a subsequent section on ethical considerations in this research. With the exception of one interview which was conducted in Swedish, all interviews were conducted in English. As my informants generally have a good level in English, the language has not posed any significant problem.

In qualitative research the data is constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the informant (McDowell 2010: 161-164). Qualitative interviews do not claim to access objective knowledge, but rather “take a fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and views of the interviewees” (Valentine 2005: 111-112). Therefore my own position and identity inevitably influences the construction of the data as well as their interpretation (Ibid.: 113; Baxter and Eyles 1997: 517). First, the fact that I am neither Swedish nor Bosnian gives me certain neutrality, which may have facilitated gaining the confidence of my informants. For instance, they may have been keener to speak openly and honestly about their experience in Sweden than if I were a Swede national. The fact that I do not come from BiH also gave me a neutral position which may have been beneficial in the context of Bosnia’s complex recent history.

In addition, I share a common experience with my informants because I am myself a migrant in Sweden, although not a refugee. This common background may have, to some extent, aroused a feeling of mutual understanding and empathy between the informants and me. Besides the migration experience, I am also close in age to many of my informants (although I am younger than all of them) and share the characteristic of having pursued higher education. For these reasons, I did not feel any major difference in terms of power in my relationship with them.

In certain cases, because of our shared migration experience and the informal setting of the interview – in cafés – some informants asked me my opinion or sought to hear about my own experience. When this happened, I tried to remain in the listener’s position during the interview, but I did not exclude having a discussion after it ended.

The data gathered through interviews are not only influenced by the background of the researcher but also by the theoretical framework of the research. As McDowell (2010: 160-161) points out, the questions posed in an interview are already theoretically situated, based on existing discourses. In the case of my research, the development and migration framework and the transnational perspective have certainly oriented the formulation of the interview questions and may have also influenced, to some extent, the responses of my interviewees. For instance, they may have exaggerated their continuous connection to Sweden or Sweden’s relevance in their current professional activity. They may also have sought to give a positive image of themselves, insisting on their achievements (particularly in terms of their professional activity) and silencing their difficulties. Although such a risk cannot be avoided, I expected it to be limited as I specifically asked about the challenges and difficulties they had faced in relation to their return process and current professional activity.

In the thesis, I also sought to clearly motivate my choices of methods and theory and provide the definitions of the concepts I employed. I was cautious not to be over-deductive, i.e. to depart from the theory and seek to find data that confirm it (while

neglecting cases that contradict it). Instead, following Herbert's (2010: 73) suggestion, I tried to constantly go back and from the theory to the data.

4.1.2 Observation

Besides interviewing, I also used the ethnographic method of observation which entails "entering the setting of some group and simply watching and listening attentively" (Berg 2006, 192). Observation can imply different degrees of participation by the researcher. It stresses the subjectivity in research, emphasizing the proximity between the researcher and the object of study (Laurier 2003: 133; Watson and Till 2010: 126).

During my field study, I observed and interacted with a large number of returnees to Bosnia. Besides the contacts with my informants, I also lived and socialized with returnees from Sweden and elsewhere. These social interactions and informal discussions with returnees have inevitably influenced my perspective on return migration.

On various occasions, I also came to observe the working routines and approaches of certain organisations and institutions regarding migration, return and development issues. As I was based at the office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Sarajevo, I became acquainted and took part to the organisation's work in the area of migration and development. For instance, I assisted members of the staff with the drafting of a report on the return of young Diaspora to the BiH labour market. I also attended a two-day internal staff meeting of the Centres of Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs) which provide assistance to returnees and local population in BiH. In addition, I participated to a field visit by members of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN)³⁶ in BiH in the context of a project to rehabilitate an old factory in North-East Bosnia to produce furniture for the Swedish market. During that visit, I met staff from the municipality and a youth organization. Finally, in October 2011, I returned to Sarajevo to attend a regional seminar entitled 'Linking Migration and Development of the Western Balkans Countries', organized by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) of BiH and financed by the European Commission.

Observations are typically recorded in field notes (Laurier 2003: 138-140). Throughout my field research I took detailed notes of my observations, noteworthy discussions and reflections. These field notes informed my analysis of returnees' social remittance transfers (in particular for the case study of the returnee-established Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN)) and of the challenges to return. They also inspired the description of Bosnia's contextual background.

³⁶ The CCSN (2012) is an independent business organization, whose task is to develop business environment, to promote trade and investment opportunities, to encourage integration of companies, and to harmonize the enterprise cultures between Scandinavian and Western Balkan countries.

4.2 Ethical considerations

According to the Swedish Research Council (2011: 16), *research ethics* involve “questions regarding the relationship between research and ethics as well as ethical standards for the researcher and the aim and implementation of the research”. An important part of research ethics relates to the relationship between the researcher and the people who participate in the research as subjects or informants (Ibid.). As my research is based on qualitative interviews, ethical considerations are essential. A fundamental normative assumption is that informants must be protected as much as possible from any harm related to their participation to the research (Cloke et al. 2004: 165).

One way to protect informants from harm is ensuring their *informed consent* to take part in the research (Swedish Research Council 2011: 22; Cloke et al. 2004: 165; Hay 2003: 43). Therefore, I clearly explained the purpose and context of my research to all potential interviewees. I also assured them anonymity (Swedish Research Council 2011: 67), namely that I would neither mention their name nor the name of the company that they work for. Instead, I refer to them with their age, sex and profession. For many of the interviewees, anonymity was the condition for accepting the audio recording of the interview, which I considered necessary in order to be able to include verbatim quotes in my analysis.

However, total anonymity is hard to achieve. My informants belong to a rather small group of Bosnian returnees from Sweden and therefore it is possible for people who are acquainted with this group to identify the informants' identity through their age, sex and particularly their profession. However, as my research focuses on returnees' contributions to development in the context of their professional activity, I cannot avoid mentioning the profession of my informants. Moreover, as I am exploring the returnees' transnational links with Sweden in the context of their work, I need to specify whether they work for a Bosnian or a Swedish company. As there are a limited number of Swedish companies established in BiH, it may be possible to identify the informants' identity. Yet, if I do not mention the professional activity of my informants, the research would lose its substance. Therefore, as the Swedish Research Council suggests, my aim as a researcher is to achieve a *balance* between the protection of individuals and the necessity of performing quality research that is relevant both at an academic and societal level (Ibid.: 18).

Ethical considerations are particularly important for researches that aim to gather personally sensitive data (Ibid.: 21; Cloke et al. 2004: 164- 165; Valentine 2005: 122-123). The focus of my research – returnees' development contributions in the context of their professional activity – is not in itself particularly sensitive. However, as mentioned above, emigration-related issues are a sensitive topic in BiH and are closely linked to ethnic divisions. Therefore it is important to ensure that the informants are not harmed in any ways by the research. In addition, although my focus lays on their professional activity, I also asked questions about the informants' migration and return experience, which sometimes awoke painful memories of the Balkan war and their experience of being refugees in Sweden. When the informants were emotionally affected by my questions, I tried to treat them with empathy and respect (Hay 2003: 41). When dealing with sensitive issues in the analysis I made sure that the informants could not be identified.

4.3 Characteristics of the research sample

My research sample consists of 13 individuals who fulfil the research criteria of having previously lived in Sweden, being professionally active in BiH³⁷ and younger than 50-year-old. Information about the informants is collected in the following table.

³⁷ One informant (returnee n°13) does not fulfill the criterion of having resided in Sweden as he lived in neighbouring Denmark. Yet he has strong connections with Sweden as he has a sister living there, whom he regularly visits. He is also connected to Sweden through his professional activity as his company that sells medical devices in BiH is the main distributor of a large Swedish company. For these reasons I consider him a relevant case for my research.

Informant	Age	Sex	Year of migration	Year of return	Professional activity	Type of employment
Returnee n°1	40	Woman	1992	2005	Financial controller at a Swedish company of zinc products	Employed at a Swedish company
Returnee n°2	33	Man	1993	2006	Technical director of a company producing prefabricated houses	Self-employed
Returnee n°3	27	Woman	1993	2010	Employee at an international organisation dealing with migration issues	Employed at an international organisation
Returnee n°4	49	Man	1992	1997	Distribution manager of a Swedish company of high-technology and engineering	Employed at a Swedish company
Returnee n°5	39	Man	2000	2002	Manager of a Swedish company producing solar panels	Employed at a Swedish company
Returnee n°6	28	Woman	1993	2010	Employee at a tourism office and founder of an 'organic box' project	Employed at a Bosnian company
Returnee n°7	28	Man	1992	2010	Employee at an international organisation dealing with regional security	Employed at an international organisation
Returnee n°8	34	Man	1993	2005, 2010	Manager of a software development company	Employed at a Bosnian company
Returnee n°9	41	Woman	1992	1999	Manager of a design and advertisement company	Self-employed
Returnee n°10	32	Man	1992	2009	Manager of company selling disability equipment and Rosen therapist	Self-employed
Returnee n°11	28	Woman	1992	2007	Employee at a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs	Employed at a BiH governmental institution
Returnee n°12	41	Man	1992	1996	Director of a Swedish (formerly Bosnian) company in the security branch	Employed at a Swedish company
Returnee n°13	32	Man	1993	2007	Manager of a company selling medical equipment	Self-employed

Table 1. Background information on the research sample.

Even though I sought to achieve a relative gender balance, the research sample is male dominated, including 8 men and 5 women. A possible reason may be that there are more professionally active male returnees from Sweden in BiH. This may be explained by the fact that the employment rate in BiH is higher among men (42.2%) than women (23.3%) (Somun-Krupalija 2011: 2). It may also be related to the difficulty of finding informants during the summer holiday period.

The vast majority of the informants went to Sweden as asylum seekers during the Balkan war. The length of their stay in Sweden varies between 2 and 18 years. 11 out of the 13 informants have obtained permanent residence permit in Sweden. All of them have learned the Swedish language to a higher or lesser degree.

The informants' age varies between 27 and 49 years old. 8 of them were children or teenagers when they migrated and attended most of their education in Sweden. The majority of informants who arrived as adults had started or completed a higher education in BiH. In Sweden, they often worked in areas that did not correspond to their educational background, such as in restaurants or a kindergarten. None of them engaged in further higher studies in Sweden.

A variety of professional activities are represented in the research sample, including in the sectors of industry, information technology (IT), sales and politics. The sample also contains various employment statuses, with 4 employees of a Swedish firm, 4 self-employed entrepreneurs and 5 employees of a Bosnian or international firm or organization.

With the exception of two returnees who are Bosnian-Croat and Bosnian-Serb, all informants are Bosniaks. Except one who is based in Mostar, all informants reside in Sarajevo and its surroundings. As Sarajevo and Mostar belong to the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), nearly all informants have undertaken a so-called 'majority return', that is, returning to areas where they are part of the ethnic majority.

The individuals in the research sample had various motivations to return as well as different return contexts. Most returned voluntarily and one was forced to return as he did not obtain a residence permit in Sweden. Some returned alone and others together with family members. Some planned their return and others returned more spontaneously, for instance by coming to BiH on holidays and deciding to stay. Some had a secured employment or entrepreneurial project in BiH before returning. Yet, it is important underlining that none of my informants returned as part of a programme of 'assisted return'³⁸.

Many returnees stated that they returned for nostalgia reasons. Younger ones said that they wanted to experience life in their country of origin, 'give it a try'. Some were motivated by the desire to contribute to the reconstruction and development of the country. Many of them have regular visits to Sweden, either for professional reasons or to visit relatives and friends. Some of them do not exclude returning to Sweden in the future.

