

The War of Positions: Football in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina

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Abstract

Research on the role sport might or can play in a post-conflict environment has tended to focus upon sport's ability to deliver wider development objectives through that known as Sport-for-Development and Peace (SDP) interventions. Such programmes are somewhat notorious for over-looking the wider influence of the pre-established domestic sporting milieus.

An ethnographic study of the role sport – and in this case specifically football - plays in what is known as a 'returnee' village within the Bosnian Serb Entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina is herein presented in an attempt to understand the complex interplay of power between the village, their neighbours, the state and those who perform and deliver football. The relationships that are established across and within such entities and the negotiations required for co-existence are significant; in a variety of ways they influence the post-conflict processes.

The interplay of the varied social and cultural groups that constitute post-conflict Bosnia requires a multi-disciplinary approach to elucidate the post-conflict processes. Utilising a neo-Gramscian approach what follows makes it possible to envisage the International Community, namely the supra-national institutions, international NGOs and funders, in the role of the dominant political group working to create its vision of a hegemony of peace. Concurrently the ethno-political indigenous elite are endeavouring to retain the status quo and have managed to create a period of permanent liminality, preventing Bosnia from creating a post-conflict hegemony.

With historic links to nationalist impulses and intricate connections to the current political milieu, football provides a window through which the post-conflict processes of a community may be observed. As what we might best term the War of Position for the establishment of a post-conflict hegemony ensues, the research illustrates that whilst domestic football may be understood as a focal point for the promotion of civil society and carries many capabilities of political capital, there remains a tension between the ethno-political elite and the International Community. Both utilise the game for their own ambitions, but neither of their visions are accepted by the wider Bosnian population.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Preface | 1 |
| Football for Hope | 2 |
| Football for Peace | 4 |
| Culture, Power and Theory | 6 |
| The Field of Football | 8 |
| The Terms and the Landscape | 10 |
| | |
| Section A | 13 |
| | |
| Chapter 1: Moving the Ball Forward: The International Community Occupies the Post-Conflict Zone | 14 |
| From Peace Keeping to Peace Building | 17 |
| Orthodoxies in the Unorthodox | 18 |
| The Power of Sport | 19 |
| Diplomacy at Play | 22 |
| Unpicking the Power of Sport | 25 |
| Deification to Reification | 26 |
| Neo-Liberal Development Benevolence? | 27 |
| Apolitical or a Political Game? | 30 |
| Player Power | 32 |
| Sport for Reconciliation and Peace in Bosnia | 33 |
| Peripheral or Integral | 35 |
| | |
| Chapter 2: Italian Probing and Dutch Individualism: Power and All that Lies Inbetween | 38 |
| An Absent 'Italian Spring' | 39 |
| Constructing Hegemony | 42 |
| Hegemony's Infinite Dynamic | 45 |
| The Power of Resistance: The Role of the Underdog | 46 |
| Interpreting Interpretations | 47 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Resisting Hegemony's Hegemony: The Rise of the Foucauldian Focus | 48 |
| Middle Class Tactics: An International Bourgeoisie? | 49 |
| Stagnating Hegemony? | 52 |
| Betwixt and Between: The Liminal State | 53 |
| Permanent Liminality: A Trapped Transition | 54 |
| Liminal Leaders | 56 |
| i. Bosnia's Master of Ceremonies... | 58 |
| ii. ... and their Tricksters | 58 |
| Challenges to Liminality | 60 |
| Football's Bipolar Personality | 61 |
| The Frozen Frame | 63 |
| Section B | 66 |
| Chapter 3: Pretty Village Pretty Flame: A Land of Conflict and Football | 67 |
| Construction: Identities of Chance | 69 |
| Destruction: Nationalism Severs | 72 |
| Nationalism Arrives in Bosnia: So Does Football | 75 |
| A Balkan Brazil | 77 |
| Football: Class and Conflict | 79 |
| The Beautiful Game and Political Symbolism | 83 |
| Independence and Resistance | 85 |
| Football Recognition and Soft Diplomacy | 86 |
| The Communist Regime: Football's Golden Era? | 88 |
| Symbolism and Competition | 91 |
| New Nationalisms (and Football Hooliganism) | 92 |
| Football: A Predictor of War? | 95 |
| Supporting to Soldiering: The Conflict Years | 98 |
| Surviving in the Post-Conflict Milieu | 102 |
| Public Good: Private Gain | 104 |
| Football restarts: War without the shooting? | 106 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Returning to Play | 108 |
| Hegemonic History and Liminal Narratives | 109 |
| Chapter 4: A Bosnian Chronicle and a Personal Journey | 111 |
| Football Kicks Off | 112 |
| Conflict Comes to Divič | 115 |
| The Village Returns | 117 |
| A Post-Conflict Ethnography | 122 |
| Reflecting the Researcher | 123 |
| Predetermined Perceptions | 126 |
| Structuring data in an unstructured setting | 129 |
| Custodians of Knowledge | 132 |
| Participation: Voluntary and Involuntary | 135 |
| Responsibility of Representation | 136 |
| War weary to world wary | 138 |
| The Ball Keeps Rolling | 140 |
| | |
| Section C | 142 |
| Chapter 5: Playing on the Pitch: Village Level Football | 143 |
| Seeking the Return Ball | 144 |
| Re-entering the Field | 145 |
| Identity Crisis? Football, representation and community in Zvornik | 147 |
| Representing Illusions: A Village and its Club | 149 |
| Unpicking Serb Uniformity | 153 |
| Conciliation, Exclusion and Hospitality | 155 |
| Showing Spectators the Red Card | 159 |
| Creating Conflict or Reflecting Reconciliation? | 164 |
| i. FK Jedinstvo Ročević vs. FK Mladost, Divič: September 26th 2007 | 164 |
| ii. FK Jordan, Jordan vs FK Mladost, Divič: May 10th 2009 | 167 |
| iii. FK Mladost Divič vs FK Trnovica, Trnovica: 6 th April 2008 | 170 |
| War minus the shooting? | 173 |

| | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| iv. | FK Mladost, Divič vs FK Srpski Soko, Čelopek: 2nd September 2007 | 175 |
| | Policing the Pitch | 180 |
| | The Business of Football | 182 |
| | The Village Hegemony | 184 |
| | Chapter 6: When Dragons Roar and Eagles Soar | 187 |
| | Imagination and Consciousness | 187 |
| | A Dragon's Blood: Representing Bosnia-Herzegovina | 189 |
| | Singing "Bože pravde": Citizens of One Country, Inclined to Another | 192 |
| | Reluctant Co-Patriots? | 194 |
| | Symbols of glory, symbols of fear | 195 |
| | Domestic Foreigners | 198 |
| | "For Entire Life!" Elite Clubs and their Supporters | 202 |
| | Affirmation of Opposition: Local Representation and Resistance | 205 |
| | A World of Maniacs, Hordes of Evil, Convicts, Vultures and Genocides | 208 |
| | Chapter 7: Institutions, Intellectuals and Influence | 215 |
| | Save us From Savez! | 216 |
| | Institutions of post-conflict Bosnia | 217 |
| | Break Up and Make Up | 218 |
| | A Multi-Ethnic Façade: Trickster Infiltration | 220 |
| | Village Level Activities | 221 |
| | Corrupting the Football Story | 223 |
| | Resisting Dominance | 226 |
| | A Very Public Resistance | 227 |
| | <i>Rat u Savezu! War on Savez!</i> | 229 |
| | Unstoppable Momentum: Resistance and Coercion Combine | 230 |
| | Politics? Football is much more important than that! | 232 |
| | The Thinking Football Administrator | 236 |
| | Inherited Intelligence | 241 |
| | The Counter Attack | 242 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Pro Footballers: The Unlikely Intellectuals? | 243 |
|--|-----|

Conclusions

| | |
|--|------------|
| After the Bullets: Football's Role in the Bosnian Post-Conflict Process | 250 |
| Building Bridges, Dredging Drains | 252 |
| Managing Disorder | 255 |
| Fighting Fire with Fire | 256 |
| Liminal Ritual or Liminoid Activity? | 259 |
| Politicising the Cultural | 261 |
| At Home Abroad | 263 |
| Policy Implications and Future Research | 265 |

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Bibliography | 269 |
|---------------------|------------|

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Appendices | 286 |
|-------------------|------------|

| | |
|--|-----|
| Appendix I: Political System of Bosnia Herzegovina | 286 |
| Appendix II: Structure of BiH Football (Source: CIN) | 287 |
| Appendix III: Summary of Village Football Clubs | 288 |

List of Maps

| | |
|--|------|
| Map 1: The Former Yugoslavia (Source: United Nations) | xii |
| Map 2: Bosnia Herzegovina Political Map (Source: Maps of World) | xii |
| Map 3: Ethnic Makeup of Bosnia-Herzegovina before and after the war (Source: UNHCR) | xiii |
| Map 4: Northeast Bosnia (Source: Google Maps) | xiv |
| Map 5: Village Football Clubs in Zvornik Municipality (Source: Google Maps) | xv |

ABBREVIATIONS

Football

| | |
|-------------|--|
| CCPA | Cross Cultures Project Association. A not for profit Danish organisation which uses games and a “fun football concept” as a tool to promote the processes of democracy, peace, stability and social cohesion. CCPA introduced the Open Fun Football Schools programme to Bosnia in 1998. |
| FIFA | <i>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</i> (International Federation of Association Football) |
| FK | <i>Fudbalski Klub</i> (Football Club – Serb/Bosniak) |
| FSJ - | <i>Fudbalski Savez Jugoslavije</i> (Yugoslav Football Association – Serbian) |
| FSRS | <i>Fudbalski savez Republike Srpske</i> (Football Association of Republika Srpska) |
| HAŠK | <i>Hrvatski akademski športski klub</i> (Croatian Academic Sports Club) |
| HNK | <i>Hrvatski nogometni klub</i> (Croatian Football Club) |
| HŠK | <i>Hrvatski športski klub</i> (Croatian Sports Club) |
| JNS | <i>Jugoslavenski nogometni savez</i> (Yugoslav Football Association - Croatian) |
| N/FSBiH | <i>Nogometni/Fudbalski Savez Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (Football Association of Bosnia & Herzegovina) |
| NK | <i>Nogometni klub</i> (Football Club – Croatian) |
| OFFS | Open Fun Football Schools: A humanitarian project run by CCPA which uses a football as fun concept to promote the process of democracy, peace, stability and social cohesion within the Balkan countries, the Trans Caucasus countries and the Middle East. |
| OFS Zvornik | <i>Opstina Fudbalski Savez Zvornik</i> (Zvornik Regional Football Association) |
| Prva HNL | <i>Prva hrvatska nogometna liga</i> (First Croatian Football League) operating during World War 2 across Croatia. |
| SAŠK | <i>Sarajevski amaterski športski klub</i> (Sarajevo Amateur Sports Club)) |
| SŠK | <i>Srpski Športski Klub</i> (Serb Sports Club) |
| SOFK | <i>Savez Organizira Fiziske Kultura</i> (Organisation for the Administration of Physical and Cultural Activities). |
| UEFA | Union of European Football Associations |

VNS *Vrhovni nogometni savez* (Supreme Football Association)

Political

ARBiH *Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* (Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

BiH Bosna i Hercegovina (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

CBO Community Based Organisation

DPA Dayton Peace Accords, agreed 22 November 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, USA, formally signed and came into force 14 December 1995 in Paris, France.

EUFOR European Union led peace keeping military force in Bosnia 2004 to date.

HDZ *Hrvataska demokratska zajednica* – Croatian Democratic Union. Nationalist Croat political party led by Croatian leader Franjo Tuđman

IC International Community

ICTY International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

IGO Inter-Governmental Organisation

IFOR Implementation Force: The NATO led multi-national peace keeping force mandated to implement the DPA. Period of engagement in Bosnia was from 20 December 1995- 20 December 1996.

INGO International Non-Governmental Organisation

IYSPE UN's 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education

JNA *Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija* (Yugoslav National Army)

KM *konvertibilna marka* (Convertible Mark). Currency of Bosnia Herzegovina which was pegged to the German Mark and then Euro (1 EUR = 1.95583 KM)

KPJ *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)

MDG Millennium Development Goals

MZ *Mjesna Zajednica* – village councils

NDH - Nezavisna Država Hrvatska - Independent State of Croatia

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

OHR Office of the High Representative

OSCE Organisation for the Security and Cooperation of Europe

| | |
|----------|---|
| PIC | Peace Implementation Council |
| PLIP | Property Law Implementation Programme |
| RS | Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb Entity within Bosnia |
| SDP | Sport for Development and Peace |
| SFOR | Stabilisation Force – NATO led peace keeper force 1996-2004 |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNPROFOR | United National Protection Force: UN Peace Keeping Force in Croatia and Bosnia 1992-1995. |

Glossary

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Bosniak | Term most commonly used for Bosnian Muslims. |
| Bosnian | Collective noun for all who live in Bosnia, irrespective of their ethnic groups. |
| Canton | The Bosniak-Croat Federation is divided into 10 political cantons, each with their own legislative, administrative and judicial powers. There are no Cantons in the Bosnian Serb Entity, the Republika Srpska. |
| Četnik | Serb nationalist movement first active as a resistance movement against the Ottoman occupiers. They gained particular notoriety as a paramilitary group active in World War II using terror tactics against Croat and Muslim civilians as well as the Partizan groups and their supporters. In the 1992-95 conflict Serb paramilitary groups styled themselves Četnik and were active in 'ethnic cleansing' operations. The term has come to denote extreme Serb nationalism and frequently used in a derogatory fashion. |
| Constituent People | A term used by the Dayton Peace Accords to denote Bosnian Croat, Bosnian Serb or Bosniak. Its use has been challenged in the EU Court of Human Rights by Jewish and Roma groups who claim that they are excluded from senior levels in the Bosnian political structure because key positions must be held by a member of a Constituent People. |
| Croat/Croatian | The term Croat denotes of something/someone of Croat ethnicity as opposed to Croatian which means something or someone from the country of Croatia itself. |
| Federation | Bosniak-Croat Entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina |
| International Community | Commonly used term in Bosnia to denote International NGOs and supra-national organisations active in the country in the post-conflict era. Of most note are the High Representative and his office (OHR), OSCE and the UN departments including UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR. |
| Minority Returnees | Returnees who are of a different ethnic group to those who are in the majority in the region. For example a Bosniak who has returned to live in the Republika Srpska |
| Municipality | The smallest official political unit of Bosnia. There are 142 municipalities, 70 in the Federation and 62 in the RS. All Federation municipalities are also a part of a Canton. |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| MZ | Mjesna Zajednica (MZ) are collectives similar to village councils organised and run by citizens. They operate beneath the Municipality Level State organisations and address daily governance issues. They were established by the Communist regime and have endured into the post-conflict era despite confusion over their legal status. Initially ignored by the International Community they are now recognised as important institutions with successful track records in engaging with citizens on civic issues. |
| Returnees | People who, having been forced to leave their homes during the conflict, have returned to reclaim their property. |
| Republika Srpska | Bosnian Serb Entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina |
| Savez | The national football association for Bosnia and Herzegovina (N/FSBiH). |
| Serb/Serbian | The term Serb denotes of something/someone of Serb ethnicity as opposed to Serbian which means something or someone from the country of Serbia itself. |
| <i>Ustaša</i> | A Croatian ultranationalist movement associated with extreme violence and terrorism. The Ustaša were originally formed in 1930 as a nationalist organisation seeking an independent Croatian state that would encompass all ethnic Croats. In World War II they were appointed by Nazi occupiers to rule the Independent State of Croatia and are held to be responsible for the murders of many thousands of Serbs, Jews and Roma in concentration camps during that period. The movement split after World War II but the name has become a derogatory term for people deemed to promote Croatian ultra-nationalism but is also occasionally used by Serbs to denote people who are anti-Serb. |

Map 1: The Former Yugoslavia (Source: United Nations)

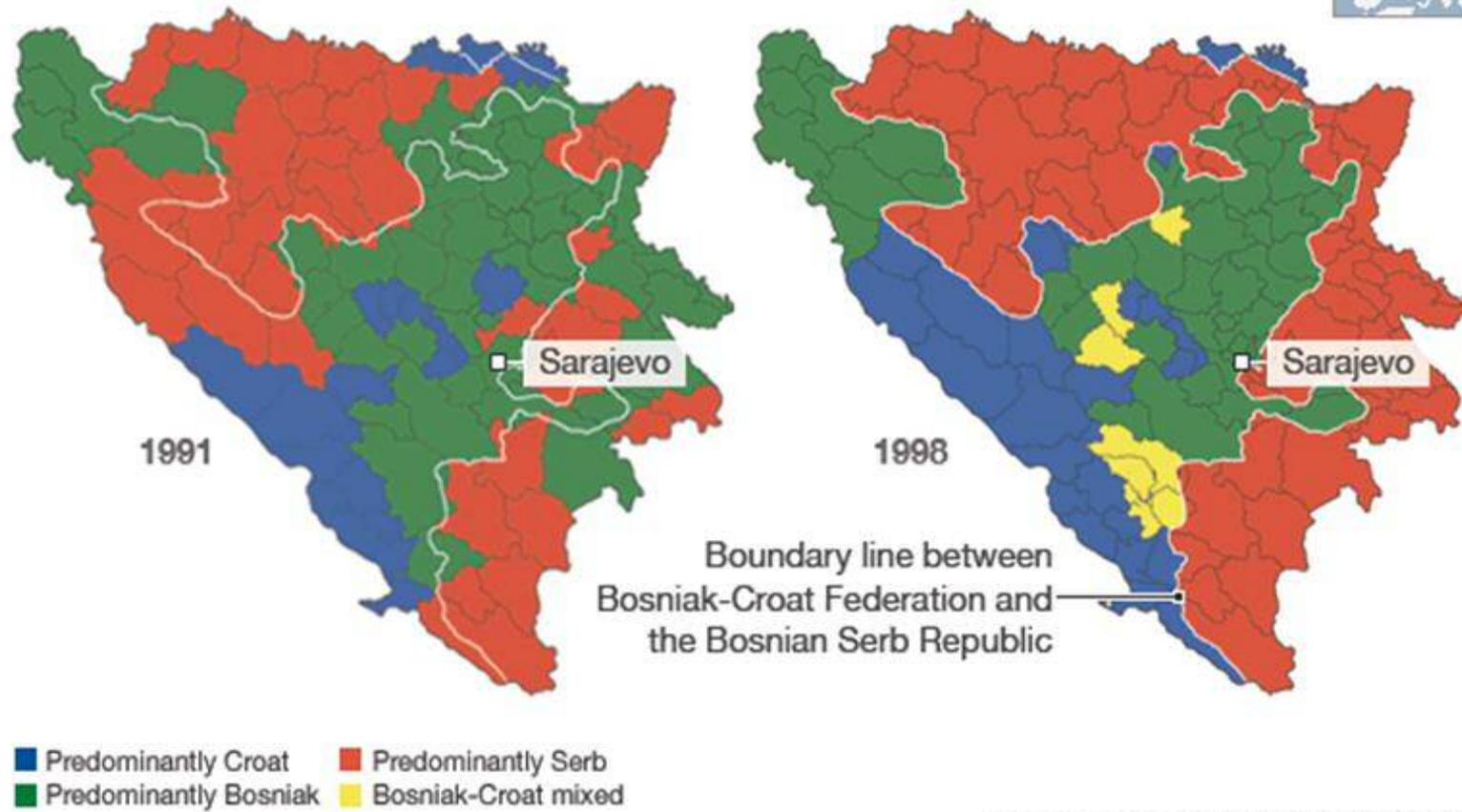


Map 2: Bosnia-Herzegovina Political Map (Source: Maps Of World)



