"It was the human thing to do"

Mapping the helping hand across the ethnic divide:
The role of komšiluk in rescuing during the Bosnian Conflict

By

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present thesis is to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related to the identities and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. Based on the Theory of National Indifference that examines to what extent individuals actually feel national and to what extent they do not, I hypothesize that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed and politicized ethnicities that served as a tool for ethno-national mobilization. I will present through a interpretative framework that *direct relations*, *extended contact through the neighbourliness lines (komšiluk)*, and *socialization with members of other ethnicities before the war* were the key factors in helping acts. This enabled helpers to perceive ethnicity as a silent category and assisted them in undergoing an identity shift from the ethnic to local and communal identification. I conclude with an exploration of the idea that a local dimension that emphasizes the idea of living with your own, in proximity of *neighbourliness* while negotiating ethnicity through the friendship and locality during and before the war, is a distinctiveness of Bosnian helpers.

Key word: ethnic indifference, komšiluk, friendship, rescuing, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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At the end I would like to thank my family for the support they have given me throughout this year.
I dedicate this work to all Bosnian helpers, who believed in humanity, showed resistance and helped their friends and neighbours.

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Introduction:

"Real Serb would never kill Dzevad and Dzemo. I don't know who those people were. But they were not real Serbs for sure. Friendship and friendship ties. I was also helping Croats."

The rescuers' actions and their motivation have been largely examined within the literature of Holocaust studies. The Israeli Parliament in 1953 enacted the Holocaust and Heroism Memorial Act establishing Yad Vashem as an official site of memory to honour the rescuers as the "Righteous among the Nations." Yad Vashem officially defined rescuers as the *Non-Jewish who risk their life, freedom and safety in order to rescue several Jews from threat of death without exacting monetary compensation*.[1] Initially the concept of the rescuer was applied only to the Holocaust, and insufficiently in the context of other genocides such as the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides. Thus, inspired by this existing literature in rescuing deeds during the Holocaust, the aim of this study is to examine how already known conclusions about motivation for rescuers' actions could be applied to the Bosnian 1992-1995 conflict, usually internationally portrayed as an ethnic conflict.

In their extensive study on the rescuers' acts and behavior during the Holocaust "*The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe,*" Oliner and Oliner describe the importance of understanding the rescuer phenomenon: "If we can understand some of the attributes that distinguish rescuers from the others, perhaps we can deliberately cultivate them."[2] Therefore, the aim of the present thesis is to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. Based on the Theory of National Indifference that examines to what extent individuals actually feel national and to what extent they do not, I hypothesize that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed

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[1] Righteous Among the Nation : http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/faq.asp
[2] P. Oliner Samuel and M.Oliner Perl. *The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, Collier Macmillan Publisher London, 1988. Page:23.

and politicized ethnicity that served as a tool for ethno-national mobilization. Since they were able to perceive ethnicity as a silent factor in an ethnically driven conflict they were able to conduct the acts of help. Additionally, I question what encouraged helpers to stay indifferent toward ethnicity and to conduct the acts of help. Furthermore, in this study I suggest the expansion of the notion of a rescuer in order to take into account conflicts that took place after the Holocaust. I underline that specificity of one society, conflict, or genocide will produce different perceptions about those who undertake the acts of help. The help for those in danger has come in different forms such as direct assistance, warnings of the upcoming danger, or providing shelter and protection. These acts did not necessarily endanger the lives of rescuers, as the Yad Vashem definition requires; nevertheless, those acts did save lives. Therefore, I seek to reformulate the concept of the rescuers in Holocaust; I operate more with the concept of the helpers, as the title of the study indicates.

Twenty years after the Yugoslav dissolution and the wars in the region, much has been articulated about different reasons for the conflict, its causes and consequences, along with explanations of the violence itself. Growing up in a post-conflict society, and in two cities largely affected by the war (Srebrenica and Bratunac), I tried to comprehend how come that people decided to undertake such acts of inhumanity. I was disturbed to that degree that I would walk on the streets constantly thinking whether this individual I am encountering now or that man that was just passing have killed someone during the war. Being overwhelmed with these experiences, I decided to oppose this narrative and embark on the process of facing the other side of the war that still remains unreported. This is the side where the human dimension prevailed over the inhuman one and where helpers come before the perpertators. The study references two towns where I grew up, Srebrenica and Bratunac. I do not intend to bring any kind of truth about what happened there twenty years ago, but merely to understand the social world of helpers that decided to share their stories with me.

Due to the underdeveloped concept, the interpretative framework will answer the question about the motivation and identity of the rescuers. It will present through the empirical settings that *direct relations*, *extended contact through the neighbourliness lines*, and *socialization with members of other ethnicities before the war* enabled helpers to perceive ethnicity as a silent category, and assisted them in undergoing an identity shift from the ethnic to the local and communal identification. I conclude with an exploration of the idea that a local dimension that emphasizes the idea of living with your own in proximity of *neighbourliness* while negotiating ethnicity through the friendship and locality during and before the war is a distinctiveness of Bosnian helpers. Also I emphasize the importance of proximity of different ethnic groups inside small neighbourhoods together with a long extended friendships across the ethnic lines as a specificity of helpers in Bosnia. This is the position from which further development of the helper concept should start. Hence, overall, an in-depth exploration of the Bosnian case is a significant contribution to this literature, as it suggests that interpersonal and inter-group contact before the war are very important factors in motivating people to act as helpers.

The remainder of my study is composed as follows:

In the first chapter, I provide the overview of already known theories about the rescuer's motivation and rescuer's behavior during the Holocaust. In order to answer my questions, I seek to apply these theories to the Bosnian helpers and examine possible contradictions and matching points. In the last part of the chapter, I discuss the authors who pose the question of how rescuers develop in a particular social and cultural setting, which I find crucial for understanding the Bosnian helpers. I provide an overview of ideas such as the rescuers having a strong sense of identity, integrity and ability to see all people as one humanity, a strong sense of justice and knowledge of the victims' plight. I conclude that the literature is concentrated on the historical specificity of the Holocaust and in a way diminishes the rescuers in other

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conflicts. It is not to say that personal characteristics of rescuers are different. However, cultural and social settings change across range of conflicts, and individuals take different paths in becoming a helper, or find themselves in a social setting such as proximity of habitation where the helping acts are more likely to happen.

Through the overview of Yugoslav dissolution and the main ideas for the causes for the war, in Chapter 2, I provide the solid ground for understanding more deeply the concepts with which I am operating here: *neighborliness, extended friendship,* and *indifference toward ethnicity*. This chapter sheds lights on the nature of the conflict in Bosnia while seeking to understand the relations among different ethnicities during and before the war. In addition, I emphasize that people in Yugoslavia identified with multiple and intersecting identities such as religious, ethnic, ideological or supranational identity. Due to this, I highlight that the helpers during the Bosnian conflicts were similarly able to shift from one ethnic identity, imposed by political elites, toward more local and community based identities, or even toward kin relationship and identities surrounding it. I devote a section of this chapter to a complex explanation of ethnicity negotiation in Bosnia.

Chapter 3 discusses the idea of neighhborliness *komšiluk* as small microcosms where helping hand was present during and before the conflict. I provide the counter-discourse to the common misinterpretation of "fatal ancient hatreds" between different ethnicities and the idea of "neighbours killing neighbours" in Bosnia. The counter narrative is demonstrated in the idea that neighborliness served as a platform that encouraged the helping acts. The chapter seeks to shed light on a different side of komšiluk by exposing the recorded stories of cordial relations, helping, and the importance of komšiluk relations during the war. I will provide an overview of the friendship ties across the ethnic lines while seeking to underline that friendship was also one of the main platforms of ethnicity negotiation and ethnic boundary crossing in Bosnia.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I will define my methodology, limitations of the study and will give a short overview of the towns in which my research took place. In the empirical part of Chapter 5, I will analyse and give more insight into helpers' acts while seeking to understand how their specific ties, relationships, and neighbourhood friendships affect their perceptions and brought more of what theoreticians of rescuing deeds call "human identity". I end with a discussion in which I examine the connection between Bosnian helpers and their motivation with already known and explored factors of recurring motivation and behavior as presented in the literature overview.

1. Chapter 1: Theoretical approach to the rescuers' behavior

In this chapter, I provide a theoretical approach to the rescuers' motivation and personal trade-offs as known in literature about the Holocaust. A recorded testimony by a number of different authors yields a variety of characters and backgrounds: they were peasants, doctors, teachers, diplomats, aristocrats. The rescuers' stories are diverse; however, what they all have in common is a mixture of awareness, empathy, inventiveness, courage, persistence and resourcefulness. Also, they come from various social, religious and gender backgrounds. After presenting a literature overview of the main authors discussing rescuer characteristics, I will highlight that it is not possible to draw a rigid line between rescuers and helpers.

Consequently, this study will treat helpers as a subcategory or a distinctive category of the rescuers. In addition, the requirements of Yad Vashem definition of the rescuers are exceptional because the totalitarian nature of the Third Reich was exceptional. The risks to which rescuers of Jews exposed themselves such as death of both the rescuer and the rescued, members of their family, and sometimes even neighbors, were far greater than the risks faced by the helpers in Bosnia. However, this is not to say that helpers from Bosnia should not be equally recognized for their deeds, but quite contrary. On the other hand, the consequences of the rescuing deeds were more predictable than in the Bosnian case, where one could never know what would happen as a result of protecting members of the "enemy groups."

Through the study, I show that the personal characteristics of the rescuers do not differ much across genocides. However, due to the different social, historical and cultural circumstances in Bosnia, we should take into account the progress from the rescuers to the helpers in order to comprehend and conceptualize the rescuers' actions within a range of conflicts. I use the literature to examine what factors shaped rescuers' actions with the aim to improve understanding of Bosnian helpers. Therefore, as I explained in the introduction, this study seeks to answer the question what motivated helpers' actions in Bosnia, and what specific aspects of the society and the conflict led them to conduct their acts of help. It will emphasize

new variables such as proximity of habitation and direct friendship across the ethnic lines. In addition, I will contribute to the notion of ethnicity during the helping acts in an ethnically triggered war.

1.1. Theory of the rescuer's motivation

Within the literature related to the Holocaust and rescuers, the imposed questions and concerns are directed toward understanding why one acts and one does not, and how one becomes a rescuer whereas another remains a bystander. An overview of several variables such as gender, religion, and social status provides the background information about who the rescuers were, but these variables alone cannot explain why those individuals in certain context and society committed acts of help. Thus, authors turn to the sociological approach in order to comprehend the phenomenon of the rescuers. When the sociological approach runs out of its explanatory power, authors turn to psychology in order to understand the phenomenon better. In that way, Oliner and Oliner classify the acts of rescue as instances of altruistic behavior, others such as Eva Fogelman and Kristen Renwick Monroe emphasize self-integrity, individuality, and the way rescuers see the other. A few authors, primarily Oliner and Oliner, and to some extent Ervin Staub, explore the personal connections between the rescuers and those they rescued in some parts of their work.

Rescuers' behavior is complex and incorporates the difficulty of moral decision, incompatible responsibilities, making choices, and living with the consequences of one's actions. One should be careful in approaching the rescuers' stories with judgment between good and evil. Nevertheless, numerous factors can affect one's capability to act or not to act; those could be in the realm of motivation, human ability and human limitations.[3] Since my research question examines the motivation of helpers during the Bosnian conflict, it is very

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[3] M. Flescher, Andrew, *Heroes, Saints and Ordinary Morality*, George University Press, Washington DC. 2003. Page: 34;

important to mention significant contributions of different authors who try to answer this question. The largest conducted study by Oliner and Oliner contains interviews with almost 700 Holocaust rescuers, non-rescuers (those who were either a part of resistance groups or did not engage in rescuing), and Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. In the study, they compared differences in demographics, environmental circumstances, developmental factors, values, and personality. Their findings reveal that the rescuers had extensive worldviews seeing all individuals as a part of a common humanity, based on human connectedness. [4] More importantly for the Bosnian context, such individuals tended to be skeptical of nationalism or any ethno-nationalisms because they viewed it as exclusionary. In order to develop what Oliner and Oliner identify as the "altruistic behavior," family played a significant role in the construction of an altruistic personality.[5] Furthermore, most of the rescuers felt that what they did was a private matter.[6] Due to the complexity of their behavior and difficulty of moral decisions, the definition of rescuers in the literature goes as ordinary heroes, or just heroes, or extraordinary persons, even though they did not see themselves as such.

However, some authors find it naïve to think that only some individuals have the ability to develop altruistic personality or acquire one, while others do not. Thus, I would consider that those explanations of the rescuing deeds are too simplistic and, of course, there are other significant components. Kristen R. Monroe in her book *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust* maintains that those who conducted rescuing acts are distinguished less by a particular moral sense and more by an identity that offered them a choice to act, which does not have connection to altruism or morality. Furthermore, in her study "*Cracking the Code of Genocide: The Moral Psychology of Rescuers, Bystanders, and Nazis*

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[4] P. Oliner Samuel and M.Oliner Perl. *The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, Collier Macmillan Publisher London, 1988. Page:23 – 24;
[5] Ibid.
[6] Eva Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage, Rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust*, New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Page: 300;

during the Holocaust," Monroe tries to understand *why and how identity influences one to act and one not to.* She asks three significant questions in order to comprehend the rescuers' and bystanders' positions: (1) what causes ordinary people to become genocidaires? (2) How do bystanders differ from rescuers and from supporters and perpetrators of genocide? (3) What causes some people to risk their lives and those of their families to save strangers?[7] She finds that a sense of personal identity which developed during their life was one of the underlying factors which compelled rescuers to undertake acts of help.

Yet, she was not sure what kind of identity rescuers acquire. Also, how did this identity trigger the rescuers' choice to act? She partly finds the answer in the idea that we learn who we are because our identity is always in relation to the others. The idea of "the other" is the most basic structure of distinct identity.[8] What Monroe emphasizes here is that the rescuers' acts are always in connection to the other, and are not purely driven from personal trade-offs or personal characteristics. Thus, if we want to examine the rescuers, understanding of rescuers should be approached from the position of the rescuer and those who are rescued. The Bosnian case will add more on self-integrity and self-identity in relation to the other with an emphasis on specific ethnicity. It will also contribute to the understanding of the importance of locality, community and close proximity in shaping one's identity and choice to act.

In trying to comprehend how identity influences the choice to act, Monroe focuses on six central: the self-concept, worldview, moral salience, ethical perspective, cognitive stretching, and categorization.[9] She found that self-image is crucial for the rescuers' decision to act, while Nazi supporters reveal quite different self-concepts. One of the interesting findings

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[7] Kristen Renwick Monroe. Cracking the Code of Genocide: The Moral Psychology of Rescuers, Bystanders, and Nazis during the Holocaust University of California, Irvine, Political Psychology, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2008. Page 700.
[8] Ibid. pp. 214;
[9] Ibid. pp. 701 and 702.

of the book is that values such as sanctity of life play a significant role in the rescuers' actions.[10] The other aspect I find illuminating and very important for understanding of the Bosnian context and rescuing behavior is what Monroe emphasizes as in-group and out-group categorization in connection to the identity and belonging. This classification is significant also for understanding the bystanders' and the perpetrators' positions.[11] Yet, her research concludes that the key characteristic of the rescuers category is that they see *similarity between humans*, while perpetrators focus on differences.[12] Seeing similarities between groups would avoid mistreatment of individuals based on the group belonging, because classifying people as different makes it easier to justify their abuse. She provides the example of the African slaves viewed as not fully human by the United States' founding fathers because of difference in skin color, or how women's anatomical differences from men have been used as a justification for denying them equal legal rights.[13] Thus, her research is crucial in understanding the helpers in Bosnia due to the imposed differences across the ethnic lines. It will contribute to the understanding whether and how helpers acquire the idea of similarities across differences and what the background platform for that is.

As we saw, the idea that identity played a crucial role in shaping the treatment of others comes from the understanding that the rescuers' behavior is always connected to the way they see themselves in relation to others. According to Monroe, this was the reason why the rescuers are left with no other choice than to help Jews.[14] But for Eva Fogelman, the reason why rescuers act is because they share humanistic values and thus they have strong self-integrity and self-

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[10] Kristen Renwick Monroe. *The Hand of Compassion, Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust. Princeton University Press*, Princeton and Oxford, 2004, pp. 703;

[11] Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13] Kristen Renwick Monroe. *Cracking the Code of Genocide: The Moral Psychology of Rescuers, Bystanders, and Nazis during the Holocaust* University of California, Irvine, Political Psychology, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2008. Page: 731.

[14] Kristen Renwick Monroe. *The Hand of Compassion, Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust. Princeton University Press*, Princeton and Oxford, 2004. pp.188;

identity.[15] According to her, they would go through a transformative process in order to acquire the idea of the rescuer self.[16] Once they acquire strong self-integrity and strong identity, they will exhibit what Oliner and Oliner describe as *togetherness with humanity*.[17] During conflicts, the world no longer makes sense for rescuers because their identities, the way they behave, notions of right and wrong no longer seem to fit; in a way, they become decentralized.[18] As described in the literature, for them their deeds were ordinary acts of humanity, or the normal thing to do.

Monroe disagreed with Fogelman's idea that the rescuers undergo a transformative path which effectively creates a rescuer self; they rather stay stable and fixed within identity and moral values that are integral part of the self. Furthermore, the understanding of the self would become a critical part of one's actions.[19] Also, one more crucial role for identity's influence on moral actions are the cognitive processes by which the rescuers see others through the categorization of "the other."[20] As Fogelman, Oliner and Oliner, and many other authors exploring the rescuers' behavior, Kristen considers that all rescuers exhibit a similar worldviews; all people are valued equally where human well-being should be the foundation of every identity system.[21] As such, it will be significant to examine whether it is possible to have one worldview when the differences among ethnic groups are constantly emphasized throughout the conflict. Also, if identity is the key factor in one's motivation to take a choice, I am interested in examining what kind of identity that is, and what the specificities of that

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[15] Eva Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage, Rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust*, New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Page: 253;

[16] Ibid.

[17] P. Oliner Samuel and M.Oliner Perl. *The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, Collier Macmillan Publisher London, 1988. Page: 6;

[18] Eva Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage, Rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust*, New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Page: 68;

[19] Ibid. 224;

[20] Eva Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage, Rescuers of the Jews during the Holocaust*, New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Pp. 235;

[21] Ibid. pp. 217;

identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina are.