A more detailed description of the background of each informant is available in Appendix 1.

³⁸ Only returnee n°12 benefited from a SIDA grant in order to start his company upon return.

5. Social remittances of Bosnian returnees from Sweden

My empirical study revealed a variety of social remittances, or ideas, practices and social capital, which have a positive effect on Bosnia's development. As stressed above, this thesis embraces Sen's broad definition of development that takes into account both social and economic aspects. In this analysis, social remittances therefore comprise contributions to both social wellbeing and economic development. Social wellbeing, on the one hand, relates to social sectors such as healthcare, environment and social protection. Economic development, relates for instance to trade and investments. In this respect, it is important recalling that social remittances can have economic effects. For example, as stressed by Bourdieu (1986: 47), social capital can be converted into economic capital thereby spurring economic growth and development.

On the basis of my empirical data I distinguish three types of normative structures and systems of practice and three types of social capital. The former include: 1. Ideas and practices about meaningful work, 2. Health and 3. Environment. The later consist of: 1. Social connections with investors in Sweden, 2. Trade partners and 3. Political institutions. This classification is summarized in Table 2.

Returnees' social remittances	Normative structures and systems of practice	About meaningful work → Returnees n°1, 3, 5, 11, 12 and 13
		About health → Returnees n°10 and 13
		About environment → Returnees n° 2 and 6
	Social capital	Social connections with investors in Sweden → Returnees n°1, 4 and 5 & CCSN
		Social connections with trade partners in Sweden → Returnees n°2, 8, 12 and 13 & CCSN
		Social connections with Swedish political institutions → Returnees n° 7 and 11 & CCSN

Table 2. Classification of returnees' social remittances in the research.

For each of these themes, I present relevant examples from the experience of the informants in my research sample. Although I used the entirety of my interviews in order to conceive the above classification, I do not refer to all interviews for each theme, but only if they contain information that is relevant to the theme. This implies

that some of the interviews are referred to for several of the themes while others are less prominent. One of the informants (returnee n°9) is not mentioned at all in the analysis as it does not appear that her experience in Sweden influenced her current professional activity. The fact that returnees, like in this case, do not necessarily, transfer social remittances will be discussed in the following section on returnees' challenges.

In the case of social capital, I also focus on the case of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN) in BiH, founded by two returnees from Sweden, which contains relevant examples for all three types of social capital. Finally, I conclude the section with a discussion of the main findings regarding returnees' social capital.

5.1 Normative structures and systems of practice

As mentioned above, normative structures consist of ideas, values and beliefs, while systems of practice are the actions shaped by normative structures (Levitt 1998: 934). My interviews among Bosnian returnees from Sweden revealed three major areas in which returnees' ideas and practices have a positive effect on development: 1. Meaningful work, 2. Health and 3. Environment.

5.1.1 Ideas and practices about meaningful work

One central aspect of Sen's definition of development as the freedom to lead a life worth living is the exercise of meaningful work. Rosso et al. (2010: 95) define meaningful work as "work experienced as particularly significant and holding positive meaning for individuals". Meaningful work therefore presumably implies good working conditions and effective organisational practices which increase the workers' social wellbeing.

The issue of good working and organisational practices was a recurrent topic in my interviews with returnees from Sweden. Many of them told me that they valued the Swedish or Scandinavian way of working, which they had experienced during their stay in Sweden, and sought to implement some of those practices in their current professional activity in BiH. Those well-regarded working practices included implementing good social security standards for employees, less hierarchical and more democratic organisational structures, professionalism and work efficiency. In my view, each of these practices highlights different aspects of meaningful work.

Some interviewees that are entrepreneurs explained that their experience of the Swedish, or Nordic, social model inspired them to implement good social security standards for their employees in their company. It is worth noting that these returnees are able to influence the working conditions in their company because they are in a director or managerial position. All of them have worked in Sweden (or Scandinavia), although not necessarily in an equivalent position.

The manager of a Bosnian company selling medical equipment argues:

"The way we built the company is very Danish or Swedish-like. Compared to the local companies we have very regulated conditions. For Swedish standards this may sound strange, but many companies here do not register their workers.

They do not pay all the contributions to health funds, pension funds and so on” (Returnee n° 13, man, 32).

In the same line, the Director of a Swedish, but until recently Bosnian, company in the security sector that employs 1,500 people in BiH describes how, contrary to many Bosnian companies, his company provides good a social protection to its employees:

“This is something that I do differently than others, especially in my country: Since 2003 all employees in the company are ‘full employees’. That means that the company pays full social insurance, pension, and health insurance. The employees are really ‘secure’ in our company. The company is attractive. Today you can see that it is full of young people” (Returnee n°12, man, 41).

The importance of having good social protections standards was also highlighted by the manager of a Swedish company producing solar panels:

“In many Bosnian companies there are problems about salaries. For example there are many people who work for six months and are only paid for one month. Here every salary is paid on time. Ok, it’s not like in Sweden but you can plan, organise your life because you know that you will receive your money at the end of the month” (Returnee n°5, man, 39).

Beside good social protection standards for employees, the informants also praised certain organisational practices that they encountered in Sweden, notably the more democratic and less hierarchical organisational structures. The financial controller at a Swedish company producing zinc products and wife of the manager stresses the importance of more democratic relations with the employees:

“What you hear about Bosnian companies is that there is always someone who decides – a strict hierarchy. In our company there is also someone who decides, but we want to have a relation with the employees. It has to be democratic so that people can take responsibility. In Bosnia the employees usually don’t take any responsibility because they don’t have a say in their working places. We want our employees to be able to tell us “this is wrong” or “is it possible to do it like this?” People in Bosnia are afraid to say such things. It’s the culture”³⁹ (Returnee n°1, woman, 40).

The manager of a Bosnian company selling medical equipment also stresses the advantages of a less hierarchical company structure.

“Maybe because we have lived in Denmark we try to have this different company policy or company culture, quite open, quite low hierarchy and so on, which I think is an advantage. Because I think people work better in those conditions” (Returnee n°13, man, 32).

In addition to organisational practices, the informants also cited a number of working practices that they sought to ‘bring’ from Sweden. The director of a Swedish (formerly Bosnian) company in the security sector mentions professionalism and efficiency:

³⁹ Author’s translation from Swedish.

“During my time in Sweden I really learned about professionalism. To make plans, do a good job. It was a short period but I got to see how things work there. Of course that was a big help. [...] So what we bring to our country is professionalism. We keep this branch on a really high level, in terms of organisation, professionalism, prices, and salaries. [...] Now that I see it, it can be something I brought from Sweden: this way of thinking, organising, keep learning all the time” (Returnee n°12, man, 41).

Work efficiency was also highlighted by the employee for an international organisation dealing with migration issues. She explains that in her task of writing a guidebook of Bosnia’s main governmental institutions, she used equivalent documents and websites about Swedish institutions as models:

“You know in my work today, it feels good having a country that is successful as a back-up. When I do things now, when I encounter something that I find ineffective, I go and find the counter-part in Sweden. [...] For my guidebook for example, I go and I find information about laws and I see how it’s put in Sweden and I see how really simple it is to get that sort of information and understand it. And then I go back to the Bosnian equivalent and I think that it should be equally easy here. So this is the way we have to do it” (Returnee n°3, woman, 27).

These various examples indicate that ideas and practices about work are socially remitted, through returnees, from Sweden to BiH. However, implementing new working practices does not always occur without difficulty. Practices are often hard to change, let alone rules and institutions. An interviewee that is employed at a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs explained that when she makes suggestions for different ways of working, she is often told “This is not Sweden, you know. We cannot do that here” (Returnee n°11, woman, 28). She admits that not all practices that exist in Sweden can be applied to the Bosnian context, but believes that some things can. Talking about social security standards, the manager of a company selling medical equipment also agrees that “It’s difficult to have all Swedish rules here [in BiH], [...] but you can implement at least some parts of the way they do there [in Sweden]” (Returnee n° 13, man, 32).

This section has highlighted work-related practices that returnees have encountered in Sweden and which they consider positive. Yet, it must be stressed that practices such as paying employees in time and having a democratic work environment, are not exclusively Swedish. They can be found anywhere. Moreover, working practices in Sweden are not automatically positive, neither are Bosnian ways of working always in need of improvement. The manager of a computer software company nuances: “Well, I don’t know if Swedish working conditions are the perfect ones that one should aim for. But this is the only thing I can compare to because I lived and worked there” (Returnee n°8, man, 34). Finally, in order to have better understanding of the effects of returnees’ work-related practices on the social wellbeing of their employees, one should listen to the employees’ perspective. However, this would have required additional field research and would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

5.1.2 Ideas and practices about health

Being healthy and having access to healthcare is a central component of development understood as the freedom to lead a life worth living (Anand and Sen 2000: 2030).

Two of my informants (returnees n° 10 and n° 13) are professionally active in the healthcare sector and, in my view, are contributing to the transfer of ideas and practices about health from Sweden to BiH.

Returnee n° 13 is a 32 year-old returnee from Denmark. Together with his father, he owns and manages a company selling medical equipment that is the BiH distributor of a major Swedish company. Parallel to its regular selling activity, the company also seeks to transfer knowledge and skills to the Bosnian healthcare sector. For instance, they seek to introduce European healthcare standards and regulations into Bosnian hospitals. As he describes it:

“In sterilization and disinfection, there are European standards and laws. So it is a highly regulated area in the healthcare sector in the European Union. Here it’s still not. So what we try to do through a Swedish company is to copy European laws and standards [in Bosnian clinics] and do a lot of education of healthcare personnel and doctors and nurses here in Bosnia. So we get all the documents, all the presentations – sometimes in Swedish – that they do in the Swedish clinics, we translate them and we do a lot of education” (Returnee n° 13, man, 32).

The company is currently implementing a project with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Srpska (RS) in Banja Luka which consists of introducing European laws and standards for prevention of nosocomial infections in four hospitals. This project is a clear example of transfer of healthcare standards from Swedish to Bosnian hospitals. “It’s kind of taking a Swedish hospital and taking this central department style and copying it for Bosnia”, its manager says.

Such projects are not solely motivated by development purposes. They also help the company to build its market and set itself apart from other companies in the sector. In that sense, they contribute to Bosnia’s economic development and create employment⁴⁰. Yet, at the same time, they contribute to the prevention of nosocomial infections, and thereby possibly save lives. In addition, the introduction of European norms and regulation in sterilization and disinfection in Bosnian legislation also brings the country closer to accessing the European Union.

The second informant who works in the healthcare sector is the 32 year-old manager of a company selling disability equipment. This company was founded in 2008 by a Bosnian person living in Sweden and a returnee from Sweden. The latter was blind himself and was already active assisting disabled people in BiH. He had supported different associations in Sarajevo and contributed to the opening of a library for blind people. His motivation in starting the company was to provide the disabled people in

⁴⁰ The company employs nine people.

BiH the same facilities that are available in Sweden. As the current manager of the companies explains:

“Starting this company was his idea at the beginning. He is from Sarajevo and his motivation was just to help his friends, his people. He knows himself how it is, to not have a white cane or something else. Of course he saw the difference between how it is in Sweden and in Bosnia. There is a very big difference” (Returnee n°10, man, 32).