Map 3

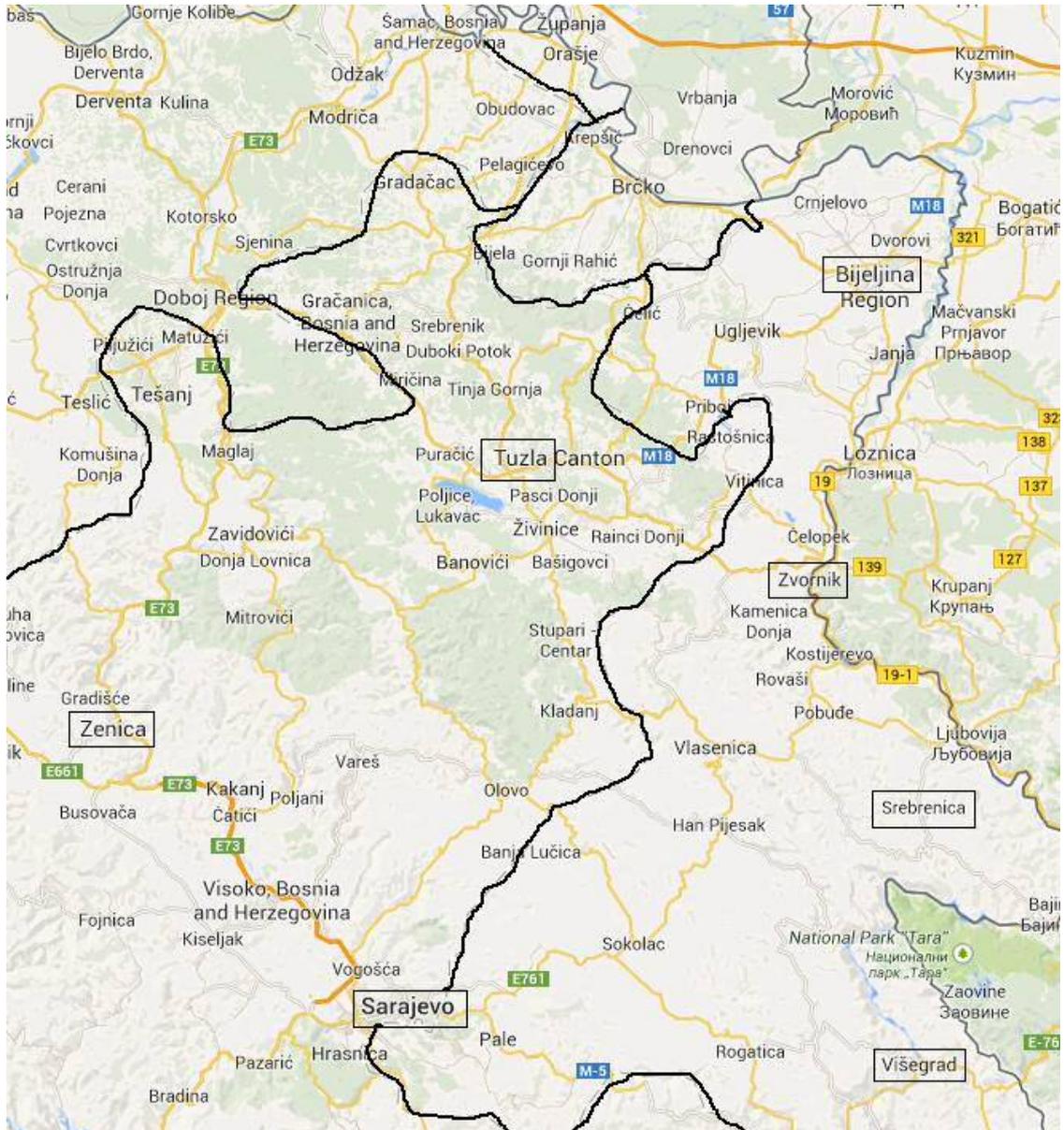
Ethnic make-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina, before and after the war



Source: Office of the High Representative

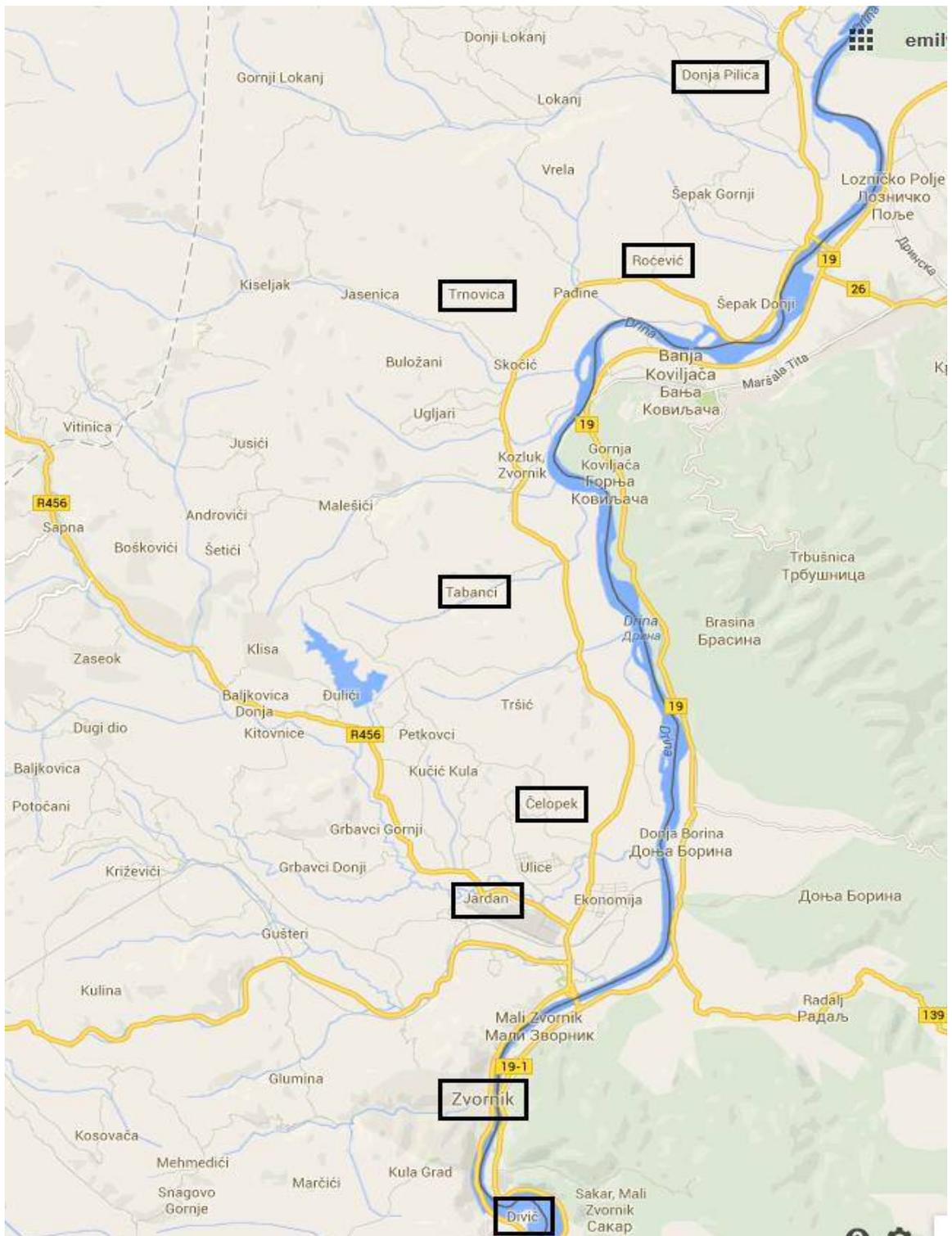
Map 4: Northeast Bosnia

(Source: Google Maps)



Map 5: Villages football clubs in Zvornik municipality

(Source: Google Maps)



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PREFACE

From the air, it looked as though the war had returned to the battered city of Sarajevo. Blazing fires and the din of explosives suggested a rewind to the dark days of the remorseless Serbian siege of the city 20 years ago. But unlike then, the streets were thronged with tens of thousands of partying Bosnians. The noise was not from Serbian artillery pieces but from fireworks. Because Bosnia's footballers are going to Brazil. (Dzidic & Traynor, The Guardian; 16 October 2013)

When qualification for a major football tournament finally came for Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) it was through the most simple of goals. Edin Džeko, the Bosniak¹ boy who as a child dodged mortar attacks in his besieged home city of Sarajevo, carved through the Lithuanian defence and spotted his Bosnian strike partner, Vedad Ibišević unmarked. Ibišević, who as a child had hidden in a ditch to escape Bosnian Serb soldiers ransacking his village, duly executed a simple side foot into the net to secure Bosnia the top spot in their qualifying group and direct qualification to the 2014 Brazil World Cup Finals. The 68th minute goal bought to an end Bosnia's 17 year wait for their first major football tournament qualification as an independent nation.

Since its creation from the ashes of an imploding Yugoslavia in 1995, Bosnian football has run the full gauntlet of emotions: it emerged from the bomb strewn pitches and decimated stadiums to claim World Cup qualification elation via accusations of endemic corruption, player revolts and two times qualifying play-off heart break². As their victorious multi-ethnic team³ returned from Vilnius, tens of thousands flocked to Sarajevo's streets and squares. They celebrated with roaring songs of support for their team, letting off incendiaries in an atmosphere that echoed the one time Serbian army artillery and mortars that rained down on the same streets just 20 years earlier. This time however, the city was revelling in a sense of national purpose, not

¹ Bosniak is the more commonly used term for the Bosnian Muslim ethnic group.

² Having finished second in their qualifying groups for the FIFA 2010 World Cup finals and the UEFA 2012 European Cup Finals, Bosnia were defeated in the final qualifying stage losing to Portugal on both occasions.

³ Their team included the Bosniak Edin Džeko and the talismanic Bosnian Serb Zvezdan Misimović and Senijad Ibričić who holds both Bosnian and Croatian citizenship.

pursuing ethnic decimation. Suddenly, momentarily, Bosnia seemed to have put its division and conflict history aside. multi-ethnic institution had brought profile, success and indeed prestige to the country.

On days when football fortunes go the 'right' way and jubilation runs high, it is easy to believe that football can cross divides and unite antagonists. In sharp contrast to the stagnation of the divided Bosnian political milieu generated by factional ethno-political infighting, nationalism and corruption (ICG, 2012), the multi-ethnic Bosnian national football team has risen in FIFA's global rankings. Appearing at 171 (out of 204) in the FIFA global ranking index in June 1996, just 6 months after the ceasefire, by January 2012 they had risen to 19th. Of all the institutions available in civil society it seemed that it was football that could cross the divides. Even the politicians recognised the allure of multi-ethnic triumphs:

"The national team has shown us all how to achieve results, not just in sports but in any field," said Denis Bećirević, speaker of the parliament in Sarajevo. "We can be successful if we work together. I hope this win will spark positive changes in our country." Quoted in Dzidic & Traynor, Guardian Newspaper 16th October 2013.

Football offered a glimpse of what could be. That same glimpse has been identified elsewhere.

Football for Hope?⁴

The perceived ability of sport to achieve the seemingly impossible in the post-conflict milieu has led to a dramatic increase in the use of sport, and football in particular, by development professionals seeking to realise development and reconciliation objectives. Originally employed as an avenue to raise money for humanitarian assistance⁵ the use of sport rapidly grew to encompass developmental aims embracing the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Kidd, 2008; Armstrong

⁴ The name of World Governing Body FIFA's football 'Social Responsibility' programme. First active in 2005 it aims to support football activities over the world that address social challenges in local communities.

⁵ A group of athletes at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics in Norway united with the International Olympic Committee to investigate ways sport could contribute to humanitarian assistance. The Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, itself a Winter Olympic host city in 1984, was a major recipient of that aid (Kidd, 2008).

& Collison, 2011; Levermore, 2012). By coincidence, the growth of scope and influence of the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) movement occurred over a similar time frame to the Bosnian post-conflict journey.

In a post-conflict society sport will be present in all guises, whether domestically orientated or internationally led, whether with a development agenda or purely for the enjoyment of the activity. Bosnia has subsequently hosted a number of SDP programmes designed to encourage peace and reconciliation, the most well-known of which are the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) which defines itself as:

“A humanitarian project using joyful games and the pedagogical ‘fun-football-concept’ as a tool to promote the process of democracy, peace, stability and social cohesion within the Balkan countries [including Bosnia]” (Cross Cultures Project Association, 2010).

The OFFS scheme ran 218 Football Schools in Bosnia between 1998 and 2009, which comprised a total of 64,561 boys and girls aged 7-12 organised by 5,250 voluntary coaches and leaders from all ethnicities across the country (Cross Cultures Project Association, 2010). Sport was understood to be a conduit for reconciliation, a promoter of civil society and therefore a tool for peace. Bosnians have been passionate about football since the first football arrived in Sarajevo in 1908 and as a part of Yugoslavia they possess a strong football heritage. It is the country’s foremost participatory and spectator sport; clubs of all standards are found with ease across the country. The country has a proud footballing pedigree; Bosnians were well represented in Yugoslav sides and its clubs participated in the Yugoslav first league. The popularity of the ‘beautiful game’ ensures that football is played throughout the country and whilst the statistics of OFFS are impressive there are many areas of the country whose post-conflict journey would be entirely untouched by the work of SDP organisations, yet were heavily influenced by the social, political, cultural and economic aspects of all levels of the game.

The international SDP impetus is however far from the only sporting activity in a post-conflict society. When the violence ceases, domestic sporting activities are quick to recommence (albeit often in a different organisational structure reflecting the new post-conflict political vicissitudes). Existing sporting associations, or sporting

associations with historical antecedents, are well placed to develop structured leagues, which have a deep infiltration across the country. The post-conflict State is also intricately involved in this activity both through Departments of Sport, Culture, Youth or Education and through the various official legislative bodies governing sporting activities. Even the largest explicit SDP programme cannot hope to rival the width of coverage, the sustainability and the historic and cultural acceptance of local sport structures. No sporting activity however operates in a political, economic or cultural vacuum. In a post-conflict milieu these and many other factors impact sport and will influence the ways in which sport affects peace and development processes.

Football for Peace?

The issue of sport in a post-conflict community must therefore be considered under several banners. Firstly there is the domestic sport; organically grown, funded, organised and realised with little external assistance but with links to international sporting bodies. Second there is the way in which sport is delivered through international agencies and organisations, including but not limited to international SDP NGOs and Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs)⁶ as well as international development departments of many governments. The division between the different organisations and their respective programmes is not clear-cut⁷. Some domestic sporting organisations have a clear development objective⁸. The State may provide funding for local sports clubs, but also provide funding for sport for development programmes, often in association with UN and other multi-lateral agencies⁹. Still other domestic sporting organisations may also obtain funding for the purpose of

⁶ One can consider here entities such as the United Nations Office for Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP). Other UN associate agencies include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

⁷ This would include the UK Government Department for International Development (DFID), the US equivalent USAID and Norway's NORAD.

⁸ Well-known examples of this would include the Don Bosco project in Liberia (Armstrong, 2004) and Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya (Levermore, 2008)

⁹ One such example would be the Culture for Development Programme in Bosnia, implemented by the Ministries of Culture and Education in conjunction with UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO (www.un.ba/home/listing/icity/567)

creating and participating in sport with no additional developmental objectives from local corporate sponsorship or through their own diaspora.

We need however to be realistic. Football has an alternative face to that pursued by SDP proponents. It does not always promote peace or social cohesion. Assisting at the implementation of an economic programme¹⁰ with a Women's Group in the eastern Bosnian village of Divič¹¹, a Bosniak minority returnee¹² village situated in the Republika Srpska (RS)¹³ the intention to research sport as a tool of reconciliation filled the room with derisory laughter. One of the women summoned her son to inform all present about a match played just two weeks earlier, the first home game since the village's newly re-formed club had re-joined the local football league. The match was against a neighbouring Bosnian Serb village, Čelopek, traditional local derby rivals before the conflict. Čelopek was also the site of a notorious detention centre where men from Divič had been interred following Serb paramilitary 'ethnic cleansing' in May 1992. Over 100 men from the village are believed to have been killed in the camp in June 1992. Their bodies to this day continue to be found in mass grave sites throughout the surrounding countryside.

The player explained the women's disdain of the concept that football could aid reconciliation:

'There's always been trouble at the Čelopek fixture, even before the war. This time the players were insulting us, chanting "We will kill you like we did in '92". The Serb referee sent three of us off and only one from the Serb team! It was a 1-1 draw. When they went to leave, our supporters attacked the bus, they wanted to fight, but Čelopek had more supporters and the police are Serb.' [Amel Pašić, player in FK Mladost Divič, September 2007].

¹⁰ "Creating Sustainable Income and empowering Women in Eastern Bosnia" programme run by Bosnia Initiatives for Local Development (BILD) and funded by the Soros Foundation.

¹¹ Pronounced Di-vich

¹² 'Minority Returns' are the term given to those displaced during the conflict who have returned to their pre-war homes but whose houses are now in an area in which they are not in the ethnic majority. People who have returned to the pre-war homes in Bosnia are known as 'Returnees' and their right to return is enshrined in Annex VII of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords.

¹³ The Dayton Peace Accords split the nation into two separate Entities; the Bosnian Serb Republika Srpska (RS) and the Bosnian Croat and Bosniak Federation. The RS is predominantly Bosnian Serb and it is the Serbs who hold the key positions in government, are the legislators, control the local economy and police force.

The official FA delegate at the match later commented:

“This match [Divič vs Čelopek, September 2007] was right on the edge, it could have really ignited something. There were some problems after the game but we were lucky, it had the possibility to be so much worse” [Mirko Milošević, President of the Zvornik¹⁴ FA regional branch, December 2008].

This brief encounter highlighted several aspects of football in a post-conflict milieu. The first was that despite the large numbers of SDP programmes operated by International NGOs (INGOs) such as OFFS, the world of SDP programmes was minute in comparison to the locally driven, administered and funded football networks across the country where the game takes place week in, week out season after season. Second, football occurs across the country for the sake of ‘football’, and not with a subtext of claims to reconciliation or the promotion of social cohesion, although such processes are welcome should they occur. However, outside of the controlled laboratory-like nature of SDP programmes, football is clearly capable of dividing and disrupting as much as it might unite and reconcile. The power issues inherent within the sport guide such processes.