Adding to the understanding of the one worldview, *Courageous Resisters – The Power of Ordinary People* highlights that an important precondition for resisting is a particular *all-embracing worldview* because he/she would see all population as a part of their in-group, or as the view—"*people like me.*"[22] Thus, due to the constant inter-group relations in Bosnia I would like to emphasise that in-group and out-group relations are very important in order to understand and position the helpers. The first step to becoming a resister is to identify and become aware of injustices in the society, similarly as Ervin Staub explores in his writings.[23] People aware of injustice will find themselves at the crossroads, which is the key moment for deciding whether to act or not. Most of the authors I consulted so far try to answer these questions: when, in which moment and how one decides to act. At the crossroads, potential resister would decide whether to take responsibility for injustice or to slide down on the side of the perpetrators and bystanders. Furthermore, the authors have noticed a very blurred line between taking action against injustice and joining the perpetrators' side.

The responses one finds at the crossroads spring from the interaction of preconditions (who the person is and what he has done before), networks (who the person knows and if he or she is in a reciprocal relationship) and the context in which resisters find themselves.[24] When these factors are combined, then individuals tend to make choices at the crossroads. Furthermore, if factors such as attitude toward authority, pro-social values and relationships with others converge, then the act of resistance will happen.[25] In the end, authors would agree

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[22] Kristina E. Thalhammer, Paula L. O'Loughlin, Myron Perzetz Glazer, Penina Migdal Glazer, Sam McFarland, Sharon Toffey Shepela, Nathan Stoltzfus. *Courageous Resistance, the Power of Ordinary People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 pp: 16;

[23] Ibid. 48;

[24] Kristina E. Thalhammer, Paula L. O'Loughlin, Myron Perzetz Glazer, Penina Migdal Glazer, Sam McFarland, Sharon Toffey Shepela, Nathan Stoltzfus. *Courageous Resistance, the Power of Ordinary People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 pp: 150; See also the page: 154 and 155;

[25] Ibid. From 21 to 27 and 152;

that there is not one essential precondition that predicts courageous behaviour; however *there is a constellation of known factors that encourage it.*[26] To sum up above ideas from different authors, it is very difficult to understand the rescuers' behavior, *what influences their behavior, encourages it, or what the trigger for the single helping action is*. Also it is often stated within the literature is that it is not necessary for the rescuers to risk their life as Yad Vashem emphasizes, but rather what is important are their personal characteristics: identity, altruism and sense of humanity.

Several authors would undertake the position that we cannot understand the rescuers without examining the perpetrators' and bystanders' position. Ervin Staub, a Holocaust survivor of Hungarian origin was rescued together with his family by the Swedish ambassador Raoul Wallenberg. Being a prominent professor of psychology, he dedicated his entire life to understanding the rescuers' and bystanders' phenomenon. Trying to explain why one would sooner join the bystanders' position, he pointed out that:

> "If you empathize with a victim but do nothing, you feel guilty…So there is a tendency to diminish the seriousness in your own mind, or to distance yourself from the victim. One way this happens is through the assumption that people who are suffering must somehow deserve it. Without quite realizing it, you can join the perpetrator in devaluing the victim."[27]

But when it comes to the rescuers, he discovered that the rescuers *identified themselves with the victims of injustice*.[28] Staub, just like Monroe, points at the crucial role of sameness among people in deciding to act.

However, Staub emphasizes that we often do not realize the power we have as

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[26] Kristina E. Thalhammer, Paula L. O'Loughlin, Myron Perzetz Glazer, Penina Migdal Glazer, Sam McFarland, Sharon Toffey Shepela, Nathan Stoltzfus. *Courageous Resistance, the Power of Ordinary People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 pp: 150; See also the page: 151;

[27] Ervin, Stuab, *The psychology of Good and Evil, Why Children, Groups and Adults Help and Harm Others,* Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[28] Ibid. pp. 29; Also Eva Fogelman take the same position by arguing that the transformation from a bystander to a rescuer requires awareness of the victim's plight, and willingness to see what others choose not to see, to pursue the truth no matter where it leads.

bystanders to make a difference. Not having knowledge is one of the key factors for understanding the bystanders' position.[29] Or even opposite to this, having knowledge about the rescued individual is crucial for the rescuers' behavior and motivation. Additionally, the key factor for the rescuers is the knowledge about the victim and compassion for the victim's plight. One of the interesting clarifications offered here is that being part of a group helps fulfil needs for security, identity, connection, and effectiveness, while, much like Monroe, Staub sees inequality between groups as a basis of violence.[30] Those particular questions and triggers for the models of behavior presented above are the concepts I examine within the analysis in order to understand what the motivation and personal trade-offs of the rescuers in Bosnia are.

Based on the readings presented above, we know that rescuers and their acts could be understood through identity, humanity and personal integrity perspective, but the question whether the idea of community and imposed normative settings, or proximity can influence the rescuers' deeds is still open. In the following sections, I present some of the scholarly work. I introduce Nechama Tec's research based on 309 Jews who survived World War II with the help of around 565 Christian rescuers. Her study presents the idea of the rescuers who were free from imposed social and normative constraints and thus were able to act. Her research is significant due to the sociological perspective on the rescuers who felt outside the imposed normative setting. This is a very important contribution to the literature that helps in understanding the Bosnian case. When she examined all rescuers, a cluster of shared characteristics emerged, suggesting that the rescuers did not fit in their environment; they found themselves on the periphery of their community, less affected by the community's expectations and controls, which provided them with an opportunity to *act* "in accordance with personal

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[29] Ervin, Staub, *The psychology of Good and Evil, Why Children, Groups and Adults Help and Harm Others*, Cambridge University Press, 2003. Page: 39;

[30] Ervin Staub. *The psychology of morality in genocide and violent conflict: perpetrators, passive bystanders, rescuers*. In Mikulincer, M. & Shaver, P. (eds). The social psychology of morality. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press, 2012 pp. 14;

values and moral precepts even when these are in opposition to societal demands."[31] Even more interestingly, she found that the rescuers were not dependent on the approval of others, but on their own self-approval.[32] Once more the idea of individuality, as explained previously, self-integrity and self-consciousness are at the focus. What these authors emphasize is that the rescuers also have a strong sense of justice along with strong ethics.

Having looked at how the topic of rescuers is generally approached in literature through an emphasis on identity, sameness, equality, environment in which they grow up, justice and injustice, I will additionally emphasize in this study the necessity of understanding the proximity of habitation in Bosnia that will inevitably lead to the reconceptualization of the rescuers. Additionally, another variable I would add is the direct and lifelong friendships that encouraged helpers in making the choice to act. As I am highlighting the necessity to rephrase the idea of the rescuers as we know from the Holocaust, I will clarify my position more in the next subchapter. Thus, in the next section I would track the development from the rescuer to the helper. The aim of this section is to identify additional elements that can influence the rescuers' behavior due to the different social, cultural and historical circumstances in which their acts of help takes place.

1.2. Between a helping hand and a rescuer in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the introduction of this chapter, I emphasized that while the *definition of the Righteous ones* is appropriate to the Holocaust situation, it is nevertheless limited because sheltering and aiding individuals who are marked for destruction (or in Bosnian case ethnic cleansing) in not considered as a rescuing act if it did not involve taking an obvious risk. A person can be in a situation of extreme danger and not be aware of it, or psychologically deny

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[31] Nechama Tec. A Glimmer of Light, Shoah Research Center, Yad Vashem.
file:///C:/Users/Nevena/Downloads/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20699%20(1).pdf
[32] Ibid.

the reality of the situation. Thus, there is the question of whether this definition is really the most suitable one to encompass all acts of help that are significant and that would at the end save the lives of those in danger.[33] This is why I decided to replace the notion of the rescuer with the helper in my study. The use of the word "rescuer" would be correct only if helpers always accurately perceived the level of danger, but this is not always the case. The rescuer in the definition and in literature is usually portrayed as an outside category; they stand against the totally hostile environment and in that way they go certainly outside of the socio-historical analysis. As it was described by Semelin:

> "Between sheltering and helping a persecuted person as part of one's ordinary everyday life, and this extraordinary character of the act of rescue organized for people in a situation of extreme danger, we need to consider the progressive, undetermined process that leads from help to rescue."[34]

In many cases, a single act of help can lead to rescuing as well. This section contributes to the idea that the line between helpers and rescuers is not rigid. In the introduction to the book *Resisting Genocide: The Multiple Forms of Rescue,* Jacques Semelin provides another very important approach to the understanding of the acts of rescuer, their contexts, and historical background, while taking the study beyond rescuers' personalities and concentrating more on operations of the rescuers portrayed in "attempt to grasp thousands of little everyday gestures in countries subjected to the most brutal forms of violence."[35] The rescuers could have come in different forms, from bringing the food, driving people in danger to other parts of the city, or lying about their identity. As Jacques Semelin explained, those are small everyday gestures. Helpers conducted similar everyday gestures during the Bosnian conflict and in many cases, those gestures happened to be lifesaving. Therefore, we should expand the notion of the rescuer

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[33]Semelin Jacques, From Help to Rescue, in a Book: *Resisting Genocide: The Multiple Forms of Rescue edited* by Jacques Semelin, Claire Andrieu, and Sarah Gensburger, Oxford Scholarship Online: 2014 pp. 12.
[34] Ibid. pp.12.
[35] Ibid. pp. 10 and 11;

and those rescued, or it should include the idea of the helper during the wartime as one category of the rescuers.

The process from lending a helping hand to becoming a rescuer can take several minutes, or it could be noticed only afterwards that the act of help committed in a certain situation was actually a life-saving one. This also has to do with different sociological and cultural settings. Bob Moore agrees with Semelin that it is necessary to analyse the rescuers within the psychological and sociological contexts from which they emerge and which make their development possible.[36] So, these authors are posing the question of how rescuers develop in particular social and cultural setting, which is crucial for understanding the Bosnian case. The advantage of this approach is that it highlights a different set of questions and it focuses on the society as a whole and serves to illuminate more clearly the possibilities for rescue in a given environment.[37] It is also significant for understanding how the process of transformation from rescuers to helpers evolves.

Thus, I will use the presented theories of authors dealing with the rescuers' behavior and examine what kind of identity or identification distinguished the Bosnian rescuers. I detect that the question that remains unanswered from the literature is how and why some people do not draw rigid lines between those they consider to be within their community and those outside, while other people do so. This question troubles me when it comes to understanding the helpers in Bosnia. Also, what kind of lines are drawn within communities in Bosnia, in this particular case in the communities in the eastern parts of Bosnia such are Srebrenica and Bratunac where I conducted my research so far. Additionally, while consulting the literature about the rescuers' behavior, it strikes me that in almost all reported testimonies rescuers perceived that what they did was a natural and understandable thing to do. When we compare

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[36] Bob Moore. *The rescue of Jews from Nazi persecution: a Western European perspective*, Carfax Publishing, Journal of Genocide Research (2003), pp. 306 and 307;
[37] Ibid. 295;

this with those who become perpetrators or stayed bystanders, then the rescuer deeds are something extraordinary, as several authors would mention. However, most of them believe that providing help to those in need is not an extraordinary thing to do, and that their deeds should not be praised. Thus, from the perception of help to those in need evolved the term helpers that I am going to use throughout the study.

Based on the conclusions I drew from my literature review, I could trace several shortcomings. One of them is that the literature is concentrated on the historical specificity of the Holocaust and in a way dismisses the rescuers in other genocides. It is not to say that personal characteristics of rescuers are different. However, cultural and social settings change across the range of conflicts and individuals undertake different steps in becoming helpers, or find themselves in social settings such as proximity of habitation where the helping acts are more likely to happen. For example, one of the necessary characteristics when it comes to helpers in Bosnia is the idea of identity in connection to ethnicity. Based on the Theory of National Indifference I hypothesize that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed ethnic mobilization and thus were able to conduct the acts of help. It is my aim to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who carried out such acts. Therefore, I will illustrate the main theories of identity and indifference toward ethnicity within next subchapter.

1.3. Identity and indifference toward ethnicity

In order to comprehend the helping hand in Bosnia during the conflict, I would like to understand within this subchapter the patterns of self/othering used in society and how ethnic identity was operating for a political purpose. Even more precisely, I seek to understand how people develop and strengthen a sense of ethnic identity, if they do it at all. There is no agreement when it comes to the very definition of identity, its importance and understanding

in different disciplines. Philosophy, anthropology, and sociology contribute to deep examinations of the notion of identity and its implication within society. From the perspective of studies of nationalism, authors are highlighting the importance of understanding the position of national identity within the field. Anthony D. Smith emphasizes the complexity of national identity: "Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today national identity is perhaps the most fundamental one."[38] He concludes that it is fundamental, but at the same time *ubiquitous, multifaceted, and pervasive.*[39] One of the most important ideas of identity is that it serves as a unifier of groups or it tries to cultivate an idea of identification that will result in sameness.

Cooper and Brubaker analyze the most common ways in which the term identity functions; their argument highlights that the term identity tends to mean too much. There are three sets of concepts to replace the word 'identity': 1.) Identification and categorization, 2.) Self-understanding and social location, 3.) commonality and connectedness. For the purpose of this study is it very important to see how these authors explain identification and categorization since I hypothesize that helpers were indifferent toward ethnicity:

> Identification lacks the reifying connotations of identity. It invites us to specify the agents that do the identifying and it does not presuppose that such identifying (even powerful agents such as state) will necessarily result in the internal sameness, the distinctiveness, the bounded groupness that political entrepreneurs may seek to achieve."[40]

So the question here is whether ethnic identity during the war resulted in sameness as explained above. However, employed fear by ethno-national elites in society was dominant, and to take a side and identify as a member of the group for the sake of security, protection and overall position in society is required. Julia Mostov emphasizes how those who belong to the

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[38] D. Smith, Antony. National Identity, Penguin Books, London, 1991. Page :143;
[39] Ibid. Page: 160;
[40] Brubaker Rogers, Cooper, Frederick. Beyond Identity. Available :
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/18_Beyond_Identity.pdf, Page: 14;

imposed and established national identity "can be sure that they will enjoy the benefits (protections and goods) of public life,"[41] while those who appear to question that identity, who question the national interests—as defined by ethno-national leaders—find themselves in an unstable place, which eventually undermines their sense of security.[42] She explains that in the war situation ethno-national leaders mobilize the people through models of belonging and maintain their positions of authority through people's fear of being left outside, unprotected.[43] In the politics of ethnocracy, identification with and loyalty to the nation does not involve choice but acceptance of the obligations of belonging, because at that moment the nation acts as a collective agent through its leaders.[44] Nevertheless, the nation cannot always act as a collective agent that seeks loyalty and sameness, because not all individuals would consider being part of the imposed narrative of belonging.

Thus, several authors in academia would explore exactly the same concept of individual attachment to the ethnicity and nation. In the article, "Imagined Non-communities: National Indifference as category of analysis," Tara Zahra explores the concept of national indifference while asking to what extent individuals actually feel national. The author criticizes mainstream authors in the field of nationalism, claiming that they did little to question national loyalties to the state, or to political powers. The critique is directed toward the collectivistic approach to the nation. Yet, the study offers a promising strategy for problematizing preconceived relations between individual subjectivity and collective affiliation.

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[41]Julie, Mostov, *Soft Borders, Rethinking Sovereignty and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008. Page: 75;

[42] Ibid.

[43] Julie, Mostov,: *Soft Borders, Rethinking Sovereignty and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008. Page:76;

[44] Ibid.

According to Zahra, it may be time to move beyond imagined communities and to consider the history of individuals who stood outside or on the margins of those communities.[45] Individuals who rejected to identify with national categories were known as "hermaphrodites," "amphibians," "renegades, and "border land souls."[46] However, indifference as such exists only in the eyes of nationalist beholders.[47] According to Zahra, national indifferences appear in a period when nationals organize in order to eliminate it. Making indifference visible, she argues, enables historians to understand better the limits of nationalization and thereby challenges the nationalist narratives, categories, and frameworks.[48] Once imagined, indifference to nationalism became as real and meaningful a category as the nation itself, and it had significant social, cultural, and political consequences. Indifference toward ethnicity during the wartime period in Bosnia was a significant category with a consequence of encouraging the acts of help across the ethnic lines.

While exploring the Rwandan Genocide in a same manner Lee Ann Fuji concludes that it is not ethnicity, ethnic loyalty or ideologies that trigger ordinary people to commit mass atrocities against their neighbours, but rather social ties and social context.[49] According to her, in periods when the killings started, ethnic logic did not play a main part but rather interest, economic and social, or already settled alliances.[50] What is important to distinguish is that ethnicity is not completely unimportant because it operates as an organizing principle during the violence; yet it is not "an automatic trigger for mass participation in violence".[51] It is a similar question that many authors ask, and Lee Ann Fuji takes the same path and tries to

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[45] Tara Zahra, *Imagined Non-communities: National Indifference as category of analysis,* Slavic Review, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Spring, 2010), pp. 104
[46] Ibid
[47] Ibid. 105
[48] Ibid. 94
[49] Lee Ann Fuji. The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide, Security Studies Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, pp. 597;
[50] Ibid. pp.567;
[51] Ibid. 596;

comprehend why some people decide to participate in killing and others turn their hands toward the helping. Resisters did not see themselves as powerless people in a given situation and they did not believe that helping someone would be pointless.[52] Within the study she conducted 231 interview with killers and helpers and exposed that many did not see Tutsi as a group to be exterminated, but rather would continuously see Tutsi friends as people they should help, not hurt.[53] The power of local ties is something that Lee Ann Fuji explored within her study and it could be easily applied to the Bosnian context.

Thus, the next chapter will highlight that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a mixture of different social, cultural and historical circumstances, and in order to grasp the helpers' actions during the war it is necessary to give a short context of the conflict. In addition, in order to understand how indifference toward ethnicity operated in the conflict, it is necessary to provide a short overview of the events that followed the conflict. Therefore, I will elaborate more on the platforms and possibilities in which ethnicity was negotiated during and before the conflict in order to further understand what encourages helpers to perceive ethnicity as a silent category. In addition, I would like to emphasize that the understanding of the conflict in Bosnia demands an understanding of the function of ethnic divisions in the country, and thus I will observe the helpers' deeds through this prism.

Chapter 2: The Context: Breakup of Yugoslavia

The aim of this chapter is to provide the overview of the main causes for the dissolution of Yugoslavia while seeking to understand the amount of violence that Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced at the end of the disintegration process. Providing an overview of the main contested concepts will help the reader better understand the position in which helpers found themselves during the conflict. I will examine the ideas of Yugoslav identity and all other

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[52] 5 Lee Ann Fuji. The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide, Security Studies Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, pp. 85;
[53] Ibid. 591;

ethnic, religious and local identities in connection to the ethnic mobilizations policies during the war while seeking to position the helpers within the framework of my argument: the helpers were able to stay ethnically indifferent toward imposed ethno-national narratives, and consequently they were able to conduct the acts of help. It was a dilemma for almost all inhabitants in Yugoslavia whether the Yugoslav identity was primary, with all other spatial, ethnic and religious identities secondarily taken into consideration. Thus, this chapter seeks to shed light on the idea that helpers were similarly able to integrate different understanding of belonging in the idea of what their identity is. In addition, the presented different understanding will show that shifts from one identification, spatial or ethnic, toward the other supranational or religious was a common thing for almost all inhabitants of Yugoslavia.