The current manager joined the company in 2009. One year later, the owner living in Sweden wished to close the company because it was not growing as expected. Despite the economic hardships, the returnee n°10 decided to buy the company. “It was a very hard decision. I was very sad and it would have given me a lot of pain if the company did not continue. This was the only company that could sell those services [in BiH]. So I decided to keep doing it [running the company] and see how long it would go.” His experience of Swedish context seems to have influenced his choice to continue with the company: “In Sweden I saw how much better it can be for disabled people. Life can be much easier if you have those devices” (Returnee n°10, man, 32). His main motivation seems to be to provide disabled people in Bosnia the same facilities that are available in Sweden.

Today the company actively informs members of associations of blind and visually impaired people about existing devices, which in turn ‘lobby’ politicians to attract policy attention on their situation. It also implements a project with a hotel in Sarajevo that wishes to adapt its facilities to blind and visually-impaired guests. Its manager thinks that “it’s a good beginning” and is confident that there will be “more and more of these projects” (Returnee n°10, man, 32).

Beside his work at the company selling disability devices, the Returnee n°10 is also a therapist in the Rosen Method Bodywork, an alternative health method that helps relaxation and tackles chronic muscle tension. While studying the method in Stockholm, he became convinced that it could be beneficial for people in BiH, many of whom suffer from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of the conflict⁴¹. Already before returning to Sarajevo, he contributed to introduce the method to BiH. Together with colleagues at the School of Health and Body Therapy in Stockholm he travelled to Bosnia two or three times a year to teach the method free of charge. Since he moved to BiH, he teaches and practices the Rosen Method and is pleased with the results:

“[P]eople recognize [the benefits of treatments.] I see it from the time I work with the Rosen therapy. I see how people react, how they feel. They want to feel better. They are feeling something different, something better. I’m very happy, I’m very thankful, that I’m here and that I can help“(Returnee n°10, man, 32).

The two examples above illustrate how returnees’ can play a role in the improvement of the healthcare sector in their country of origin. In both cases, the fact that the person has lived in Sweden has a significant impact on their health-related practices. The manager of the company selling medical equipment implements projects to transfer knowledge and norms in the healthcare sector from Sweden and BiH. Similarly, the

⁴¹ It is estimated that between 10% and 50% of the country’s population suffers from PTSD (Milić 2011).

manager of the company selling disability equipment strives to provide disabled people in Bosnia the same facilities that are available in Sweden. He also introduced a relaxation method which he discovered and studied in Sweden. In my view, these two cases are examples of social remittances transferred from the returnees host to their home country.

5.1.3 Ideas and practices about the environment

Living in a good and healthy environment is a central aspect of human wellbeing. Environmental protection and sustainability are inherent to development. Two of my informants (returnees n°2 and n°6) play a role in transferring ideas and practices about environmental preservation as part of their professional activity.

The manager of a company building prefabricated houses (returnee n°2, man, 33) stressed that the company produces low-energy houses. Low-energy houses are houses that use less energy, from any sort, than traditional or average contemporary houses. They are better isolated and are made of natural materials. He learned about low-energy houses in the context of his education in civil engineering at Lund University, where he dedicated his Master's thesis to the study of low-energy houses. In that sense, his knowledge and know-how could be seen as a social remittance that he transferred from Sweden to BiH. As he says, "Because I did my research in Sweden about prefab low energy houses in the future [he laughs]. I did that at university, so I took my experience from there to here" (Returnee n°2, man, 33). He also seems to contribute to changing ideas and practices about low-energy housing consumption in BiH. As part of his business activity, he tries to inform and advise his Bosnian clients about the environmental and economic benefits of low-energy houses. He explains that it is important for his clients to see that low-energy houses are produced in BiH: "If you have a factory here producing stuff like that. Then people can see it, touch it and they can say: 'Ok you can sell it as well'. It is also about sharing information with the clients" (Returnee n°2, man, 33).

These ideas and practices about low-energy housing do not only contribute to social development but they also contribute to economic growth and employment: the company is employing about 100 people.

Returnee n°6 (woman, 28) also contributes to transferring ideas and practices about both health and the environment as she initiated an 'organic box' project aiming to distribute organic and locally produced food to families in Sarajevo. In Sweden she worked for several years in an organic food store where she acquired knowledge and experience about organic food. She was in contact with the farmers who produced the food sold in the shop. She also took a course in nutrition which gave her further knowledge about healthy food. After moving to Sarajevo, she launched, together with her fiancé, an 'organic box' project which consists of distributing organic and locally grown products to households in Sarajevo. In her words:

"We've started distributing something we call "the organic box". That's a cardboard box that we are hoping to be able to recycle fully from our clients. That's a box that we fill with organic ingredients. Thus far we only have vegetables but we are hoping to get berries and fruits. All of them are grown within a distance of 60 or 70 kilometres, which is great because it's 'near

products'. And they are grown without any chemicals. They are just grown naturally" (Returnee n°6, woman, 28).

These two examples illustrate how environmental ideas and practices are socially remitted from Sweden to Bosnia by returnees.

5.2 Social capital

As mentioned above, social capital refers to the resources that accrue to individuals or groups by virtue of belonging to certain social networks or other social structures. According to Levitt, social capital can be socially remitted by migrants. In my empirical research, I sought to identify cases of social capital transferred by Bosnian returnees from Sweden in the context of their professional activity. I found that returnees maintain social connections with various actors in Sweden and that these connections can be beneficial for the development in BiH. Many returnees have social connections with investors and trade partners in Sweden thereby facilitating trade flows between the two countries and Swedish investments in Bosnia. When this happens, social capital is arguably converted into economic one. Beside trade partners and investors, returnees also have social contacts with other actors in Sweden such as in the academic and the political spheres.

In this section, I begin by presenting different examples of social capital transferred by the returnees in my research group in the form of 1. Social connections with investors in Sweden, 2. Trade partners in Sweden and 3. Political institutions. In a second stage, I examine the case of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN) in BiH which was founded by two returnees from Sweden and contains relevant examples for all three themes. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the main finding regarding returnees' social capital.

5.2.1 Social connections with investors in Sweden

As mentioned previously, four of the returnees I interviewed are employed in Swedish companies. Among them, two have played a critical role in assisting Swedish investors to establish their company in BiH. Another returnee became in charge of a Swedish company's office in Bosnia thanks to his contacts with the company during his time in Sweden.

Returnee n°1 (woman, 40) is a financial controller at Swedish company producing zinc products for various industries, where her husband is the site manager. When she was living in Sweden, her husband worked for seven years as a caster for the company in Bredaryd. During that time, he had several discussions with the owner of the company advising him to open a factory in Bosnia, where the costs of productions are lower. This project became a reality in 2005. In addition to convincing his manager to invest in BiH, he also played a central role in the establishment of the factory. He assisted the Swedish investor to find a location, to contact local actors and supervised the construction of the building. His wife thinks that if the Swedish investor had not known a Bosnian person that could assist him, he would probably not have invested in BiH. She stresses the mutual trust between her and her husband and the Swedish investor. On the one hand, the Swedish investor trusted that they were capable of managing the

company's site in BiH. On the other, they also felt that they could trust him, which gave them security:

“He [the Swedish investor] saw that he could trust us, and that is important. [...] But he also played a big role for us. He was a security for us and we were a security for him. He knew how to manage a company. We didn't. It wasn't so easy to say, 'We'll move back to Bosnia after thirteen years and with all that has happened here.' We didn't know what would happen, but we had trust in ourselves and in him. And we managed it”⁴² (Returnee n°1, woman, 40).

Returnee n°5 (man, 39) who manages the BiH site of a Swedish company producing solar panels also assisted a Swedish investor to establish in BiH. He met the investor in 2004 after returning to Bosnia. At the time, he was visiting different companies in search for a job. By chance he happened to visit a company at the same time as a Swedish entrepreneur who was researching about investment opportunities in BiH. As he spoke Swedish and was a mechanical engineer, the Swedish entrepreneur offered him to assist him in establishing a factory, which he did. He found a suitable location and helped with administrative procedures, purchase of material and hiring of staff. He also facilitated the negotiations with local politicians, which involved dealing with demands for bribes.

“At the beginning I worked as a translator. In many cases I was like a filter. Many things that Bosnian people said, I didn't translate to Mr. X [the Swedish investor], because they were very bad. I didn't want to come to a situation where he thinks bad things about it [about what the Bosnian interlocutors said]. So I was like a filter [he laughs]. [...] I think that [by doing this] I helped a lot to start the company here” (Returnee n°5, man, 39).

As this quote suggests, he was more than a simple interpreter. He knew what would be acceptable for the Swedish entrepreneur and tried to conciliate the two different business cultures. He also managed to avoid any form of corruption. Without his assistance, it is likely that the Swedish investor would have been unable to fulfil the complicated procedures involved in starting a company in BiH. It is interesting noting that the returnee n°5 did not know the Swedish entrepreneur before they started working together. Arguably, the fact that he had lived in Sweden for two years and had learned the Swedish language played a large role in strengthening their mutual trust. It made it possible for him to exercise the function of 'filter' and select the information to translate to the investor and the local authorities during the negotiations.

Finally, the Distribution Manager of the Bosnian office of a Swedish company of high-technology (returnee n°4, man, 49) also had social connections with Swedish investors. Although he did not play an instrumental role in the establishment of the company in BiH, having contacts with the Swedish representatives of the company contributed to him being employed in the company. While being in Sweden, he approached representatives of a large Swedish company of high-technology and engineering asking them whether they had any plans to open a representative office in BiH. When they did open an office in 1997, he became its first employee. The social connections acquired in Sweden appear to have helped him in his personal career. Although the company's policy is to hire local people in their representative offices, he considers his knowledge of the Swedish language and way of working as an advantage:

⁴² Author's translation from Swedish.

“Swedish people always prefer to hire people who know the Swedish language and know some things about the country and have some experience of the Swedish mentality and philosophy in doing business. Because it is easier to be efficient in the market if you already have such kind of knowledge and experience” (Returnee n°4, man, 49).

The two Swedish factories that were established with the assistance of returnees from Sweden represent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Sweden to BiH. They are clear examples of social capital being converted into economic one. In other words, the returnees’ social connections and mutual trust with Swedish investors facilitated, or even enabled, Swedish investments to BiH. These two factories contributed to revive the industrial production and infrastructure, which was largely destroyed during the conflict. Their presence does not only generate economic growth but also employment opportunities in the localities where they are situated. The factory producing solar panels employs 50 Bosnian people and the factory producing zinc products employs 15. The first has rehabilitated the building of an old factory that had been abandoned since the war. The second is established in a locality where, before the war, there used to be a large textile factory employing about 3000 women. Today, the zinc factory is the only factory in operation in the area.

As mentioned above, Bosnia’s complex political and institutional context and persisting corruption tend to discourage foreign investments. In 2010, FDI to Bosnia amounted to 174 million USD, while migrants’ financial remittances reached as much as 2.2 billion USD. With this in mind, the role of returnees in facilitating such foreign investments becomes particularly meaningful. The contribution of returnees from Sweden is also particularly relevant as the Swedish investments in Bosnia are particularly low compared to other European countries. They only amounted to 13 million EUR between 1994 and 2010. In the same period, the investments from Austria and Germany reached 960 and 285 million EUR respectively (FIPA 2011).