Culture, Power and Theory

Football’s enormous popularity and passionate following attracts dynamics capable of influencing processes in the post-conflict milieu. To examine the role of football in reconciliation processes in Bosnia requires the type of deep understanding of the complex power dynamics that surround both the sport and those holding the reins of power in Bosnia, namely the International Community (in the form of supra-national bodies mandated by the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords to oversee the reconstruction of Bosnia)¹⁵ and the country’s domestic ethno-political elite. These latter are the nationalist politicians whose power stems from a conflict legacy which

¹⁴ Zvornik is the major town in eastern Bosnia and the regional football league body which administers the local leagues at village level, OFS Zvornik, is based here.

¹⁵ Chapter 6 provides a more detailed explanation of the International Community present in post-conflict Bosnia.

ensures ethno-political patronage and whose nationalist visions of division dovetail with personal interests. Put simply those who had enriched themselves during the conflict have continued to do so after (Toal & Dahlman, 2011). Clearly allegations of nationalism and corruption may not be directed at each and every elite ethno-nationalist politician. However, the local Bosnian population perceives the politicians to be a single group primarily concerned with their own personal positions of power.

Uncertainty and instability thrive in conflict and have continued into Bosnia's post-conflict milieu. In such times an ethno-nationalist elite have been able to capitalise upon economic instability and political insecurity and establish themselves as influential citizens. As the general population was forced to become accustomed to operating outside the realms of law during the conflict by relying upon the black market to survive, those who controlled the conflict economies became disproportionately powerful. It is the ethno-nationalists, who include the ethno-political elite, who have a vested interest in ensuring that Bosnia does not complete its transition to a functioning, stable post post-conflict society – one with respect for rule of law applied by a robust legal system (ICG, 2002; Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

In what follows two theoretical paradigms have been utilised to illustrate post-conflict Bosnia. The first draws from the notions of hegemony theories as proposed by the Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci. This provides the dynamic underpinning how football in Bosnia is utilised for the acquisition of power and influence. Gramsci's ideas around hegemony focus upon the constant negotiation between different sectors of society which are a central tenet to the creation of a cultural bloc underpinning the acceptance of the political and economic structures. Despite almost two decades passing since the cessation of violence, neither the International Community nor the ethno-nationalist elite have been able to create a dominant cultural bloc establishing an accepted post- hegemony in Bosnia. With the dynamic not working the country finds itself in a stalemate. The post-conflict processes in Bosnia have, by popular consensus, become stuck (ICG, 2012).

To explain this frozen moment of Bosnia's post-conflict story, the research turned to the social anthropological ideas of Victor Turner, whose concept of Liminality proved

to be illustrative. Arising from Turner's studies of a pre-industrialised societies, periods of transition – which he termed 'liminal' are best understood as ritualised journeys which when completed lead to an altered state for the participant. When the passage to the desired state is not completed as expected and the participant becomes fixed between two states a state of permanent liminality may result. Although liminality is a concept more usually applied to individuals and small scale pre-modern societies, it is possible to comprehend conflict a wider societal liminal period and should the transition process stall society may also become fixed between two states (Szakolczai, 2010).

The necessity for two frameworks mirrors the dichotomy of footballs influence on reconciliation in this post-conflict society and permits an illustration of the dualism integral to the sport. These ideas underline how football, essentially a simple sport beloved by many, is exploited by those who wish to impose a cultural and social perspective, whether it be the International Community aspiring to develop a stable democracy or the ethno-political elite endeavouring to retain the current liminal *status quo*.

The Field of Football

Sport is not merely played, but watched, administered and presented and at every point it is influenced by the dominant order (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Sport remains a critical juncture for the creation of a cultural hegemony through which a dominant class may retain power (Sugden & Bairner, 1999; Maguire, 2005). It also provides the arenas for those who do not fully conform to the predominant hegemony to visibly counter the over-riding dominance of the ruling groups through demonstrations of resistance (Carrington, 1998).

Using thus the theories of political science and explanations of social actions drawn from social anthropology this research sought to examine the role of football in a post-conflict society. This way SDP theories could also be considered via a period of prolonged immersion in the culture under focus. The aim was not to 'prove' sport does what SDP organisations contest it does (a tendency highlighted by Coalter

(Coalter, 2013)) but to observe the manifestation of influence football has across various social, cultural and economic parameters in a post-conflict community.

An ethnographic study permits an intimate prolonged inquiry. Done properly it provides a sense of understanding producing *'the feel of a society or social group in one's bones'* (Armstrong, 1998, p. xii). The ethnographic immersion enables the researcher to notice and attach significance to seemingly trivial moments or events. This is important because reconciliation processes are unique to individuals and communities and progress unevenly. Such processes are influenced by events of the present as well the past. Ethnographies permit assumptions to be challenged and research questions to adapt to the changing realities between the supposition of the researcher and the reality of the people studied. Prolonged ethnographic research requires the flexibility to work out what the research is really about and therefore is not endeavouring to answer what eventually might turn out to be the 'wrong' or peripheral question. To respond to the situation as it is, not as the researcher thought it was, is an important ethnographical strength (Okely, 2012).

Any ethnography is, by definition, an interpretation of events framed by the researchers own biases and preconceptions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Being female, in my late 30s with a young family in tow and not fluent in the Bosnian/Serbian language, at the beginning of the research I was in the eyes of the footballers of Zvornik, an unlikely researcher. What was initially seen as a weakness became my strength; the research lay not in the reconciliation journeys of the footballers, but of the communities they were tasked to represent. A regular spectator at matches and women's groups meetings and a partaker of inevitable conversations of parents looking after young children on the touchline provided a wider spectrum of interactions and facilitated observations of distribution of power and influence. The complexity of the region highlighted the role of processes attached to football.

The primary task of the research remained throughout as attempting to present a perspective of the football milieu in one region, with a focus upon one returnee village, Divič, and their football club. The research recognises that because

communities are complex, shifting associations no one research site can speak for all others in the same country. The post-conflict cannot be simplified. Post-conflict communities and their experiences of conflict are complex and varied which makes it impossible to generalise about them. Some have had direct experience of violence whereas others are impacted more in terms of economic hardship and disruption, some have fled their pre-war homes, perhaps abroad, and others will be remarkably untouched. Some have lost relatives, often the economically active members of the family upon whom dependents relied upon for survival. Others will have fared well during the conflict, perhaps able to utilise the uncertain political and economic situations to their advantage. As time progresses those who were children during the times of violence will become adults, with little memory of the pre-war structures. For those communities most affected there remains little of their pre-war societal structures but villages less affected retain a higher degree of societal and cultural memory. Such vast differences will all impact the extent to which the general population will be receptive the creation of a cultural bloc. Consensus will be complex and patchy, hegemony difficult to construct and differences easily exploited by ethno-nationalists eager to retain their personal grip on power.

The Terms and the Landscape

The aim of this thesis is to present an ethnography of a Bosniak community in the Serb dominated Republika Srpska which explores the way in which the activity of football impacts post-conflict processes and is utilised by different influential actors in the region to support their often contrasting visions of a post-conflict hegemony. It is estimated by peace researchers that reconciliation processes are generational in length (Lederach, 1997). Undertaking research 15 years after the events that so traumatised the region permits observation of longer-term post-conflict processes and the exploration of the existence of football's influence on them. By examining the rich and varied processes and nature of people's actions as they interact with the football milieu, whether at village level, elite teams or the institutions of football itself, this thesis seeks to provide insight into extent to which the processes evident in football may be translated into political capital.

The following is split into three sections. Section A provides the theoretical frameworks around which the research is based. Post-conflict societies are fractured and complex, with multiple and contested hegemonies which constantly shift and are not fully established. As the International Community responds to the crisis their humanitarian and development responses to the conflict further distorts domestic processes. To accurately illustrate the dynamics of the complexity of the post-conflict environment requires frameworks from both political science and anthropological fields.

Section B sets the context: It provides a regrettably brief outline of the history of Bosnia, how the evolution of a people into separate ethnic groups has led to such ongoing violent ramifications and explores the historical links between the political and football spheres, paying particular attention to the role football has played in the ethno-nationalist events. Such a framework sets the locale for the active research, an ethnography of a Bosnian returnee village on the very eastern fringes of the country.

Section C presents the active research showing the role football has had upon the post-conflict processes of Divič at three levels; village football, elite football and football's institutions, illustrating the hegemonic processes at work and highlighting the actions taken by those who wish to retain the current unstable status quo.

Bosnian terminology is complex and inherently political. At this juncture there are a few uses of terminology which ought to be clarified. Although the term 'ethnic' is used throughout this thesis it should be understood that the three groups in Bosnia derived from the same stock. As such there are no differences between them beyond that of history which has taken different groups in different cultural directions. Ethnicity is commonly equated with 'race' and some Bosnians contest the terms use in Bosnia because they feel it suggests the three groups are more fundamentally different than they actually are. With that in mind the term ethnic is used herein according to the Oxford Dictionary definition meaning '*relating to a population subgroup with a common national or cultural tradition*'. The term 'Bosnian' is used herein to define that pertaining to Bosnia as a whole and incorporates all three major ethnic groups; Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats but also includes other

groups identifying themselves with the country but who do not belong to one of the three major ethnic groups, most obviously the Jewish and Roma populations. The terms 'Serb' and 'Croat' are used to pertain to that of Serb or Croat ethnicity whereas the terms Serbian or Croatian imply specifically to the nations of Serbia or Croatia themselves; a Serbian is from the Serbia itself, whereas a Serb is someone of Serb ethnicity. The term 'Bosniak' is used in preference to Bosnian Muslim in part because that is how Bosniaks refer to themselves but also because it removes the religious connotations from the name. Bosnian Serbs are not known as Orthodox Bosnians nor are the Croats known as Catholic Bosnians. Religion is certainly a defining part of ethnic identity in Bosnia but Bosnians are not uniformly religious.

Finally the full name of the country of Bosnia is Bosnia and Herzegovina. Herzegovina is a predominantly Croat region to the south and west of the country. Strictly speaking any time Bosnia is mentioned the full name should be used. However this thesis is based in the northwest part of the country and Bosnians from this region routinely use the term Bosnia to apply to the country as a whole. For the sake of clarity and an easier read their convention has instructed the analysis that follows.

SECTION A

The following section assesses the role of SDP interventions in a post-conflict context before moving on to consider the two frameworks which are the bedrock of this research; Gramsci's hegemony theory and Turner's concept of liminality. Postulating that Bosnia is a country best understood as one whose hegemony was destroyed during the conflict but has not yet established a new hegemony. The International Community, mandated to implement the Dayton Peace Accords, is endeavouring to create a stable and peaceful country, but their inability to compromise has, as Gramsci predicted, meant that their hegemonic vision has not developed the cultural bloc required to become established. In this hegemonic vacuum have arisen the ethno-nationalist elite, a dominant class who are more interested in protecting their personal positions of power and influence gained during the unstable nature of conflict. Recognising that Bosnia is in the reintegrative phase of a conflict driven liminal period, the ethno-nationalist elite act as 'Tricksters' using any tactic to perpetuate the liminal period and prevent the country from reintegrating into the wider global political society. Sport, and football in particular may be seen as a tool for both would-be dominant groups.

Literature researching the role of sport in social, economic and political processes in a post-conflict society might be broadly divided into two. On one side is sociological theory examining the more generic role that sport has or might have in society and the role it might play in bringing about social, political or economic change. On the other, echoing the growth of SDP NGOs since the 1990s, is literature focussed on the explicit role of sport for development organisations. In many ways this reflects the division of sport in a post-conflict society; domestic sporting activities where sport is enjoyed for the sake of sport itself alongside what Coalter has termed 'sport plus' i.e. the international development programmes as the International Community attempts to assist the (re)building of a society and culture torn apart by violence. This discourse, between the internal, inherent, organic, social and cultural structure of a post-conflict community and the external, neo-liberal global context is readily apparent in sport in Bosnia.

CHAPTER 1

Moving the Ball Forward: The International Community Occupies the Post-Conflict Zone

Conflict in Bosnia has historically been a regular and recurring phase. The most recent conflict in the 1990s witnessed one crucial and important difference to the conflicts that had passed before; the level of engagement by the International Community both during and in the years following the violence. The following chapter examines the context within which the International Community's response to the Bosnian conflict was framed and proceeds to demonstrate how the development of the SDP sector has been shaped by similar contextual parameters.

Bosnia's 1992-95 civil conflict occurred in a period of intense global upheaval. The largely peaceful revolutions in many Soviet States in 1989 were indicative of rapidly globalising civil societies which enabled citizens to begin to redefine their relationships with the state (Kaldor, 2003). However, the break-down of the old (i.e. pre 1990) world order and the communist hegemony of the Eastern bloc led to a wave of 'identity politics' which in the context of the failure of the prevailing political legitimacy during an era of instability provided the possibility for political opportunists to reclaim and reinvent identities. Such political movements are, by their very nature, exclusive and divisive and led to a number of 'new wars' waged not between states, but between armed networks of state and non-state actors (Kaldor, 1999). These conflicts might best be understood not as civil wars, for the networks, causes and influences of the violence spread across borders, but as regional conflicts (Lederach, 1997; Kaldor 2003).

A typical characteristic of these 'new wars' has been the utilisation of disparate militias, which has necessitated the creation of a single narrative to provide an element of unification: Such narratives have tended towards ethno-nationalist sentiment. The ability of nationalist leaders – in this case in Bosnia - to create an atmosphere of fear within which the population feel threatened is necessary in order to rationalise the violence and justify the eradication of those of a different ethno-

political group whether through forced expulsion, mass killings or economic, psychological and political intimidation. As such the targeting of civilians has become a common strategy and ensures that civilian casualties become an explicit aim rather than a by-product of armed conflict (Kaldor, 1999).

The suffering of civilians in the Bosnian conflict triggered a humanitarian response from that known as the International Community at previously unprecedented levels. Since the start of the conflict an estimated two-thirds of the Bosnian population have received assistance from international humanitarian agencies and NGOs, coordinated by the UNHCR (Kaldor, 1999). The Dayton Peace Accords that brought the violence to a halt also established the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)¹⁶ which in turn nominated a High Representative mandated to implement the civilian aspects of the peace agreement¹⁷. Humanitarian relief aimed at supplying basic assistance to civilians in need morphed into developmental assistance as the focus shifted to a wider implementation of policies focussed upon realising long term change. The International Community remained, authorised by the Dayton Accords to take the lead role in the creation of a new, post-conflict Bosnia.

The term International Community is widely understood throughout Bosnia to mean the organisations concerned with implementing the civilian aspects of the Dayton Accords. They are considered as the principal practitioners of international peace-building efforts, ultimately overseen by the High Representative and his Office (OHR). In Bosnia the International Community comprises of a number of international supra-national agencies, most notably the World Bank, IMF and UN specialist agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF. Other prominent organisations include the EU, NATO and OSCE¹⁸ who are mandated to develop a 'fair and democratic' electoral system

¹⁶ A body of 55 countries and agencies established to support the peace process. It is run by the Steering Board of the PIC which meets periodically to review progress in implementing the DPA. It retains international control over Bosnia until the country is deemed to have political and democratic stability and self-sustainability. The point at which the PIC ceases to have control over Bosnia has not been defined.

¹⁷ Annex 10 of the Dayton Accords

¹⁸ The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe is a regional security organisation comprising of 57 states in Europe, Central Asia and North America whose work revolves around ensuring security in the region. Their activities cover conflict prevention, economic development and promoting human rights. Delegates of participating states meet weekly in Vienna.

throughout the country. The term is understood by Bosnians and those who work in Bosnia (whether local or international) to include International NGOs including ICRC¹⁹, MercyCorps, Oxfam and Save the Children. National Development Agencies, most prolifically the UK Government's DfID, the US USAID and Scandinavian organisations such as Norway's NORAD and Sweden's SIDA, have also been particularly active in the delivery of aid and development programmes in Bosnia during and since the conflict.

Local NGOs do not include themselves within the International Community umbrella but much of their funding is from donor agencies who only fund programmes in accordance with the International Community objectives, thus defining the type of programmes local NGOs to implement. These disparate local and global groups have varied agendas but all subscribe to the overall peace-building strategy integral to which is rapid democratisation, market liberalisation and human rights protections as a way of establishing a sustainable peace able to resist the drift back to conflict as is estimated to happen in almost half the number of countries emerging from a civil conflict (Lederach, 1997).

Almost two decades after the signing of the Dayton Accords Bosnia can be regarded as a success story in that it has not drifted back into armed conflict. However the country remains very dependent upon the presence of the International Community. The PIC has confirmed that Bosnia must meet certain conditions before OHR may be closed, including fiscal sustainability and entrenchment of the rule of law and a more recently added condition of the reform of the constitution. Bosnia has been recognised as a potential candidate country for accession in 2003 and signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement agreeing to EU conditions for membership in 2008. Closure of OHR is considered to be a pre-requisite for EU membership but the PIC regular amendments to these conditions leaves observers unsure as to exactly when OHR's role may be considered complete. There remains a sense that the

¹⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross, an independent, neutral organisation established in 1863 to provide humanitarian help for people affected by conflict. Based in Geneva it is financed by donations from governments and from the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

closure of OHR would represent a threshold which must be crossed to consider the country has completed its post-conflict period.

From Peace Keeping to Peace Building

The 1990s saw a switch in international engagement from the 'peace keeping' focus of the Cold War era to 'peace-building' strategies when the underlying sources of conflict were to be addressed. No longer was international involvement to be simply a matter of preventing violence; the interventionist mandate had expanded and *"peace-building involved identifying and alleviating the underlying sources of conflict within a war-shattered state, which required a thorough understanding of the local conditions"* (Paris, 2004, p. 3). The methods used to implement peace-building namely the adoption of liberalising policies, the pursuit of free and fair elections, constitutional limitations on state power (combined with the promotion of a civil society to monitor and balance state power), respect for individual human rights and the promotion of a market driven economy in which the influence of the state was to be minimised with widespread privatisation) reflect the dominance of the USA in the period following the Cold War (Wallensteen, 2007). Although supra-national organisations such as the Bretton Woods institutions did not seek to impose forms of government onto states, their conception of 'good governance' a standard condition of assistance during the 1990s presupposed Western economic and democratic models are optimal and reflect the influence of the dominant super-power of the period (Paris, 2004).

If success for such an approach was to be measured in the numbers of countries that did not re-visit widespread violence in the years following conflict, then such an approach might be deemed to be positive - of the fourteen major peace-building operations launched by the United Nations between 1989 and 1999, only three have reverted to widespread violence (as opposed an estimated 50% of conflicts without peace-building assistance) (Kaldor, 2003). Beyond this metric are complex situations. To what extent may we claim success in evaluating the extent to which conditions for a stable and lasting peace had been established? How long could peace be sustained after the departure of the international peace-keepers? We might note that whether

the underlying causes of the conflict had been addressed, had the post-conflict society been equipped with the tools to resist further impulses back to violence? Almost twenty years after the International Community began work on the Dayton Accords a sustainable peace has not been achieved and success for International Community interventions cannot yet be claimed.