The chapter will expand more on the idea that Yugoslav civic identity was destroyed by large ethnic nationalism mobilization during the wars in Yugoslavia. Several reasons for that are provided such as that working class identity was quickly replaced by a strong ethnic identity while the idea of brotherhood and unity were replaced by a search for national unification. Other explanations were drawn on the misinterpretations of the "ancient ethnic hatred" and the Balkans being "predisposed to the violence." Economic instability and restructuring of the country through the constitution contributed to the mentioned indication and deepened the mistrust and fear within the country. I will further seek how, then, helpers were able to stay ethnically indifferent in this situation and acquire more local and communal identities, instead of ethnic ones. Thus, I will expand more at the end of this chapter on identity in connection to ethnicity while seeking to examine how ethnicity was negotiated before and during the war in Bosnia.

1.4. Contested Theories about the dissolution of Yugoslavia

Significant academic work encompasses the understanding and explaining of sociological, cultural and historical circumstances in which the dissolution happened. Thus,

overall, most of the authors try to provide the context in which Yugoslavia as a state disintegrated. The Bosnian war comes as the final product of the Yugoslav dissolution, and as the difficult consequence of ethno-nationalism, fall of communism and economic reforms. Among the most frequently cited explanations is that the Yugoslav state was from the very beginning an essentially impossible or inevitable construction.[54] In order to explain the wars in the Balkans during the nineteenth century Robert M. Hayden and Maria Todorova asserted that authors tend to stereotypically characterize the region with numerous prejudices such as that Balkans people hold overall an "aggressive nationalism" and that they have a propensity toward violence and tribalism.[55] What puzzles the authors studying the Bosnian case, is the amount of violence that occurred in the period between "1992 and 1995."

One of the explanations that Hayden presents, is that violence took place in almost all parts of Yugoslavia, but it was most intense in the regions with mixed population, such as Bosnia. According to him, it is not that violence erupted because of the long communist repression and some kind of hidden nationalism, but rather it was the "forcible unmixing of the peoples whose continuing coexistence was counter to the current political ideology."[56] One of the often-mentioned causes for the dissolution of Yugoslavia was the prevalence of the ethno-national politics which acquired significant attention in academia. Thus, for example, the approach adopted by Ernest Gellner demonstrates that differences between Western and Eastern nationalisms were that the Eastern European nationalisms were still locked into complex loyalties of kinship, territory, and religion.[57] According to him, people in these countries were bound to take a great deal of very forceful cultural engineering and in many cases; it was bound to involve population exchange or expulsion, forcible assimilation, and

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[54] Johan Lampe, *Yugoslav as a History: Twice there was a country*, Cambridge Press 2000. Sec.edition.Page:4;
[55] Robert M.Hayden. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans, Studies of a European Disunion 1991-2011*, Brill, Laiden and Boston 2013, pp.19;
[56] Ibid. pp.84;
[57] Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006. Page:97

sometimes liquidation.[58] This is one of the most common and explored interpretations of the dissolution of Yugoslavia that should be observed with a certain distance, since similar expulsions and liquidations exist in other parts of the world.

Other authors have suggested that the main causes of the dissolution were economic reforms and country structure. Michael Palairet highlights several components of the fall of Yugoslavia. The dominant one was the collapse of its authoritarian socialist economic system, the dissolution of the Titoist Yugoslav state, and at the end, the constant determination from Belgrade.[59] Dennison Rusinow suggests that economic reforms, which produced competition for centrally controlled investment funds and disputes over development priorities, were one of the main culprits for expansion of nationalism.[60] Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the economic crises certainly contributed to Yugoslavia's disintegration.

Adding to causes such as ethno-nationalism, Dejan Guzina argues that the institutional composition of the former Yugoslavia allowed the development of mutually exclusive ethnic nationalisms and led to the self-destruction of Yugoslavia.[61] It was a development, or more precisely retrogression, from civic nationalism (Yugoslav) toward ethnic nationalisms. Civic nationalism has grounds in institutions and it requires a political contract and consensus. Therefore, ethnicity is not the central part. However, as Guzina and many others illustrate, in the end, Yugoslav civic identity became a victim of ethno-nationalism. In that manner, Jasna Soso argues from a more macro-level perspective that the dissolution of Yugoslavia was the

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[58]Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006. Page: Page:97

[59] Michael Palairet, *Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia/ State Collapse in South East Europe Europe*, New Perspective on Yugoslav Dissolution edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Disintegration, Purde University Press, 2008.Page:221;

[60] Dennison Rusinow, *Reopening of the National Question in the* 1960 in book State Collapse in South East Europe Europe, New Perspective on Yugoslav Dissolution edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Disintegration, Purde University Press, 2008.Page:134;

[61] Dejan, Guzina, *The Self-Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism, 2000.Page: 21;

final work of a long European tradition of violent ethnic homogenization of territories.[62] Unlike Gellner, who described the particularity of Eastern nationalism being predisposed to violence, other authors assert the idea of the European soil being also turbulent and predisposed for different kinds of violent ethnic homogenizations.

The most debatable cause for the dissolution was the 1974 constitution that confirmed and strengthened the autonomy of the federal units, as it introduced the concept of sovereign rights of self-determination and gave the possibility of the states to be entitled to their own independence.[63] In order to follow the idea of self-determination, any other nation, by reviving its history, tried to prove that they were special and very old nations with a long history. In a way, the constitution provided the ability for each nation within Yugoslavia to seek its independence from the Yugoslav state. Julia Mostov emphasizes the process of replacement of the working class identity with ethno-national collective identity as a crucial element when it comes to the claims for territory.[64] The slogans such as "brotherhood and unity" replaced the calls for national unification and separation, while national self-determination substituted worker's self-management as the basis for building the new system.[65] The new countries that emerged from Yugoslavia also try to comprehend their new national identities.

However, when it comes to the Yugoslav identity, it incorporated in itself all other ethnic, religious and cultural identities as one supranational identity: Yugoslav Identity. It was a dilemma for almost all inhabitants integrated within the Yugoslav territory whether the Yugoslav identity was primary, with all other spatial, ethnic and religious identities secondary in consideration. It is very important for this study to illuminate on the idea of ethnic identity

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[62] Jasna Dragović- Soso, J.Cohen Lenard. *State Collapse in South East Europe, New Perspective on Yugoslavia's Disintegration,* Purde University Press, 2008. Page:5;

[63] Ronald Rich, *Recognition of the State: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and The Soviet Union,* European Journal of International Law, 1993. Page :37;

[64] Julia Mostov, *Soft Borders, Rethinking Sovereignty and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008. Page: 66;

[65] Ibid. pp. 66;

and its development before and during the conflict. Interestingly, Cvijeto Job, in his chase for definition or description of his personal ethnic identity, emphasizes "a Dalmatian from Dubrovnik, Belgrader, a Croat and therefore Yugoslav."[66] People in Yugoslavia identified with multiple and intersecting identities, such as religious, ethnic, ideological or supranational identity.

Thus, it is easy to understand that helpers during the Bosnian conflicts were similarly able to shift from one imposed ethnic identity by political elites toward more local and community based identities, or even more toward keen relationship and identities surrounding it. However, the difficulty is that these complex identities started to be "constituted as categories serving to rationalize discrimination, violence against certain groups".[67] Journalists, but also academics, tend to explain the conflict in Yugoslavia as an "ethnic conflict," adding the ethnic prefix on the idea of identity. This ethnic prefix is taken for granted and also usually it is uncritically observed. According to Wilmer, the category of ethnicity in connection to the conflict is observed as something organic and self-evident.[68] However, it should be noted that identity is fluid and changeable category.

In connection to the identity, ancient hatreds are described as the main trigger for mobilization of ethnic identities into the violent acts. Jasna Dragović discusses this, as she called it, "unexplored category" of "ancient hatreds," which produces a rise in immutable and conflicting primordial identities among the country's different national groups.[69] For Dragović, ancient hatred is an overstated phrase in academia because it portrays Yugoslavia as

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[66] Cvijeto Job, *Yugoslav's Ruins, the bloody lessons of nationalism.* A Patriot's writings. Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, 2002, Page: 5;

[67] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 83;

[68] Ibid. pp. 84;

[69] Jasna Dragović- Soso, J.Cohen Lenard. *State Collapse in South East Europe, New Perspective on Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, Purde University Press, 2008. Page: 2;

intrinsically predisposed to violence.[70] As an example, she gives Samuel Huntington's thesis about the clash of civilizations. The understanding of the concept leads us to recognize essentially an ahistorical and static approach, because Huntington's analysis of civilization as constant leaves no space for examination of identity as formation, as a fluid and continuous process.

Furthermore, the category of ancient hatred is in total opposition to the ethnic indifference. This problematical approach finds its grounds in the idea that civilizational identity is an unchangeable given.[71] Also, as mentioned above, the usage of the term "ethnic conflict" was connected to the idea that such ethnic problems will occur in undemocratic societies, underdeveloped and generally non-Western countries.[72] Thus, the idea of ethnicity in connection to identity was a dominant explanatory category when it comes to the occurrence and causes of the conflict, because ethnicity served as the easiest way for the war mobilization. I will dedicate most of my study to understanding how these categories are operating during the war and in what connections they are to the helpers. Yet, it must be stressed that nationalist narratives in Yugoslavia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina were not ancient or primordial, but constructed and contested.[73]

Let us consider also the different perspectives and explanations when it comes to the Bosnian war. Robert M. Hayden highlights that the country that suffered the most from the dissolution of Yugoslavia was also the most ethnically heterogeneous one.[74] Bosnia and

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[70] Jasna Dragović- Soso J, J.Cohen Lenard. *State Collapse in South East Europe, New Perspective on Yugoslavia's Disintegration,* Purde University Press, 2008. Page: 2;

[71] Ibid.Page:4;

[72] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 85;

[73] Ben Lieberman. *Nationalist narratives, violence between neighbors and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Hercegovina: a case of cognitive dissonance?* Journal of Genocide Research, Routledge Taylor and Francis group, 2006 pp. 301;

[74] Robert M.Hayden. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans, Studies of a European Disunion 1991-2011, Brill*, Laiden and Boston 2013, pp.91;

Herzegovina recorded the highest rate of mixed marriages in comparison to all other Yugoslav Republics, which indicated an increase in integration of social groups within society.[75] The other indicator of heterogeneity was that Bosnia had the highest rate of those who declared themselves as Yugoslavs as opposed to emphasizing their ethnic identities.[76] The question is what happened that brought such a high scale of violence. Some authors would explain that people voted for their independent state not on the ground of citizenship, but rather on the ground of the ethnically defined nation, because the ethnicized definitions were embodied within constitutions.[77] However, there is a dilemma how such a heterogenic society as Bosnia adopted an overall primacy of ethnic identity during the war.

From the other perspective, Hayden provides one of the answers to this question. He highlights that in all republics, the dominant nations (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians) were the majority, so that the ethnic state was the will of majority, while only in Bosnian case there was no majority or minority.[78] Being that mixed, with almost equal percentage of all ethnicities, and without the majority of one ethnic group, aggressive violence occurred in the country. Additionally, in order for violence to erupt, out-group dehumanization was a main tool for evoking disgust toward the "enemy groups".[79] Such processes, followed by strong prejudice, facilitate the atrocities and genocide to happen.[80] Employed ethnocentrism by ethno-national readers provided the fundamental reason for differentiation between groups with a tendency to

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[75] Robert M.Hayden. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans, Studies of a European Disunion 1991-2011, Brill*, Laiden and Boston 2013, pp. 92;

[76] Robert M.Hayden. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans, Studies of a European Disunion 1991-2011,* Brill, Laiden and Boston 2013, pp. 92. In the chapter „Ethnic heterogeneity"

[77] Ibid. pp. 295;

[78] Ibid, pp. 296;

[79] Erin E. Buckels and Paul D. Trapnell. *Disgust facilitates outgroup dehumanization, Group process and intergroup relations*, Sage, 2013 pp. 772;

[80] For more on dehumanization and delegitimization please see: David Livingston Smith: The paradoxes of dehumanization, source EBSCO: http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=cb95c00a-cd3d-443c-a5c3-930073d6fa39%40sessionmgr112&vid=0&hid=117

devaluate other groups while considering your own group morally and culturally superior.[81] Manipulating this kind of ethnocentric nationalism is seen as the quickest and the most effective method for gaining political power but also, most importantly, for maintaining control over the population.[82] Moreover, when the strong in-group identification is significant it does not mean that the prejudices toward the out-group would occur. However, several factors such as moral superiority, sensitivity to the threat, social distrust and power politics, can provide the basis for aversion toward those that are outside the group boundaries.[83] Such ideas were the main ethno-national tools for mobilization during the war.

The Bosnian war ended with the Dayton agreement in 1995 and even today descriptions label it the bloodiest war on the European soil since WWII. Considerable research on violence and ethnic identity has been conducted during the twenty years in the aftermath of the conflict and explored varieties of ideas on violence and reasons for its manifestation. However, it is still a thought-provoking topic. Thus, in the next subchapter, I would like to further explore this topic and give a short overview of the different perspectives when it comes to violence in Bosnia. This will help to better understanding of the helpers' actions during the Bosnian conflict and position them within the wider society.

2.3. Anthropology of the War – making sense in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, the most tragic event of the Yugoslav dissolution is the war in Bosnia, and without understanding the context in which it happened we would not be able to understand the acts of helpers during the war. When it comes to the war in my country several questions concerned me. First, why and how it happened and

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[81] Bar Tal Hammack. *Conflict, Delegitimization, and Violence, In The Oxford Handbook of Intergroup Conflicts,* Edited by Linda R. Tropp Oxford University Press, pp. 33;

[82] Vesna Pesic,

[83] Marilynn B. Brewer. *The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?* Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 55, No. 3, 1999, pp. 442;

secondly, why it had to end so brutally with the ethnic cleansing and the 1995 genocide? Also, I wanted to comperhend how we understand the war? Ivana Macek's perception of the war is that it is opposed to the peace.[84] When the cognitive change from the peacetime to the war time is happening, people all of a sudden started to experience helplessness. The choices we have to make in abnormal situations, such as during war, change us considerably. In the same way, helpers were able to make choices whether to act or not to act. Frank Wilmer claims that it changes our perception of the self because there is a constant reconsideration of what is acceptable and what is not.[85] In the testimony collection from the war period in Bosnia, we hear narratives of how people strongly believed the war would never reach their cities. Especially in small villages and cities where people lived in close proximity, there was a strong perception that the war would not reach them.

According to the Macek, the war in Bosnia was in the first place triggered by fear, the threat of violence and losses, and it made people seek collective protection described as an urge to find the group bounds that will protect you—in this case, it was an ethnic group.[86] Differences that existed between the groups before were recognized and maintained in a spirit of multiculturalism and coexistence. At the point when these differences created an expression of different interests, the language of conflict began. The differences in interests resulted in tensions; tensions will usually lead to conflicts, while conflicts inevitably lead to violence.[87] However, we can consider the provided description as too simplistic and unfit to grasp the complexity of the violence in a society. However, it can help to understand and better examine

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[84] Ivana Macek. Sarajevo *Under Siege, Anthropology in Wartime*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009 pp. 193;

[85] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp.193;

[86] Ivana Macek. *Predicament of war, Sarajevo experiences and ethics of war*, in the book: Anthropology of Violence and Conflict, edited by Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schroder, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London,2001, pp. 210;

[87] Ibid.

position I am taking here: that the helpers felt indifferent toward ethnically imposed narratives as presented above.

Therefore, Macek would add that the war has the ability to enforce antagonistic divisions between the groups and homogeneity within the group.[88] It is not only that people just accept new explanations, ideas and imposed norms by political-military elites, but also "normality take place in political space where the power of defining the truth is highly contested."[89] During the conflict and after, everyone would have their own truth. The amount of violence in Bosnia was tremendous and it left considerable marks over the entire society. Additionally, I would add that in Bosnia, ethnic mobilization narrative facilitated the possibility of physical hurt. However, as I argue, helpers in the case of Bosnia were able to oppose employed ethnic mobilization and I seek to understand what were the processes or main platforms for them to counter ethnic mobilization.

Franke Wilmer seeks to answer the question how these narratives are mobilized to construct and deconstruct the identities and the systems of meaning on which the legitimacy of state institutions rests.[90] He finds it disturbing that high scales of violence, including the rape of women and the forced oral castration of men, murdering of civilians, children and elderly, is normal simply because it takes place within the situation that we describe as the war.[91] Also, besides why ordinary people did what they did, there is a certainty that without ordinary people there would be no wars; the question he further poses is what identity has to do with this.[92] Thus, the segment of war, identity and violence will be discussed further in the study.

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[88] Ivana Macek, *Sarajevo Under Siege, Anthropology in Wartime*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009 pp. 208;

[89] Ivana Macek, *Imitation of Life, Negotiating normality in Sarajevo under the* Siege, in the book: The new Bosnian Mosaic, Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society, edited by: Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, Ger Duijzings, Ashgate, 2007, pp. 41;

[90] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 30;

[91] Ibid, pp. 59;

[92] Ibid. pp. 63;

Furthermore, I think we can better understand why people do inhumane acts if we observe why they do human acts, and vice versa.

People who once declared their identity through class started strongly to affiliate themselves with one of the dominant ethnic groups (Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats). It would be difficult to employ such a wide range of violence if ethnic prejudices were not one of the main mobilizations tools. According to Franke Wilmer, interpersonal prejudices were apparent along two lines—the otherness and interethnic prejudices as local setting. [93] Manipulating ethnocentric nationalism has been the quickest and the most effective method of gaining political power but also, most importantly, maintaining control over the population. The in-group and out-group high ethnicization, differentiation, hostility and in the end, large scale of killings, was dominant in one part of the society that followed the rules, imposed by the warlords. However there is enough evidence of friendly and supportive relations between the groups even during the war that I want to explore. The model of helping behavior grows across the neighbor lines and it is influenced by extended contacts that each group had before the war.

When the war was already at its high stage in most of the places around Bosnia, people started to narrow their overall solidarity of citizens once comprehended with the brotherhood and unity idea, toward the local settings such as neighborliness and friendship.[94] When the neighborhood and friends proved not to be trusted anymore, people turned to the last resorts, their families.[95] However, neighbourliness remains the secure area especially within the local small settings. Local approach and understanding of local context has much to offer because it provides better understanding of the complexities of everyday life in Bosnia before, during,

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[93] Frank Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia,* Routledge, London-New York, 2002. Page: 159;

[94] Ivana Macek, *Predicament of war, Sarajevo experiences and ethics of war*, in the book: Anthropology of Violence and Conflict, edited by Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schroder, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London,2001, pp.202;

[95] Ibid. pp. 202.

and after the war. I would say that only through local dynamics we can easily observe meanings, experiences, and conditions.