Finally, it is important stressing that these Swedish investments in Bosnia also benefited the Swedish investors by lowering their costs of production. They are typical cases of moving production to areas with lower production costs, notably due to cheaper workforce. An analysis of the effects of such investments on Sweden’s economy is beyond the scope of this thesis⁴³. Yet the existence of such effects must at least be recognized. All too often, the literature on migration and development focuses solely on development effects in migrant-sending countries, while overlooking effects in migrant-receiving ones.

5.2.2 Social connections with trade partners in Sweden

Besides having contacts with Swedish investors, the returnees of my research sample also have social connections with trade partners in Sweden. Just as in the case of investors, contacts with trade partners may lead to social capital being converted into economic one.

⁴³ For a thorough discussion about Foreign Direct Investment, see Legendijk and Hendriks 2009.

Returnee n°2 (man, 33) manages a company that produces prefabricated houses which has many clients in Sweden. Before he joined the company in 2006, it was not making any business with Sweden. Four months after his arrival, the company started selling products to Sweden. Today the company's share of exports to Sweden is the largest among EU countries. Trying to sell their products to the Swedish market was a natural step for him. As he explains:

"I went to school in Sweden and I know their standards and norms and everything. And I knew that we can produce the same quality as Swedish companies, meeting their requirements. I knew what they want, what they request and what we can make. So I put these two things together [he laughs]" (Returnee n°2, man, 33).

This quote suggests that the returnee's knowledge of the Swedish market and the Bosnian standards was central to the shaping of trade connections between the two countries. He also stressed that his contacts with his clients in Sweden were 'much better' than with other foreign clients. He explains this difference by invoking his knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish ways of working and doing business:

"It's language, culture, because I lived in Sweden and I know how they think about quality, time, prices, way to handle, way to discuss, details, contracts... And of course when they know that I speak Swedish and I come from Sweden, they feel more comfortable. And it's the same for me as well" (Returnee n°2, man, 33).

The advantages of knowing the language and ways of working was also highlighted by the manager of a company selling medical equipment that imports most of its products from Swedish and Scandinavian companies.

"You know, when I choose my business partners, Scandinavian companies come first, because it's easier for me to communicate. It's maybe easier for them to commit to somebody who has a story in Scandinavia. You know when I call a Danish company, I say "Listen, I'm Danish, I finished the school here, I worked for a Danish company and I want to work with you". It's easier for them to make a step and say "We can connect with him easier" than with someone that says "I'm Bosnian, I've lived here all my life..." So it is a good way to get this trust, thanks to the language it's much easier. So when I send them an email, it's in their culture, in their language. They understand much better than [if it was from] somebody else" (Returnee n°13, man, 32).

Speaking the same language and knowing the work culture seems to significantly contribute to building trust between trade partners. Thanks to these characteristics, returnees can forge a special relationship with business partners from their host country. As the quote above suggests, this particular position sets them apart from Bosnian entrepreneurs who have never left the country.

The particular position of returnees is also stressed by the returnee n°8 (man, 34) who manages a software development company, which was established with the purpose of selling services to Swedish clients. Its owners are two Bosnian people living in Sweden who are working in the same sector in Stockholm. They decided to set up a company in BiH, where the cost of the labour force is lower, and sell their services to the Swedish market at competitive prices. This can be described as a form of outsourcing of software development services from Sweden to BiH.

Returnee n°8 explains how the fact of having lived and worked in Sweden facilitates trade connections with partners in the country:

“These two owners in Stockholm, including me who lived in Sweden, we know the culture of the business in Sweden, we know how to communicate, we know what the Swedish customers want. And that's why we can provide them with the same level of quality and know-how. If I was only a Bosnian living here all my life, there would be no chance for me to know the culture. You know how to write a right email, in the way Swedes are used to. These are small things but they make a big difference” (Returnee n°8, man, 34).

As in the two cases above, the returnee n°8 stresses the importance of his knowledge of the Swedish market and ‘work culture’.

An interesting point about this example is that the manager of the company in BiH does not only have social connections with Swedish clients but also with the Bosnian founders of the company who reside in Sweden. As they trusted him, they asked him to be in charge of their company in Bosnia⁴⁴.

In addition to having contacts with business partners in Sweden, returnees may also have contacts with Swedish companies in BiH. As the director of a Swedish-owned, but formerly Bosnian, company in the security branch mentions:

“Even when I went back to Bosnia I had a lot of contacts with the Swedish Embassy, with Swedish companies, like ABB and Ericsson. I went to Sweden, I saw how it was there and I got a lot of contacts with Swedish business people in Bosnia. So my contacts were not only in Sweden but also among Swedish people in Bosnia. At first, this was a big help for me [for establishing his company]” (Returnee n°12, man, 41).

The fact of having lived in Sweden appears to help returnees to make business with trade partners in Sweden and Scandinavia. Their knowledge of the Swedish language and ‘work culture’ facilitates their social connections with trade partners and contributes to build mutual trust. In addition, their knowledge of the Swedish market helps them adapt their products and services to the Swedish demand. Just as in the case of contacts with investors in Sweden, the returnees’ contacts with trade partners in Sweden are examples of social capital being converted into economic capital. The trade connections, facilitated by returnees, enhance economic development in BiH and create employment opportunities. For instance, the factory producing prefabricated houses managed by the returnee n°2 (man, 33) employs about 100 employees in a small locality in Central Bosnia.

⁴⁴ This is not the only company founded by Bosnians in Sweden. The company selling disability equipment that is now owned by the returnee n°10 (man, 32) was also established by Bosnian people residing in Sweden.

5.2.3 Social connections with Swedish political institutions

Besides social connections with actors in the economic sphere, returnees also have contacts with Swedish political actors, forging potentially positive institutional connections between Sweden and BiH. Improved political dialogue is positive from a development perspective as it can contribute to better cooperation in the area of trade, investments and development cooperation.

At the political level, an employee of a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs mentioned that her Swedish background facilitates her collaboration and dialogue with Swedish governmental officials and other foreign actors. Talking about the fact that she has lived in Sweden, she says:

“It helps me connect with other organisations. It helps me connect with Swedish agencies. Anything that has to do with Sweden, I think people hear about you and you hear about them and you connect immediately. If they are to contact the institution, they usually contact me. [...] And people also at my working place, they know about that, they know where to put me into. They say: “this is something for her to do because she has some connections there”. I think that really helps. [...] I think people are always trying to find similar people to bond with. So of course if you have somebody who speaks Swedish in a Bosnian institution, you know, that’s your contact point. And that’s how pretty much it has worked. So I think it’s good. I’m like a bridge between the two countries” (Returnee n°11, woman, 28).

It is interesting noting that she did not have contacts with Swedish officials prior to being employed at the Bosnian governmental institution. Rather the fact that she has lived in Sweden helped her acquire enhanced professional connections with her Swedish counterparts. She even told me that she found it easier to ‘connect’ with Swedish people when being in Bosnia than when being in Sweden. As she said in the quote, she felt like a ‘bridge’ between Sweden and BiH. This example shows that a returnee’s Swedish background can, to some extent, facilitate political dialogue with Swedish institutions. Improved political dialogue between Sweden and BiH is certainly a positive outcome from a development perspective, as it can help improve aid programmes (Sweden is one of the largest donors in BiH) and boost investments in the country.

The returnee n°7 (man, 28) who is employed as a representative for Sweden at an international organisation dealing with regional security also sees his Bosnian background as an asset in his work:

“My strong side is working for Sweden and using the knowledge of the region in my work [...]. It would benefit Bosnia as well because in me they would find someone that understands their problems much better than someone who's not from the country and does not speak the language and is not from the region and studied its way through the problems. So for sure that is where I see myself as contributing” (Returnee n°7, man, 28).

Finally, another possible example of returnees facilitating political dialogue between Sweden and BiH is the returnees that are employed at the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo. To my knowledge, at least two employees of the Embassy are Bosnian returnees from Sweden. In addition, out of the ten interns who have performed an

internship at the Embassy during the five last years, eight had a Bosnian origin (Hedlund 2011). Yet, I did not manage to interview any employee of the Embassy during my field research.

5.2.4 The case of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway in BiH

Beside the cases of social capital transfer by the returnees of my research sample, I also examined the social capital transfers of two other returnees from Sweden, Slobodan and Nelica Neskovic, who founded the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN) in BiH. The CCSN is an independent business organisation that aims to strengthen institutional, economic, scientific and cultural relationships between Sweden and Norway and the Western Balkans.

I chose to analyse their case separately from my other informants for two reasons. First, I did not conduct a thorough and anonymous interview with them. Instead I interviewed them specifically about their role in the CCSN. Second, given the diversity of activities of the CCSN – that deals with trade, investments as well as academic and institutional cooperation – it is more adequate to analyse its activities together as they encompass all the types of social connections discussed above.

Slobodan and Nelica Neskovic, a married couple that lived in Sweden between 1992 and 2000, established the CCSN in 2005, with the objective of improving the trade relations and cooperation between Sweden and Norway and the Western Balkans. The CCSN intends to serve as a forum that allows companies, institutions and universities with mutual interests to interact at various levels.

When in Sweden, Slobodan obtained a degree in business administration at Lund University and Nelica a degree in software development at the same institution. After obtaining the Swedish citizenship, they decided to return to BiH because they wanted to contribute to the reconstruction and development of the country. Aside from his work at the CCSN, Slobodan has also been the deputy major of the City of Sarajevo. Currently, he is an advisor to the government of the FBiH in the energy sector.

The CCSN has engaged in a variety of projects that go beyond mere trade and include institutional, academic and scientific cooperation. While I was in BiH in the summer of 2011, Slobodan and Nelica were negotiating a project to rehabilitate a pre-war wood factory in the municipality of Lopare in the North-East of the country (in Republic of Srpska) to produce furniture for IKEA. As they invited me to accompany them to a field visit in the municipality, I was stricken by the size of the factory that had been abandoned since the war. Clearly the fabric told a story of an industrial past in the region. I met staff of the municipality and of a youth organisation who told me that the rehabilitation of the factory would be a positive outcome for the municipality, where the unemployment rate is estimated to be around 40%. Beside small-scale agriculture, small business and few municipality jobs, employment opportunities are scarce.

The CCSN also arranged that the World Bank finances a road safety project in the FBiH involving consultants from the Swedish agency of traffic (Trafikverket). They also facilitated academic cooperation between Swedish and Bosnian universities, including between the Uppsala University and the University of Banja Luka, the Lund University and the University of Sarajevo and the Royal Institute of Technology and the University

of Sarajevo. Moreover, during the time Slobodan Neskovic was deputy major of Sarajevo he tried to revive an existing partnership between the cities of Stockholm and Sarajevo⁴⁵.

Making social connections between various actors and institutions in Sweden and BiH is the core activity of the CCSN. The Neskovic couple is using its social capital in both Sweden and Bosnia for the purpose of spurring social and economic development.

5.2.5 Main findings about returnees' social capital

The examples above illustrate how returnees transfer social capital to serve social and economic development in BiH. Their social connections with various actors in Sweden contribute to facilitate investments, trade and institutional cooperation between the two countries.

My empirical research highlights a number of factors that seem to facilitate returnees' accumulation of social capital, which I will refer to as 'sources of social capital'.

First, the knowledge of the Swedish language appears to be a major source of social capital for returnees. Several of my informants insisted that their knowledge of Swedish contributed to develop mutual trust between them and actors in Sweden. It is particularly interesting in today's context where the English language has become the main channel for international communication that the knowledge of Swedish still matters in building trust. This is clear in the case of the manager of the Swedish factory producing solar panels (returnee n°5) that only spent two years in Sweden but managed to learn the language, which later helped him gaining the trust and collaborating with the Swedish investor.