Orthodoxies in the Unorthodox

The liberalisation driven international response utilised for post-conflict situations throughout the 1980s and 1990s reflected the prevailing neo-liberal development orthodoxy operated by the World Bank and IMF (Paris, 2004). Such an orthodoxy demanded the reduction of the involvement of the state in markets and a corresponding development of civil society in order to provide a balance to state power. By the 1990s, following the lack of expected progress from the Structural Adjustment Programmes operated by the Bretton Woods institutions, a different development orthodoxy was emerging that focussed upon enabling development through the protection of human rights and freedoms. Poverty has been linked to the lack of protection of human rights (Pogge, 2008) and the inclusion of human rights into development practice dominated development discourse towards the late twentieth century. It was into this landscape that the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) movement began to take off.

The 1978 adoption of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport by UNESCO²⁰ proclaimed access to sport to be a universal human right. The inclusion of the right to access sport in several subsequent Human Right Conventions (with the increased legal obligation upon states conferred by a Convention) firmly grounded sport within the UN supranational global framework (Giulianotti, 2010)²¹. Sport

²⁰ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation was established in 1945 to encourage peace on the basis of humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity. They create holistic policies that address the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

²¹ For example Article 31 of the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) state that nation-states must recognise the right of the child to "rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child". Article 13c of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) seeks to ensure a basis of equality of men and women in the right to "participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life".

hitherto welcomed as a distraction from the 'real' world of politics was now considered an antidote to political extremism and conflict.

The Power of Sport

As the recognition of the failure of traditional international development orthodoxies to achieve many of their long term objectives (including the global social change and the reduction of poverty and inequality) intensified throughout the 1990s, the idea that sport might be mobilised to address the failures of the traditional development orthodoxies flourished (Levermore & Beacom, 2012; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). The growth of the SDP movement throughout the 1990s linked the idea of sport, particularly participation in sport, to the protection and advocacy of the realization of other universal rights (Kidd, 2008, Armstrong & Collison, 2011; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014, Levermore, 2012). The promotion of sport thus shifted from being a universal right in its own right to being the vehicle by which other universal rights could be delivered, promoted and protected. Various sports were considered to be key to this but all sports were keen to be considered the facilitators of such a philosophy.

The concept of sport as a mechanism to realise broader development goals caught the attention of key global policy makers (Beutler, 2008). The UN declared 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (United Nations, 2005), the World Economic Forum dedicated an event to SDP in 2006 (Levermore, 2008) and in 2005 FIFA switched from making its traditional charitable donations to implementing programmes using football to achieve social development targets (Coalter, 2010). By 2011 hundreds of organisations and programmes devoted to the use of sport to further development and peace building objectives were listed on the international platform on Sport for Development (www.sportanddev.org).

The 'power of sport' creed has powerful backers. Nelson Mandela said "Sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they understand." (DCMS, 2000). Adolf Ogi, the Special Adviser to the Secretary General of the UN on Sport for

Development and Peace added “Sport, with its joys and triumphs, its pains and defeats, its emotions and challenges, is an unrivalled medium for the promotion of education, health, development and peace. Sport helps us demonstrate, in our pursuit of the betterment of humanity, that there is more that unites than divides us.” (United Nations, 2005, p. 89) The Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan agreed: “Sport has the power to bring people together, bridge differences, and promote communication and understanding.” (United Nations, 2006).

Sport is claimed to be an *‘effective delivery mechanism’* that is also *‘a cost-effective means of achieving development and peace goals’*. (United Nations, 2005, pp. 83-84). The increasing number of organisations, corporations, aid organisations, NGOs and governments committing growing levels of funding to SDP programmes sport was accompanied by a burgeoning body of SDP literature tackling the issue of sport in development administered through increasing numbers of Western NGOs who provide the activity in accordance with the dominant neo-liberal framework inherent in modern development practice today (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011).

There are a range of SDP actors utilising sport to deliver development objectives. NGOs are perhaps the most active and include INGOs such as the Canadian based Right to Play and the Danish Cross Cultures Programmes Association whose ‘Open Fun Football Schools’ (OFFS) programme is perhaps the best known SDP intervention in Bosnia. Other actors identified include Intergovernmental and Governmental Organisations including the Overseas Development departments such as DfID, USAID and NORAID, the Private Sector (most prominently multi-national Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes) and Radical NGOs and social movements, who use sport as a focal point for campaigning around social justice issues, such as protesting against child labour in football manufacturing (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Broad partnerships whereby different actors work collaboratively, particularly in terms of planning, financing and implementing SDP projects are common (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014).

Such was the support for sport as a tool for development and the belief that sport could deliver developmental goals, that in 2009 the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolutions calling upon sport as a sector to take the opportunity to support

peace, inclusivity and socio-economic development in upcoming mega sporting events (Armstrong & Collison, 2011). Indeed the hosting of such mega events themselves by countries in the Global South have become understood as a legitimate tool of development policy, despite little consideration of the local political economy with inherent inequalities and underdevelopment (Cornelissen, 2009; Darnell S., 2012)

Sports Policy analyst, Fred Coalter provides a useful classification for clarifying the ways in which different organisations use sport for development by dividing the sport activities into three (Coalter, 2007):

- (i) **Sport:** Activities that are purely based around sport which assume developmental properties are inherent for the participants.
- (ii) **Sport Plus:** in which sporting programmes are adapted to include a wider development objective, for example gender equity. The programmes aims infer that participation in sport is instrumental but that sport in and of itself is insufficient to achieve these developmental objectives. Sport Plus programmes pursue their defined objectives through a number of approaches including organizational values, ethics, practices and symbolic games but for the programmes to achieve their goals additional approaches are required.
- (iii) **Plus Sport:** Sport is used to attract participants as a hook to attend programmes where the developmental objective is related less to the sporting activity but more to programmes of education and training, most often for educational and health objectives, such as HIV/AIDS awareness. Such programmes have a tendency to focus on short-term outcomes which are given primacy over any longer term more complex developmental processes.

This enthusiasm for sports potential to deliver social and economic change led to the role and purpose of sport becoming ever-more obscured: no longer was it an activity in and of itself, with its own social, political and cultural negotiations. Instead sport

became best understood as a tool to address and achieve greater socio-political challenges (Levermore, 2011). Does sport deserve such a burden? Furthermore, could sport bring together antagonists in peace?

Diplomacy at Play?

When understood as a benign cultural activity sport is a form of soft diplomacy *par excellence* (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2014). The SDP sector is most commonly assumed to benefit four key developmental areas: health, social inclusion of marginalised and disempowered groups and communities, poverty reduction and peace and conflict resolution (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). Of most interest to this thesis is that of peace and conflict resolution. SDP institutions believe that sport has the potential to bring together divided communities, facilitating a positive interaction (United Nations, 2005; Right to Play, 2010; Cross Cultures Project Association, 2010). Others, perhaps the less naïve, point out that sport also has the potential to create and perpetuate divisions. (Sugden & Bairner, 1999; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001).

Whilst IC peace-building efforts have largely focussed upon the democratisation and market liberalisation of post-conflict nations, there is recognition that a sustainable peace requires active work to reduce the structural, institutional and social inequalities and social hatreds and intolerances in order to build what renowned peace researcher Galtung refers to as a *Positive Peace* (Galtung, 1998). According to Galtung the cessation of violence will not be sufficient to sustain peace if the inequalities manifesting from structural, social and institutional violence are not addressed. Framing development initiatives and programmes through a human rights framework mirrors this thinking; to protect an individual's civil, political, economic and social rights echo the pursuit of a reduction in the inequalities so often at the root of conflict.

The complex, transitional nature of a post-conflict period requires both short-term actions and long-term vision to bring about the change required to build peace (Lederach, 1997). Often the causes of conflict lie in the deeper structural and systemic nature of the nation and require combined social change, as demonstrated by Dugan's 'nested paradigm' model which advocates for addressing issues at both

systemic and grassroots level (Lederach, 1997; Sugden, 2014). Such deep cultural and social changes can require decades to implement and provide intangible and unmeasurable outcomes, a consideration often at odds with the objectives of the International Community who are keen to measure results, achieve objectives and withdraw from the area at the earliest possible point.

Fundamental issues of truth, justice, mercy and peace must be addressed to achieve reconciliation (Lederach, 1997). The creation of War Crimes Tribunals such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is a step taken by the International Community to create the conditions needed for truth, justice and mercy – areas in which SDP programmes are able to offer little assistance. However the fourth central tenet is the buttressing of peace through improving security, respect, unity and well-being. It is in this area that SDP programmes are best able to support the implementation of a stable peace. Programmes specifically designed to bring together inimical communities to break down barriers and foster friendships between them are believed to promote social cohesion. Other programmes strive to address inequalities, to educate participants about the dangers of mines and to promote physical well-being. SDP programmes argue that those who play together may well respect each other in future.

The traditional *ad hoc*, informal nature of sports programmes began to alter as the SDP sector moved to validate their activities. The SDP sector began to formalise their perceptions to bring the sector in line with other development initiatives. Most obviously this was achieved through the explicit linking of SDP programme outcomes to the pursuit of the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG)²². Sport was proclaimed to be a '*powerful vehicle*' for attaining MDG aims of education, health and social development, sustainable development, equality (the empowerment of women in particular) and contributing to lasting peace (United Nations, 2005, pp. 26-29) a far wider remit than previously attempted.

²² The MDGs, set by the UN in 2000 are an attempt to focus global development efforts on eight key areas: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, providing universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing of a global partnership for development.

The SDP sector has been remarkably one-dimensional and self-congratulatory when examining their own claims regarding the power of sport in development and the genre has received surprisingly little critical attention given its increased utilisation (Coalter, 2007; Levermore, 2012). The efficacy of sport is taken as a given: an intellectual truth that few challenge. SDP programmes began to utilise their sporting celebrity connections and exploited the greater level of media interest garnered from such association. The increasing levels of funding the SDP sector received and consequential higher profile began to lead to more critical sets of eyes being cast over SDP activities (Coalter, 2007; Black, 2010; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011 amongst others).

To be fair, the SDP sector does recognise limitations to sport as a peace-building mechanism. There is an acceptance that sport in and of itself is not capable of halting a conflict although the violence may be suspended for a period for a sporting event²³ (Beutler, 2008). The sector appreciates that sport may be used by some to promote conflict, in particular through encouraging nationalism and enabling acts of racism or violence against minorities and excluded groups (Right to Play, 2010). It also acknowledges that SDP programmes, in common with many peace initiatives, may make a conflict worse through worsening divisions between conflicting groups, reinforcing structural or overt violence, diverting resources from productive peace activities and disempowering local people (Right to Play, 2010; United Nations, 2005). The criticisms of SDP programmes which can also be applied to any development intervention are also acknowledged by the sector: SDP programmes can be uneven, underfunded, unregulated, uncoordinated and riven with competition for limited resources (Kidd, 2008). Aware that more rigorous research must be presented to authenticate the usefulness of sport as a tool for development, the sector appears instead to have adopted an attitude of researching how to prove that sport does what they say it does (Coalter, 2010). The stated aim of the UN's 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education's (IYSPE) was to "*present undeniable proof that sport and physical education have a role to play in the achievement of global developmental*

²³ Perhaps the most well-known is the Olympic Truce wherein UN Member states are asked through resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993 to observe a truce for the period of the Olympic Games and to use the period to work towards peace by peaceful and diplomatic means.

goals and improving the lives of people living in poverty, disease or conflict” (Beutler, 2008, p. 361) which suggests a willingness to illustrate a pre-determined attitude of success rather than systemic instrumental analysis of the relationship between sport and development a common attitude within the SDP genre.

That said the sector has been less receptive to examination of the most fundamental aspect of SDP; the actual ability of the movement to achieve its aims and the concrete mechanisms by which these objectives will be realised (Coalter, 2007; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011, 2012; Levermore, 2011). This concern, that there is no mechanism through which the developmental objectives of SPD programmes are actually realised has been expressed in a more detailed analysis of OFFS which stated:

“aims of development through sport are over-ambitious, unrealistic, inappropriate for conflict resolution and complicated by the number of different project partners involved who may have conflicts of interests towards the projects.” (Armstrong & Collison, 2011, p. 396)

Clearly the power of sport is more complex than it first appears.

Unpicking the Power of Sport

The SDP movement has tended to utilise a traditional functionalist framework to justify its existence (Spaaij, 2009). Sport is understood to demonstrate many of the cohesive values required by society to coalesce and participation provides the opportunity for the instruction of the values of a society (Durkheim, 1915). In other words there is a perception that sport takes the role of reproducing (usually aspirational) societal values and moral personality (such as leadership, discipline, team-building and inclusiveness) which participation will confer onto the participants. Sport may also viewed as a method of tension management, providing a recognised venue for the release of aggression in a relatively contained environment (Rowe D. , 2004). As a consequence the driving dynamic of SDP is the belief in the innate goodness and the benefits that participation in sport provides. The ever-vague attribute of ‘character’ is amplified by the supposed efficacy of sport that occurs in an assumed neutral, apolitical space (Coalter, 2010; United Nations, 2005). On a collective level the society that has sport bought to it has the benefit of enjoying its ‘capacity building’.

There are limitations with this perspective. Most obviously, the sense that sport is in and of itself positive ignores the litany of less than subtle negative traits associated including hooliganism, nationalism and corruption (Black, 2010). More subtle negative traits including the continuation of social exclusion, social division and elitism all of which run counter to the inclusive nature proclaimed to be inherent within SDP. To its credit, the UN did recognise that sport is '*capable of igniting violent passion, separatism, nationalism and racism*' in 2005 IYSPE report, but countered that sport could also become a '*surrogate for war*' as long as the '*competitive impulses*' could be expressed in a '*safe and regulated environment*' (United Nations, 2005, p. 84) reinforcing the sense that the SDP sector persists in pursuing a pre-determined view of the success of sport in achieving developmental aims.

Such programmes can be inherently conservative which may be where the roots of the problems of conflict lie. In a fractured, dysfunctional post-conflict community societal structures and values are being reformed. It is not always clear which values are the ones being reinforced by sporting activities. A return to normality may well be the 'normality' that had cause the conflict in the first place. Functionalist assumptions presume that the *status quo* is desirable: Sport often reinforces the existing societal structure and values. To bring about developmental aims such as equality, an end to discrimination, social inclusion and female empowerment requires in most instances the instillation of a different set of social values. So, one might ask, does sport have the power to facilitate revolt or at least reform?

Deification to Reification?

Those that believe in the power of sport to deliver concrete developmental aims are passionate in their beliefs and to some extent deserve the moniker of 'sport evangelists' or 'sport pentecostalists' (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014). There are a number of reasons for such a belief system. SDP leaders have often been highly successful sportspeople, whose personal experience of sport has reflected SDP's mythopoeic ideals. Such people, by virtue of making a career in sport, are presumed to have less obvious political 'baggage' than development professionals thereby opening up the possibility of their engaging in areas previously inaccessible to the

non-athlete (Levermore, 2008). Their energy and conviction is assumed to be contagious and capable of being passed throughout the sector, most specifically onto young volunteers whose inexperience and lack of professionalism is countered by boundless enthusiasm, energy and belief in the programmes they are implementing (Black, 2010; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011). However, the ability to be a highly successful sports person is not the same as working within the development sphere. Excellence in a sporting milieu requires achievements of specific goals and adherence to set agendas/training programmes. The development sphere incorporates less definite goals in a more nuanced, ambiguous milieu and has a less certain reification process (Black, 2010).

Functionalist assumptions around the 'power of sport' remain precisely assumptions (Giulianotti, 2012). Measurements of the effectiveness of SDP programmes are not simple calculations: SDP interventions have come in for particular criticisms for their lack of clarity and the imprecise nature of the aims of their interventions. Within the SDP genre there has been little acknowledgement of the extent to which the mythopoeic mystique surrounding sport has led to a reification of concepts without genuine evidence of such outcomes (Coalter, 2007, 2012). The extent to which sport is believed to bring about wider development objectives without clarifying how such achievements are realised is justifiably widely criticised (Black, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011c; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012). But sport continues to be promoted at all levels as an antidote to a host of societal ills. For many it is an inherent good, for others sport does no harm. In such logic not to utilise sport would be a ludicrous omission.

Neo-Liberal Development Benevolence?

The interventions of SDP usually operate within two distinct frameworks: that sport is universal (and universally positive), and that development is a benevolent system through which goods, aid and experience from the Global North can pass to the Global South (Coalter, 2010). This brings problems: To assume the universal nature of sport is to ignore its cultural and historical baggage, particularly within local contexts. As a popular and visible cultural practice, sport is a particularly potent method of encouraging the implementation of a cultural hegemony (Saavedra, 2009).

Modern sport did not merely appear but emerged within a context - often colonial - and within a globalising capitalist hegemony. Even without the historical baggage, the politics of development are omnipresent in SDP because *'developmental ideas inevitably bear the imprint of those who have developed them'* (Black, 2010, p. 125). This is an uncomfortable juxtaposition for the SDP movement who seek to claim their developmental objectives – particularly those of equality and inclusion - are being realised through an apolitical, neutral arena (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011). The extent to which development and development programmes can be considered to be benevolent activities and the extent to which sports can be understood to be both universal and neutral need addressing. Criticisms of both assumptions lie within theories of globalisation.

The SDP sector's widespread and unquestioning acceptance of the benevolence of the very concept of development positions the movement firmly in the neo-liberal hegemonic system. Global North agencies dictate what constitutes development as well as divining who and who isn't 'developed'. (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011). The neo-liberal strategies of market liberalisation and civil society development promoted by the Bretton Woods institutions led to the retreat of the state in citizen's daily lives. Such a retreat opened up the opportunities for external agencies to operate and deliver within the spheres of health, education and welfare of a nation-state, traditionally state controlled and operated activities (Batley, 2002). The modern SDP movement believes sport has the ability to bring about successful outcomes within these spheres and thus such activity falls within its mandates. As a consequence Global South participants have no real voice regarding the version or vision of development being implemented, nor are they asked to address the issues of who is being developed and in what way. They have little ability to hold the organisations delivering the development to account, and as such may be viewed as receiving a form of neo-colonialism (Armstrong, 2004; Giulianotti, 2011c; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012)

Interventions of development are usually designed to follow a linear model replicating that of the Global North experiences. There is little questioning of the nature of their aims or the logic of such interventions in areas with dissimilar history,

cultures or resources (Black, 2010). Indeed there is a suspicion that with their financial strength and political influence, Northern NGOs are powerful agents who are in effect cementing the position of the Global North at the top of the development ladder, concomitantly constraining southern communities' abilities to create a new possibility for change and so maintaining the inequalities inherent in the current world system (Carrington, 1998; Darby, 2005; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012).