Thus, approach from below can offer better explanations why certain individuals decided to act and what their motivation was. In order to comprehend the idea that helpers stayed indifferent toward ethnicity it is important to see how individuals were negotiating ethnicity on a daily basis because it can provide some the platforms of ethnicity negotiation where helping acts are more likely to happen. I explained in chapters (1.3.) and (2.1.) how identity was operating during and before the conflict. Since I am arguing that indifference toward ethnicity was one of the main factors that supported helpers with the ability to conduct acts of help, I will extend further the concepts of identity and ethnicity in the subchapter that follows.

2.4. Ethnic categorization and negotiation of ethnicity in Bosnia

Anthropological work in Bosnia conducted by Tone Bringa, Ivana Macek, Frank Wilmer, Paula Pickering and Elisa Helms demonstrate that ethno-national identification was fluid and that identity was negotiated on a daily basis while ethnic boundaries were constantly maintained. Most of the authors dealing with rescuers' acts, understanding behavior, as well as comprehending the conflict and rescuing in the relation to identity, try to understand how the self is constructed. As we saw from the theoretical framework, Eva Fogelman would argue that the rescuers have strong self-integrity, others such as Kristine Monroe would emphasize that identity is the key driving force for one to make choice and to act. Also, self in relation to the others is another underlying factor for understanding the rescuers' acts. When it comes to the conflict and understanding the causes of the conflict, identity comes as the main component. Identity is not stable and fixed; it is rather fluid and layered in multiple intersecting identities.[96]

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[96] Franke Wilmer. *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 68;

The crucial issue here, and in connection to Bosnia, is whether our identity connects us to the others or it alienates us from them.[97] Or to rephrase, whether the identity of helpers was connecting them with others, or alienating them.

It was asserted by several authors dealing with the wars on the Balkans that identity is a key factor for understanding the overall process of the conflict. We can indicate the question of identity in Paula Pickering, Ivana Macek, Franke Wilmer and Tone Bringa research conducted in Bosnia. As we saw, the idea of primary and secondary identity in Yugoslavia was also debatable topic for authors such as Hayden, Jovovic, Julia Mostov and Denisson Rusinow. Several of them would also emphasize the importance of the ethnic identity in everyday life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and how it is negotiated in daily life, such as the work of Elissa Helms, and Cornelia Sorabji. When Paula Picker was conducting her research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, she found out that people used to identify with various groups and subgroups, or more in different categories. It is to say that imposed ethno-national ideology during the war and after was not applicable to the entire society, since the bounded groupness was not the primary identity for most of the people.[98] While asking one of the citizens of Sarajevo to describe his nationality, he would answer he is a Serb immediately, including several other identifications such as—Sarajevan, Bosnian, European and member of the planet Earth.[99] Even though the ethnic identity would come as the first identifier, it does not mean that it would be as strong as it was required by political elites, or that it had primarily negative connotations.

Imposed and reconstructed ethnic identities served for political purposes and they excluded those who did not want to define themselves in any ethnic terms, and those who were not members of the dominant ethnic group. Paula Pickering explained that prewar analysis

[97] Perl M. Oliner and Samuel P.Oliner. *Toward Caring Society*, Praeger, London, 1995, pp.121;
[98] Paula M Pickering, *Peacebuilding in the Balkans*, *The View from the Ground Floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007 pp. 10;
[99] Ibid. pp. 10;

shows that citizens of Bosnia were less willing to accept someone of different ethnicity for varying levels of intimate contact in 1986 than they were in 1966. Citizens from 1970 onward judged interethnic relation at a local level as better than those of national and regional level.[100] From these statistics, we can see how, going into the nineties, ethnic identification and composition changes. As more nationalistic parties came to power, ethnic identification became stronger. Interestingly, Paula Pickering also recorded that interethnic relations in neighbourhoods were estimated as being at their best: 57 percent assess interethnic relations as good, 28 percent as satisfactory while 12 percent as bad.[101] It was a tendency by the nationalists to destroy the long-standing tradition of neighbourhood relations and to base ethnic belonging as the only foundation of one's identity.[102] However, this study presents an analysis that argues quite the contrary.

Maintenance of ethnic boundaries in Bosnia was always present but not as something negative, rather as necessity of communication of differences and understanding of your own identity group in the relation to the other. While explaining ethnic boundaries, Fredrik Barth defines identity as "self-ascription and ascription by others."[103] He considers that, for their maintenance, it is necessary that groups have cultural differences so that they can communicate these differences. It is not that accordingly those differences would lead to tensions, conflict and violence. Ethnic boundaries are always maintained between two groups, but stronger ethnic groups will be able to impose and transform the style in which they cohabitate.[104] These processes are common during the war situations but not in general, because the meaning of identity varies across different groups.

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[100] Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007, pp. 20 ;
[101] Ibid. pp. 21;
[102] Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007, pp.28;
[103] Barth, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, in the book: Ethnicity, edited by Johan Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford University Press. 1996.Page: 78;
[104] Ibid pp.82;

Thus, we can trace many understandings when it comes to ethnicity and Paula Pickering rightly notices that there is much variability attached to the ethnicity while individuals that are labelled by different categories (usually ethnicity) do not equally signify and perceive these categories.[105] People could identify more strongly with other social settings that are forming groups, such as neighbourliness. Also when it comes to the relations to the other, how individuals conceive the idea of self is substantial for their social and political behavior.[106] The self-identity was highlighted as one of the underlying factors in helping behavior. But this self-identity is often not perceived in ethnic terms. They can be sometimes identified more with their locality than with the sense of ethnicity. If we live in physical proximity, it encourages the possibility for mutual understanding and it does "help people to understand their common interest in humanity."[107] Thus it is not unusual that people choose their friends within their near physical surroundings such as neighbourliness, school or any other close space.

During the research Paula Pickering tried to find the answers on the question if ethnonational communities form the basis for the in-group to which individuals identify.[108] She finds out that the most common answer was "none," because people would blame political elites equally from all sides. [109] Bosnia was frequently characterized as a society with a high degree of community cohesiveness, neighbourliness and shared interest in intercommunal relations. [110] Personal networks entrenched in everyday life are the best opportunity for interethnic cooperation in Bosnia. They are usually turned to informal institutions of the family, friendship, neighbourhood networks, rather than to the formal ones such as national and local

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[105] Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007, pp. 54;

[106] Ibid. pp.53;

[107] Perl M. Oliner and Samuel P.Oliner. *Toward Caring Society*, Praeger, London, 1995, pp. 103;

[108] Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007, pp. 67;

[109] Ibid. pp. 67;

[110] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 102;

government, the judiciary, etc. [111] When the state fails to protect citizens, people start to rely on other sources.

Thus, one of the common grounds people in Bosnia relied on when the war erupted was a neighbourliness where people lived together, shared their daily life before the war but also during the war. According to Ivana Macek, one of the existing pre-war social norms was neighborliness and according to her, it was more important than nationality. [112] In a way, neighborliness was a platform for ethnicity negotiation, as the subchapter headline suggests. Anthropological research on the war in Bosnia and citizens' behavior under the Sarajevo siege recorded by Macek revealed that people changed during the war and showed different characteristics, whether selfish or altruistic. [113] However, she traced the cordial relations between the neighbors where people risk their life to save their friends. [114] Likewise, Slavenka Drakulic within the chapter *"How we survived communism"* illuminates what it means to have a communist household, and how neighborhoodness was operating before and after communism. As she underlines, you are utterly dependent on your neighbor for different kind of favors, such as borrowing coffee and sugar, while he or she will see you in your 'around the house clothes'. [115]As she mentions, there is a good side of this intimacy, because people would not have illusions about each other.[116] Ethnicity as a category of identification within this intimacy is negotiated on the several levels. One is neighborliness as described above; the other is through the deep extended friendship relations that I will describe in the next chapter.

Thus, negotiation is possible only when people can meet each other and spend some time in proximity. Observation by Oliner and Oliner highlights that there

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[111]Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007, pp. 113;

[112] Ivana Macek, *Sarajevo Under Siege, Anthropology in Wartime*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009 pp. 88;

[113] Ibid. pp. 89;

[114] Ibid. pp. 108;

[115] Slavenka Drakulic. How we survived communism and even laughed, Vintage, London 1993 pp.183;

[116] Ibid. 183;

"is a deliberate effort to connect with groups different from our own for the purpose of seeking mutual understanding. Deliberate means intentional rather than accidental, seeking out rather than being found, and connecting which implies forming some type of personal relationships." [117]

We are more likely to act and to protect others whom we see as part of our in-group (this is primarily family and other close associates) and devalue those who are outside of it. [118] The cases where out-group members would become your family or close associates are recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is the question whether one's loyalty toward the in-group always corresponds to the existence of some outgroup hostility. [119] Crossing from the in-group membership and becoming a close friend with a member of the out-group requires also the boundary crossing. But, when the conflict started, it made group members more consciousness of their group boundaries. It also activated the group's defences among which the confirmation of their value system was employed against the "outside enemy." Therefore, this study seeks to illuminate that the acts of help are likely to happen when the ethnic boundary crossing is present. In that sense, identities, neighbourliness or strong friendship relations played crucial roles.

Researchers highlight that the more we develop close relationships with an individual, the more we also develop strong empathy. [120] Thus, ethnic boundary crossing is also more likely to occur. Attachment to family and friends are main processes, and we are tend to help more those with whom we have interpersonal relationships. [121] In many societies to love your neighbour lies at the heart of most moral and religious systems. [122] It is frequently interpreted

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[117] Oliner Perl, Samuel Perl. Oliner. *Toward a caring society: ideas into actions*, Westport, CT: Praeger. Pp: 102 and 103;

[118] Kristina E. Thalhammer, Paula L. O'Loughlin, Myron Perzetz Glazer, Penina Migdal Glazer, Sam McFarland, Sharon Toffey Shepela, Nathan Stoltzfus. *Courageous Resistance, The Power of Ordinary People*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 pp. 24;

[119] Gordon Allport. *The Nature of Prejudices* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, pp 41

[120] Ibid.168;

[121] Gordon Allport. *The Nature of Prejudices* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, Page: 169;

[122] Kristen Renwick Monroe. *The Hand of Compassion, Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust*. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2004. pp.226;

that we love those who are like us.[123] Since people would express hostility against out-group members the idea how we define others becomes critical to our treatment of them.[124] It was crucial for Bosnians also to understand how they defined the others. Living in proximity influenced the perception of one individual toward the other individual. The most important proximity of habitation in Bosnia is neighbourliness.

Therefore the next chapter will elaborate more on locality and the idea of *komšiluk* (neighbourliness) as the concept with which I am operating in this study with an aim to give an insight of the helping acts in Bosnia. I approach neighbourliness while observing it as a platform for ethnicity negotiation and as a platform where indifference toward ethnicity is likely to happen. Thus, I will be focusing on characteristics of *komšiluk* while seeking to understand and highlight that neighbourliness played crucial role in encouraging helpers to act, since neighbourliness was platform for negotiation of ethnicity.

3.2. Chapter 3: The role of neighborliness (komšiluk) in rescuer acts in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Scholarly interest in the Bosnian concept of neighborhood (*komšiluk*)[125] started to develop after the war, when highly publicized narratives of horror stories of neighbors suddenly killing neighbors took a front seat as the main dilemma in understanding the violence in Bosnia. The central question in this literature is how such intimate relations could suddenly turn murderous. Moreover, the notion of a neighbor killing a neighbor becomes an essential element of common misinterpretation of "fatal ancient hatreds" between different ethnicities as the cause of the war. The intention here is not to downplay the atrocities committed by neighbors and recorded by academics, investigators and journalists, but to demonstrate a counter narrative

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[123] Ibid. 226;
[124] Ibid.
[125] Komšiluk is Turkish derived word for neighborhood in Bosnia. It is traditionally considered as a heritage left by five hundred years of Ottoman Empire in this region.

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where neighborliness serves as a platform encouraging the helping acts. Anthropologists Tone Bringa and Xavier Bougarel, who consider *komšiluk* as a standpoint for production of differences that inevitably conclude in conflict, have described these events in detail. From a different perspective, Cornelia Sorabji considers ethnicization of komšiluk as a failure to see out of the borders and to access the meaning of the term itself.

This chapter seeks to shed light on a different side of *komšiluk* by exposing the recorded stories of cordial relations, helping and the importance of komšiluk relations during the war. Based on fieldwork in Podrinje region, I identify the stories of good neighborliness during the war and locate its importance. In this way, I try to challenge the predominant understanding in the academic literature of neighborliness being in crisis because of ethnic mobilization. I challenge the idea that *komšiluk* behavior, norms and close intimate relations were the principle foundation of the violence that occurred, and to add a new dimension of understanding komšiluk by acknowledging acts of help, courage and kindness between neighbors during the conflict.

It is my intention to explore more on the close and intimate friendship before the war across ethnic lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina that enabled people to stay ethnically indifferent and played a crucial role in decisions to act as a helper during the conflict. This chapter gives an overview of the extended friendship portrayed within neighborliness, understood as growing up together through life. It will also provide the main concepts and ideas of particularity of the neighborliness in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a tendency to shed light on the importance of proximity, locality and communal life in understanding the helping acts.

3.3. The neighborliness– *komšiluk* as "living side by side"

When Yugoslav republics started to politicize ethnicity and to foster political divisions, as described in the chapter about Yugoslav dissolution and the war in Bosnia, locality played a crucial role in maintaining tolerance and mutual understanding between ethnicities. One of

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the specific elements of Bosnian locality or countryside is the idea of neighborliness, or komšiluk. The word komšiluk is a derivative from Turkish *komšija* (neighbor); it translates to neighborhood and refers both to neighborly relations and to the spatial environment of the neighborhood whose boundaries are defined subjectively. [126] The community or the neighborhood usually relies on promotion of non-kin, neighborhood ties and bonds as forms of moral community and mutual support.[127] For Xavier Bougarel, *komšiluk* is a term used to describe "good neighborly relations among members of different ethnic groups." [128] As I observed many times in the society where I grew up, living together (*zajedno*) is a matter of eating together, and living in proximity (in *komšiluk*) is a matter of mutuality between next-door neighbors."[129] Villagers in Bosnia also associate the idea of neighborhood with memories of mutual help during the hay season in the fields, where people regularly help each other because, in their interpretation, that is what constitutes "the real *komšiluk.*"[130] As David Henig described it, *"komšiluk* is the space where people live with one another, rather than next to each other."[131]

In rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the household is central to the imagination of belonging. Household is the place where inter-ethnic interactions take place through mutual visits and gossiping over coffee as a matter of daily routine.[132] Sorabji posits that neighborhood refers primarily to the physical neighborhood and its social relations regardless of neighborhood ethno-national identities, and points out that it is "ethnic coding bias and ethnic

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[126] Cornelia Sorabji, *Bosnian Neighborhoods Revised, Tolerance, Commitment and Komšiluk in Sarajevo in* the Book On the Margins of Religion, edited by Frances Pine, João de Pina-Cabral, Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, 2008. pp.100

[127] Ibid pp. 101;

[128] Xavier Bougarel. *Twenty Years Later, Was Ethnic War Just a myth.* Perception of the Wars in Yugoslavia, Scholarly Reflection, Sudosteuropa 2013 pp. 574;

[129] David Henig. *'Knocking on my neighbor's door': On metamorphoses of sociality in rural Bosnia*, University of Kent at Canterbury, UK- Critique of Anthropology, Sage 2012 pp. Pp. 10;

[130] Ibid. pp. 13

[131] Ibid. pp. 15

[132] See more Elissa Helms. *The gender of coffee: Woman and reconciliation initiatives in Bosnia and Herzgovina*, Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology 57 (2010):

categorizations employed by scholars that would suggest differently."[133] This work presents exactly this idea of ethnic indifferences within *komšiluk* as opposed to the ethnic categorization and groupism approach in academia. [134] Thus, neighborliness as microcosms served as a platform for the negotiation of the ethnicity.

In addition, in Bosnia, the house provides villagers with rich symbolism and expressions that are used in everyday language; for example, 'opened' and 'closed' doors of the house are a central metaphor for the openness and closeness of the people.[135] As it was described by Paula Pickering, while following particular families and individuals for eight years and trying to understand the dynamic social processes within which people understood and located themselves, she found that female villagers often engaged in extended coffee visiting, where open door were a practice.[136] The interaction that happened allowed for the expression of both differences (religious affiliation) and commonalities (co-villagers and hospitality).[137] In the same manner, Elissa Helms describes the importance of coffee culture within the neighborhood for the reconciliation processes. [138] Coffee culture between the neighborhoods in different part of Bosnia was traditional also during the war. In her book, *Sarajevo under the siege: Anthropology of the wartime*, Ivana Macek also noticed that komšiluk during the war was a way of resisting dominant ethno-nationalistic discourse because

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[133] Cornelia Sorabji. *Bosnian Neighborhoods revisited, Tolerance, Commitment and komsiluk in* Sarajevo In the book On the Margins of Religion edited by Frances Pine, João de Pina-Cabral, Berghahn Books, New York, 2008. pp. 107

[134] For more on groupism and ethnic categorization see Roger Brubaker: *Ethnicity without Groups*, University of California, and Cambridge Journals. 2010.

[135] David Henig. *'Knocking on my neighbor's door': On metamorphoses of sociality in rural Bosnia,* University of Kent at Canterbury, UK- Critique of Anthropology, Sage 2012 pp. 10;

[136] Paula May Pickering. *Peace Building in Balkans: The view from the ground floor,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2007. 19;

[137] Ibid.

[138] Elisa Helms. *The gender of coffee: Woman and reconciliation initiatives in Bosnia and Herzgovina*, Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology 57 (2010): 17–32

komšiluk as an institution effectively denied the primacy of ethnic bounds; people crossed ethnic boundaries seeking security in komšiluk rather than within ethno-nationalist groups.[139]

Tone Bringa in her article *Nationality categories, national identification and identity formation in multinational Bosnia* uses the same approach to explore the ordinary daily life of villagers in the small inter-ethnically mixed village of Dolina. She concludes that the presence of other ethnic groups was needed in order to construct cultural identity, since it is mainly through its presence that a person is taught awareness of his or her own ethnic identity while, differences in dress and house style are only a reflection of everyday life attitude.[140] According to her, the neighborliness represents "the acknowledgement of the fluidity of collective identities which makes it necessary to invoke an 'ethnic boundary' through frequent statements of 'what our customs are and are not.'"[141] In that way, internalization of ethnic differences through the neighborhood was constantly present. The idea of ethnicity being constantly negotiated through the neighborhood presumably emerges from Fredrik Barth's notion of ethnic boundaries where ethnic identities are the product of continuous so-called ascriptions and self-ascriptions.[142] Thus, neighborliness served as a ground for ethnic crossing and negotiation of different ethnicities.