A second source of social capital seems to be the returnees' knowledge of the work and business culture in Sweden. Many informants working in Swedish companies or having trade relations with Sweden highlighted the importance of having knowledge and experience of the Swedish way of working and doing business. This implies very concrete things such as ways to communicate, write an email, ways to negotiate and write contracts.

Finally, a third source of social capital that facilitates returnees' contacts with trade partners in Sweden is their knowledge of the Swedish market, notably the quality standards.

One interesting finding is that many of the social connections between returnees and actors in Sweden were not initiated when the returnees resided in Sweden, but when they had already returned to Bosnia. In such cases, it is not social capital *per se* that they acquired in Sweden, but rather the sources of social capital that they accumulated in Sweden. In other words, the fact of having lived in Sweden helped them forge social connections with Swedes once they had returned. This was the case, for example, of the employee of Bosnian governmental institution, who became the 'privileged interlocutor' of her counterparts in Swedish institutions.

⁴⁵ This is not an exhaustive list of the projects carried out by the CCSN. Information about their other projects is available on the organization's website: <http://www.chamber.ba/>.

Returnees do not only have knowledge of the Swedish language, work culture and market. They also master the Bosnian language and are acquainted with the work culture and the market situation in BiH. This aspect is particularly useful for Swedish investors and institutions, which can benefit from such knowledge. However, as they have been living abroad, returnees may not always be so familiar with the Bosnian market, work and business culture. In such cases, returnees may still have contacts, or social capital, in Bosnia, which can provide them with needed information. In this regard, two of my informants (returnees n°2 and n°13) told me that it was very helpful for them to manage a business together with their father who had a better experience of the Bosnian context. This is in line with Hansen's argument that returnees are in a particular position as they are able to accumulate social capital both in their host and home country.

By linking individuals in different countries, returnees are operating in a 'transnational social field'. They are able to make use of their simultaneous connections in Sweden and Bosnia. As Faist (2000a: 200-202) puts it, the returnees' social capital acts like a 'transnational transmission belt' bridging individuals and groups two countries.

A final key observation is that the returnees in my research sample have social connections both with Swedish and Bosnian investors and trade partners in Sweden⁴⁶. Yet, the literature on transnational migration tends to focus on migrants' social connections with their co-ethnics. In the case of transnational migrant entrepreneurship, for example, scholars have argued that the solidarity and trust among the members of kinship and ethnic networks facilitate transnational business exchanges (Faist 2000a: 217; 2008: 31; Guarnizo 2003: 686; Landolt 2001: 231; Zhou 2004: 1058). In contrast, my research stresses that factors other than ethnicity facilitate transnational business and investment relations. The knowledge of the Swedish language and work and business culture appear as decisive sources of social capital. These factors are not related to ethnicity but rather acquired when living in Sweden.

⁴⁶ As a reminder, two of my informants work in a company that was founded by Bosnian people residing in Sweden.

6. Challenges of return

This research has highlighted various social contributions of returnees to Bosnia's development. Yet returnees face substantial challenges and difficulties in their return process, which also affect their possibility to transfer social remittances and enhance development. In this section, I outline the principle obstacles put forward by my informants and other key actors I interviewed. I distinguish the challenges related to the returnees' country of origin (BiH), their host country (Sweden) and their personal life course trajectories.

In a second stage, I present two case studies of institutions – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Centres for Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs) – that provide assistance to returnees and seek to enhance the development effects of return migration. These case studies aim to further illustrate the challenges faced by returnees.

6.1 Returnees' challenges

As mentioned above, a major reason why a large share of Bosnians who fled the country during the war has not returned relates to the unfavourable economic and political context in BiH.

The issue of the lack of employment opportunities in BiH was largely discussed during my interviews. Many of my informants had already found a job or planned to start their own company before their return. Returnee n°1 (woman, 40) returned in order to work in the newly established Swedish company producing zinc products. Returnee n°7 (man, 28) was seconded by the Swedish government to work at an international organisation dealing with regional security in Sarajevo. Returnee n°10 (man, 32) came in order to practice and teach a relaxation method, returnee n°12 (man, 41) to launch a company in the security branch and returnee n°13 (man, 32) to manage a family-owned company selling medical equipment. When I asked them whether they would have returned if they did not have a job or project, they told me that they would not have done it. They pointed at the scarcity of jobs and the necessity of having contacts in order to find a job, which are difficult to acquire while living abroad. The returnee n°1 explained that returning without a job was not an option for her and her husband especially because they had two daughters to look after.

My informants also pointed out that it is particularly difficult for returnees to enter the Bosnian labour market, while it is easier to find employment in international organisations and Swedish or foreign companies. There are different reasons for this. First, as the employee of an international organisation dealing with migration issues (returnee n°3, woman, 27) explained, international organisations are well-suited workplaces for returnees because they tend to value returnees' international experience. Second, foreign companies and institutions are likely to be more attractive for returnees because they tend to offer better working conditions, notably in terms of salaries, compared to the Bosnian labour market. As the manager of the software development company (returnee n°8, man, 34) stressed, joining the Bosnian labour market implies accepting and adapting to lower working and living standards than in

Sweden. For that reason, the employee of an international organisation dealing with regional security (returnee n°7, man, 28) told me that he would not have returned if not to work in a Swedish or international institution. Returnees employed in Swedish companies, such as the financial controller in the company producing zinc products, the manager of the company producing solar panels and the distribution manager of a Swedish company of high-technology and engineering (returnees n°1, n°4 and n°5), also underlined the advantages of working in a Swedish company, compared to a Bosnian one, in terms of salaries and working conditions.

Returnees are not only confronted to the lack of employment opportunities. In some cases, their return to the Bosnian labour market also raises jealousy and discontent among the local population. For instance, the employee of a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs (returnee n°11, woman, 28) was blamed for “taking a Bosnian person’s job while she could find a job in Sweden”. According to Slobodan Neskovic (2010) from the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway (CCSN), the jealousy of local people towards the diaspora is institutionalized in the form of the difficulty to get foreign diplomas recognized in BiH. For the returnee n°11, getting her Swedish Master degree recognized was a time-consuming and expensive process. That is why many returnees, like the manager of a company selling medical equipment (returnee n°13, man, 32), choose not to engage in this complicated procedure. Although he holds a Master degree, his labour card indicates that he only finished the elementary school.

Returnees may also have more difficulties in finding employment or setting up a company because, having lived abroad, they lack contacts and information about the labour market and business regulations in BiH. Providing information and assistance to returnees to enter the labour market is one of the functions of the Migrant Service Centres (MSCs) and the Centres for Information, Counselling and Training of Youth (CISOs) set up as part of IOM-led projects. These initiatives will be discussed below in the case study of the IOM.

In addition to the challenges related to finding employment, returnees also point to the difficulties related to Bosnia’s unfavourable climate for investments. Many informants argue that the main obstacle to establish a business is the lack of political commitment to develop the country’s economy. Often local politicians seek to promote their own personal interest instead of developing a long-term development strategy for the country (returnees n°4 and n°5; Hamulić 2011; Neskovic 2010, 2011). The manager of the company producing solar panels provided a telling example. In 2009, the Swedish owner of the company planned to open another plant in BiH but was confronted with demands for bribes by local politicians and therefore abandoned the project. The project would have created as much as 150 jobs.

Returnees do not only face difficulties related to their home country (BiH) but also with relation to their host country (Sweden). A considerable obstacle for migrants in Sweden wishing to return to their home country concerns the transfer of their social security benefits. According to Emina Krzovic (2011), coordinator of the office for voluntary return of the City of Stockholm, Sweden has a particularly restrictive system for the transfer of social security benefits. Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Germany

have a better approach on taxes and repatriation⁴⁷. She underlines the inconsistency of allowing people to come as work migrants or refugees but preventing them from returning to their home country if they wish so. Interestingly this aspect was not raised by the returnees in my research group. This may be because many of them were relatively young when they returned and therefore may not have contributed significantly to pension funds.

In addition to factors linked to migrants' host and home countries, a number of personal and life course-related factors also facilitate or complicate return. Many of my informants stressed that they would not have returned if they had not obtained the Swedish citizenship which allows them to return to Sweden if their stay in Bosnia did not meet their expectations. This is in line with the transnational conception of return as an open-ended process rather than a once-and-for-all move from the host to the home country. For some informants having completed education in Sweden was a pre-condition for return. The manager of the company producing prefabricated houses (returnee n°2, man, 33) maintains that it is not profitable to come back to Bosnia without an education that allows finding a qualified job. Finally, the fact of having a family tends to complicate return. Some informants who returned alone (returnees n°2 and n°9) admitted that it might have been difficult for them to return with a partner and children. Similarly informants who returned with their family (returnees n°1 and n°12) said that they would not have done so if they had not previously found an employment in Bosnia.

Personal and life-course related aspects do not only constrain migrants' return, but also their capacity to transfer social remittances. Some personal characteristics seem to be more conducive to such transnational practices. Many of my informants pursued higher education in Sweden. In such cases, it can be considered that the knowledge and skills they have acquired in Sweden are 'socially remitted' in the form of ideas and practices. Work experience in Sweden is also a source of ideas, practices and social capital. The returnee n°9 (woman, 41), who established her design and advertisement company, is the only informant of my research sample for whom having lived in Sweden does not seem to have an influence on her current professional activity in Bosnia. In my view, this may largely be due to the fact that she neither studied (besides the Swedish language) nor worked during her stay in Sweden. When she arrived in Sweden, as a war refugee, she had recently graduated from the Fine Arts School in Sarajevo. She had always intended to return to Bosnia as soon as the conflict would be over and did not seek employment in her field of study in Sweden. In my interview with her I did not identify any example of social remittance transfer in the context of her professional activity. However, this does not mean that she has no other form of transnational engagement with Sweden outside the professional environment.

The case of the returnee n°9 is significant as it shows that all returnees do not necessarily transfer social remittances and that there are different degrees of transnational engagement. Recognising the various degrees of transnational engagement is crucial for avoiding a research bias towards the more transnationally active migrants.

⁴⁷ According to Sweden's Committee for Circular Migration and Development (2011: 36-37), the Swedish social security benefits are either residence-based or employment-based. The former are largely portable, but the later are difficult to transfer to third countries.

6.2 Case study of the International Organization for Migration

Return migration and development is one of the areas of focus of the Sarajevo office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁴⁸. The organisation has developed various projects aiming to support returnees addressing the challenges involved in the return process. As I was based at the organisation's office in Sarajevo during my stay in Bosnia, I became acquainted with their initiatives in the area.

In the early 2000s, the IOM implemented a number of programmes for facilitating the return of refugees, including assistance in finding employment or starting a business⁴⁹. These early programmes were aimed at assisting war refugees in settling back in Bosnia and did not focus specifically on migration's development effects. More recent projects, however, explicitly aim to utilize the knowledge and skills of the Bosnian diaspora for development purposes.

The 'Migration for Development in the Western Balkans' (MIDWEB) project, which is the continuation of a previous project (AENEAS), organises temporary placements of highly educated professionals residing in a number of European countries in private and public positions in BiH. Besides short-term returns, the project also foresees so-called 'temporary virtual returns' which consist of knowledge transfers through electronic communication without implying the migrant's physical return.