Neo-liberal development theory provokes many criticisms, some identified by Levermore are of particular relevance for SDP interventions. The first suggests that by developing what is essentially a core-periphery dichotomy between the northern (developed) and southern (developing) areas, development essentially creates a level of dependency, thus ironically reinforcing inequalities and underdevelopment. The second suggests the genre is post-colonialist whereby historical and cultural legacies influence southern areas, for example trading patterns with previous colonial occupiers leave a legacy of over-dependence upon export of raw materials and an underdeveloped ability in the South to utilise said raw materials for domestic manufacturing and innovations. The third manifests in what is best termed critical feminism, which addresses development via the historical and cultural legacy of societal – mainly gender - discrimination. All three, whilst quite different in character see particular concerns over contemporary unequal power distribution and the impact that such interventions have or might have upon development in the south. (Levermore, 2012).

The creation of a Global North neo-liberal sporting hegemony through sport is also highlighted by Darnell & Hayhurst (2011) who argue that sport, in particular, has a dominant capitalist achievement ethos which subsumes Southern participation through Northern policy making. Elitism and inequality become normalised (between north and south, nation states or communities) which informs the cultural and political logic of sport (Darby, 2005). Sport thus is not innocent and carries political baggage whether it likes it or not.

Apolitical or a Political Game?

Participation in global sport requires acceptance of the terms dictated by the controlling sports bodies. The power and influence of multi-lateral non-state organisations such as FIFA, UEFA and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) exemplify the neo-liberal hegemony at work (Giulianotti, 2011c). Domestic league structures, association positions and sporting disputes are all resolved according to decrees from the sport's international body. Power in many sports, including football, is held in the global north and regarded by many in the global south to be a form of neo-colonisation (Jarvie, 2006; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012). In the case of football, the governing body, FIFA have long been suspected of marginalising developing regions where economic disparities hinder the development of the game such as Africa (Darby, 2005).

The most commonly utilised sports in SDP interventions are football, basketball and volleyball which are all modern, northern originated sports. Although undeniably popular in many areas of the global south they are not domestic; all have been introduced by channels of colonisation or emulation and retain their unique cultural and historical baggage. Widely played they may be, neutral and apolitical they are not, and never were²⁴ (Jarvie, 2006; Giulianotti, 2011a; Levermore, 2011)

Mirroring the way in which trading patterns see raw materials flow from the global south to post-colonial masters, football continues to draw players and money from the south to the leviathan leagues in England, France, Italy, Spain and Germany. Televised matches from these leagues are consumed globally²⁵. These northern leagues are keenly and knowledgeably followed by those who have never been to the countries nor the cities the clubs represent. Local domestic leagues, smaller and less

²⁴ The utilisation of sport for cultural ends is not solely the domain of the Global North. Examples of resistance and counter-hegemonic impulses in the field of sport are legion. A well-known example has been the deliberate development of a carnival atmosphere at cricket matches in the West Indies in which their white colonial masters were routinely derided specifically challenged the colonial system (Giulianotti, 2005).

²⁵ In August 2002 the author watched Manchester City vs Newcastle on a TV powered by the only generator in the district in the East End of Freetown, Sierra Leone. In January 2009 the same teams were again broadcast live on TV but this time the game was watched in a bar in a bar in Kozluk, just north of Zvornik.

skilled than those mentioned above, have been undermined by these televised matches and are cited as the reason for reduced crowds and a lack of common knowledge about the domestic game and its players (Hargreaves, 2002; Darby, 2005; Jarvie, 2006; Maguire, 1999)

In a globalising world the power and influence of popular sports such as football have implanted the Northern cultural sporting model with its celebration of competition, inherent elitism and strong nationalist overtones into global Southern society. (Giulianotti, 2010). Research has focussed upon the interventions of northern organisations in the southern countries leading to an over-emphasis on northern based SDP practitioners. (Armstrong, 2004; Hayhurst, 2009; Coalter, 2010; Giulianotti, 2011; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). This generalisation of the SDP movement ignores the wide range of actors participating and utilising sport as a means for social development (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012). It further raises important questions about the stereotyping of SDP recipients, their needs and implied consent of the direction they would like to take.

The modern sport fixation with competition and winning, leads to pressures for the athletes to take performance enhancing drugs as an example of the sporting culture being instilled as a part of the northern hegemony (Black, 2010). Rather than bringing about the positive traits of leadership and discipline oft-hailed by the SDP movement, sports unintended side effect may be a culture of cheating and corruption (Maguire, 1999). Sport can thus exacerbate the political mores that contributed to conflict. Furthermore, a lack of international success and notable difference in quality between domestic leagues in the north and the south perpetuates northern superiority wherein the south is taught the '*rules, order and norms of how to behave/submit*' (Levermore, 2012, p. 42). The SDP genre may have good intentions but it sits within a political context.

That said the SDP have to begin somewhere, somehow. One starting point is particularly emotive. The invocation of the 'power of sport' with its 'universal language' as a *proof* of sports ability to drive international development is oversimplistic and reductionist (Darnell, 2012). There is instead a growing understanding of the individual nature and range of experiences of the communities and individuals

participating in SDP programmes which produce a range of outcomes, even from the same programme. Thus in place of any talk of those essentialising the power of sport, there is a growing recognition of the need to consider the role that culture and power play within and consider how sport *'is socially constructed, that it is context specific and that its social meanings and impacts are shaped by the interplay between social structural and cultural processes'* (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014, p. 2).

Player power

The extent to which power and/or knowledge can be used as an agent of transformation has obvious appeal to SDP agents. Sport, with its physical, social and cultural benefits as well as potential economic benefits becomes a powerful tool when understood to be a site where life may be transformed and improved. A strong facet of the neo-colonial criticism of SDP is the requirement to examine the relationship of power between those implementing the developmental intervention and those participating (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). The extent to which local NGOs are able to influence SDP projects can be limited. As Giulianotti and Armstrong (2014) ask: *"to what extent and in what ways are these local projects able to adapt or to shape the global SDP movement according to local needs?"* (p. 3).

Research has highlighted that SDP interventions are not always passed on in the original form to their target populations but southern participants instead mobilise sport to meet their own goals (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). Local actors will *"contextualise, reinterpret, resist, subvert and transform international development agendas which, in turn, contribute to a diverse array of development practices emerging within local contexts."* (ibid, p. 95). In explaining this comes the recognition that power is not exclusively in the hands of Northern actors. Consequently analysis call for a more decentred approach to SDP research, one which takes into account the full range of actors in SDP including perspectives from the Global South and a detailed examination of actors from the Global South to understand how authority is subverted and manipulated to defend and promote individual interests. Such appreciation of local agency is vital in order to understand the relationship between neo-liberal capital with local power dynamics (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012).

Academics are not agreed on what to make of indigenous resistance. The actions of the community leaders in a Zambian sport-based project studied by Lindsay and Grattan arose out of the application of neo-liberal policies to which Zambia has been subjected. Agency of locals represents a resistance to the global neo-liberal hegemony and its organisations. Darnell and Hayhurst acknowledge the importance of highlighting local community based perspectives of SDP but submit that Lindsay and Grattan's Zambian example is best understood not as oppositional to the top down model of development portrayed in SDP critiques but as complementary. (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012, p. 112). They argue that the actions of local Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the realm of sport for development is not evidence of a failing dominance of neo-liberalism but should instead be considered a survival strategy to counter the oppressive neo-liberal structures. Darnell and Hayhurst further raise the notion that local agency in SDP is an example of the ways in which cultural hegemonies are being constructed through a process of social and cultural negotiations amidst relations of power (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012). This approach requires SDP researchers to consider how power is retained and resisted, which not only locates actions within a people centred context, but allows for the challenging of the ideologies that uphold structural inequalities.

Sport for peace and reconciliation in Bosnia

The rise of the SDP movement coincided with the International Community's involvement in Bosnia. The role of explicit sport-for-peace programmes in Bosnia focussed upon reconciliation evidenced most obviously through bringing communities together. In the eyes of the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS)²⁶, the SDP organisation most active in Bosnia during this period, sport was to be used to *'promote the process of democracy, peace, stability and social cohesion'* (CCPA, 2010), goals very much in accordance with the overarching International Community ambitions. Another prominent SDP NGO, Right to Play, commented that the OFFS schools provided *"in very sensitive areas, the first significant, post-war contacts between municipalities experiencing serious ethnic tension and antagonism"* (Right

²⁶ The Danish organisation CCPA (Cross Cultures Project Association) introduced the Open Fun Football Schools in Bosnia in 1998.

to Play, 2010, p. 208). Certainly the OFFS programme in Srebrenica in 1999, which claimed to be the first multi-ethnic event in the town since the conflict, was a significant event for the town with 400 children participating and an equivalent number of spectators (Levinsen, 2000).

OFFS are the most extensive and well-known SDP programme in Bosnia. There are plenty of others: the NGO Street Football World who organise football festivals in the eastern Bosnian city of Foča for people aged 14-18 from across the Balkans with the explicit aim of promoting ‘intercultural dialogue’ (Street Football World, 2009). The NGO Football Friends²⁷ and the British Council sponsored ‘Dreams for Teams’ programmes²⁸ run multi-ethnic tournaments for children from different cities. The Spirit of Soccer NGO land-mine awareness programmes were implemented between 1996-1998 (Spirit of Soccer, 2005). On top of these are programmes promoted by football guardians. FIFA organised a friendly humanitarian fixture in Sarajevo between the FIFA World Stars²⁹ and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2000 on behalf of Bosnia’s war orphans (FIFA, 2009). FIFA’s GOAL! Programme then undertook construction of a technical centre to encourage youth football, women’s football and technical development such as refereeing standards in the northern city of Orašje³⁰. The Bosnian National Football Association (N/FSBiH) implemented grassroots programmes designed to bring about specific development objectives such as the Women’s football festival in Sarajevo funded through UEFA’s Women’s Football Development Programme (UEFA, 2012). As the social structures of Bosnia’s conflict ravaged communities were rebuilt, football’s governing bodies were convinced that

²⁷ A Serbian NGO, Football Friends is active in Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro, striving to help heal the fragmented societies in which they are growing up. <http://www.football-friends.org/>

²⁸ A British Council project run in 45 countries aiming to develop leadership skills and an understanding of other cultures among young people through sport and international school links. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/czechrepublic-projects-dreams-and-teams.htm>

²⁹ The FIFA World Star squad was coached by Carlos Parreira and captained by the Brazilian player Dunga. It included globally reknown players such as Italy’s Roberto Baggio and Germany’s Thomas Hassler <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/725930.stm>

³⁰ Two locations were considered for the project, Sarajevo and Orašje. The Sarajevo one ‘proved too difficult to realise’ (a comment that remains unelaborated) and so work concentrated on Orasje, a small town in the north of Bosnia on the Sava river which is a major border with Croatia and was the site of serious fighting throughout the conflict.

football would be able to influence their reconstruction to incorporate MDG objectives.

In the Zvornik region there have been very few explicit SDP interventions. OFFS operated one football school in the municipality in 2002, before any meaningful return of Divič residents had been achieved. The programme was understood to be a great success with 192 children aged 13-14 participated with 12 trainers employed. Four MZs took part (Jardan, Kalesija, Zvornik and a club from the Serbian village of Mali Zvornik) but the event has not been repeated. The Bosnian administrators of the programme have endeavoured to replicate the programme but without the support of OFFS have been unable to raise the funds to do so (interview with Obren Ekmedžić, administrator of the OFFS Zvornik programme November 2009).

Peripheral or Integral?

Sport retains an informal, almost spontaneous nature: Numerous unofficial sporting activities have occurred across the country notably casual matches between the International Peace Keeping forces (IFOR, SFOR and EUFOR) and locals. Such occasions are seen as a pleasant distraction, a chance to step away from the chaos of Bosnia's situation and to experience enjoyment. In particular the local Bosnians relished US troops'³¹ relative inexperience and lack of soccer skills and delighted in the opportunity to be the victors in such fixtures, the game allowing them a victory in a culture that sees them as victims.

The global is forever reflected in the local, the outcome may be referred to as 'glocal' (Giulianotti, 2010, 2011a). The national football associations which run domestic leagues within which most local clubs will participate are governed by the mandates laid down by the international football organisations and by State legislation. Whilst International sports organisations such as football's governing body the *Federation Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) and its European counterpart, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) provide international SDP their influence is far more widely experienced as the organisations which provide the structure in

³¹ US troops were present in the NATO led IFOR and SFOR forces. EUFOR, the EU led peace-keeping force, took over from SFOR in 2004 and US troops have not been deployed in Bosnia since that date.

which (in this case) football is to be organised both throughout Bosnia but also as a part of the wider global footballing community (Jarvie, 2006; Giulianotti, 2011b).

Simplifying sport and its cultural tenets and generalising the process by which sport intrinsically aids development and peace ignores the more subtle, less perceptible processes that sport might impact. The reification of the processes within SDP leads to assumptions that every community and every individual connected to the programme will experience the idealised intervention the same way. Such an assumption ignores the complexity of the community in which the programmes are delivered and the ranges of needs of the individuals (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). A consideration of the complex nature of communities, networks and hegemonies in which the intervention is grounded is necessary in order to appreciate the differing ways in which the programme may be processed by the participants and how desired outcomes can be resisted and transformed by some participants. Such a focus upon culture and power and the way such processes manipulate SDP interventions has obvious political overtones. The need for a nuanced understanding, the ability to appreciate that different communities will experience programmes differently is key to understanding the impact of SDP programmes.

Such a realisation demonstrates the need for a theoretical framework. It is herein that Hegemony Theory, able to incorporate the diverse range of individual and communal experiences in tandem is applied to what follows. Any framework examining the ways in which different communities respond to SDP or sport within a developmental or post-conflict context will require the ability to allow for a wide range of experiences and situations. The Gramscian framework is recognised for its ability to accommodate and indeed celebrate individual and wide-ranging difference. Hegemony theory remains interested in how hegemony is created, accepted, resisted and ultimately succeeds or falls. In a post-conflict society the post-conflict hegemony is being built and contested. Some work to introduce a hegemony capable of withstanding that which would return to violence. Others work to resist the imposition of any hegemony preferring the chaos and uncertainty of the liminal period between conflict and embedded peace because it is in such an environment that their personal positions of power and influence may be realised. Sport operates

within this context and its peace-building or peace-breaking potential must be understood within that context.

CHAPTER 2

Italian Probing and Dutch Individualism: Power and All that Lies In-between

Anthropologist Jeremy MacClancy (1996) reiterates the importance of understanding the relations of power surrounding any sporting event when stating:

“Sports and sporting events cannot be comprehended without a reference to relations of power: Who attempts to control how a sport is to be organized and played and by whom; how it is to be represented; how it is to be interpreted.” (p. 5).

It remains obvious that to understand the role that sport has – or might have - within a development context it is also vital to understand the power relations at play. These will be multi-faceted and temporal: they will include structural factors including those instigated by the global neo-liberal hegemony. They will be cultural and include gender and ethnic elements. They will be economic with the capacity to access to capital dictating the shape of the sport. They will be individual with personal histories and experiences impacting upon the ways in which different people react. All will be present both within and separately from sport: different elements will use their elements of power differently, some will conform others preferring to resist. The recognition that development is neither homogenous nor linear must allow for the fullest range of the responses to the impulses of those who deliver development.

The Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrote little about sport but his influential framework around the concepts of ‘hegemony’ and the ‘national popular’ permits an analysis of sport in a post-conflict society that incorporates the multifaceted distribution of power within post-conflict context. The use of intensely detailed research, including ethnographies, to examine beneath the surface of societal and cultural assumptions provides an ability to scrutinise the way in which power shapes the way a society is constructed and grounds Gramscian notions firmly within the Critical Theory framework which sought detailed analysis in order to interpret the

emerging interests in social relations and meanings in Germany³² at the time Gramsci was developing his framework (Rigauer, 2000)³³. The dynamism of hegemony theory is not, however, sufficient to illustrate the post-conflict situation in Bosnia. It is for that reason that a second anthropological framework must be used to demonstrate the additional power relations at play that are stalling the hegemonic process. The following chapter examines both Gramsci's hegemony theory and van Gennepe's theory of liminality in order to elucidate the processes surrounding football within Bosnia's post-conflict context.

An Absent 'Italian Spring'

The theories of Gramsci were developed within the context of European political and economic developments in the early twentieth century. As a Marxist thinker Gramsci was concerned with the relationship between the Base (that which builds and perpetuates unequal economic relations) and the Superstructure (the remaining infrastructure arising out of, but underpinned by the Base). Gramsci was primarily interested in the way in which the Base could be fundamentally changed to create a more even division of Capital (Crehan, 2002). His ideas were influenced by the national and global political events in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Italy Gramsci was born into was a new nation, the amalgamation of a number of provinces with starkly different economic, political and social cultures (Jones, 2006). Gramsci, experienced periods of intense personal poverty amidst a national backdrop of regular economic and agricultural export driven crises. As a Marxist Gramsci noted that despite the political mobilisation of farmers and employees of northern

³² The Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt was founded in 1922 members of which included leading Critical Theorists Horkheimer, Benjamin and later Habermas and Friedeburg. This social theory is often referred to as the Frankfurt School.

³³ The lag in the timing of Gramsci's writings in the 1930s and the publication of his work in the 1970s raises obvious questions regarding Gramscian theory's ability to provide meaningful insights into a world that is vastly different from the one in which he lived and wrote about (Morgan, 1997). The new world order, globalisation and the dominant neo-liberal ideology of the contemporary world would have been inconceivable for Gramsci (Cox, 1993). Theorists must consider whether the actors of agency remain relevant in today's society, and whether the contemporary agents of resistance and counter-hegemony are indeed Gramscian. In his defence many consider agents such as the state, political parties, intellectuals, media and civil society organisations to remain as relevant as ever in contemporary societies.

owned industries no corresponding revolution or 'moment of crisis' had occurred that would challenge the status quo (Crehan, 2002). Instead, the dominant class of the day managed to absorb the leaders and the demands of the political and revolutionary movements into their own hegemonic vision. (Davis, 1979) Having successfully retained power the dominant class was able to continue to implement policies inimical to the working class and agricultural workers (Davis, 1979; Jones, 2006). Gramsci realised that a revolution against the uneven distribution of capital was insufficient to bring about the overthrow of the traditional Italian aristocratic and landowning interests who remained over-represented in the political structure (Davis, 1979). Their ideals and their economic and cultural structures that society existed in and were reinforced by the embedded divisions of Italian society (Crehan, 2002). When questioning why - despite the clearly genuine and widespread resistance to the political and economic elite throughout the 1920s - this scenario had not led to a Workers Revolution Gramsci realised that there was no coherent social and cultural structure with which to replace the one that was reinforcing inequalities. There was thus a need in Gramsci's analysis to create a united social and cultural bloc. This would require the meshing of the culture traditionally controlled by the state with the culture of the 'people'. The end product would be a 'national popular' (Rowe D. , 2004).