Many sociologists devoted their work to understanding communal life and relation between friendship, neighborliness and family. In his very influential book, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft - 1887)* Ferdinand Tönnies made a clear distinction between his ideal types—communal society and associational society. According to his

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[139] Ivana Macek. *Sarajevo under the siege, Anthropology of wartime,* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. Pp.111;

[140] Tone R. Bringa. *Nationality categories, national identification and identity formation in Multinational Bosnia*: file:///C:/Users/Nevena/Downloads/591-2570-1-PB.pdf pp. 81;

[141] Ibid.

[142] Fredrik Barth. Ethnic Groups and Bounderies, Introduction: http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic446176.files/Week_4/Barth_Introduction_Ethnic_Groups_and_Bounda ries_.pdf

analysis, the "real and organic life" represents the main characteristic of *Gemeinschaft* or community, which he described also as "intimate, private and living together" while "imaginary and mechanical structure" is connected to the concept of *Gesellschaft* or society, described as public life.[143] Characteristics of *Gemeinschaft* are its natural and interdependent close relations between individuals such as the relation between brothers and sisters, husband and wife or parents and children.[144]

In his chapter on *Gemeinschaft by blood-of Place-of Mind- Kinship-Neighborhood and Friendship*, Tönnies describes the importance of locality and shared place based on common habits. He illuminates that "wherever human beings are related through their wills and organic manner" we can trace three types of *Gemeinschaft*: kinship, neighborhood and friendship.[145] Neighborhood is described as living together in the communal fields while pursuing "intimate knowledge of one another" and "having proximity of habitation." [146] On the other hand, friendship is based less upon habits and has a mental nature forming a mutual trust. In Tönnies' words, everything is interrelated:

> *"*The neighborhood may be compared with a kinship type….as the relations among brothers and sisters – therefore, all cousins and other relations of similar consanguinity are compared to the other organically conditioned relations, so in the same way friendship is comparable to the neighborhood and kinship."[147]

In that way, nurtured friendships across neighborhood lines were strongly related to growing up together and being constantly directed to each other. The sense of closeness and intimate knowledge about each other will have tremendous impact on people to conduct the acts of help during the wartime.

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[143] Ferdinand Tönnies. *Community and Society,* Translated and Edited by Charles P. Loomis, Dover Publication, Mineola, New York, 2002 pp. 33
[144]Ferdinand Tönnies. *Community and Society,* Translated and Edited by Charles P. Loomis, Dover Publication, Mineola, New York, 2002 pp. Ibid. pages 33 to 39.
[145] Ibid. 42
[146] Ibid. 43
[147] Ibid. 44

The difficulty with *komšiluk* stories of Serbs and Bosniaks keeping the joint night guards while defending the village from paramilitary units is that they stayed within private family memories due to the current dominant ethno-nationalistic politics. However, the rationale behind the neighborhood approach is that individuals generally spend a lot of time in that environment, so that trusting attitudes are thought to be most affected by this immediate social context and less so by larger regional or even national contexts.[148] The microcosms of neighborliness were thus numerous times able to transcend the fear and ethnic mobilization employed by the state apparatus and maintain *komšiluk* traditional norms of mutual respect and coexistence. In Xavier Bougarel words, *komšiluk* is a political community with its own citizenship; when the state failed to maintain the community and forced ethnic homogenization.[149] Additionally, the study on neighborhood diversity and social trust shows that both strong ties, such as intimate interethnic friendships, as well as weaker ties through intercultural home visits have the ability to contribute to the helping behavior.[150] The study on "*Close relationships and inclusion of the other in the self*" demonstrates that within the intimate relations, which is a synonym for closeness, the other is treated as a self, or as it was noted, there is the tendency of "including the others in the self."*[151]* I will discuss the idea of the friendship in more depth in the next subchapter.

Based on the literature on *komšiluk* and helping across the neighborliness lines presented above, it could be stated that those that were able to integrate the idea of the self in the other and to maintain and cultivate friendships across the neighborhood microcosms, were

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[148] Birte Gundelach and Markus Freitag. *Neighborhood Diversity and Social Trust: An Empirical Analysis of Interethnic Contact and Group-specific Effects*, Urban Studies, May 2014, pp. 1236;

[149] Xavier Bougarel. *Twenty Years Later, Was Ethnic War Just a myth*. Perception of the Wars in Yugoslavia, Scholarly Reflection, Sudosteuropa 2013 pp. 574;

[150] Birte Gundelach and Markus Freitag. *Neighborhood Diversity and Social Trust: An Empirical Analysis of Interethnic Contact and Group-specific Effects*, Urban Studies, May 2014, pp. 1236;

[151] Arthur Aron, Elaine N. Aron, Michael Tudor, and Greg Nelson University of California, Santa Cruz. Close *Relationships as Including Other in the Self*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1991 pp. 242;

able to maintain *Gemeinschaft* in a trans-ethnic way and thus commit acts of help. I emphasize that *komšiluk* was a particular field for nurturing different acts of help before the war. As we saw from the abovementioned authors, helping behavior during the war existed across the neighborliness lines. On the other hand, different kind of friendships existed not only across neighborliness lines, but also in different kind of proximities.

Thus, in the following chapter I will provide short summery of the idea of friendship in prewar and during the war periods in Bosnia. I will provide an overview of the friendship ties across the ethnic lines while seeking to underline that friendship was also one of the main platforms of ethnicity negotiation and boundary crossing in Bosnia. It is my aim to explain in depth the importance of friendship ties and the possibility to stay indifferent toward ethnically imposed narrative during the war.

3.4. Friendship – raja and papci

It is interesting to note that there is hierarchy in understanding what it means to be a real friend and part of "*raja*" and one who is outsider of your comradeship, not sharing the same values – *papak*.[152] This dualism fits more the spirit and dialect of Sarajevo, but it is widely used in other local communities across Bosnia. Macek explains that prewar friendship was deep and strong, almost equal to the bonds of kinship and imagined as "blood relations."[153] Close friendships would usually end up in different kinds of godfather's relations. As I explained, they would become raja. In Bosnia, friends would develop special kind of godparenthood such as haircut parenthood (sisano kumstvo), newborn parenthood and also

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[152] Papak is a slang used to denote the uncultivated citizens, those who are against coexistence and those who would always be against the values of togetherness. Papak mean the feet of the pig, which is in a way used to explain that someone has dirty thoughts or dirty behavior. Overall, papak is someone who does not respect raja and raja values.

[153] Ivana Macek. *Sarajevo Under Siege, Anthropology in Wartime,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009 pp. 113;

bride and bridegroom.[154] A godparent would make sure, if something happened to the parents of the child that he would provide security for that child. In addition, haircut parenthood was a way of crossing religious and ethnic boundaries through the friendship. Hair cut godparenthood is an alternative to baptism parenthood since, in order to be a haircut godparent, it is not required to be of the same religion.[155] Thus, when the child is born, the godparent cuts the child's first hair, which at the end symbolizes the close intimate friendship. The biggest number of parenthood happened between different ethnic groups, as a sign of honor and friendship, but also as a sign of ethnic boundary crossing.

Strong bounds between friends were specific relationship before the war but also during the war. In their book *Toward Carrying Society*, Oliner and Oliner, define bonds further:

> They refer to the attachments people make to places or people; those locales, individuals or groups with which they feel intensely interconnected, related, affiliated and identified. Bonds remain real and ever-present internally even if their sources are externally transformed or removed.[156]

The bonds, as described above, are expressed in growing up together and having a constant connection to each other through life. With people with whom we interrelate on a daily basis, it is easier to interact and identify strongly because, as Oliner and Oliner explain, they *have a heightened reality for us.[157]* Through the friendship, empathy develops with a tendency to feel for the other person. It is other-oriented rather than self-oriented and it required "entering" into the other.[158] Living in the neighborhood and in a proximity would emphasize and strengthen friendship relations among different groups. This is only one aspect of friendship development. The other interesting aspect of the understanding friendship across the group relations and consequently individual relations is what Oliner and Oliner call

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[154] Ivana Macek. *Sarajevo Under Siege, Anthropology in Wartime,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2009 pp. pp. 114;
[155] Ibid. pp.114;
[156] Perl M. Oliner and Samuel P.Oliner. *Toward Caring Society*, Praeger, London, 1995, pp. 10;
[157] Ibid. 44;
[158] Ibid. pp. 32;

diversification, which means, "*to overcome cultural distortions about groups other than your own for the purpose of seeking the mutual agreement*".[159] Diversification would also imply personal close relations among the individuals in the group. It is the shift from the intergroup relations to the interpersonal relations described as more close and intimate.[160] Individual relations among the helpers and the helped across the ethnic groups were crucial factors in understanding the motivation to act. Being able to go outside of your ethnic boundaries is another equally important factor that I discussed in the previous chapters.

Also it is important to mention that people that lived in proximity – growing up together and being directed toward each other – experience a level of sameness where ethnic identification would come as a second identifier. Sameness can be constructed along different lines such as those that are like me, and those that are not like me, or same/not same.[161] We tend to perceive our friends as those like us and to choose friendship with people with whom we see similarity. It is a bounded self that will make distinction of me and not like me in contrast to not me / not like me.[162] In order to acquire shared sameness across categories of different identities, we must be able to see ourselves as interchangeable with one another's circumstances and be able to *ask how it would feel to walk in the other's shoes.[163]* In their research on altruistic behavior Oliner and Oliner compared rescuers of Jews with a control group of people who were bystanders on the basis of 600 interviews and recorded that the rescuers more often than the non-rescuers stated having Jews as a friend or neighbor before the war.[164] Thus, together with neighborliness, friendship was essential for helpers in order to be

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[159] Perl M. Oliner and Samuel P.Oliner. *Toward Caring Society*, Praeger, London, 1995, pp. 102;
[160] Ibid. pp.106;
[161] Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War, Identity, Conflict and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*, Routledge, New York and London, 2002 pp. 229;
[162] Ibid. pp. 229;
[163] Ibid. pp 231;
[164] P. Oliner Samuel and M.Oliner Perl. *The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, Collier Macmillan Publisher London, 1988;

able to see sameness across the categories, and to be able to transcendent imposed nationalistic narratives.

At the beginning of the study I emphasized that the aim of the present thesis is to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. I hypothesized that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed ethnic mobilization. In the interpretative framework the concepts from literature review such as strong self-integrity, strong sense of humanity and identity that give one the ability to choose to act will be examined in the analysis of my interviews. Additionally, I question what encourages helpers to stay indifferent toward ethnically imposed narratives and conduct the acts of help. Thus the analysis will encompass the concepts of neighbourliness (*komšiluk*) and friendship across the ethnic lines as main categories of ethnicity negotiation and as the factors that influenced helpers' actions. In the next section, I will present my methodology and then introduce the analysis of interviews.

Chapter 4: Methodology

I used oral history interviews as the principal method during the fieldwork. I conducted 11 interviews over a period of two weeks, of which eight interviews were with helpers and three were with those who were helped. I used the snowball technique in finding potential interviewees for my research. I chose oral history as a method because I believe it can provide the answers to the questions I want to examine, and also because it can provide a narrative from which it is possible to thoroughly trace and analyse helpers' actions during the war. Oral sources "tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did."[165] Memory is not a passive depository but an active

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[165]Michael Frisch. *Oral History and Hard Times, in the book:* The Oral history reader edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, Routledge, London and New York, 1998. Pages: 67

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creation; therefore, the ability to preserve the past of the narrator that wants to make sense of it brings the very changes to the memory.[166] Those changes have personal subjectivity or the narrator's socio-economical standing and it may affect the evaluation and colouring of the story.[167] Instead of discovering the sources, oral history partially creates them.

However, being aware of this limitation accordingly, I believe that it is still the most suitable method that can comprehend the complexity of the events in Bosnia. Also it is very important to stress that we should rather observe the interview as a conversational narrative, as it is a conversation because of the relationship between an interviewer and interviewee, and a narrative because of the form of the exposure – the telling of a tale, and could only be understood while encompassing various relationships contained within this structure.[168] The aim of the interview is to bring to consciousness ideological problems of the interviewee, to expose the information related to the cultural context in which information was conveyed, and thus to transform an individual story into a cultural narrative; thereby we can understand what happened in the past.[169] Therefore, I found the oral history method to be the most suitable observation tool for analysis of episodic events, such as helping processes during the Bosnian conflict.

The process of searching for the helpers and those who were helped was very difficult. I chose to do interviews with both categories, since I believe and as I stress in chapter (1.1.) and (1.3.) the helpers' deeds could be comprehended fully only if we have both perspectives. Since I grew up in Srebrenica and afterwards in Bratunac, and also worked for a period of time as a journalist, I thought that it would be relatively easy for me to find interviewees. However, I had difficult time in getting to my encounters. First, I started to search for people through the

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[166] Ibid. pp.69;
[167] Ibid. pp.70;
[168] Michael Frisch. *Oral History and Hard Times, in the book:* The Oral history reader edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, Routledge, London and New York, 1998.pp. 72;
[169] Ibid.

local NGOs and my acquaintances. In the end, I resorted to approaching people on the street and asking them if they had any knowledge about the acts of help during the war. Once I explained what I was doing and why I was conducting this research, most of the people were delighted by the topic itself and they would encourage me. But typically they were not willing to talk. However, several of them agreed to provide me with information about local people and their acts of help. I even came across a few helpers themselves. Only few accepted to talk about their deeds as talking about anything related to the war still makes a sensitive situation.

I wanted to see whether the idea of the rescuers, as presented in the literature and previously defined, could be applied on Bosnian helpers. I separated my questions into three sections in order to build comprehensive interviewee profiles. In the first set of questions, I focus on the pre-war period and inter-ethnic relations; the second part, I concentrate on the war period and the acts of rescuing, while the last section of the questions I dedicate to the aftermath of the war. The most important question when it comes to oral history that I also try to trace is what sort of person is speaking and what sort of thing he or she is talking about? What sort of statement is made? What is mentioned and not mentioned during the conversation? [170] Additionally, I try to outline what cultural and historical categories people use in order to retell their experiences. Finally, I analyse what emerged as a theme even though it was not particularly emphasized during the interviews.

Beside the presented important question, within the pre-war section I have asked my interviewees about their age, place of birth, education and other personal information. I was interested in their family life, religion and their relationship with other ethnicities before the war. I felt that my interviewees were open and honest and that that they answered every question in detail. Sometimes the situation they found themselves during the interview was

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[170] Michael Frisch. *Oral History and Hard Times,* in the book*: The Oral history reader edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, Routledge, London and New York, 1998.: 29- 37

very difficult, since the memory from the war was constantly present in their narration. However, I have a feeling that all of my interviewees had a strong need to answer all of my questions, as they did at the end.

In the set of questions dedicated to the war, I was interested to see how people generally treated each other during the war, and if the person witnessed any killings and deaths before the helping acts. After that, I questioned the helper's motivation, the dangerousness of the situations in which helpers found themselves, and whether there was any kind of personal relations between the helpers and the helped ones. I dedicated the last section to the post-war period and explored the overall picture of helping deeds. At the end, I asked my interviewees whether they talked about his or her acts with family or friends, and whether they are in contact with their rescuer or the person they have rescued. This question was directed toward comprehending the full picture of helpers and helped ones.

The analysis goes as this: first, I transcribed the interviews in my native language and familiarized myself with the data by doing a first reading of it. Second, I did two more readings of the data and tried to identify any common themes. The next stage involved additional readings of the text, during which I assigned analytical categories to paragraphs by considering the meaning of the text, the context in which it was said, and the idea it expressed. I tried to look for contradictions, points of conflict, inconsistencies, places where dominant explanations run out of explanatory power or reach their explanatory limits. It led me to discover what the major themes that emerge from the data analysis are.

The last stage of the analytical process was arriving at analytical themes. I achieved this by comparing and contrasting the ideas across different categories, as well as within them. I tried to see what connective threads there are among the participants I interviewed, observing what I understand now that I did not understand before starting the interviews and during the interviewing process. In addition to this, I used field notes to document my observations. Most

field notes served as the basis upon which I later wrote my field experiences and analysis. In the end, names of the interviewees were changed due to the sensitivity of the topic. I am fully aware that generalisations cannot be drawn from these 11 cases, however I hope the data I collected can open up the ground for possible reconceptualization of the rescuers and further research in the same field.

The table 1.1. lists all interviewees and gives an overview of their age, ethnicity, gender, and city and whether they were helpers or helped ones.

Changed Name	Age	ethnicity	City	Gender	Helper/Helped
Nedeljko	60	Serb	Bratunac	Male	Helper
Dragoslav	64	Serb	Bratunac	Male	Helper
Nermin	67	Bosniak(Muslim)	Bratunac	Male	Helped
Jaca	69	Serb	Bratunac	Female	Helper
Aco	40	Serb	Bratunac	Male	Helped
Hasan	49	Bosniak(Muslim)	Srebrenica	Male	Helper
Senad	62	Bosniak(Muslim)	Srebrenica	Male	Helped
Milan	70	Serb	Srebrenica	Male	Helper
Ivan	73	Serb	Srebrenica	Male	Helper
Muhamed	69	Bosniak(Muslim)	Srebrenica	Male	Helper
Stanojka	57	Serb	Bratunac	Female	Helper

4.1.   Srebrenica and Bratunac – two cities with difficult history

The eastern part of Bosnia's valley of Drina was one of the most affected areas when it comes to the conflict in Bosnia. This part of the country is on the border with Serbia and has been known for the difficult periods and large scale of atrocities committed during the Second World War but also during the Bosnian conflict. These two periods left profound marks on the society and on the memories of citizens of the region. I grew up in this region immediately

after the war, and I was largely affected by the war stories throughout my growing up period. Accounting the society that has developed twenty years after the war, the element in daily narration of the citizens is still predominantly the war narrative. I was interested to see and I was always observing how life works in Srebrenica and Bratunac in the post-ethnic war situation. Furthermore, my focus was also the life during the conflict.

Srebrenica represents an endless inspiration for journalists, academics and random tourists interested in the war and genocide studies. During the winter, city counts around 3,000 inhabitants, while during the summer it raises up to the 8,000. In the 1995, the largest atrocities in the whole Bosnia took place in Srebrenica, where around eight thousands men disappeared in one week. Bratunac is situated just 12 kilometers away from Srebrenica and the city counts around 12,000 citizens. During the war, large scale violence also happened in Bratunac. Interlinkage between these two cities existed before the war and during the war. The connection went through the market, marriages and competing football teams. In addition, the spirit of small communities existed in the form of contests for the better rock band and folklore troupe. In addition, cordial relations existed among citizens of these two small cities.