These temporary return projects aim to be mutually beneficial to the migrants' home country and the migrants themselves. Interestingly, there tend to be more applications from Bosnians in the diaspora than from employers in Bosnia (Barnes and Sadiković 2011). It seems that many applicants see it as an opportunity to return for a short time and experience a glimpse of life in Bosnia. Alma Hamulić, a young woman from the Netherlands who participated to a similar project of temporary return⁵⁰ before establishing in Sarajevo told me that she would not have returned if it wasn't in the framework of that project (Hamulić 2011). In my view, the main advantage of these temporary return projects is that they provide a 'trial period' giving the possibility to become acquainted with life in Bosnia without taking the decision to leave the host country. This is in line with the transnational perspective on return migration which highlights the fact that return is rarely seen as a once-and-for-all move from the host to the home country, but involves a certain amount of mobility between the two countries. While such projects are useful, they are addressed to only a limited number of individuals⁵¹.

⁴⁸ The IOM is an inter-governmental agency dealing with migration issues, which was founded in 1951 and is based in Geneva. The IOM established in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993. In its early years, it mainly facilitated the movement of war refugees. It is now increasingly involved in the areas of labour migration, returnees' economic reintegration and counter trafficking.

⁴⁹ Such programmes included the 'Return of Qualified Nationals' (RQN) and the Government Assisted Repatriation Program (GARP).

⁵⁰ Alma Hamulić participated to a temporary return project called 'Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals' (TRQN) which is particularly directed to migrants in the Netherlands. Today, she is the vice-president of the NGO Naša Perspektiva (Our Perspective), which she established in 2010 with another returnee from the Netherlands. The NGO's main objective is to connect the diaspora with BiH. Its partners include the IOM, the Dutch and the Swiss agencies for development cooperation.

⁵¹ The MIDWEB project foresees the temporary return of 10 individuals in each participating country.

Other IOM initiatives aim to provide information about migration and return possibilities to a broader audience. In 2008, the IOM established five Migration Service Centres (MSCs) in Bosnia for informing prospective emigrants about possibilities to migrate legally to EU countries and assisting returnees to integrate into the Bosnian labour market⁵². Another IOM project, the Youth Employability and Retention Programme (YERP), has also established similar advice centres for prospective migrants and returnees, the Centres for Information, Counselling and Training of Youth (CISOs), which specifically target the youth. There are 16 CISOs across the country.

The existence of the MSCs and the CISOs suggests the recognition of the multiple difficulties faced by returnees to integrate in the Bosnian labour market. However, while these centres are supposed to assist both prospective emigrants and returnees, the brunt of their activity is placed on prospective emigrants. According to Sasha Barnes and Irma Sadiković (2011) from the IOM, increasing the focus on returnees remains a challenge for the centres. Assisting returnees appears to be a less burning priority than helping the unemployed people in the local population. This may be due to the fact that, as stressed above, the diaspora generally has a negative reputation in Bosnia and is often considered to be 'privileged', and therefore in less need of help.

In the framework of the YERP project, the IOM also conducted an online survey on the reintegration of diaspora youth in the Bosnian labour market (Oruč et al. 2011). The findings of the survey led to the drafting of a guidebook for assisting returnees in their return process, their (re)integration into the labour market and the establishment of businesses. The guidebook, which is distributed by the CISOs since the beginning of 2012, is a positive initiative that is likely to facilitate returnees' return process.

6.3 Case study of the Centres for Local Development and Diaspora

Another institution that explicitly aims to assist returnees in their return process is the so-called 'Centres of Local Development and Diaspora (CLDDs). Interestingly, the first CLDD was established in 2004 by the City of Stockholm in order to provide assistance to both returnees and the local population. Today such centres have been established in nine municipalities in BiH⁵³. To a large extent, the CLDDs are the result of the initiative and dynamism of Emina Krzovic, coordinator of the office for voluntary return of the City of Stockholm. Krzovic is originally from Sarajevo but has resided in Sweden since the 1980s. Today the CLDDs are partly financed by the municipalities where they are situated and by City of Stockholm. It is important stressing that the CLDDs do not only assist Bosnian returnees from Stockholm but from all over the world.

As I was invited to attend an internal meeting of the staff of all CLDDs in Fojnica (Central Bosnia) in July 2011, I became acquainted with the variety of activities carried out by the centres. In partnership with the office for voluntary return of the City of

⁵² The Migrant Service Centers (MSCs) in BiH are part of and financed by the employment services in their respective entities. They were established in the framework of the AENEAS project. The MIDWEB aims to strengthen their capacity and visibility.

⁵³ CLDDs are present in the following municipalities: Banja Luka, Mostar, Ilijaš, Srebrenica, Goražde, Ključ, Teslić, Jajce and Glamoč.

Stockholm, they have developed an eight-step model for a successful return. They assist candidate returnees in the following areas: 1. Obtaining required documents; 2. Finding accommodation in BiH; 3. Obtaining required education (in order to increase the chances to find employment); 4. Finding employment; 5. Finding a school for children and healthcare; 6. Trial period; 7. Un-registration from Swedish authorities; and 8. Return. This eight-step model is based on the recognition that return migration involves a number of constraints. It seeks to tackle both the difficulties related to leaving the host country and those related to the reintegration in the country of origin. I find particularly interesting the fact that it involves a 'trial period' where the prospective returnee can experience life in BiH without compromising the possibility of returning to Sweden. This is similar to the temporary return projects carried out by the IOM. However, Krzovic explained that such 'trial periods' are difficult to implement because they suppose a certain amount of financial resources. Regrettably, I was not able to interview any individual who benefited from the assistance of CLDDs due to the fact that the CLDD staff has a confidentiality agreement which forbids them from sharing personal information about their clients.

In addition to assisting returnees from around the world, they also implement projects aiming to connect returnees and the local population and spur local development. These range from assistance in completing tax declarations or acquiring farming equipment to building a school or a sport hall. These projects vary from one centre to another and are initiated 'from below' by the returnees and the local population in each municipality. The need to connect returnees with the local population is related to the fact that, in Bosnia, migrants sometimes have a negative reputation and are blamed for having 'escaped the war'. It is positive that CLDDs do not give all their attention to returnees but try to make everyone working together towards the development of the local community.

The internal CLDD meeting that I attended in July 2011 also gathered representatives of the Iraqi and Somali diaspora in Sweden. They came to learn about the CLDDs' functioning and activities because the office for voluntary return of the City of Stockholm intends to open similar centres in Somalia and Iraq. Although each of the three diaspora communities has a specific context, they also have similar challenges regarding return migration. All three count nationals in Sweden who wish to return and contribute to their home country's development. Therefore, such sharing of experiences is certainly beneficial.

7. Discussion

7.1 Returnees' development contributions: a transnational perspective

My empirical research shows how Bosnian returnees from Sweden contribute to Bosnia's development by transferring various social remittances in the form of ideas, practices and social capital. The concept of social remittances has proved a useful methodological tool for analysing returnees' social contributions to development. As social contributions are an abstract notion, the concept delimits the attention on specific social phenomena.

Consistent with the transnational perspective, the research highlights the continuous relevance of Sweden for the returnees' every day professional activity in BiH. Thanks to their simultaneous connections in both their host and home country, returnees contribute to the formation of a 'transnational social field' in which social remittances are exchanged. By transferring social remittances from Sweden to Bosnia, returnees create intense links and connect actors, both migrants and non-migrants, in the two countries. The significance of Sweden in the returnees' professional activity varies from case to case. However, for the vast majority of returnees in my research sample, Sweden is relevant in one way or another – a place for business or a source of inspiration for different projects.

The returnees in my research sample transfer ideas and practices in the areas of meaningful work, health and environment which are beneficial to the development and social wellbeing of the Bosnian population. These ideas and practices constitute social remittances because returnees associated them, to a larger or lesser degree, with their experience in Sweden. The recipients of these social remittances and the scale of their effects vary from case to case. For instance, the good working standards implemented by returnees in their companies primarily benefit the social wellbeing of their employees. Ideas and practices about health and environment, on the other hand, are directed to a larger group of recipients or the society as a whole. For instance, good practices in the area of hospital disinfection are targeted to the medical practitioners, but can potentially impact the whole society. Likewise, practices regarding individuals with disability are primarily directed to policy-makers, and can potentially impact all those who suffer from disability. Finally ideas and practice about organic food or low consumption houses concern the broader society. These ideas and practices primarily promote social aspects of development and, therefore, stress the social dimension of the migration and development interrelation. Yet, they also have economic impacts as they are related to the returnees' entrepreneurial activities.

Beside ideas and practices, returnees make also use of their social capital or connections with various actors in the business and political field in Sweden, which can play a positive role for Bosnia's development. Two returnees in my research group have social connections with Swedish entrepreneurs and have played a determinant role in the establishment of Swedish firms in Bosnia. Other returnees facilitate trade relations between Sweden and Bosnia by making use of their social connections in both countries. In both cases, returnees' social connections contribute to increasing

economic exchanges between the two countries, thereby spurring economic development and employment creation. The mutual trust at the basis of these social connections seems to be facilitated by a number of factors: returnees' knowledge of the Swedish language and their knowledge of the markets and work and business culture in both countries. Finally, some returnees working in the political field also cultivate contacts with Swedish political institutions which can lead to various positive outcomes such as improved development cooperation and increases in trade and investments.

As stated above, the transnational perspective on migration gives particular attention to the concept of social capital in the context of transnational migrant entrepreneurship. Some of the returnees in my research group have established or work in firms that are largely based on their connections with Sweden. This is for instance the case of the firm producing prefabricated houses that sells products in Sweden or the firm of software development selling their services to the Swedish market. In my view, these returnees are typical examples of transnational entrepreneurs making use of their connections in different countries to facilitate economic activity. Two of the returnees of my research group have also played a determining role in facilitating the establishment of Swedish firms in Bosnia. Hedberg et al. (2012: 126-127) use the term of 'transnational agents' to refer to international migrants who "in their role as *intermediators* between sending and receiving areas, establish links that are entered on by international firms". This is clearly the case of the two returnees in my research.

The study of the social remittances transferred by Bosnian returnees from Sweden gives rise to three additional observations.

First, it shows that the social and economic aspects of migrants' contributions to development are closely related. Just as financial remittances have social effects, social remittances have economic ones. This is particularly clear in the cases where returnees' social capital facilitates economic development in the forms of trade and investments. The transfer of ideas and practices may also have economic outcomes. Entrepreneurial ideas and practices acquired abroad can stimulate enterprise. Moreover, ideas and practices that improve working conditions, such as more democratic relations within a firm, can increase productivity and economic development. Migration's social and economic effects on development are thus interconnected.

Second, it is interesting stressing the variety of social remittances transferred by Bosnian returnees. Policy discussions about migrants' 'non-economic' contributions to development tend to focus on the knowledge and skills of highly-qualified individuals. Yet, the concept of social remittances does not only include transfers of knowledge and skills but also ideas, values, mentalities, and attitudes and social capital which are not necessarily acquired through higher education. For instance, many returnees in my research sample bring ideas and practices regarding in the area of 'meaningful work', which are not solely acquired through higher education. Neither are the factors at the basis of social capital – knowledge of the Swedish language and work culture – exclusively related to education. They can be acquired by having simply lived in the country. While highly qualified returnees can make substantial contributions to development, researchers and policy-makers should also look beyond the mere transfer of knowledge and skills to take into account the various types of social remittances.