Whilst Marxism considered that economic imbalances in the distribution of economic capital would bring about social and cultural revolution, Gramsci considered culture and civil society as the drivers of societal transformation. Whereas Marxist ideology believed subjugation of the sub-ordinate society to be achieved through economic coercion, Gramsci's concept of cultural domination postulated that authority was achieved when the subordinate classes are persuaded that the social, political and economic status quo exists to be beneficial for all, despite their position of subjugation. In a further Gramscian term, the structure of society was understood to be based in '*common sense*'; the population believe it to be the most beneficial structure for them, irrespective of the economic reality. It is the sense that ideas and practices become universal through the organisation and structure of daily life (Gramsci, 1971). Such a situation would be considered hegemonic.

Despite Gramsci's Marxist roots his framework has several important distinctions from orthodox Marxism. Gramsci's writings are themselves open to a wide range of interpretations. Translated and widely available to the English speaking world from in 1971, some 35 years after his death in 1937, the very nature of Gramsci's notebooks (smuggled from his prison cells) were fragmentary and incomplete and required interpretation (Jones, 2006). Terms used by Gramsci are especially opaque partly because as a vanguard he was writing before the vocabulary of the age had caught up with his ideas (Anderson, 1976) and possibly also so as to avoid censorship by prison officials (Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1971). The wide variety of interpretations of his writings means his thinking is used in many ways with wide inconsistencies.

Orthodox Marxism views social order as shaped by unequal power relations deriving from inequalities of power and capital distribution. If one follows such a model sport is best viewed as the product of the dominant group and would, and will if needs be, be used as a tool to reinforce the existing social order. It therefore becomes an event controlled by the economic elite, which turns "*athletes into robots and spectators into disciplined, passive consumers and [creates] further opportunities for capitalist exploitation and ruling class domination.*" (Rowe D. , 2004, p. 100), such an argument is both reductionist and determinist.

Gramscian theorists have proven uncomfortable with the Marxist tendency to focus upon either elite sport, with its appropriation of the market, or the use of sport as a form of state social control, believing that such an approach lost sight of the cultural appeal of sport as a whole and dismisses sports role in resistance and opposition to capitalist processes (Hargreaves, 1986; Gruneau, 1988; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Not all agreed that Gramsci would have concurred with the distance of his framework from orthodox Marxist thinking, claiming instead that the understanding of Marxism today is flawed following the failed socialist revolutions of the late Twentieth Century combined with a perception of the overly economic deterministic nature of Marxist approaches led to a loss of faith in orthodox Marxism (Bairner, 2009). However, it was the widened scope for human agency provided by Gramsci and the potential impact of the negotiated relationship between the dominant and dominated groups was enthusiastically taken up by the growing Cultural Studies movement which

challenged the commonly held narrow and elitist definition of culture to a more generalised concept that placed culture as a central tenet of daily life. (Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000).

During the 1970s and 1980s Gramsci's work became prominent in the UK, associated with the rise of the Cultural Studies genre. Academics such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall from the influential Birmingham Centre of Cultural Studies (BCCS) examined issues surrounding Englishness and resulting issues of marginalisation. They recognised popular culture, including sport, as an important site of popular struggle. In particular, it was John Hargreaves' work on the use of sport by the English bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century to foster their growing political and economic power which firmly placed sport as a facet of popular culture and set sport as an arena for the struggle for power relations and a tool in the cultural formation of a nation (Hargreaves, 1986). Such a theme has been revisited frequently (Gruneau, 1988; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Sugden & Bairner, 1999; Keech, 2002)³⁴.

Constructing Hegemony

Notwithstanding Gramsci's disregard of sport his political philosophy, particularly his concept of hegemony, has been so influential in sports sociology since the 1970s that sociologist Rowe was prompted to make his elegant observation of the '*hegemony of hegemony*' within sports sociology (Rowe D. , 2004, p. 108). The Gramscian framework provides meaningful insights into both the Bosnian post-conflict milieu and the role that sport plays within that society because sport, particularly football,

³⁴ Sociologist Alan Bairner, revisited his Gramsci influenced 1993 study of Northern Irish sport a decade later and raised concerns regarding his uncritical use of Gramsci's theory. He considers his earlier work to have been too focussed upon one power dynamic, that between the majority Unionist population and the minority Nationalist community at the expense of other power loci. Whilst believing that although sport was characterised by relationships based in (and closely mirroring) the political economy, the role of the socially excluded including women, poor and non-hegemonic men held insights into the development of the peace process in Northern Ireland (Bairner, 2002). A different theoretical framework, namely the post-colonial, often been used in gender studies for example, would have demonstrated nuances and provided a platform for the excluded or marginalised communities to demonstrate their contribution to Northern Irish society. He further suggests that in the rush to embrace Gramscian thinking the extent to which sport is actually rooted in the economy has been ignored. For Bairner, access to sport is dominated by the economic playing field, and as such the ability for sport to act as a resistance movement will be constrained by the subjugated groups' abilities to participate.

has been used by the two dominant groups in Bosnia; the International Community and the local ethno-nationalist elite. That said the fragmented nature of Gramsci's writing leads to frustrating inconsistencies in his definition of hegemony. Four conflicting accounts of hegemony within Gramsci's writings are regularly cited in Gramscian influenced research:

- Hegemony is defined as a relationship between the state (representing coercion) and civil society (representing consent)
- Hegemony is seen solely within civil society and is the struggle for ideological supremacy. Political society (i.e. the state and its legislative abilities) is again seen to be wholly coercive
- Hegemony includes the 'essential economic and class base', in other words is more closely tied to the historic nature of hegemony
- Hegemony is the relationship in which one group sets out to establish a moral and ideological leadership over other groups and relies upon their ongoing consent to retain power. (McNally, 2009, p. 188)

Whilst Gramsci always understood culture to be intrinsically linked to political and economic processes, hegemony is usually understood to be a far wider concept played out in the unconscious and unquestioning way in which daily life is conducted. Raymond Williams expanded upon this commenting that hegemony exceeds ideology because it constitutes a lived experience, it is the sense of reality for most people and is therefore a process and not a system or a structure (Williams, 1977).

Gramsci wrote of hegemony as a 'War of Position' within which there is a constant cultural and intellectual negotiation. This War of Position provided a population with the tools to develop a culture capable of challenging the social constructs imposed by the dominant classes and permits society to be prepared for a 'War of Manoeuvre' or the overthrow of the dominant class (Gramsci, 1971). The hegemony in place is therefore understood to be a reflection of the War of Position and reflects the immediate *status quo*.

In Bosnia one could argue that the two dominant groups are creating different positions. The International Community are endeavouring to build a hegemony that addresses the structural, institutional and social inequalities that led to the conflict, thereby minimising the likelihood of a return to conflict. They believe they can do so by implementing democracy, respect for human rights, market liberalisation and respect for the rule of law. However, the ethno-nationalists resist the construction of any hegemony, for it is in the confusion of the period that has no established hegemony that their power and influence is derived. Ultimately, the failure of the International Community to enter in a 'War of Position' and negotiate that has led to the failure to construct a national hegemony in post-conflict Bosnia.

The dynamism provided for by Gramsci provides the capacity to examine the power dynamics at all levels present in the football milieu in a post-conflict community as it moves beyond the post-conflict period. By understanding the International Community to be the dominant class in the post-conflict community it is possible to understand the post-conflict period as a liminal moment in which a post-conflict hegemony is being established. The extent to which that hegemony has been established reflects the War of Position in a post-conflict society. In Bosnia, 20 years after the cessation of violent conflict, it has become evident that hegemony is yet to be established and the country has failed to progress into a post post-conflict period. It is a state stuck in the final stage of a liminal period; the reintegration that must follow disintegration.

Hegemony is a dialectic process, in which both sides are informed and affected by the other. It is instilled and maintained by the dominant group through the dual processes of consent and coercion. Subjugated groups, encouraged to see power disparities as 'common sense' agree implicitly to the imposition of inequalities. Yet the inevitable incomplete acceptance of hegemony requires dominant groups to use an element of coercion to retain their position, most often through their control of the political and legislative infrastructure (Bairner, 2009; Hargreaves, 1986). Social theorists have tended to concentrate upon the process of consent by focussing upon the processes of negotiation which leads to the acceptance of a dominant culture (Gruneau, 1988; Rowe, 2004; Darnell, 2012). In such negotiation the dominant group

adapts and accommodates to some of the societal and cultural changes of the dominated or risks losing control and with it their dominance. This articulation of state control (or more accurately the minority of people who control the state and its institutions) and the culture of the 'people' creates a powerful social and cultural bloc, with the elite seen to be representing the masses (Rowe D. , 2004). However, this process of acceptance is not purely one of consent; the dominant group will use their position of power, particularly when in control of state institutions, to coerce acceptance of their hegemony (Hargreaves, 1986; Armstrong & Young, 1997)³⁵.

Hegemony's Infinite Dynamic

No hegemony however can be absolute: there will be always some who reject it. To retain hegemony involves constant negotiation through the processes of resistance, coercion and consent played out across the daily cultural landscape. Therefore, hegemony is best understood not as an end point, but as a constantly evolving process. The cultural commentator Raymond Williams (1977) pointed out that hegemony '*is never total or exclusive*' but endlessly changing to accommodate societies changing characteristics. Different sections of society will accept hegemony to different extents, as such hegemony can and never will be complete. This idea, that the ruling group, although dominant – i.e. hegemonic - does not have complete control is crucial to Gramscian thinking and an important distinction to the overtly reductionist and deterministic Marxist approach. A lack of complete control implies that the dominated groups retain some element of power; with such power comes the possibilities of resistance and the creation of a battleground within which hegemonic ideals can be wrestled, adapted and accepted.

Herein lies the attraction of Gramscian thought for sports social theorists, sport becomes an arena for the play of power relations (Hargreaves J. , 1986). Even in eras where dominance seems completely established, sport can be a visible manifestation of the dissent of subjugated groups and evidence that hegemony is neither total nor

³⁵ Sugden and Bairner highlighted the coercive nature of a state in their study of sport in Northern Ireland, commenting that the British state, whilst on the one hand using sport as a tool for lessening civil disorder and promoting popular consent, were simultaneously coercing sports people and fans of the more nationalist orientated Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) with a specific intention of preventing a counter-hegemonic impetus (Sugden & Bairner, 1999).

complete (Armstrong, 1998, Hargreaves, 1999). It is also the sense that the sporting arena is a venue at which individual agency can become transformational that is so attractive to the SDP sector and its programmes.

As sociologist Darnell (2012) argues:

“[Hegemony theory] reminds and illustrates that the social organisation of sporting practices and the social and political meaning ascribed to sport are particular and the result of negotiation between actors within relations of power.” (p. 24).

The fundamental nature of the distribution and use of power of all actors in the global sporting framework has led to calls for the use of Gramsci’s hegemony theory to explain SDP practices, particularly given the global neo-liberal framework within which international development is based.

The Power of Resistance: The Role of the Underdog

The process of creating hegemony is a combination of negotiation and compulsion which highlights an important characteristic of hegemony theory, that of *resistance* or counter hegemonic impulses. Resistance to hegemony is what creates the dialectic process and leads to bespoke societies, reflecting their unique histories, cultures and geographies. It is what creates a structure of a society, with its rubrics, traditions and procedures, which is broadly tolerable to the population as a whole and becomes generally accepted. Gramsci’s observation that although the ruling class may dominate economically and culturally they do not have complete control provides an avenue for individual and subordinate group agency to affect the structure in which they live. It is this recognition of the potential of agency within all levels and groups of society that distinguishes Gramsci from the overtly deterministic Marxist theory (Carrington, 1998; Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000).

Although the dominant group retains power in society it is recognised even the most seemingly powerless individuals have power. People resist, transform and manipulate the central hegemony and recognition of such agency is important (Giddens, 1984). Although all people have power, particularly the power to manipulate and transform hegemonic impulses with regard to their personal world, the ability to exercise that power in a meaningful way is not universal (Morgan, 1997).

Inequalities, whether individually in terms of access to economic capital or cultural limitations or whether through constraints of a global political and cultural economy, mean that all are not equally powerful. This has obvious implications to all seeking to affect their desired changes through sport (Giddens, 1984; Sugden & Tomlinson, 2002). Sport can become one arena for the struggle for dominance but always within the constraints of the cultural and political economy (Darnell, 2012). Darnell and Hayhurst highlighted this idea when examining the ways in which SDP aims, like many other post-colonial developmental programmes, were transformed by the ways in which participants were able to manipulate programmes, distorting the original aim (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012).

Interpreting Interpretations

The lack of an agreed definition of hegemony and the problems with identifying Gramsci's key agents of hegemony from his writings remains problematic (McNally, 2009). Most would concede that the transformation of society requires a rethinking of the ways in which actors utilise their power to affect hegemonic processes. Yet the use of hegemony makes it difficult to explain resistance and counter hegemony.

At the wider level Gramsci provides no timescale nor mechanism for the overthrow of the dominant group, considering hegemony as won via consent rather than coercion. Morgan (1997) summarised this argument as:

'is not that subordinate groups lack agency, are unable to oppose or resist and established hegemony, but that they lack the sort of agency it would take to undo an established hegemony' (p. 189).

The dominant class negotiates from a position of power. Subjugated groups, therefore are bargaining from a position of weakness and any trade-offs by the dominant groups would be not an act of negotiation but one of acquiescence. Having no specific mechanism by which subordinate groups are able to extract power from the dominant is an issue also highlighted by MacAloon, who argued that Gramscian theory accounts not for the causes of social constructions but illustrates the effects of such a structure (MacAloon, 1992).

Resisting Hegemony's Hegemony: The Rise of Foucauldian Focus

The hegemony of Gramscian theory in sports studies began to wane in the 1990s as criticisms that Gramsci was too focussed upon inequalities of society to appreciate the full extent of individual power (Darnell, 2012). Studies highlighting marginal groups, particularly around gender and sexuality and post-colonialism, turned more to Critical Theory and introduced Foucauldian thought (Birrell, 2000). The latter, drawing upon the ideas of French philosopher Michel Foucault, focusses upon power and its representations and provides:

'An important antiessentialist, antireductionist, analytical framework for examining the construction of subjectivities and power relations within sport' (Pringle, 2005, p. 256).

The basic contention is that everyone has an element of power and that power changes with different people having power at different times and in different situations (Morgan, 1997). This then provides individuals with the ability to accept or resist to a greater or lesser extent. As such power was and remains akin to knowledge and can, when permeated throughout society, act as a transformative mechanism.

Both Gramsci and Foucault understand power to facilitate and affirm social meanings, relations and identities. They also recognised that relationships, be they between individuals or structures and microstructures that inform daily life, make access to power unequal and that inequality is problematic. They differ in their beliefs about how inequalities in power relationships are formed. Gramsci focusses more upon the hierarchy of power, whereas Foucault, in keeping with his belief that power is everywhere suggests that individuals are normalised to take on responsibility for their own management, which entails ever more insidious forms of state social control and surveillance in order to retain dominance (Pringle, 2005).

Both Gramscian and Foucauldian thought distinguishes between forcing change on populations through coercion (the traditional understanding of power) and managing change through societal consent. However, Gramsci relies upon the dominant groups convincing the subjugated of their legitimacy, whilst Foucauldian thought provides individuals with much greater individual responsibility (Darnell, 2012). Significantly

for this analysis Foucault focuses upon the *body* as a site for discourses of power. Gramsci almost avoids issues about the body. The Foucauldian focus around the way a human being is constructed to become subject to a particular truth has provided a particularly useful framework for writers observing issues surrounding gender and sexuality. Feminist thought around sports have considered aspects of sport to be a site for the reinforcement of male, patriarchal values: Sport celebrates physical dominance and prowess and sustains hegemonic masculinity to the detriment of the feminine. A Gramscian analysis remains more interested in how individuals act as intellectuals, making conscious decisions rather than the unconscious displays and meanings of power being projected onto and by their own bodies (Pringle, 2005).

Darnell (2012) identifies several of Foucault's insights that are of particular relevance for the SDP sector. The first highlights the way in which it allows for cultural individuality within the global neo-liberal hegemony of the twenty-first century. The second highlights that the use of power is neither inherently repressive nor entirely benign. As such, the much used concept of 'empowerment' within the SDP sector might best be understood within the wider political and social contexts to understand how relations of power are being utilised and played out (Darnell, 2012).

Academics in the SDP genre have recently begun to revisit Gramsci. Amongst the neo-Gramscians is Darnell who argues the ability of a dominant class to establish inequality as a notion of 'common-sense' is core to SDP studies, but concedes that the production of hegemony must take into account the array of social and cultural factors beyond the economic and social class framework (Darnell, 2012). As Darnell points out hegemony theory requires 'direction and purpose within relations' between the different groups and as such it incorporates a dynamism as it leads towards an altered state (ibid. pg. 33).

Middle Class Tactics: An International Bourgeoisie?

To contemplate whether a non-state actor, that is the International Community, may be considered to be hegemonic we must consider whether Gramsci's hegemony theories may be applicable at a global level. That we might term 'World Hegemony' may be considered if it entails a social, political and economic structure and the

institutions and civil societies act across the national borders but international organisations must be in a position to absorb counter-hegemonic ideals (Cox, 1993). International Organisations such as the Bretton Woods institutions provide a mechanism for imposing rules upon states that reinforce the global economic and political hierarchies, yet have enough flexibility to make compromises.

A post-conflict state in the modern world finds itself in a situation that Gramsci, working in 1920s Italy could never have imagined. The integrity of a nation – in this instance Bosnia - that has disintegrated into a civil conflict has been usurped to a large degree by the over-riding supra-national bodies such as the UN. The creation of the post-conflict Bosnian state and its apparatus has been established following negotiations overseen by the UN and other powerful bodies who continue to dominate the peacebuilding efforts. These organisations have been mandated by the Dayton Accords to implement a framework upon Bosnia, a framework that promotes human rights, democracy and encourages the country to participate actively in the global arena. Crucially however this framework has not been agreed upon by neither the local population, nor the local elite.

Questions are also asked as to whether global institutions and global social movements can be considered to be hegemonic or counter hegemonic when applied outside of a national basis. Thus are Gramsci's theories, constructed around a structure built upon nation state, still relevant in the new supra-national milieu? (Femia, 2005). This national/international dichotomy is of significant interest to this thesis and any consideration of a post-conflict milieu. Conflict in the modern world is overseen by a strong supra-national contingent, most obviously the UN and associated humanitarian and development NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Any post-conflict community will have a strong internationalist flavour as the "International Community" strives to create a peaceful nation-state capable of participating in the current political and economic milieu.

Others dispute the extent the global nature of hegemony has permeated modern societies, claiming national identity, nationalism and the importance of nation continues to thrive (McNally, 2009; Kaldor, 2003). Despite the international nature of post-conflict, each post-conflict community retains its own individual characteristics

be it in terms of history, culture, conflict experience and individuals who retain power, both political and economic, once the violence has come to a halt. It is the period between the cessation of violence and the establishment of hegemony that will determine the outlook of the conflict afflicted society.