I chose Srebrenica and Bratunac as fields to conduct the research because they were the easiest places for me to get in contact with people. Due to the highly politicized situation, it is not easy to get in communication with the helpers, because they are not willing to share their stories. Additionally, before conducting the research, I have had opportunities to hear stories of helping hands across the ethnic lines in Srebrenica and Bratunac. Thus, I find it important to record these stories in a society that went through such a large scale of violence. I conducted interviews with people whom I know, with parents of my friends, neighbors and acquaintances of my school friends. Thus, even though I had a difficult time in finding the sources, they were more accessible to me, instead of going to some other parts of Bosnia. In addition, choosing Srebrenica and Bratunac was a proper decision due to their ethnic composition. At the end, I

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find it important to give an account of the helping actions during the conflict in an area known only for mass atrocities.

4.2. Limitations

One of the limitations I can trace is that interviews are conducted twenty years after the conflict. However, as explained in the introduction of the chapter, oral history could still provide significant information. I would assume that as the consequence of remembrance, many of my encounters tend to idealize or give partial information about their deeds. Also, due to the sensitivity of the topic out of 11 interviews, nine were recorded while for 2 interviews I had to take notes on site because the interviewees refused to be recorded. However, I took notes carefully and I was able afterwards to write additional participant observations.

Another limitation is that their stories could be largely influenced by the current political and or personal situation. During the period of my research, the announcement of the Hague judgements for the war criminals influenced the overall situation in society. I was aware that every time the tribunal brings final decisions, the ethnic narrative between ethnic groups intensifies. Thus, I was aware that a well-planned study design, with precise questions was needed in order to acquire possible answers to the research questions. Also, when it comes to the gender representation, only two interviewees were women and nine of them were male. I took this sample due to the snowball method while the gender variable is not crucial for understanding of helping acts in this study. The final significant limitation is the issue of partiality. The number of rescuers in Bosnia is unknown and even the very term is not defined in the Bosnian context. Therefore, I will necessarily be in danger of jumping to conclusions.

However, I would like to emphasize that I will not find truths or non-truths in this analysis, only self-understanding and understanding of acts of help. In the end, I assume that my interviewees are telling me the way they see themselves and understand their world. I am not seeking truth, but instead I try to comprehend the trend in how people understand

themselves and what might have motivated them to act the way they did at a particular time. They told me their stories, and I retell them to the readers, and neither their story nor my re-telling approximates any kind of truth of what happened back then. I also leave some space for the readers to observe data by themselves and make conclusions.

Chapter 5: Empirical Findings

In the empirical section, I will analyse the main concepts I found important in understanding the helpers in order to answer my questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. This chapter will provide main ideas how neighbourliness and friendship across ethnic lines influenced helpers to remain ethnically indifferent toward imposed political narrative. I will analyse and give more insights in helpers' acts while seeking to understand how their specific bounds, relations, neighbourhood friendship affected their perceptions, and brought more what theoreticians of rescuing deeds call—human identity.

I will examine indifference toward ethnicity as a concept that was possible only because the helpers' identities have a strong sense of neighbourhood relations and friendship. The discussion part of this chapter will give an overview of empirical findings through the prism of already known theories about the resurging deeds. Thus, I will analyse the helping hand as category of the rescuers and I will debating on the different perspectives as presented in literature review. The empirical chapter will add more on the theory of the rescuer behavior and rescuers' deeds in a specific social setting, such as Bosnia.

4.3.   Ethnic Identification and ethnic indifference examined

While talking with one of my interviewees about the pre-war period in Srebrenica and the sense of coexistence in Tito's Yugoslavia, I asked how life was before the war and how people treated each other. He answered: "You go in Marlboro, right? So you see the people there, how they interact and behave, how we talk….so it was the same as in Marlboro, just the

same."[171] My interviewee was referring to a small rock café, "Marlboro" in Srebrenica, where most citizens gather to listen to rock music while discussing daily political problems and retelling famous Bosnian jokes. He tried to symbolize small communal life represented in café Mallboro as an escape from daily politics where all individuals are equal and where the idea of *who is who* is disregarded. Through my research, I find that ethnicity matters in day-to-day lives of people, but it is not hatred-based as is often suggested. Ethnicity matters for organizing the daily life, but ethnicity does not cause animosity on a daily basis. Ethnicity is in a way the fabric of society.

Academics dealing with the Bosnian society have a hard time understanding that ethnicity can be important in bringing about good things. In the theoretical framework chapter (1.3.) I emphasize the main ideas that ethnicity was not the main identifier of people during the war. As Lee Ann Fuji explained, even though ethnicity was important in organizing society, it was not the main trigger for the ethnic conflict. The ethnicity of people in the room always gives us information and provides us with contextual clues. It helps everyone understand everyone else, and in a way it functions like the water for fish. It is interesting that most of the people are hardly aware that they are spending most of their lives in the water. This is how Stanojka, A Serb who helped her Muslim neighbours while hiding them in her house, explains what was important for her in relation to the other ethnicities:

> "Our best man was Nigad Đozić and my godmother was Marica Ivancic, so she was a Catholic and he was a Muslim, and to us it did not matter. It was important that we were friends and none of us put religion at the first place. It is somewhere in each of us, that complex identity." [172]
> The concept of best man and godmother was a way of ethnic crossing and ethnic

negotiation. I highlighted in the context chapter how friendship bounds were operating across the ethnic divides. As I explained, strong intimate bounds would provide people with a sense

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[171] Interview with Muhamed in Srebrenica, February 2016.
[172] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

of sameness and togetherness. Thus, we would be able to help those with home we have more intimate relations. The idea of friendship was the platform for indifference toward the ethnicity and for the ethnic boundary crossing.

Also, I suggest that ethnicity was silent during the war and it acquired an ethnic dimension only once scholars labelled the conflict in Bosnia as an ethnic conflict with strong ancient hatreds. I explained this in chapter (2.) while giving the overview of the Yugoslav context. Additionally, I emphasized that the complexity of identity and belonging in Yugoslavia—perceiving your identity in multiple ways such as Sarajevan, Yugoslav, and in a same time as Serb—provided helpers during the conflict with the ability to shift identities. They would rather identify with locality, community and friendship instead across the ethnic lines. This is to say that ethnic identity was never a fixed category.

Employed fear by ethno-nationalists during the war situation was dominant, and there the requirement to take a side and identify as a member of the group for the sake of security, protection and overall position in society existed. Ethnic indifference expresses itself in the concept of looking to all humans as humans and not as members of ethnic groups. Thus, the helpers' identity would rather connect them to the others. Linking this to the question whether our identity connect us to the others or it alienates us from them, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, I found that helpers' identity is always in connection to the other, and thus it is able to stay ethnically indifferent. Stanojka explains her motivation to act as a helper by saying,

> "The first thing to look at is to be a man at the first place. I did not ask for a name, but I was looking forward to see how I can help to someone and open the door of my house. To help…. this is the essence."[173]

As I mentioned in the chapter where I discuss the role of neighbourliness, the open doors of the house represent the openness of people. Since my aim is to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related

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[173] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts, I used the theory of indifference toward categories such as nation and ethnicity in order to examine these acts. I found out that helpers were not influenced by imposed ethnic mobilization that seeks to do harm to others in the name of ethnic belonging. They rather acquire the idea of neighborliness and friendship as a counter narrative toward ethnic mobilization. Through the proximity of life, helpers were able to see their identity in connection to humanity, rather than ethnicity. Explained in Stanojka words, "I am a human being and you are a human being, so what's the problem then?" According to her, and as mentioned in the theoretical framework, we all have choices and we make these choices because of our relations to the other, or our self-understanding. Additionaly, friendship ties accross the ethnic lines were one of the main motivatiors. Friendship would come as a primary identificator.

> *"But we are all afraid, all have the same fear. The fear is that you lose friends, that someone may kill and torture them. I had this fear, so what happened to us, it will happen to them anyway. It is in fact this time the right choice, you have a choice   and we have made that choice, others did not and they closed their homes. We all make choices. We later found out that that some neighbours reported to the paramilitary units' that we are hiding Muslims. They searched for us and because they wanted to mistreat us. That was the price at the end."[174]

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, identity provides helpers with a choice to act. Stanojka shows strong self-integrity and strong identity that forced her to act, or as Monroe mentions, there is no other choice left than to act. Through further narration, I found out that Stanojka's identity was stripped from the notion of ethnicity. She would not use ethnic categories in her narration, only ideas such as human, man and people. The crucial moment for her to act was the idea that she grew up with the people that live in the house next to her, and being in proximity of habitation made her believe in the sameness of people, or of people as being one category.

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[174] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

Listening to stories about perpetrators' acts during the conflict, I was interested in understanding how come that, on one side, there is a war between Serbs and Muslims; paramilitary Serb formations are entering into the city and killing people, while, on the other side, you are hiding together in the basement with your Bosniak friends. I could not understand the absurdity of the situation of different ethnicities being in war but in the same time helping each other, and hiding each other from those people who followed the ethno-national narrative. Nedeljko is a Serb from Bratunac who helped his Muslim friends during the war while hiding together in basement of his house. He explained to me:

> "Real Serb would never kill Dzevad and Dzemo. I don't know who those people were. But they were not real Serb for sure. Friendship and friendship ties. I was also helping Croats."[175]

As this quote shows, ethnic indifference is not the only strategy of the helpers to relate to the social world around themselves. To Nedeljko, it is important that he is a Serb and he negotiates the 'Serbness' of those carrying out the inhumane acts. Thus, the ingroup is not only defined by ethnic terms but also by the values one can relate to. According to Nedeljko's narration, there are two categories of ethnic groups and he identifies with the one, which he calls "the right one." He differentiates between those who are for peaceful coexistence and those who were committing mass atrocities in the region. He perceives his ethnic identity as a Serb as an identity that will never commit such crimes, or even more, it would rather help his fellow citizens who have the same identity as he has – the identity that believes in justice and decency. Therefore, the same identity among the groups regardless their ethnicity for Nedeljko is:

> "I will always help decent people and people with a sense of justice. They were not guilty for what happened."[176]

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[175] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, February 2016.
[176] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, February 2016.

Nedeljko further emphasizes that what happened is largely the responsibility of ethnic elites, and according to him, there were people who did not want to follow the same logic. They rejected the largely employed idea of ethnicities being against each other. They were able to stay ethnically indifferent to the utilized ethnic prejudices as well. Maksim, a Serb from Srebrenica who provided accommodation to his Bosniak friend when the conflict was at its height, tried to explain to me the concept of ethnicity, but he immediately started to talk about humans deprived from their ethnic belonging. Similarly to Nedeljko, Maksim also distinguished between groups. For him, individuals based their identity not on ethnicity, but rather on human values. This was one of his main motivations to act as a helper:

> "For me there is only one human value, there are good and bad people. Only after that we should differentiate between people. I am personally convinced that God is only one. God is one and faiths are different. We all pray to the same God, just in different ways. Science has proven that the DNA structure is the same for everyone. After all, in the world of religion it is written, for Orthodox there is Adam and Eve and in the Koran Adam and Have. It is the same thing."[177]

Finding similarities in different religions and between groups is a way to see shared humanity with others. As mentioned within the theoretical framework, it enables individuals to feel how it is being in the others' shoes. Since the helpers were able to see similarities among ethnically different groups despite the imposed ethnic mobilization, they were thus able to stay ethnically indifferent. Some of my encounters told me that they would spend so much time together even during the war that it was not possible to think that there is any kind of conflict among them.

> "Would you believe me that a lot of times I remember, we would come to school and meet in the night, or during the day? We would seat and talk. I think, dear God, if someone was filming us, he would wonder whether it is possible that these people are at war. There are so many memories of those good old days, so many good and

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[177] Interview with Maksim in Srebrenica, February 2016.

nice stories about my fellow Muslims. We do not make a difference, not really. For me, what is important is the man.“[178]

The man as a concept within the narrations of my encounters is a man without ethnic belonging, he/she is just a man – a human being. We saw that Maksim, Nedeljko and Stanojka would imply the same logic. The level of violence during the Bosnian conflict surprised several of my interviewees. Negotiation of ethnicity in Bosnia was possible due to the mixture of people in rural areas. Cultural differences among groups existed so that the groups can communicate these differences. Daily negotiation among the groups brought good and deep personal relations where many of my encounters could not believe that the war was about to come. As Ivan, a Serb that was helped by his Bosniak friend who drove him in the village in a so-called Serb territory, explained to me:

> "I was always surprised, how it is possible that we are going to fight against each other, how? It is like you once put the corn, pumpkin seeds and beans, all put in a bowl and mixed up and you are going to plant this. It was called sacma. So we are in Bosnia – sacma. So we are planted house to house. Field to field. We did not even notice that the war was starting. We hear some shootings, but we never thought it would come to that......... And even during the war we stayed in good relations."[179]

The narrative of ethnicity as a main problem within the society is still dominant within political discourse and the helpers during the conflict are afraid of being punished if they speak up about their deeds. I found out that even though within some of my encounters' narration I could trace that they were part of the whole imposed narrative and they would identify as a particular ethnicity during the narration, this does not mean that they would conduct inhuman acts in the name of that particular ethnicity. As explained by Nedeljko, a Serb who was protecting his Bosniak friends, the people who conducted acts of killing were:

> "Those were people blood thirsty. They came to rob the houses. So they saw Dzemo's and Dzevad house as nice and big. They wanted that house. So that's why they kill them. After that, they moved in the house. Greediness, nothing else."[180]

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[178] Interview with Maksim in Srebrenica, February 2016.
[179] Interview with Ivan in Srebrenica, May 2016.
[180] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

The punishment of the political elite for most of the people who do not feel ethnical in a particular moment is social exclusion. That can mean a variety of things, but importantly it can mean segregation and limited chances of access to the economy. It was interesting for me to notice that even now, twenty years after the war, helpers would rather remain silent about their deeds. They would know among each other who helped whom during the war, they would talk in coffee breaks about those times, but going out publicly with a story would be a problem for them. As it was explained to me*: "*There are some crazy people in each group, they still use ethno-nationalism to fear people. Mainly politicians. So, it is better to remain silent because of my family and my friends. If I talk, maybe those whom I helped could also have problems with their groups, so I am aware of it."[181] Some of the helpers even after the show that they do not care for ethnic narratives in the region, especially competing narrative of victimhood. As Stanojka explained to me: "I am still going on the commemorations of my Muslim friends, the victims of war, victims who were my friends. Those were just civilians and they did not have anything to do with it at all.*"[182]*

I hypothesized that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed ethnic mobilization. Since they were able to perceive ethnicity as a salient factor in an ethnically driven conflict, they were able to conduct the acts of help. I have largely proven my initial idea, but the question what motives them to stay indifferent toward ethnicity and thus conduct acts of help will be further answered in the next chapter through the main platforms I have identified – neighbourliness and friendship. I can say that all of my encounters have perceptions that the war was not about ordinary people, but rather about ethno-national political elite. Once more the idea of the war as being some kind of a natural disaster that goes out of the ordinary people's control is mentioned. All introduced concepts are going above and across ethnicity, serving

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[181] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.
[182] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

more as individual identifiers connected to community but in the same way stripped from ethnicity.

Thus, in next subchapter, I will highlight some of the answers to the question related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. People who lived in proximity, close and with each other, rather than next to each other, were able to conduct the acts of help. The neighbourliness functioned as a platform where people were able to negotiate their ethnicities on a daily basis. It served also as a platform of mutual help before the war, during the war and nowadays, it is the platform of reconciliation. Also, deep friendship bounds were able to overcome ethnic ties and thus individuals who conducted acts of help and those who were helped would have similar ideas about their deeds. We will see what kind of relations neighbourliness and friendship produce and have in common, and how they influence ethnic indifference.

5.1. Helping hand across the neighbourliness lines

During the fieldwork, I faced many difficulties in finding the people for interviews and trying to escape ethno-national political manipulations in the region. It was very difficult to approach people with the notion of the rescuer, so I easily switched my initial question and asked if they know people *helping* each other during the war. I went to visit Sejo, a man in his mid-fifties in a village near Srebrenica. I have known Sejo for a couple a years, but never thought that he had an experience of helping and protecting by a Serb soldier during the Genocide in Srebrenica.

When I entered the room where Sejo lives, I noticed a photograph attached to the old wall clock. I asked: "Who is that man?" – "Well this is my komšija (neighbour) Dragan with my father," he responded, "he is a Serb living up, near my house. It was interesting to me that he keeps the photo of his father who was killed in Genocide with a Serb guy on it. I immediately started to question Sejo about komšiluk and relations, and in a hidden manner I managed to

have a deep conversation about the pre-war and post-war relation in the village. The komšiluk theme just randomly occurred and he started to explain to me the komšiluk relationship with his friend Dragan before the war. In a way, Sejo used komšiluk to try to explain how ethnicity was not such an important category, or at least it will come as an unimportant identifier.

> „His house was mine, and my house was his. That's how we lived. In the same manner as I entered into my house, he would enter too into my house, so there were no differences. The same goes for me, I would enter his house almost every day, as it was my house. My mother used to cook for us to eat and it was also for him, but, as his mother was cooking, it has been on the table for me. We never had that distinction. All Serb houses here, up to these hills, it was all an integral part of our lives. We all knew each other, we played together, we kept the livestock together, went to school together, got married and said goodbye to people who were dying. We would welcome the new-borns, celebrate each other's holidays, in all kinds of works…..It is like a family."[183]

As we can observe, in rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the household is central to the imagination of belonging and the household is also the place where inter-ethnic interactions take place through mutual visits, lunches and coffees. As mentioned in the chapter on neighbourliness, Sejo and his friend Dragan would visit each other almost every day where the household served as a platform for interethnic communication. It helped diminish the ethnic identification and acquire more community-based identity. Since Sejo mentioned to me that Dragan, his neighbour, played the key role in his escape and salvation from the genocide, I was interested to hear about that. Sejo told me that this was the reason he keeps the photo on the wall because Dragan is the reason he is alive today. He managed to escape from the Srebrenica Genocide due to the help of the Serb soldier:

> "I managed to cross through 2 barricades, but on the third I slipped on some branches and fell. One of the guardians on the barricades came and put a gun on my face, but the other solder came and told him to stop. I thought it is over. That solder picked me up and told me not to be afraid. He told me he knew me. He give me cigarettes and he explained to me how to get on the way, since there was a minefield there. He knew everything about me. Who my father was and who my brother and mother were. However, I could not recall his face. And he told me to go now and not to turn back and

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[183] Interview with Sejo in Srebrenica, May 2016.

very soon I would come on my territory. After, I realized he was coming to Dragan's house and that's how he knew me, he was Dragan's cousin."[184]

Since I wanted to understand the specificities of the acts of helping during the Bosnian conflict by answering questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts, I have asked Sejo what was the motivation behind:

"I think one of the main reasons was that he knew me, and the other that a human side how to do evil to someone with whom you have some sort of relation, relationship, you know? I cannot remember exactly the figure of that man out of my fear, but until today, it stuck to my mind his moral sense of responsibility. It is moral sense of the man toward man that did not allow him to do something bad, at that moment to me."[185]

Thus, long extended contact across the neighbourhood lines was crucial for one to act as a helper and saviour of a neighbour's life. Also, as we saw from Sejo's narration, the relationship between helper and helped is crucial. Their relationship was maintained across the neighbourhood lines. His helper knew him because he was coming often in Sejo's komšiluk. According to Sejo, the idea of connectedness across the neighbourhood lines was crucial for a Serb soldier to act as a helper. Afterwards, Sejo discovered that it was actually a cousin of his best friend Dragan.