A final observation is that, while this research focuses on returnees' contributions to development in Bosnia, returnees' practices also have development effects in Sweden.

Practices such as facilitating trade and investment and improving political dialogue are not only beneficial for Bosnia but for Sweden as well.

In the case of the facilitation of Swedish investments in Bosnia, the Swedish companies established in Bosnia clearly benefit from the lower production costs available. In this sense, returnees who facilitate such investments (for instance the returnees n°1 and n°5) contribute to economic development both in Sweden and BiH. Similarly, the facilitation of trade relations has simultaneous development effects in Sweden and Bosnia. Swedish companies benefit from the possibility to outsource part of their production or services in a country with cheaper labour force. This was the case of the computer software company managed by the returnee n°8. Returnees also assist Swedish companies to export their products in Bosnia by using Bosnian companies as a distributor of their products. This was the case of the company managed by the returnee n°13 which is the main distributor of a large Swedish company of medical equipment. In addition, good political dialogue between Sweden and Bosnia is to the advantage of both countries. Thus returnees who contribute to enhance political dialogue (such as the returnees n°7 and n°11) make a positive impact in both countries.

All the above suggests that return migration has simultaneous development effects in both countries of origin and destination. Returnees' social remittances are not unidirectional, but flow simultaneously in both directions between the two countries. The traditional distinction between development in countries of origin and countries of destination appears artificial. Instead, it seems more accurate to adopt a transnational perspective on development that recognises migration's simultaneous effects in different places. From this perspective, development is not a process confined within the borders of a nation-state, but rather occurring in a transnational social field. It impacts individuals who are members of transnational social networks which are constituted through migration processes and link individuals in home and host countries.

7.2 A reciprocal relationship between migration and development

My empirical research shows that returnees can potentially enhance development in their country of origin by transferring various social remittances and analyses cases where returnees create transnational connections between Sweden and Bosnia. Returnees' capacity to transfer social remittances makes explicit their agency. Returnees are active agents of change in their societies of origin and reception, rather than passive recipients of external forces. Yet, their actions are also constrained by structural dynamics. In line with De Haas' pluralist framework that seeks a compromise between agency and structure, this research stresses the structural constraints that limit returnees' freedom of action. It highlights a number of political, economic, social and personal factors that constrain migrants' return and their capacity to transfer social remittances, including Bosnia's complex political situation, ethnic divisions, poor social security system, high unemployment and hinders to investment.

The significance of these structural constraints is not only voiced by the returnees in my research sample. It is also evidenced by the large number of Bosnian people who remain in Sweden, many of whom wish to return but have not done it in practice. As

mentioned above, out of the 56,000 Bosnian people residing in Sweden, it is estimated that 70% are interested in returning to BiH someday (CLDD 2010). It is crucial to have this broader picture in mind when analysing the migration and development relationship.

My empirical research shows that, in certain cases, returnees can play a positive role in development, but it does not imply an automatic relationship between migration and development.

The general development context at the international, national or local level, largely determines migrants' capacity to contribute to development. The current political and economic context certainly discourages or prevents many Bosnians from Sweden or elsewhere to return to their home country or invest in its development. Migrants' capacity to return and engage in development-generating activities depends on various contextual, but also personal, characteristics. As stressed by De Haas (2010: 253), migration is not an independent variable "causing" development. Instead, migration and development have a reciprocal relationship whereby migration is "an integral part of change itself and a factor that may enable further change". In the case of this research, this means that Bosnian returnees from Sweden can *potentially* contribute to Bosnia's development, while at the same time their actions and capacity of influence is constrained by Bosnia's political and economic context. Migration and development thus have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Returnees' social remittances (or migrants' contributions more generally) cannot, by themselves, bring development, but they can contribute to it, particularly when favourable conditions are in place.

As the effects of migration on development are contingent to spatial and temporal contexts, the findings of this research are linked to the particular social, political and economic context in BiH. However, similar practices of social remittance transfers are also occurring in different contexts. It is likely that other diaspora groups from Sweden (or other industrialised countries) face a similar situation when returning to their home country. Therefore, I believe that the experience of the returnees in this research gives a better understanding of practices of return migration and social remittance transfer more generally.

7.3 Some policy considerations

In this thesis, I have argued that Bosnian returnees from Sweden can contribute to development by transferring various types of social remittances. I also pointed to the numerous obstacles that returnees are confronted to in their return process.

These findings are relevant for policy discussions in the area of migration and development both in Sweden and BiH. Well-informed policies could, to some extent, address returnees' challenges and improve their capacity to perform development-related practices.

A first major observation is that many of returnees' challenges are also shared by the local population. For instance, political stability, a sound economic climate and employment opportunities would not only encourage migrants' return but also benefit the Bosnian society as a whole. Similarly, a functioning social security system, good public healthcare and education systems would be an advantage for both returnees

and locals. Thus it is important for policymakers to recognise that many of returnees' needs are no different from the needs of the local population.

Returnees also have certain specific obstacles, which could be addressed through sound policy reforms.

First, the difficulty to find employment in Bosnia is a major disincentive to return. Efforts are needed to improve the access of labour market information among prospective and actual returnees. Advising job-seeking returnees in finding employment is part of the mandate of Centres for Information, Counselling and Training of Youth (CISOs) and Migration Service Centres (MSCs). Yet, the centres seem to devote more attention on prospective emigrants than on returnees. Increasing the share of centres' activities in advising returnees should be a priority. The recent publication of a guidebook for assisting returnees in their return process is a positive initiative. This publication should be easily accessible and largely distributed. Bosnian authorities should also assist returnees, as well as migrants residing abroad who wish to start a business in the country. The Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FIPA) and regional development agencies could organise information meetings and promotional activities specifically directed to migrants and returnees. Facilitating returnees' integration into the Bosnian labour market also requires that process of accreditation of foreign diplomas is simplified.

Another major hindrance to return relates to the difficulty of transferring social security benefits acquired in Sweden. With the right of return⁵⁴ being a recognised human right (Refugee Council 2012), facilitating the portability of social security benefits should be an important focus of policy reform in Sweden. This is also a central recommendation of Sweden's Committee for Circular Migration and Development.

More generally, policymakers in both countries should adopt a more flexible understanding of return that reflects the reality of migrants' continuous movement between their host and home country. Applying a transnational perspective in policymaking implies developing policies that facilitate migrants' mobility. In this respect, Sweden's Committee for Circular Migration and Development proposes that the permanent residence permit is not directly revoked after residence ceases. In this way migrants can return to their home country for a certain period without losing the possibility of re-migrating to Sweden.

Temporary return projects, such as those implemented by the IOM, are useful because they give returnees an 'experimental period' during which they experience life in Bosnia, without implying a categorical decision to leave their host country. While such projects should be reproduced, policymakers should also consider mechanisms to translate these specific projects into a system. It is important to underline that, with one exception, none of the informants in this study did benefit from any governmental assistance in the context of a 'repatriation programme'. Instead, their return process has been self-driven (or bottom-up). While 'managed return' projects can be beneficial, it is crucial to facilitate the mobility of individuals that are not part of such initiatives.

⁵⁴ The Right of return refers to a principle of international law, codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, giving any person the right to return to, and re-enter, his or her country of origin (Refugee Council 2012).

For successful policies in the area of migration and development to be implemented, it is crucial that a favourable political environment is in place. Policymakers, both in Bosnia and Sweden, should recognise migration's potential role for development. In that respect, the current efforts to integrate diaspora and migration issues into existing strategies in BiH is a positive step. Given Bosnia's complex institutional structure, it is important to encourage inter-institutional cooperation in order to ensure the coherence of diaspora-related policies.

It is also a positive step that migration's role in development is recognised in Swedish development cooperation policy. Yet, substantial efforts are needed to realise the objective of drawing on the experiences of Bosnian diaspora in their strategies. In view of the findings of this research, SIDA should particularly consider returnees as potential partners in its development projects. As shown in the research, returnees constitute a valuable source of development-inducing ideas, practices and social capital.

Finally successful policies in the area of migration and development also suppose an enhanced dialogue and cooperation between migrant host and home countries.

8. Conclusions

In this thesis I use the concept of social remittances – or the ideas, practices and social capital flowing between migrant host and origin countries – to explore the contributions of Bosnian returnees from Sweden to Bosnia's development. My empirical research highlights various types of social remittance transfers including ideas and practices in the areas of health, environment and work, as well as social connections with investors, business partners, and political and academic actors in Sweden. I argue that returnees' social and economic contributions are closely linked. Social remittances can have economic effects, for instance in the form of foreign investments, business creation and trade.

In the case of social capital, my empirical research shows that returnees' social connections are facilitated by a number of factors that contribute to building trust between the returnees and business and political actors in Sweden. Those facilitating factors, which I call 'sources of social capital', include the knowledge of the Swedish language, the market, work and business culture in Sweden. These findings are a useful contribution to the literature on transnational migrant entrepreneurship which tends to focus on the trust and solidarity that emerges among the members of a certain ethnic or national group. Instead, this research suggests that factors other than ethnicity play a decisive role in facilitating transnational entrepreneurship and business. Trust, in such cases, is not based on a common ethnic belonging but rather on knowledge and practices that can be acquired by living in the host country (Sweden). In my view, the lack of attention to other factors than intra-ethnic connections represents a gap in the literature on transnational migrant entrepreneurship that needs to be filled.

Another interesting finding is that returnees accumulate social capital both in their host and home country. This double accumulation of social capital, facilitated by their physical presence in Bosnia, puts returnees in a unique position in comparison to migrants residing in Sweden. They can act as a 'bridge' or 'transnational transmission belt' between the two countries and thereby contribute to their development.

The various development contributions of Bosnian returnees highlighted in this research are a positive outcome for Bosnia, which was ravaged, in the early-1990s, by the most devastating conflict in European soil since the Second World War. It is particularly encouraging that returnees play a role in improving social sectors by bringing ideas and practices in the area of health, the environment and working conditions. Returnees' role in establishing businesses and facilitating investment and trade is also valuable, especially in the current context of high unemployment and poor investment climate.

However, while many returnees transfer development-inducing social remittances, their actions are constrained by structural factors. In this research, I highlighted the various economic, political and personal constraints faced by returnees in their return process which, in turn, affect their capacity to transfer social remittances. I also argued that there are various degrees of social remittance transfers and returnees do not automatically transfer social remittances. In the case of social remittances transferred in the context of a professional activity, the fact of having studied and worked in the host country seems to induce more transfers.

These findings suggest a nuanced position between pessimism and excessive optimism regarding returnees' contribution to development. Returnees do contribute to social and economic development in a variety of ways. Yet, the effects of return migration on development would certainly be higher if more favourable conditions were in place. Migration, by itself, is no panacea for development. For returnees (and migrants in general) to contribute to development, the existence of well-functioning social, legal, political and economic institutions is of paramount importance. My findings thus confirm De Haas' argument that migration and development are mutually reinforcing processes. Just as in the 'chicken or the egg' dilemma, it is impossible to say which one – migration or development – comes first.

This thesis contributes to the body of empirical research on migration and development through a transnational perspective. By focusing on the concept of social remittances, which has been little utilized so far, it suggests a new angle to analyse the development contributions of returnees. It highlights the social aspects in the migration and development nexus and, therefore, counterbalances the predominance of economic aspects in current academic literature. It also contributes to the empirical research on migration and development in the Swedish context. Although the issue of migration and development is prominent in Swedish policy debates, few empirical studies have explored the development contributions of diaspora groups in Sweden.