Within the term 'International Community' lies a wide range of organisations with different purposes and objectives. The International Community cannot, therefore, provide a unified and homogenous view of how a post-conflict hegemony should look and there exists a wide range of visions for a post-conflict Bosnia. Local Bosnian NGOs are critical of the work of the International Community and the vision it is implementing³⁶ yet these NGOs are themselves dependent upon International Community funding in order to operate. The International Community in Bosnia is ultimately, however, dominated by OHR, which in turn is governed by the PIC. Although there is a range of visions proposed by many civil society and international actors within Bosnia, OHR will remain a dominant force in Bosnia until the PIC determines that the work of OHR has been completed. OHR's ongoing presence continues to frame the hegemony building processes within which Bosnian civil and political societies operate.

To compare the International Community to a dominant social group in the Gramscian sense further ignores a fundamental difference: The ultimate goal of the international agencies, having achieved cultural hegemony, is to withdraw from Bosnia leaving behind a dominant class to run the state according to the International Community cultural hegemony. For the dominant cultural class to not run the state is not an unprecedented situation; Cox offers the landed aristocracy in England as an example of a group who has run the state on behalf of the bourgeoisie so long as the aristocracy "recognised the hegemonic structures of civil society as the basic limits of their political action" (Cox, 1993, p. 51) In this sense the International Community are relying upon a hegemonic vision with a moral and ideological leadership so strong that the International Community is not required to be involved in the daily running of the state.

³⁶ including the Human Rights Office in Tuzla and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights based in Bijeljina

The extent of engagement of these external characters in the post-conflict state is not one that Gramsci could have envisaged. Gramsci's War of Position suggests that cultural hegemony is a constant negotiation whereby dominant groups may only retain power if they absorb ideas from the subordinate groups and failure to do so will result in their eventual deposition. The International Community is in a position that Gramsci could not have predicted; their position in the country is mandated by the Dayton Peace Accords and they will remain in the country until the PIC – an International Community body - considers the DPA implemented. Their position is not dependent upon Bosnians. They have no need to compromise with subordinate groups to retain their status and as a result are not compelled to negotiate with subordinate groups to maintain their position. The refusal to compromise has, however, hindered the hegemonic process; a cultural hegemony has not been achieved. The country remains in a liminal state, unable to establish a hegemony or even a War of Position because there is no necessity for the dominant group to adjust their hegemonic vision.

Stagnating Hegemony?

Hegemony is never complete or absolute. Within the population resistance and counter-hegemony remain forever present and the on-going negotiations between the different groups remain a fundamental part of the hegemonic process itself. Such a process is inherently dynamic and in stark contrast to the torpor in which post-conflict Bosnia is widely understood to have become embroiled (ICG, 2012). The Dayton Peace Accords, which provide the International Community with their mandate in Bosnia, offer no clarification to when the International Community role will be fulfilled. Instead the Peace Implementation Council continues to set a number of conditions which must be completed before OHR may be closed (as detailed on pg. 16). The closure of OHR is a symbolic threshold, signifying the end of the post-conflict period. Whilst the establishment of a hegemony should have led to the crossing of this threshold, the process of doing so appears to have stalled. Hegemonic theory offers no explanation for this stagnation. To illustrate how the post-conflict processes in Bosnia have become stuck as the country moves into a post post-conflict period, it is therefore necessary to turn to the anthropological concept of Liminality, which

offers the opportunity to explore the process of the crossing of thresholds, and highlights that the lack of a clear threshold demarking the end of the post-conflict period has instead guided Bosnia into a state of stagnation. The concept of liminality understands that the period surrounding the symbolic crossing of a threshold hold particular characteristics as participants in the ritual are reformed (Turner, 1967). When liminal theory is applied to modern societies such periods are characterised by instability and those that are able to exploit that instability are often interested in maintaining that unstable status quo (Horvath, 2013).

Betwixt and Between³⁷: The Liminal State

Dutch anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his seminal study of rites of passage used the term *liminality* to describe the moment when an individual is transiting two states of existence. In a life cycle this could be the period between becoming engaged and going through the ritual of marriage or submitting a PhD and being awarded one. It is in such moments, often saturated with ritual, when the normal rules of the mundane lack relevance. The liminal process is understood to be a seminal moment in a person's life when what has been known is deconstructed in order to reconstruct the participant for re-entrance into society in an altered state and is divided into three periods namely rites of separation, transition rites which is the true liminal moment and rites of incorporation or post-liminal rites (van Gennep, 1960).

Wherever they occur, liminal moments share certain significant characteristics, most notably a suspension of the conventional rules and a concomitant sense of intensity. Periods of liminality are often uncertain, unstable times where the lack of societal norms encourages the development and deployment of different perspectives. British anthropologist Victor Turner developed van Gennep's ideas during the 1960s, expanding upon the concept of the liminal phase (Turner, 1967). He argued that individuals in a liminal state are required to undergo ritualised passages which when completed will form the basis of their reintegration into society under a new status. For some individuals and some groups, liminal moments are age-specialist and

³⁷ Turner's famous phrase 'Betwixt and Between' is derived from a title of an essay published in his 1967 book, *The Forest of Symbols*. The term has come to epitomise the elusive definition that is the sense of the liminal state.

tradition-bound and usually clearly choreographed, with a definite sense of their eventual reintegration into society. In other words the liminal state is temporary with a clear and agreed route to reintegration. Those undergoing the ritual are stripped of their external status and develop a sense of '*communitas*' in which all participants, irrespective of previous status, are seen to be equals. An individual may find their subsequent life to be shaped and defined through their liminal experiences (ibid.).

Turner primarily applied the idea of liminality to small scale communities, especially coming of age rituals in tribal communities. Other scholars have adapted the idea to apply to modern, complex societies and noted its relevance to war, revolution and other forms of violence (Armstrong, 2008; Thomassen, 2009; Szokolczai, 2010;). The use of the term 'liminality' to describe a period experienced by a society is becoming more common, although not all would go as far as Szokolczai's assessment of post-modern society to be essentially in a state of permanent liminality (Szokolczai, 2010).

Turner warned against using liminality to describe wider, complex post-industrial societies, contending that simpler pre-industrial societies were able to keep the social systems and repetitive rituals stable in a manner that larger more complex societies were unable to therefore blurring the ritualization surrounding liminal moments. As such Turner believed that concept of liminality in a complex post-industrial society should be used metaphorically in order to avoid confusion with what he considered true liminal moments (Rowe S., 2008). His logic was that in order for the deconstruction required to exit the liminal phase in an altered state stability of the external social system had to be evident. Whilst appreciating this logic the liminal concept will be utilised in the complex society that is Bosnia. The micro-society that is 'Football' is, it is contended here a stable extended social system.

Permanent Liminality: A Trapped Transition

Bosnia demonstrates aspects of liminality. The conflict demolished the social, economic, political and legal structures creating a formless state in which different perspectives, most notably those surrounding issues of ethnicity dominated politics. Bosnia is currently in the process of attempting to exit the post-conflict liminal State. Turner's point regarding the stability of the external society is valid but the extent

and depth of involvement of the supra-national community within Bosnia occurs within the stability of a wider geo-political order. The International Community are mandated by the Dayton Peace Accords to be active in Bosnia and will remain so until the International Community decides that the conditions for its withdrawal (as yet unspecified) have been met.

For societies and entire demographics in a state of liminality the route from the dismantled to the newly constructed is less certain with no certainty of exit. Occasionally the - by definition - temporary nature of the liminal moment becomes fixed: participants therein become trapped in what should be a transitional phase (Thomassen, 2009; Szokolczai, 2010). Using van Gennep's tri-partite structure of the liminal phase, Szokolczai identifies three stages of liminality during which a society may become stuck; the first is the descent into disorder, the second is the chaos of the liminal moment itself (which in the case of Bosnia would equate to the actual conflict) and the third and final stage occurs with reintegration (Szokolczai, 2001). In the case of Bosnia the trapped transitional moment has occurred during the re-integrative phase. The nation failed and continues to fail to complete the final stage of the liminal process; reintegration of the wider society and into what could be described as the post post-conflict era and the wider geo-political entity of South East Europe.

In the liminal state everything is ephemeral and constantly changing. Post-conflict Bosnia lacks a robust legislative system capable of instigating respect for the rule of law. This means that those flouting the new legal structure of the post-conflict nation are able to continue their contempt with impunity which obstructs the development of the structures of the new post-conflict nation. The development of a domestic Bosnian collective that should be emerging to implement the post-conflict social structures and responsibility is being impeded by the lack of a tangible structure by which it can effectively exercise its agency.

In the uneasy peace that emerged as the guns stopped firing the country did not proceed into a post-liminal period but instead remained in an indeterminate state as the International Community were unable to build the national popular required for the establishment of their hegemonic vision. The ethno-political elites sought to

maintain the *status quo* that had proved so personally beneficial. If the reintegration stalls, the intensity and instability of a liminal status is likely to lead to a period of increasing levels of violence and, possibly even a return to the conflict itself.

Liminal Leaders

The state of liminality, as described by Turner, is notable for its clear demarcations: It has a beginning and an end as the route from one state to the other. Individuals guide participants (whether an individual or a group) through their liminal status in accordance with societal expectations. This role of guide is a particularly sensitive position, particularly given the intense personal emotions experienced during liminality (Horvath & Thomassen, 2008). The people who occupy the guide role are carefully chosen by the community as they must ensure that the passage proceeds in such a way that the participants gain the desired qualities from their experience. An individual undergoing a rite of passage is often required to attain a balance of strength and humbleness from the liminal rituals. If this balance is not achieved correctly it can result in excessive self-glorification or self-denial. In such scenarios the desired outcome of participation in the rituals has not been achieved (Thomassen, 2009). It is important therefore that both the guided and the figure who guides and indeed the very pathway that constitutes the liminal state are clear and agreed upon by the participants and the wider society.

For liminal societies like Bosnia the route through the liminal phase is less clear: the end – or arrival - point is unknown. This post-conflict haze of ambiguity sees populations searching for a sense of certainty. This may be in both concrete structures and credible individuals. In this situation two types of characters tend to emerge, typified as the *Master of Ceremonies* and the *Trickster* (Horvath & Thomassen, 2008). The former takes the role of guiding the community through rituals and into a post-liminal state. However, unlike liminal moments for smaller group ceremonies. There is no overarching consent regarding the format of a post-liminal society. The vision of the Master of Ceremonies for such an end point has not necessarily been adopted by the liminal society itself. This undermines the authority and confidence of the population in the position.

The latter character often observed in liminal phases is that of the Trickster. Such a person insinuates that they are able to guide towards a post-liminal state, but have no real intention of doing so; their personal power and influence lies in the liminal state being sustained. The Trickster is an unusual character, more at home in liminal situations than non-liminal ones and therefore rather than attempting to guide a community into a post-liminal state has a real interest in perpetuating the potential chaos of the liminal moments (Horvath & Thomassen, 2008).

Hungarian anthropologist Arpad Szakolczai postulated that many Eastern European regimes were stuck in permanent liminality from the end of World War II until their fall some 45 years later. The rise of the communist movement required a protracted period of conflict to create confusing conditions, weakened state institutions and periods of intense social upheaval to become established. The conditions of transitoriness and confusion of World War II permitted party leaders to weave analogies between the fate of the party and the suffering experienced by the nation as a whole and the populations seemed ready to accept further turns from what was had been considered reasonable and normal. (Szakolczai, 2001). Considering the Communist Leaders of the Eastern Bloc as a variety of Tricksters, Szakolczai notes that the leaders were then able to utilise the Cold War to maintain a sense of emergency and imminent threat from the West thwarting the development of a framework under which the pre-war social existence could be re-formed. Furthermore the development of a communal group capable of leading the reintegration of the regimes into a post-liminal state was thwarted, preserving the liminal state (Szakolczai, *New wars and permanent liminality*, 2010).

If such an argument is accepted it can be further contended that the use of nationalism in Yugoslavia in the 1980s was also the action of Tricksters. The experience of Yugoslav communism was different to other European nations and it permitted greater travel and interaction with the Capitalist Western European countries which meant that the authorities could not utilise the West as instigators of a possible threat. As the economic climate and structural flaws of the Yugoslav state began to appear and present serious issues for those in power, they instead

utilised nationalism as a method of creating imminent threat to achieve the similar objectives.

When the post-conflict period in Bosnia is understood to be liminal two key groups of people may be easily identified.

i. Bosnia's Master of Ceremonies...

The International Community, hoping to guide Bosnia across the threshold of a state in conflict to their vision of a lasting peace in a stable and democratic country, allocated themselves the classic 'Master of Ceremonies' role. Their programmes - in common to the major peacebuilding missions since the early 1990s - have provided a clear definition of the steps they believe the country needed to take to leave its liminal state. This intervention and programmes might be regarded as a ritual which must be undertaken before reintegration may occur (Paris, 2004). Yet the pathway they offer, which includes the implementation of democracy and a market economy is a path set without consultation with the Bosnians themselves. The nature of the global geo-political landscape and the extent to which supra-national organisations are able to intrude upon a nation's integrity claims a route to provide the wider external social stability seen by Turner as an important part of the liminal ritual process. One might argue furthermore that the similarity of peace-building missions employed across the world holds an element of global ritual for the conflict afflicted countries to undergo as a part of their reintegration into the global geo-political fold.

ii. .. and their Tricksters

The ethno-nationalist political elites have regularly been accused of utilising their positions to ensure their own personal benefit, including the current Bosnian Serb leader, Milorad Dodik, the current Bosniak leader, Bakir Izetbegović, and the Bosnian Croat former Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia, Ante Jelavić (Ramet, 2006). Their vested interest in prolonging the liminal state is evidenced by their on-going promotion of a sense of conflict and ethnic division. They stress whenever it is expedient a sense of imminent threat to their ethnic interests, thereby promoting instability and persuading each ethnicity to remain focussed upon ethnic issues at the

expense of common concerns. Within this ethno-political elite are many of who had great political and economic influence during the conflict and have, in the confusion and opaque nature of conflict and post-conflict, established themselves in the role of Trickster. The continual stream of post-conflict political crises perpetuated by Bosnia's political elite are strikingly similar to the tactics used by Eastern European Communist regime.

The International Community became and remains perplexed over the propensity of Bosnians to continue to vote for nationalist and ethnically driven political parties in general elections despite the presence of several multi-ethnic non-nationalistic political parties: It may be understood by the feeling of insecurity and deep concerns over the possibility of a return to chronic violence that drives Bosnians to vote for those who claim to be able to protect their ethnic interests. By perpetuating conditions of instability the Tricksters have been able to persuade Bosnians to endorse their positions of power. The Tricksters ability to maintain an undertone of potential conflict and a return to the violence reinforces the unstable nature of the country, constraining the development of communal groups who might carry the capacity to lead the state into a post-liminal period.

The International Community have remained puzzled also over the lack of an emergence of a local elite capable of challenging the vision of the ethno-political elites. In the years immediately following the conflict numerous Bosnian NGOs were established, supported financially by the International Community, provided the aims of the programmes correlated with the International Community vision. However, as the years passed and other crises came to dominate the global agenda (in particular the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 and the resulting military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan) international donors saw little evidence of progress in Bosnia. Bosnian NGOs experienced increasing difficulty in obtaining funding from international donors and with little improvement in the Bosnian economy NGOs struggled to finance their programmes and many, eventually, ceased to function. The appearance of a civil elite, in other words groups of citizens capable of challenging the state and the political elite, forcing them to be held to account was and remains constrained. As with the Eastern European Communist states alluded to by Szokolczai, the liminal

state inhibited the emergence of such a group, compounding the Tricksters grip on power.

The question remains of whether the vision of the Trickster could be considered hegemonic. To remind ourselves; the Tricksters' aim is not the creation of a cultural bloc informing the actions of the population but the manipulation of a situation to secure personal influence. However, should liminality become permanent with elites dedicating energy to maintaining that permanence, constant negotiation is required, which might be considered both simultaneously hegemonic and liminal. Liminal transition may also be understood as hegemonic if the Tricksters are acting in a way to maintain their hegemonic dominance.

Challenges to Liminality

It is somewhat of a paradox that liminality - a vibrantly dynamic process - is being utilised here to illustrate the static, stagnant nature of post-conflict Bosnia. Liminality in its ideal is a concept with a beginning, middle and end and a process resplendent of movement, dynamism and vitality and progress towards a rebirth. The liminal framework however does not offer a sense of how a state stuck in permanent liminality will be able to proceed, nor does it offer guidance on how to influence the eventual characteristics of the post-liminal state. The sense of getting stuck in a permanent liminality undermines the fundamental nature of liminality.

The egalitarianism that derives from the moment when individual liminal participants are stripped of all defining features to become equals, was seen to be a positive aspect, particularly for its regenerative and liberating abilities (Turner, 1969). The condition of *communitas* was understood to be an important aspect of the ritual of liminality because participants were stripped of their previous identities before reconstructing their post-liminal selves. Ideally, in creating *communitas* participants are able to construct a shared meaning and to reconstruct social reality without the fragmentation of class, prejudice or racism (St John, 2008). However the sense of *communitas* is not shared when the concept of liminality is applied at a societal level. Society has no counterpart or colleagues with whom to tread the path to the post-liminal state. Bosnia must undertake its liminal passage by itself.

Furthermore, the liminal society manifests many divergences; those within the society may all be affected by the chaos of liminality but not all in the same way. Put simply, Bosnia's conflict was unspeakably brutal for many Bosnians, but whilst hundreds of thousands died and millions more might be said to have been traumatised, others benefitted from the conflict negotiating as they did so astutely the conflict economy and political scenes to their own benefit.

For Bosnia the liminal moment has re-defined and given new significance to ethnic boundaries. The experience of liminality did not induce a condition of egalitarian *communitas* but defined the different groups as separate and distinct dominated by resentment, distrust and hate (Horvath & Thomassen, 2008; Thomassen, 2009), and the leaders relied upon the creation of an atmosphere of fear and mistrust in order to justify and rationalise the extreme levels of violence of the conflict (Kaldor 1997; Lederach 1997). As Bosnia undertakes its 'reintegration process' into the wider geopolitical community their Masters of Ceremony, the International Community must seek to re-define the social ethnic boundaries once again to encourage people to cross the thresholds and rebuild links. The question as to what extent can football be a tool to achieve such ambitions remains.