Because of that event, he decided to plant a field of raspberries together with Dragan, so that they can work together and see each other more often. He concluded that even though bad things happened during the war; he lost his father; he can never forget the periods before the war when all of them lived as a family and he is willing to continue to live like that. During the war, komšiluk was obliged to protect their own houses, but he was regularly visiting Dragan and Dragan was regularly coming to Sejo house. As mentioned in Chapter 3, people managed to cross ethnic ties and seek security within the komšiluk.

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[184] Interview with Sejo in Srebrenica, May 2016.
[185] Interview with Sejo in Srebrenica, May 2016.

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I described in the theoretical framework that, in order to show a helping hand, you have to have knowledge about the helped, and this was the case with Sejo. Additionally, 'opened' and 'closed' doors of the house as a central metaphor for the openness and closeness of the people is also present in Sejo's narration. This was the crucial moment in order to overcome ethnic mobilization and to remain good friends even after the war. Open doors of both houses help them overcome fears and continue their friendship through the business. I have asked Sejo why he came back from the Netherlands to his hometown when he used to have a good job there, while in Bosnia he is jobless. It is almost two years that he has been living in Srebrenica. He explained to me:

> "You know, those images of that solder, giving me a cigarette and showing me the road while I am shaking from the shock, are chasing me all my life. I think besides being homesick, a big part of my return to Bosnia is my wish to find this man. I am still searching, but I will find him one day. I cannot explain this; this is something stronger than you can imagine."[186]

With Nedeljko, my second encounter, I had the longest conversation that lasted around two hours. He protected his Bosniak friends in a basement during the war. During the conflict, he also drove them through the barricades to the local hospital. I was interested to hear about the relation during the war between friends and neighbors and Nedeljko explained to me how it was common in their community to form local neighborhood joint militias consisting of both Muslims and Serbs:

> „Many Muslims stayed in the city. No one bothered them and we respected each other and helped each other until those dogs of war came who already felt some of the battlefields in Croatia and who experienced some bad things there…. families killed, those people were blood thirsty. Because of them, we had joint guards here, Muslims and Serbs together. Precisely because of those sideward people."[187]

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[186] Interview with Sejo in Srebrenica, May 2016.
[187] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

He put effort into explaining to me the pre-war period when inter-ethnic relations were defining their lives but diversity was respected nevertheless. Nedeljko used to go and pray together with his friends in the mosque, regardless of his ethnicity and religious background. This helped him internalize the ethnic diversity that did not lead to violence but instead to mutual help and respect. His Bosniak friends used to live just three houses away from Nedeljko. So it was natural to him that they would go hiding together during the war. Thus, komšiluk was a way of resisting the dominant ethno-nationalistic discourse because komšiluk as a microcosm would successfully deny the primacy of ethnic bounds.. In such a way, they would avoid ethno-nationalist groups. Ethnicity as a tool of mobilization was a non-existing category for him. According to Nedeljko, they knew that they were in war, Serbs and Bosniak, but he described that there would be always people who do not follow dominant political opinions: "I do not have anything with it. Dissenting people should be respected and those were the people that did not have any colors inside, no prejudices toward other nations, cosmopolitans."[188] Nedeljko strongly identifies with the idea of humans, as he calls it, since he emphasizes that he felt it. The idea of sameness embodied in humanity was present and it helped him cross ethnic lines and find himself in a situation where he was a helper. As I explained, Nedeljko was hiding together with his friends in the basement:

> "One day, that friend of mine, Džemal, came to me and said that he had a problem. His wife was going through stomach pain and he didn't know if she had started giving birth. He didn't know what to do. I had some fuel. It was wartime, so it wasn't possible to buy fuel. You had to reach to the black market to buy some. I took my car and the three of us went to the hospital, to the gynaecologist. We didn't have any choice. As we were going, we could hear rifle shots on the surrounding hills. We didn't know anything, we just hoped we could get through. You could see military, and you couldn't say which military it was. It was all like in the movies, with flames and a lot of smoke. We decided just to hit the gas and keep on going. The problem was how to reach that hospital.
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> Fortunately, we went through with no problems. We got to the hospital and found the director. He said that he wouldn't recommend to Džemal to go back in my car, and that

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[188] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

he could also probably disappear if he did. So it was a struggle. What to do? I said to Džemal to stay with his wife until she gives birth, but he didn't want to, since his mother and his brother stayed at home. Now, by coming back with me, he was putting me in a tricky position, since I was driving a car with a Muslim. We went to the car, and prayed to God. We were lucky, since no one stopped us, and we got back home safe."[189]

I was interested to hear what Nedeljko's motivation was to help and hide his neighbors in the basement. Obviously, a long extended friendship through the neighborhood lines as described within the context framework was crucial for him. Neighborhood as explained in the idea of living together in the communal fields while pursing intimate knowledge of one another appears once more. Nedeljko explained to me his motivation by saying, "There was no motivation, you know, it is human thing to do, you just go, and something above you leads you to do this. I simply did not think about it and lastly, it was the only possibility."[190] For Nedeljko not helping was not an option, since, as he explained, they knew each other all life, they were friends. According to him, to feel that this is a human thing to do is to feel that ethnic identity is a second identifier, or it is not an identifier at all. Somehow, the ethnic identity as employed by ethno-national leaders would take second place or no place at all.

Jadranka focused on clarifying to me just how significant komšiluk was – so much so that there was no chance to leave behind people who were threatened by nationalists. There was a possibility to transcend the ethnic coding bias that was surrounding the idea of komšiluk to feel more human instead of ethnic and to help one's friends in danger. Thus, komšiluk was a way of resisting dominant ethno-nationalism:

> **"I heard from many people that you conducted acts of help during the war."**
> "That was something my mother was doing. She saved our komšiluk, she put make-up on young boys, put some women's dresses on them, so that they couldn't notice if they are men or woman. She saved many of them. She would let them go over Drina River. If she hadn't not done that, they would have probably died here. Even today, I love Muslims. I have friends Muslims. Nothing bothers me."
> **"Did you save and help your mother?"**

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[189] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.
[190] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

"I took them over the bridge also, together with my mother. It did not matter that we were Serbs. We lived together and we have been companions, we grew up together and we were raised together." [191]

Since I argue that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed ethnic mobilization, I could trace that it is due to the proximity of habitation in neighbourliness that they were able to feel indifference toward the imposed ethno-national mobilization. As I observed many times in the society where I grew up, living together (*zajedno*) is a matter of eating together, and living in proximity (in komšiluk) is a matter of mutuality between next-door neighbors. Komsiluk solidarity was stronger than ethnic solidarity in case of Jadranka. As she explained, it does not matter if she is a Serb, she still loves her Muslim neighbors. For her, they are first the neighbors with whom she grew up together, and then if they are also Muslim, they have a specific religious identity.

Muhamed has the same perception and he provided his definition of neighborhoodness. He helped several Serb fellow citizens as he call them. His definition of locality, referring to the neighborliness as well comprehend also the idea of civic identity and culture of coexistence nurtured in Yugoslavia. The microcosms of neighborhoodness were thus numerous times able to transcendent the fear and ethnic mobilization employed by the state apparatus and maintain komšiluk traditional norms of mutual respect, coexistence and intimate knowledge about each other. For Muhamed, the proximity of habitation with almost keen ties was the motivation for him to act as a helper during the war.

> **"What was your motivation, to help someone during the war?"**
> "My motivation was to place people out of danger, those innocent and irresponsible Justice motivated me."
> **"Those were your friends."**
> "Those were my fellow citizens…komšiluk, but former komšiluk where komšija was more important than your own brother."[192]

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[191] Interview with Jadranka in Bratunac, February 2016.
[192] Interview with Muhamed, Srebrenica February 2016.

The rationale behind the neighborhood approach is that individuals generally spent a lot of time in that environment, so that trusting attitudes are thought to be most affected by this immediate social context and less so by larger regional or even national contexts. In this sense, the particularity of locality played the crucial role. This represents the idea according to which neighbors become as family members due to the proximity of cohabitation. At the end of my research, I met Stanojka and she symbolizes what authors of Holocaust studies acknowledge as a multiple rescuer. Within her narration, I could trace several acts of help that Stanojka was mentioning just randomly. The institution of komsiluk was present all the time:

> "There were several women in Bratunac we knew, Muslim women. Vesna, me, Mira and Stanka, we knew where those women lived, where their apartments were. They were either old or have been alone. They had no children. We would gather and bring them some food. It was a war, the bakery was not working, shops as well, they were closed….It was a miracle that they survived. We would cock something, put it in big plates and bring it to them, so that it can lst for several days, because they did not go out from their apartments, their houses. That was komšiluk solidarity. The thing is, all of us, we think the same, and that was the essence."[193]

Based on Stanojka's narrative, it could be stated that those who were able to integrate the idea of the self in the other and to maintain and cultivate friendships across the neighborhoods microcosms, were able to maintain *community* in a trans-ethnic way and thus commit acts of help. In that manner, several woman gathered and decided that they were going to help their Muslim friends, because it was, as Stanojka explained, komšiluk solidarity. So, the answer to the question about the motivation of helpers during the conflict could be found in komšiluk solidarity. The ideas of sameness was present constantly, as she explains that they all think the same, and she immediately saw all woman as equal to herself. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of komsiluk for conducting the acts of help:

> "I lived across the street from Jaca - Jasminka. She was my classmate from elementary school. That night my husband, and I, we went to our room to sleep, and as I was going

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[193] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

to turn off the lights, I saw through the window that something unusual was happening in Jaca's house. I saw how Jaca was taking off her shirt while her father was in the room and her mother and some other people.

It was an abnormal situation, an abnormal to take off your shirt in front of your father. My husband had better eyes and he noticed that those people were armed. I went literally in my pajamas and barefoot in Jasminka house. I asked them what they were doing. They told me that this was not my business. They were anyway ustashe. I told them those were not ustashe; those were Jaca and her father and her mother. My husband went to call my father-in-law because he had a gun. He entered the room, he told Jaca to get dressed, and he told her mother and her father, *you are my komšija, you should come to my house*. Those people started to threaten him, but he raised the gun and told them: what do you want I am Serb as well. Those were some paramilitary volunteer units."[194]

We can trace several elements in Stanojka's narration. She emphasizes the importance of the komšiluk solidarity, while her idea of neighbors is not that they are part of an ethnic group. She explained those are Jaca, her mother and father referring that them as human beings, as individuals. Therefore, we can see from this quote how neighborliness was a platform for helpers in which they would feel indifference toward ethnicity. Stanojka was able to stay ethnically indifferent and to observe her neighbors as humans and individuals, but not as members of ethnic groups. I asked Stanojka what her motivation to help her neighbours was. She replied, "I don't know. This was some kind of a reaction, you know. This is my friend, you understand, my friend. Then, you just do not think what will happen to you. I did not think what will happen to me. My husband was thinking better than me because once we saw what was happening in Jaca's house, he went to take a gun."[195]

I will analyze the idea of friendship and intimate bounds in the next subchapter. Since then, the paramilitary units would come to Stanojka's house to check if there were some Muslims hiding. However, they would persistently try to hide their neighbors.

"They would come to our house and ask for something. They said that we help the Turks, Balije[196]. To them we were hiding people. They did not of course find anyone.

[194] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.
[195] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.
[196] It is a derogatory term used against the Muslim population.

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My father-in-law told me that when darkness falls, I should go into our komsiluk and gather children, girls, and young women. They would come to sleep with us. All of those Muslim neighbors, what was left around our komsiluk, would come to our house. And one of the neighbors, Hasib, he said that he would not sleep now every night at our house, he would go to Germany and he packed his family and kids and he left."[197]

The presented analysis of 11 conducted interviews maintains that close intimate friendship before the war across ethnic and neighborhood lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina facilitated people to stay ethnically indifferent and played the crucial role for one to act as a helper during the conflict within his or her proximity - komšiluk. Moreover, the komšiluk relations and norms started to be the platform for further reconciliation in the post-conflict society. The sense of interdependence and interconnectedness was always present in Bosnia; this is something that is the central part of the Bosnian society and it cannot despaired with an occurrence of violence.

The question why people save each other's lives in connection to komšiluk, we can understand through the ethics of the komšiluk, described within the provided context where people live with each other rather than next to each other. Thus, I found that the komšiluk bonds and values promote positive tolerance within the neighborhood relations and facilitate active care of ordinary neighbors between different ethnic groups, which is in a way the main postulate of the komšiluk ethics. I conclude that the idea of living together very close, as described 'side by side,' while accepting and nurturing the differences, brought more positive influence and deeds, and opposed the violence employed largely by paramilitary units.

4.4. Helping hand and friendship ties

This subchapter seeks to underline that not only proximity of life in neighbourliness but also long friendship across ethnic lines was a main motivator for helpers to feel indifference toward ethnicity, since they put friendship in the first place. During the fieldwork, I was trying

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[197] Interview with Stanojka in Bratunac, May 2016.

to get as much information as possible from my interviewees and to make the situation as comfortable as possible for the participants. I contacted also the friends' journalist from the region who helped me find possible candidates for the research. One of the first encounters was Nermin and Dragan, a helper and a helped one. I was lucky that I could organize interviews with both sides. First, I conducted the interview with Dragan and I realized that helping used to come in different forms, from food supplies and hiding together in the basement to driving to the other city. After the war, Dragan and his friend Nermin both still live in the same city and, more importantly, see each other almost every day. I was also more than happy when I noticed that their stories are complementary. When I compared my main findings, I started to look how the act of helping was used within the participant narration. Dragan explained to me how the situation proceeded with his friend Nermin by saying,

> "He was labelled as the participant in some kind of a Muslim protest here in the city. It was dangerous for him afterwards. One day he called me, came to my apartment and asked me to drive him from Bratunac to Konjevic Polje. What could I do back then? I couldn't say no, do not go. This was his wish and I put him in my car and drove him directly to Konjevic Polje. There I left him, in Konjevic Polje, and it was completely deserted. There were no people on the street at all. Already there was some tension growing. When I went back I felt uncomfortable from the realization how everything was so deserted, there was no one out there. I felt fear, I almost regretted what I did, why I put myself on this adventure."

Still it was not clear to me then why he decided to do this, what the driving force for him was. Since my aim was to understand the specificities of the acts of helping during the Bosnian conflict by asking questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts, I asked Dragan about his motivation.

What was your motivation for doing it after all?
> "I did not think about that. The animosity did not increase to the level where I would consider him as an enemy. It was normal for me, as a friend, to drive him and I considered that I would not have any troubles by doing that afterwards."

But still you could say I cannot, for instance, I do not have fuel?

"I could not refuse him, I did not think about that because I consider him as my friend. You can do that much for your friend, right."

So he was a good friend?

"Well, yes. We hang out together, go hunting together, play cards. As all of us, we grew up together, we are a generation. "

Then, how would you define your friendship?

"We hang out really intensely, go out in cafes, and watch a football and comment on it, root for a team. Simple."

Do you consider that you did something special?

"Well, it is very normal for humankind that a friend helps a friend."

Without the regard for the ethnic background?

"Without. I grew up without prejudices, without ethnic divisions and when someone asks me, it is really uncomfortable to me to explain this. People lived together and they lived in harmony without any prejudices, there was no possibility to create them in that period. "[198]

From Dragan's perspective we can observe that the idea of the intimate friendship was the dominant motivator. The contact with Nermin, his Muslim friend, would include growing up together, seeing each other in the café and loving the same sports. There is a clear indication of the self-reflection and intimacy through the friendship as mentioned within the context chapter. For him, ethnic boundaries are not sharply defined and thus the creating prejudice was not possible due to his extended and long friendship with Nermin. As I explained in the subchapter on friendship ties, friendship refers to the attachments people make to places or people with whom they feel intensely interconnected, related, affiliated and identified.

Thus, friendship bonds for Dragan and Nermin remain real and ever-present internally even if the sources are externally transformed, and they were transformed due to the war situation. However, for Dragan and Nermin this was not the case. Also, when I asked Nermin if he knows what was Dragan's motivation for conducting the acts of help he explained to me:

"It was on the road to one Serb village; a crew consisting of five to six people fully equipped with guns, they let us pass the barricade because they knew him, but they also knew me as well. Therefore, we go further...and I expected that in the Muslim enclave we would jump on guards there. However, there was no air, no birds, no sound, there was no light, nothing on the road. This was one terrible silence. Nevertheless, while

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[198] Interview with Dragan in Bratunac, February 2016.

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crossing Kravica, we came across Serb guardians, around 5, 6 people, and we stayed there for a long time and this was the moment when he played a key role in my extraction. I could have ended there. We said goodbye to each other on the crossroads and from that moment, I was worried what could happen to him on his return.

If I knew that Dragan had at least a little tainted heart and soul, there would be no conversation between us. Nothing could make me want to stay near a man who destroyed, slaughtered and robbed. Moreover, I have no doubt that there were so many cases in our city where people helped each other, I know it. "[199]

I hypothesized that helpers during the conflict stayed indifferent toward imposed ethnic mobilization. Since they were able to perceive ethnicity as a silent factor in an ethnically driven conflict they were able to conduct the acts of help. Additionally, I question what encourages helpers to stay indifferent toward ethnicity and to conduct the acts of help. Friendship, together with neighbourliness, as described above, were the main factors. Sometimes pre-war friendship was deep and strong, almost equal to the bonds of kinship and "blood relations. As I describes in chapter (1.) and also chapter (3.), we use to relate more to people with whom we interact on a daily basis and identify more with them. Thus, through the friendship relations, Nermin and Dragan were able to transcendent ethnic identities and thus feel ethnically indifferent to the war situation. In this manner, Dragan was able to leave aside the notion what could happen to him if he goes in the care with a Muslim through the several barricades. His idea was that you can do that much for your friend.