I believe that this research is not only relevant academically but also from a societal perspective. First, by putting forward the positive effects of migration on development it sets migration in a positive light. In the current context of scepticism about migration and mounting xenophobia, academic research that highlights the positive sides of migration is valuable. It is also important to emphasize the social aspects of migrants' contributions to development because many policymakers in migrant-sending countries and international institutions seem to view migrants only as economic agents (who send financial remittances or spend a lot of money during holiday visits). Yet, as this research suggests, migrants are more than 'walking wallets'. They also bring various non-material, or social, contributions to their country of origin. This aspect deserves to be more recognised.

It is my wish that the findings of this research will inspire better-informed policies in the area of return migration and development both in Sweden and Bosnia.

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9.4 Interviews

9.4.1 Interviews with returnees

Returnee n°1, woman, 40 years old, Financial controller at Swedish company producing zinc products, interviewed on 24 June 2011 at her office in Mostar.

Returnee n°2, man, 33 years old, Technical director at a company producing prefabricated houses, interviewed on 8 July 2011 at BBI café in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°3, woman, 27 years old, Employee at an international organisation dealing with migration issues, interviewed on 21 July 2011 at the author's apartment in Novo Sarajevo.

Returnee n°4, man, 49 years old, Distribution manager at a Swedish company of high-technology and engineering, interviewed on 15 July 2011 at his office in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°5, man, 39 years old, Manager of a Swedish company producing solar panels, interviewed on 17 June 2011 at his office in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°6, woman, 28 years old, Employee at a tourism office and founder of an 'organic box', interviewed on 1 August 2011 at her apartment in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°7, man, 28 years old, Employee at an international organisation dealing with regional security, interviewed on 7 July 2011 at a café of the UNTIC towers in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°8, man, 34 years old, Manager of a software development company, interviewed at on 18 July 2011 at Hotel Hecco cafe in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°9, woman, 41 years old, Manager of a design and advertisement company, interviewed on 5 July 2011 at a cafe in Novo Sarajevo.

Returnee n°10, man, 32 years old, Manager of company selling disability equipment and Rosen therapist, interviewed on 4 July 2011 at BBI cafe in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°11, woman, 28 years old, Employee at a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs, interviewed on 23 June 2011 at her office in the Parliament Tower in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°12, man, 41 years old, Director of a Swedish (formerly Bosnian) company in the security branch, interviewed on 21 June 2011 at his office in Sarajevo.

Returnee n°13, man, 32 years old, Manager of a company selling medical equipment, interviewed on 14 June 2011 at Pivnica Cafe in Sarajevo.

9.4.2 Other interviews

Barnes, Sasha, Project Manager at IOM Sarajevo and Irma Sadiković Programmes Assistant at IOM Sarajevo, interviewed on 2 August 2011 at the IOM office in Sarajevo.

Boucault, Regina, Chief of Mission IOM Sarajevo and Sasha Barnes, Project manager at IOM Sarajevo, interviewed by Charlotta Hedberg in May 2010 at the IOM office in Sarajevo.

Bukvic, Nedim, National Programme Officer at SIDA, interviewed by Charlotta Hedberg in May 2010.

Hamulić, Alma, Vice-President of the NGO 'Naša Perspektiva' dealing with BiH Diaspora, Youth Employability and Migration, interviewed on 22 June 2011 at Torte i to Café in Sarajevo.

Hedlund, Anders, Head of SIDA in BiH, interviewed on 12 July 2011 at SIDA's office in Sarajevo.

Krzovic, Emina, Coordinator of the office for voluntary return of the City of Stockholm, interviewed on 23 June 2011 at BH United Sport Cafe in Sarajevo.

Mraović, Boriša, Researcher at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies (CIPS) at the University of Sarajevo, interviewed on 19 July at Spazio café in Sarajevo.

Šimunović, Danijel, APU Network (Network of Bosnian academics, businessmen and artists in Sweden) Coordinator, interviewed on 13 May 2011 at Levinskys Café in Stockholm.

Neskovic Slobodan and Nelica Neskovic, Managing Directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway in BiH (CCSN), interviewed on 19 July 2011 at café Promenada in Sarajevo.

Neskovic, Slobodan, Managing Director of the Chamber of Commerce of Sweden and Norway in BiH (CCSN), interviewed by Charlotta Hedberg on 24 May 2010 at café Vrasni in Sarajevo.

Stanić, Isma, Head of Unit Diaspora Department, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Department for Diaspora, interviewed on 15 June 2011 at her office in the Parliament Tower in Sarajevo.

Stanić, Isma, Head of Unit Diaspora Department, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Department for Diaspora, interviewed by Charlotta Hedberg in May 2010.

Appendix 1: Short presentation of the informants of my research sample

Returnee n°1 – woman, 40, Financial controller at Swedish company producing zinc products: She arrived in Sweden in 1992 as an asylum-seeker together with her mother and sister. In Sweden, she got married to a Bosnian man with whom she has two daughters. She worked among others in a kindergarten. From 1998 to 2005, her husband worked as a caster for a company based that produces zinc products for a wide range of industries such as automotive, electronics and construction. During that time, he had many discussions with the manager of company about opening a factory in BiH. This project became a reality in 2005 and the family returned to BiH. Now she works as a financial controller at the company's site in Mostar and her husband is the site manager. She has regular communication with the site in Sweden and travels there at least once a year.

Returnee n°2 – man, 33, Technical director at a company producing prefabricated houses: He went to Sweden as an asylum-seeker in 1993 with his mother and sister. He attended school and obtained a degree in civil engineering at Lund University. After graduating in 2006 he came to BiH on vacation and decided to stay. He started working for a Bosnian company based in Central Bosnia that produces prefabricated houses, which is owned by his father. A few months after he joined it, the company started exporting products to Sweden. Today Sweden hosts the largest share of the company's EU customers. He has regular business trip to Sweden and does not exclude moving back there some day.

Returnee n°3 – woman, 27, Employee at an international organisation dealing with migration issues: She went to Sweden in 1993 as an asylum-seeker with her mother and sister. She attended school, studied psychology and peace and conflict studies in Southern Sweden and worked among others in an organic food shop and as a business advisor. In 2010, she came to Sarajevo with her sister for vacations and they both decided to stay. She did an internship at an international organisation dealing with migration issues. Later the internship turned into a job. She believes that it would be interesting to return some day to Sweden, enriched by her experience in BiH.

Returnee n°4 – man, 39, Distribution manager at a Swedish company of high-technology and engineering: He was working in the business sector in BiH before the war. In 1992, he travelled to Stockholm on a business trip, but the conflict forced him to stay. He learned Swedish and worked as a cook. At the end of 1996, he approached representatives of a Swedish company of high-technology and engineering asking them whether there were any plans to open a representative office in BiH. They indeed opened an office in 1997 and he became its first employee. He travels to Sweden at least once a year to visit family members.

Returnee n°5 – man, 39, Manager of a Swedish company producing solar panels: After the war, he graduated in mechanical engineering in Bosnia. In 2000, he went to Sweden as an asylum-seeker, but he did not obtain a residence permit and he returned to BiH in 2002. In 2004, while looking for a job, he met a Swedish investor who planned to open a factory in BiH. He assisted him in establishing the company in the outskirts of Sarajevo and has now become its manager. He sometimes visits Sweden for work.

Returnee n°6 – woman, 28, Employee at a tourism office and founder of an ‘organic box’ initiative: She came to Sweden as an asylum-seeker in 1993 with her mother and sister. She attended school, obtained a degree in graphic design and worked among others at an organic food shop. During a holiday in Sarajevo in 2010, she met her fiancé and decided to stay. She is working at a Bosnian tourism company. In parallel she develops an ‘organic box’ initiative aiming to distribute organically and locally grown products.

Returnee n°7– man, 28, Employee at an international organisation dealing with regional security: He moved to Sweden in 1992 as an asylum-seeker with his parents and brother. He has a law degree from Uppsala University and has worked for the Swedish Foreign Ministry in Moscow, Cairo and Stockholm. In 2010 was seconded by the Swedish government to work at an international organisation, in Sarajevo, dealing with regional security. He is planning to move back to Sweden in the near future and resume his work at the Foreign Ministry.

Returnee n°8 – man, 34, Manager of a software development company: He came to Sweden in 1993 as an asylum-seeker with his parents and brother. He attended school, studied computer sciences and electrical engineering at Malmö University College and worked as a high school teacher. In 2005 he moved back to Sarajevo and worked as marketing manager at a television station. In 2007, he decided to return and work in Sweden. He lives in Sarajevo since the end of 2010 and is the manager of a computer software company, which is owned by Bosnian people residing in Sweden. He does not plan to return to Sweden for the moment but ‘never says never’.

Returnee n°9 – woman, 41, Manager of a design and advertisement company: She had just graduated from Fine Arts School in Sarajevo when the conflict began. In 1992 she moved to Sweden to join her sister who was living there. Soon after the war ended, she returned to Sarajevo. After working for an international IT company, she started her own design and advertisement business. She does not plan to return in Sweden permanently but is looking forward to her upcoming trip there.

Returnee n°10 – man, 32, Manager of company selling disability equipment and Rosen Method therapist: He moved to Sweden in 1992 as an asylum-seeker with his parents. He attended school, gymnasium and worked on different jobs in Stockholm. In 2005 he started a training to become a therapist in the Rosen Method Bodywork, an alternative health method helping relaxation and tackling chronic muscle tension. Convinced that this method would be beneficial for the Bosnian population suffering from PTSD, he returns to Sarajevo in 2009. Beside practising and teaching the Rosen Method, he owns a company selling disability equipment, which was founded by a Bosnian person residing in Sweden. He does not wish to return to the Sweden for the moment.

Returnee n°11 – woman, 28, Employee at a BiH governmental institution dealing with European Affairs: She moved to Sweden in 1992 as an asylum-seeker with her parents. She attended school and studied political sciences at Stockholm University. In 2007, as part of her studies she did an internship at the Foreign Ministry of BiH in Sarajevo. As she was about to return to Sweden, she found out about a vacancy at a governmental department dealing with European Affairs. She was selected for the job and is still working at this department today. She does not exclude returning to Sweden or moving to another country. “Once you have migrated once, it’s like the whole world is yours”, she says.

Returnee n°12 – man, 41, Director of a Swedish (formerly Bosnian) company in the security branch: He moved to Sweden in 1992 as an asylum-seeker with his wife. After the end of the conflict he visited BiH in search of ways to contribute to the country's reconstruction. With the assistance of a SIDA project aimed to support collaborations between Swedish and Bosnian companies doing reconstruction-related business, he started a small company selling security equipment. Today the company employs 1,500 people in BiH and is owned in majority by a Swedish security company. He has regular work visits to Sweden and wishes that his daughters will study in Swedish universities.

Returnee n°13 – man, 32, Manager of a company selling medical equipment: He moved to Denmark in 1993 as an asylum-seeker with his parents and sister. He finished high school and studied economics in Copenhagen. Besides in Denmark, he has also studied or worked in the US, Czech Republic and Mexico. In 2007 he decided to move back to Sarajevo. Together with his father, he bought a company selling medical equipment which was founded by a Bosnian person residing in Sweden. The company, which he still manages today, is the principle distributor of a large medical equipment company in BiH. He is satisfied with life in Bosnia and is planning to stay, at least for a while.