The other interviewee was Hasan who protected and helped Serbs in Srebrenica during 1993 and 1994. Being at a high position back then, he was able to take care and send people to the Serb houses in order to stand guard if paramilitary units show up**.** On the question if he could tell me something about himself and if he remembers what the inter-ethnic relations in his community were Hasan explained to me,

Our greatest friends used to be Serbs, we really respected each other, our best friends and girlfriends were of Serb nationality. Srebrenica was never nationalistically

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[199] Interview with Nermin in Bratunac, May 2016.

charged, we lived as one soul. My best friends were Serbs, we'd go out and drink – me, Brano, Savo, Vlado, and so on. We had a terrific clique, we used to hang out."[200]

Friendship was mentioned as a key factor for the acts and from further conversations I figured out that the protected people were usually old parents from his friends. He would continue his explanations while stressing that there was no perception of strong in-group and out-group ethnic division but rather a common sense of people being in one group with the same values and outsiders as those who do not share these principles. He brought up the idea of common humanity, as he calls it "we are one people," transcending ethnic identity; the most important thing for him were inter-personal relations which mean, in a way, understanding how good friendships operates. Thus, good friendship relation was a main motivator for Hasan to act as a helper.

> "But I thought that there should be good people and bad people, regardless of what nation they're coming from, and that's how I was sentenced to death four times here by the Bosniaks. I didn't let them kill the Serbs in Srebrenica...I mean, we are one people. Nowadays, people go over from Serbs to Islam, or Catholicism. Or a Muslim becomes Orthodox, and so on. That's citizens' freedom; I care only about how you relate to me; how you relate to God is your problem. "[201]

As mentioned in the chapter on friendship ties, through the friendship, there is a possibility of developing empathy with a tendency to feel for the other person. Living in proximity, as analyzed previously, brings to the fore the close intimate relations between neighbors. Even more, being friend with someone without the proximity of habitation can also facilitate close relations between friends who go out together, go in the same school and feel direct connection between each other throughout their lives. Thus, this friendship ties become other-oriented rather than self-oriented and require "entering" into the other. Thus, during the

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[200] Interview with Hasan in Srebrenica, February 2016.
[201] Interview with Hasan in Srebrenica, February 2016.

narration Hasan was able to transcend the idea of the enemy, to dislocate it with ethnicity. My next encounter was with Nedeljko. I asked him about the inter-ethnic relations before the war:

> "If you believe me, I have a Muslim girlfriend, a Bosniak. Also, if you believe me, the best friends I have were also Muslims. "[202]

One of the common themes I found interesting is that direct contact did not include only friendships but also romantic relations. Both Hasan and Nedeljko were mentioning the girlfriends from other ethnic groups as something positive and as a proof of the strong contact. He would continue to explain to me how strong the friendship was, that he as an Orthodox would go to pray in a mosque together with his friends. This represents the idea of diversification as introduced by Oliner and Oliner in the theoretical chapter. It implies personal close relations among the individuals in the group, and it requires a shift from the intergroup relations to the interpersonal relations that are closes and more intimate. Thus, an individual can be observes as an individual, and not as a member of a group. Nedeljko was able to diversify his relations with his best friends and to cross the ethnic group boundness.

> "All of my friends in one period went in school and in the mosque as well. Even me, I went in the mosque to pray with them. I went there. I was interested, as a young boy, I had 12, 13 years, I went to see what they learn there, how this functions. Everything with friends, everything with your comrades."[203]

Nedeljko tend to see all people as similar. This sameness would come between those friends that have the same values. Pretending to be naïve, I asked Nedeljko how come it was possible that after such kind of friendship, the war erupted anyway. Also, I was interested in the relations during the war period.

> "It happened often that Muslims who wanted to go with me were not allowed due to their group. Because they were taught by theirs. The same goes for Serbs, if they wanted to hang out with Muslims, they couldn't because of theirs. Once it starts, the

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[202] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.
[203] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

division, it permanently increases to a higher level, and at the end, it has to come to some kind of separation."[204]

As I described previously, the imposed ethnic mobilization was so high that even some helpers would join their ethnic tabors. However, due to their identity, and possibility to see behind ethncity, they would be able to conduct the acts of help. Nedeljko explained to me how he found himself in situations when he had to decide whether to help and to risk his life. After hearing this I was really interested to see what the motivation was and to try to answer my research question. According to him, he was not aware whether he was risking his life, there was not time for thinking. From that moment he started to talk about his friends and the nature of the war. I was telling to Nedeljko that if he wants, we can stop there, because it was unbearable for him, his eyes were full of tears. Somehow, I felt that he had to share the story with me, it was a relief for him. He continued to explain events after the rescuing.

> *"*Both of my friends were killed. Džemo and Dževad. Greed. Some paramilitaries, which entered the town, those dogs of war… I got back from the battle lines one day. It was in 1993. I got home, and my father was sitting on the balcony. It was half past ten in the morning. End of summer, so it was sunny. I heard someone going on the street and screaming for her sons. I asked my father what was that all about and he stood up, and went back to the room. I went after him and asked him again. He said that some unknown people came and tied Džemo and Dževad with wire and took them away. The woman was still screaming. It was over. Greed. Those people thought that they were unreachable and that they could do whatever they wanted. They thought they were to build a country for us by taking other people's property and killing people. We went to military prisons to see if we could find them. We asked everybody. We couldn't find them. We were looking everywhere, but no one would say a thing. No one knew anything or they were afraid to speak. They were not in any of the prisons, that was for sure. They disappeared.*"*[205]

Strong friendship bounds were present constantly during Nedeljko narration. Beside hiding together in the basement and helping his friend's wife, he recalled some old moments before the war. As it was mentioned within the intimate relation and closeness part, the other

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[204] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.
[205] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

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is treated as a self and there is the tendency of "including the others in the self". The distinction between your group as being ethnically portrayed and the group of your friend loses its significance. In Nedeljko's case, growing up together made it impossible to put a boundary in-between. It is interesting to note that friends are not condemned for taking sides in the war. They are understood and often empathized with. On the other side, those friends would be condemned for the betrayal of the city, the local community, and neighborhoodness. They would also be condemned for letting out the spirit of the pre-war friendship. He continued to explain the nature of their bounds before the war that made him hide his friends in the basement and try to help them when paramilitary units surrounded the city.

> "We would hang out together, go fishing and barbeque together. Nearby there was a river where we used to play. It was a great time. The bloody war, you see. On that same river where we spent our childhood together, this was where they killed and threw them. With no trace. Who knows where the river took them after that. They have no graves."[206]

Aleksandar was one of the helped interviewees with a strong post-traumatic syndrome. He was kept in a concentration camp as a young boy, sixteen-year-old. All the images he explained to me were so vivid. The doctor, as he was referring to the man who rescued him from concentration camp, was an important friend of his father. He risked his life several times while entering the concentration camp trying to find Aleksandar. As it was explained by Sejo in the analysis presented under the komsiluk chapter, the idea how you can hurt someone and not help someone when you have a relation and a connection to this individual was present. Extended friendship across the ethnic lines was one of the underlying factors for helpers to act.

> "A man was looking for me in that [concentration] camp, and I didn't dare answer while he called out some five times. I heard somebody calling out for me, but I didn't dare answer. I didn't know where my father was. I thought somebody was looking for me in order to mistreat me...When I saw him, I recognized him. Rather, he knew me better because he used to visit us often; he was a hunter, he would visit my father and they

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[206] Interview with Nedeljko in Bratunac, May 2016.

used to hang out together a lot. He wanted to take me away; however, some people didn't let him. Then, he said, if you don't allow this kid out, we all die. He then took me home with him. I hid there in the basement. There were quite a few people. They didn't know I was a Serb. When they'd start talking something, I would play stupid and pretend to read some book."[207]

While asking Aleksandar if he knows what the possible motivation for the doctor to save him was, he answered:

"To be honest, I don't know what his motivation for saving me was, I don't know, believe me. I know we were family friends; he'd come visit us for as long as I can remember, he was into hunting and he was a doctor. My dad learned joinery at his place. They used to visit us on our patron saint celebration day, and we'd visit them on Christmas day."[208]

One of the interesting things when it comes to the helping hands process was the common theme for most of my interviewee. They would categorize people locally by referring to them as our Serbs, and our Muslims, trying to differentiate between those who were entering in the cities and conducting ethnic cleansing, and those people they knew all life. Thus, the importance of the inter-personal contact was emphasized once more through the idea of localism. However, this localism manifests itself in idea of proximity of habitation as explained in the analysis dealing with neighbourliness relations.

"When they first caught me, I tried to run away. I didn't know where I was; I had left my mother and sister and my aunt's small baby. Suddenly, I found myself in a brook, bullets snapping, hitting the water. As I was running, I found two hundred people in a house. That's where they caught us, tied us up with wire; that's where they beat us – I witnessed maybe two murders in that place. These weren't our Muslims; they were some foreign Muslims who came from Mostar. Eighty people were killed in that one day, and some twenty-nine were buried in a ditch. "[209]

I was interested to see how the act of helping was used within the participant narration. I try to trace what sort of a person is speaking and what sort of thing he or she is talking about.

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[207] Interview with Aleksandar in Bratunac, May 2016.
[208] Interview with Aleksandar in Bratunac, May 2016.
[209] Interview with Aleksandar in Bratunac, May 2016.

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What sort of statement are made? What is being talked about? What cultural and historical categories people use in order to represent their experiences? What came as a theme even though it was not particularly emphasized during the interview? I found out that after neighborhoodness, intimate friendship as a very strong life-long direct contact was the leading underlying factor for one to take action. I came to this finding by asking the questions why this is interesting and why I am interested in it. While reading over and over again through the data, the common theme was emerging and I realized that Oliner's idea of the rescuers having the sense with humanity was applicable in Bosnia where the sense of humanity was developed in connection to the neighbourliness and long friendships. People were able to relate to "the other," to the outgroup, through the self, because of the several factors such as growing up with "the other," having intimate and romantic relations with "the other", in a way being strongly familiarized with "the other."

I emphasized during the interviews that the ethnic categories appear to be insignificant for the helping process. Additionally, I found out that the concepts of neighborhoodness, friendship and ethnic indifference are important characteristics of Bosnian society when it comes to the helping and they are going to be reviewed in the next analysis through the prism of the literature review, presented in the beginning. I will also return to the idea that helping should be introduced as a category or a subcategory of rescuing deeds known in Holocaust, due to the different cultural and social settings that we could observe in Bosnia, and that have already been highlighted through the concepts of komsiluk and friendship.

4.5. The rescuers and the helpers – discussion

In relation to the Holocaust and rescuers, the most common question is directed toward understanding why one acts and one does not, and how one becomes a rescuer, whereas another remains a bystander? Variables such as gender, religion and age were taken into account in order to try to comprehend the rescuers' deeds. From the presented literature review we can

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see that concepts such as strong self-integrity, self-identity, and altruistic behavior were just some of sociological and psychological explanations for the rescuer's motivation. But I was interested to see how rescuers develop in a certain social and cultural setting, such as the Bosnian setting. Furthermore, the rescuers and their acts could be understood through identity, humanity and personal integrity perspective, but the question whether the idea of community and imposed normative settings, or proximity can influence the rescuers deeds was still open.

Thus, as I mentioned in the introduction, I wanted to trace what the matching points are when it comes to the theories of the rescuers' motivation, as known from the Holocaust and how we can apply this theory to the Bosnian helpers. Therefore, as we saw from the analysis presented above, people in Bosnia live in close-knit communities in a multicultural setting where diversity in cultural, ethnic and other significant identities were main characteristic of society and where ethnicity was constantly negotiated through different platforms. I came to the finding that there is not a single essential precondition that predicts courageous behavior, however there is a constellation of known factors that encourage it. In the case of Bosnia, I traced komšiluk and friendships as important factors for the helpers' behavior. Furthermore, through proximity of life, living side by side and being directed to each other constantly throughout life was another main factor for helpers to stay ethnically indifferent to the war situation.

But how is this connected to the authors explaining the rescuers' behavior? I found out that through the komšiluk and friendship lines, helpers were able to see sameness with each other, or as Oliner and Oliner described, they would acquire "togetherness with humanity". Thus, these platforms added to the possibility of having one worldview when the differences among ethnic groups were constantly emphasized throughout the conflict. This is the point from which I trace the importance of taking into account the different social and cultural settings in which helpers, or rescuers find themselves. Also, Kristine Monroe asks how

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relations to the others and personal self-identity influence helpers' behavior as described in Chapter 1. Applying this to the Bosnian case, I could identify that the helpers' identity has the ability to internalize the differences before the war and thus to develop inclusive identity. Again, the internalization of the differences was possible through the platforms of komšiluk and friendship.

The question I posed was what motivated helpers and made them go on the side of responsibility while employing ethnic indifference toward nationalistic war rhetoric. Then, what kind of identity or identification distinguished Bosnian helpers? The possibility of ethnicity negotiation brought up what theoreticians of the rescuers distinguished (Staub, Monroe, and Oliner Oliner) as an important factor of motivation - the knowledge of the victims' plight. But in the case of Bosnian helpers, it is not only that they had knowledge about the victims' plight, but they also had deep knowledge about the daily life of their friends, neighbours. Growing up together and constantly negotiating ethnic differences thorough life was crucial for helpers. This facilitated them to develop comprehensive identity where strong sense of self, as underlined by Eva Fogelman, requires also the strong sense of the other. The other was not perceived as an enemy ethnicity, but rather as a friend, neighbour or human. Furthermore, helpers acquired a sense of justice through sameness, as described in Chapter 1, as they were able to cross the ethnic divides and conduct the acts of help.

The other thing I wanted to examine was whether the line between helpers and rescuers is rigid. Even though one can find the definition of the Righteous appropriate to the Holocaust situation, the definition is nevertheless limited because sheltering and aiding individuals who are marked for destruction (or in Bosnian case ethnic cleansing) would not be considered as a rescuing act if there was no risk involved. Thus, I switched to the category of helpers, defined by me as people who were not aware of the undertaken risk and were able, due to the proximity of the neighbourliness, extended and deep friendship, to reject ethnicization narrative and

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conduct the acts of help. As we saw from the analysis, they were providing food, driving across dangerous areas, or they were hiding together in basements. I emphasize the idea that a local dimension of living with your own in proximity, regardless of ethnicity, is the distinctiveness of Bosnian helpers. This is why I demanded at the beginning that we should rephrase the concept of rescuers from the Holocaust and seek to understand other local, social and cultural dimensions across the range of conflicts.

Conclusion:

"I am a human being and you are a human being, so what's the problem then?"

When I set out to write this thesis, I wanted to understand the specificities of the acts of rescuing during the Bosnian conflict and to answer the questions related to the identity and motivation of the people who have carried out such acts. I hypothesized that helpers during the war perceived ethnic identity as a silent category and thus were able to resist ethnic mobilization. However, I was still interested in knowing whether any other factors, beside the indifference toward ethnic categories, played a role in helping acts. Through my research, I found that ethnic indifference was not the only helpers' strategy for relating to the social world around them. I traced that neighbourliness and strong friendship ties also influenced helpers' ability to shift their identities and identify more with community on a local level. Furthermore, due to the proximity of life, in which helpers spent most of the time, they were able to see their identity through the sameness and in connection to humanity, rather than ethnicity. This is to say that ethnic identity for helpers was never a fixed category. In addition, friendship ties and neighbourliness were the platforms where indifference toward ethnicity was most likely to occur.

My findings also reveal that individuals generally spent a lot of time in close environment and therefore their trusting attitudes are more affected by their immediate social context and less so by larger regional or even national contexts. The *komšiluk* functioned as a platform where people were able to negotiate their ethnicities on a daily basis. It served also as a platform of mutual help both before the war and during the war, and presently it is the platform for reconciliation. The other particular characteristic of helpers in Bosnia is the ability to internalize the differences across ethnic lines. Thus, the helpers would develop what authors of rescuers' deeds call "inclusive identity". At the end, I emphasize the characteristic of Bosnian helpers and their motivation to conduct the act of help manifested in the ability to

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negotiate ethnicity intensely across different platforms such as romantic relationships, friendship ties, and through distinctiveness of komšiluk where growing up together and being constantly directed to each other through life were the key factors in helpers' behavior.

This study contributes to the understanding of specific helpers' identity and motivation as it adds the new dimensions of locality and proximity of habitation as unexplored categories that contributed to the helpers' motivation. It also emphasizes the importance of reconceptualization of the concepts of rescuers in order to better understand different social settings such as the Bosnian society. Thus the study provides solid ground for exploration of other conflicts. As one of my encounters told me: *I believe that there will be time when more people will notice the importance of this kind of subjects. From that foundation we can build better world for all of us.*

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Apendicies

Srebrenica

Photo taken by Mladen Kojic - Portal: eSrebrenica;

Bratunac

List of Questions during the interview process:

Pre War Life:

2. Where were you born?

Education?

3. Describe your family life and your daily life in pre - war period?

4. Describe school, friends, hobbies, affiliations you use to have before the war?

5. Describe the nature of religious life in your family and community?

6. What sort of work did you do? Did other family members work?

7. What are your recollections Srebrenica-Bratunac before the war, including relationships between Serbs and Bosniaks? Any recollections of animosity of any kind?

8. Did you know or could predict that the war will happened?

9. On your opinion what was the character of the war in Bosnia? How would you described it?

During the war

1.   Were you alone? Where did you live?

2.   Where did your family members were during the war?

3.   What did you do all day during the war? Work? Food? Sanitation?

4.   How did people around you treat each other?

5.   What were the relationships between people? (Bosniak – Serbs)

6.   Did you have any good friends? Did anyone ever help you? Did you help anyone? Were people affectionate with one another?

7.   What were your experiences? Did you witnessing any killings and deaths?

8.   Feelings during the war situation? Fears, dreams, hopes, questions

9.   Describe how you got involved in the rescuing process?

10.   What are the most powerful recollections of your helping experience, can you describe your engagement?

11.   What was your motivation for helping?

12.   Did you consider helping being danger?

13.   Did you have any kind of personal relationship with the rescued? Who hid you, and what was your relationship with them? Or whom did you hide and what was your relationship with him/her?

14.   Did you talk about your experiences after the war? Who listened?

16.   Now 20 years after, anything changed, when you think about the helping, will you do the same?

Post War:

1.   What do you recall about the moment when you realized that the war is over?

4.   Describe the conditions of your environment. What did you do?

5.   How did you adjust to "normal" life after the war? What problems did you face? What gave you strength to go on? Did religion play a role? Any belief system?

6.   Do you talk daily about your acts with family?

7.   What about outside the family circle?

11.   What do you think, should the helping deeds be publicly acknowledged, did you consider to talk about the helping process in media or any public gathering?

12.   Do you think it is important for people in Bosnia to know about that?