Football's Bipolar Personality

The division between the liminal and the everyday is less clear cut in industrialised societies than the pre-industrial society with its more formalised rituals. Within modern life rituals are bound by and can reinforce tradition and the *status quo*, the spontaneous nature of creativity can and frequently does happen away from ritual based processes (Lewis, 2008). Post-industrial societies, with their shift from communal to an individualist paradigms have seen the fragmentation of previously common rituals. In his famous article "*Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology*" Turner noted that in modern post-industrial societies the liminal ritual has largely been replaced by leisure activities including creative arts and sport, as community-wide ritual is replaced by individualism and rationalism (Turner, 1974). This has promoted to significance performance arts and leisure spectacles, one of which is sport. Turner recognised the rituals surrounding

sport and other leisure activities had many liminal characteristics but disputed that they were truly liminal moments, labelling them instead as *liminoid*. Unlike truly liminal events which are rites of passage undertaken by all relevant members of a society, participation in sport is voluntary and are not integral to societies broader social and cultural context. Furthermore Turner focussed upon rituals as a method of communal rejuvenation and self-renewal; not only was participation in a liminal ritual mandatory but it involved the fundamental and permanent transformation of all participants. By contrast, the nature of sport, including football, presents ritualised moments to voluntarily step away from society with its daily obligations but participants will return to their daily life unchanged and no threshold has been crossed - a crucial difference to truly liminal rituals in which participants undergo a transition and are permanently and irrevocably altered to achieve a new post-liminal state.

Football may be a leisure activity, but it is economically and politically important and holds disproportionate influence. One could argue that far from being on the margins of the political and economic spheres, football in Bosnia is best considered as being at the centre, mirroring and often overlapping the political milieu. To see football as a liminal ritual it is necessary to agree with those who dispute Turner's classification of sport as liminoid (Rowe S., 2008). Whilst for an individual watching a football match does not imply a change of status (which is a core part of the crossing of a liminal threshold) it is possible that it could be considered to be a liminal ritual for a liminal society. The game is a sign that society is returning to a functioning state. The game's structures, traditions, rituals, memories and political and economic interactions can be understood to evidence a return to normality following an anomalous period. Football may thus be a tool of the creation of a post-liminal society.

In Gramsci's argument hegemony must be negotiated in the spheres of parliament, family, schools, universities and hospitals (Gramsci, 1971). However it is argued here that such hegemony may also be negotiated within the football environment, an environment which has the additional - often understated - resonance of being a very visible form of negotiation. Such negotiation must be considered in light of who

controls the game; legal, political, social and historic factors are crucial here as well as on the actual field of play. Football's popularity ensures it to be a particularly strong influence of people and politicians. As an institution the game is acceptable to the vast majority of the Bosnian population and although the females have historically chosen not to participate within it they clearly understand it to be a part of their culture. It was and remains an obvious arena for those seeking peace to utilise.

The Frozen Frame

Within the Bosnian context of this research football undertakes a dual role: For the International Community, acting as a liminal Master of Ceremonies, football is a liminal social ritual, a part of the transition from conflict to post-conflict state. For the ethno-nationalist elite it is a liminoid activity, utilised to perpetuate a sense of insecurity and chaos in order to prevent change. As such, football has the ability to reintroduce conflict and the threat of violence into the community. As Armstrong and Guilianotti (1997) note *"the very act of donning team colours means that some form of opposition and intolerance will ensue"* (p. 9). The violence that has accompanied football activity in Bosnia, whether evident in the wide-spread hooligan activity associated with elite clubs or unexpected brawls at village level matches suggests that football also has the capacity to reinforce the vision of Bosnia's Tricksters, the ethno-national elite.

Football in the post-conflict milieu retains an inherent dichotomy; namely its ability to create impulses reinforcing the stability of society whilst simultaneously reinforcing cultures of division. What is significant in the instance of Bosnia and for Divič in particular is that a conflict based on ethnicity within a country of various ethno-political identities has the most severe impact at a local level; long-term neighbours become enemies and at the cessation of the conflict once again live side by side. Football clubs and their supporters that represent the village and implicitly the dominant ethnicity they locate are staffed by those who physically fought each other in the conflict. This *immediacy* is less prevalent when considering larger club

matches³⁸ and thus the grass-roots game provides for an analysis of intimacy, silence, avoidance and sublimation.

Hegemony provides a useful base to examine the structure of a post-conflict society. The extent to which ideas are accepted (in Gramscian terms becoming 'common sense') across society dictates the extent to which peace will be able to dominate. For the neo-liberal international consensus this includes the adoption of democratic principles and the development of a market economy. Simultaneously there remains in the post-conflict milieu remnants of the previous economic, cultural and political structures, such vestiges of which are well understood by the general population. Whilst the International Community may reason that the previous structures led the region into conflict and therefore seeks to take the opportunity to construct new (more internationally leaning) political structures, the original politicians, business leaders and people of influence might still be utilising the traditional structures. Some of these influencers will be working towards peace, others looking to cement their personal positions of power in the new milieu may be less inclined to do so.

In a period of liminality the absence of the usual rules and structures permit that previously considered unattainable to be thought of as not only possible but indeed at times justified. The on-going efforts of the Bosnian Serb elite to raise the issue of a possible RS independence and the renewed calls by the Bosnian Croats for the formation of a third, exclusively Croat Entity and the intransience of the Bosniak elite to accept anything that challenges a state in which they have an overall majority, reinforces this sense that Bosnia, despite two decades of non-violence, is ever on the edge of disintegration. The heightened sense of possible conflict continues to impede development and reinforces the division of the ethnic groups but ensures the elites personal positions of power.

The quagmire of liminality in which Bosnia has become embroiled is a direct result of the inability of any group to establish an accepted hegemony. Without the Bosnians

³⁸ An important exception to this are the two Mostar Premier League clubs: The fighting in Mostar was characterised by its close quarters nature, people know who killed who and this is reflected in the post-conflict intensity of football rivalry (Armstrong & Vest, *Bridging Practice and Desire: Football Rivalry in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2013).

agreement of the eventual end-point and lacking in consensus on how to participate in the rituals, the country has not been able to complete their 'passing through'; they are no longer in conflict, but neither have they agreed upon how they will be post-conflict. They are stuck betwixt and between. Fundamental to achieving hegemonic dominance is compromise. In Bosnia's case however none of the dominant groups has sought to compromise. The International Community, unaccountable to locals has indicated a pathway to post-conflict peace but is not prepared to countenance any other version. Bosnia's ethno-political elites are invested in maintaining the liminal status quo; to compromise would jeopardise their personal positions. The groups capable of forcing compromise have been unable to develop, their ability to bring about change through agency hindered by the permanent liminal state of the country. Twenty years after the Dayton Accords, Bosnia remains a state entirely defined by its conflict where its political landscape is reduced to the stereotyping of fear and in which a status quo Trickster liminality is the real-politick.

SECTION B

It might be argued that the history of Bosnia is of a country in which no hegemony has been able to effectively embed, leading to repeating periods of counter-hegemonic resistance and eventual violence. The separation of an ethnic identity of the peoples of Bosnia might also be argued to have created a state of permanent liminality in the nation; it has not been possible to cross the threshold of a single national identity capable of over-riding ethnic identity leaving the nation in a state of perpetual instability.

The following section illustrates the history of Bosnia within the frameworks detailed before. It shows that the country's ongoing resistance to any overarching hegemony has resulted in a series of violent, ruinous conflicts, often fuelled by its more powerful neighbouring states. The Eastern Bosnian Bosniak village of Divič is a microcosm of the Bosnian tale and is provides the site of the ethnographic research and illustrates the wider Bosnian context.

The final chapter of the section completes the context of the research, by detailing the ethnographic methods employed and reflects upon the nature of the research, the researcher and its ethics when applied to a post-conflict site.

CHAPTER 3

'Pretty Village, Pretty Flame'³⁹: A Land of Conflict and Football

Until 1992 Bosnia - a republic in the Yugoslav Federation - was best known in the West for its hosting of the 1984 Winter Olympics in its capital city of Sarajevo. To many international observers, the name 'Sarajevo' conjured up images of the GB ice dancing duo Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean in the Zetra Stadium⁴⁰ floating to the sounds of Ravel's *Bolero* and a sea of perfect 6.0's from the judges. The Games showcased the talents of the skaters and skiers but also highlighted the hosting abilities of Sarajevo and the socialist Yugoslav federation in was to be the first, and only, Winter Olympics hosted by a socialist country. The games were considered to be a resounding success; there was little to indicate the atrocities that were shortly to engulf the city. Almost 10 years to the day after Torvill and Dean's gold winning performance the international media was once again covering events in Sarajevo: The aesthetic however, could not have been more different. A shell had exploded in the central Sarajevo marketplace (known as the *Markale*) killing 68 civilians and wounding a further 144⁴¹. International journalists, present in numbers in Sarajevo since the 1992 start of the Bosnian Serb siege of the city, were rapidly on the scene. Graphic footage of the massacre went global. In the space of a decade Sarajevo had gone from a city of culture and splendour to a war zone. Its people once celebrated for their welcoming nature now required protection from thousands of UN troops. Besieged by the Bosnian Serb army stationed above the city in the encircling

³⁹ *Lepa sela lepo gore* is the title of a famous Serbian film directed by Srđan Dragojević. Its theme is the 1990s Bosnian conflict in which Bosnian Serb soldiers, trapped in a tunnel by Bosniak forces, examine their personal choices which have led them to this point and tries to comprehend how former friends and neighbours have turned upon each other with such devastating consequences.

⁴⁰ Their gold winning performance was skated on February 14th 1984, an apt date for the most romantic of duets.

⁴¹ The first Markale shelling took place on February 5th 1994. The Markale was to be shelled a second time in August 1995 when a further 37 civilians were killed.

mountains that had once been used for the downhill skiing events the city's buildings and civilians were now target practice for tank missiles, mortars, rocket launchers and other artillery fire. Sarajevo's main boulevard⁴² earned the nickname '*Sniper Alley*' as Bosnian Serb snipers picked off exposed pedestrians forced to leave the protection of surrounding buildings to cross the street.

The city's multi-ethnic population became a bargaining tool for politicians. Bosnians Serbs targeted civilians in Sarajevo to force the Bosniak authorities to accept Serb demands. The same targeting of civilians enabled the Bosniaks to call for international intervention against the Bosnian Serbs. Debate persists to this day as to who were the perpetrators of the worst atrocities during the conflict. The Serbs deny responsibility for the *Markale* attacks, blaming instead Bosniak forces looking to frame the Serb army for '*political reasons*' (Sense Tribunal, 2014). Some 20 years after the *Markale* massacres the country exists in a post-conflict stalemate. The 1995 Dayton Peace Accords (DPA)⁴³ were successful in stopping the armed conflict but left the country with a cumbersome, inefficient and over-bureaucratic state with exceptionally weak state-level institutions and prone to deadlock over everything between competing ethno-political factions⁴⁴. In 2014 the more optimistic see it as a country with major issues but one working towards EU integration (Stewart & Knaus, 2011). Others have less confidence sensing that Bosnia is an international protectorate "*waiting to collapse when the international commitment leaves*" (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2012). History illustrates that the region is no stranger to collapsing dynasties, but the unprecedented levels of

⁴² The *Ulica Zmaja od Bosne* (translating literally as Dragon of Bosnia Street) was named after the Bosniak General Husein Kapetan Gradašćević commonly referred to as the 'Dragon of Bosnia' in reference to his fight for Bosnian independence from the Ottoman Empire.

⁴³ The peace agreement that finally brought the Bosnian conflict to a halt were negotiated in Dayton Ohio in November 1995 and came into force in December 1995. Known as the Dayton Peace Accords, they were signed by Alija Izetbegović representing the Bosniaks, the President of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milošević representing the Bosnian Serbs in the absence of Radovan Karadžić who had been indicted for crimes of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the President of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman representing the Bosnian Croats in Paris.

⁴⁴ For example, it took over a year to form a central government following the 2010 elections due to in-fighting between different political factions.

international community involvement in this most recent conflict has created a very different outcome.

Construction: Identities of Chance

“The unstable history of the Balkans has taught its peoples precisely when is the right moment to flee” (Judah, 2009, p. 86)

Despite what seems to be the perpetual conflict and animosity in the region, Bosnia has been a recognisable distinct territory since the 1400s, although it only achieved independent status in 1992 with the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Malcolm, 1996). Its identity and boundaries were retained throughout the centuries because of the problems it caused for the various powers who wished to assimilate it, including an inaccessible terrain and ‘*indigestible*’ ethnic mix (Burg & Shoup, 1999, p. 18). Efforts to create a single accepted hegemony within the region illustrate that hegemony is never complete and forces of counter-hegemony and resistance always have potential to overthrow established power structures.

The story of Bosnia is one where a people with the same history, cultures, customs and language became splintered and their separate identities have become accentuated through the adoption of different religions. It is widely believed that a group known as the Slavs moved into the Balkan Peninsula throughout the fourth century, settling an area depopulated by constant warfare⁴⁵. The Slavs were non-differentiated but took diverse routes to the region⁴⁶; over time these groups splintered becoming distinct but obviously intertwined as attested by their close linguistic, historical and cultural backgrounds. External influences and some internal leaders have endeavoured to reinforce these ethnic differences, resulting in regular periods of conflict between the groups. To this extent it might be argued that Bosnia has existed in a state of permanent liminality with the transformation into a single unified culture unobtainable. Yet the concept of ‘national identity’ in the Bosnian

⁴⁵ The location of the Slavs is subject to historical debate but they are believed to have arrived in the Balkans from central northern Europe, in particular the territories of modern day Poland, Belarus and Ukraine (Malcolm, 1996).

⁴⁶ Those settling in Croatia are thought to have migrated from Poland whilst those settling Serbia are thought to have come through Czech Republic and Slovakia (Malcolm, 1996).

context is a modern one and to that end it is difficult to argue that Bosnia's pre-modern era can be understood to be a state in a perpetual liminal status. Rather it has experienced a number of incomplete hegemonic projects which have fallen to the forces of resistance and counter-hegemony.

The Balkans were once a part of the Ancient Roman Empire but were divided when the Empire split. Modern day Croatia and Bosnia fell into the Western Roman Empire administered by Rome whilst modern day Serbia became a part of the Eastern Roman Empire governed by Constantinople. The divide - which took place centuries before the Slavs migrated into the region - was to provide a legacy evident today. The Eastern Empire Emperor, Theodosius, enacted a decree in 380AD which established that all subjects would be Christian subject to the laws laid out by the Council of Nicaea; the language and script⁴⁷ of the church were to be Greek. Croatia and Bosnia, lying to the west of the divide were not subject to this decree and remained a part of the Latin Roman Catholic church (Judah, 2009).

Croatia's coastal regions and proximity to Rome meant a strong Roman Catholic presence in the region. Bosnia's mountainous terrain was more difficult to infiltrate, few Roman Catholic monasteries were built within Bosnia and that religion did not become well-established. The Bosnians, often referred to as the *Bogomils* during this time, preferred to practice a different form of Christianity, possibly as a deliberate political statement of resistance to the Roman Church. Little is known about the church itself, but relations between it and the Roman Catholic Church became increasingly tense throughout the Middle Ages, with the Catholics often referring to the *Bogomil's* as heretics with heretical doctrines. Encouraged by the Papal authorities keen to abate the heretical populations, the Franciscan order began to establish monasteries in Bosnia from the 1400s. By 1460 Bosnian clergy were being offered a choice between conversion to Christianity or expulsion from Bosnia at a time when the *Djed* (or leader of the Bosnian church) was rumoured to have joined the Orthodox Church. The Bosnian Church was severely weakened and by the time

⁴⁷ Ultimately this script developed into the Cyrillic script which Serbians and Bosnian Serbs continue to use today, Croats and Bosniaks use the Roman alphabet.

the Turks arrived in 1463 the Bosnian Church was in a state of chaos and virtually defunct (Malcolm, 1996).

In the meantime to the East, the Serbs had developed a dynastic empire led by the Nemanja family which led to a period of Serb stability and prosperity. The politically astute Nemanjas claimed hegemonic control from a weakening Byzantium Empire by obtaining autonomy for the Serbian church (thus creating the Serb Orthodox Church) and securing recognition of the Serbian nation from the Pope⁴⁸ which included recognition of their family's right to be crowned. The Nemanjas began building churches throughout the country complete with illustrations of Serb greatness. The canonisation of members of the Nemanja family not only confirmed the dynasty's grip on power and strengthened the Serbian Orthodox Church, but created a sense that the Serbian people were a part of a common ethnic group; the Serbian Nation. The significance of the foundation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the creation of a Serb statehood and national identity cannot be underestimated and demonstrates why modern Serbs hold their religion as central to their identity, despite not being particularly religious (Judah, 2009). Lasting from the 1200s for about 200 years this period of Serbian greatness dominates contemporary Serb consciousness and frames Serb ethnic hegemony to this day.

The Turkish Ottoman conquest of first Serbia in 1459 and then Bosnia in 1483 was to profoundly alter the region, creating distinctions that were to be cleaved deep into the various national identities that proved so murderously divisive. The Ottoman Empire had two primary aims in their conquest of the Balkan peninsula; "*plunder and tribute for men to fight wars and money to pay for them*" (Malcolm, 1996, p. 45). Some soldiers were salaried paid for by the Ottoman administration; but others were feudal, undertaking military duties in exchange for land. With very few exceptions, Ottoman forces were Muslim, and as Bosnians were drawn into the machinery of the Ottoman state, many converted from Christianity. In Serbia, the outer reaches of the

⁴⁸ Securing a Papal blessing for the nation of Serbia (an Orthodox state) was the equivalent of obtaining international recognition by the UN today (Judah, 2009)

Ottoman Empire, Christians were allowed to carry arms as guards of roads and passes; few Bosnian Serbs converted to Islam (Malcolm, 1996).

The Ottoman tactic of leaving newly occupied territories under the control of its native rulers and allowing the practice of other religions of the book (most notably Christianity and Judaism) permitted the Serb Orthodox Church to remain as a flagship Serbian institution, maintaining and promoting the ideals of Serbdom even as the Serb State was dismantled. The *Bogomils* in Bosnia did not have the strength to provide the institution around which Bosnian national identity could coalesce as Serb national identity did around its Orthodox church. Instead large numbers of Bosnians with personal or economic ambitions chose to convert to Islam in an effort to attain employment within the Ottoman administration. The more rural Bosnians remained loosely Christian, and eventually took on the practices of the Catholic or Orthodox churches depending upon their geographical proximity to Croatia or Serbia or areas in which there were larger numbers of Catholic or Orthodox practitioners present⁴⁹ (Hoare M. A., 2007). As such it can be understood that very few '*exogenous ethnic elements were introduced into Bosnia by the Turks*', the rise of Islam in the region came about from conversion by numbers of the native population (Burg & Shoup, 1999, p. 18 and Donia & van Antwerp Fine, 1994; Malcolm, 1996)

Destruction: Nationalism Severs

The Ottoman Empire's strength declined throughout the 1800s and as the epoch's shifted so a wider regional liminal period became evident. It is during this period of transition that surrounding European countries became influenced by a new phenomenon; nationalism (Malcolm, 1996). The concept of self-determination was shaking the structure of the Empires of that time, including the Austrian (soon to be Austro-Hungarian) Empire which was growing in strength to the North and which

⁴⁹ Large scale migrations in the period before and during the Ottoman occupations were common. Some were in response to likely violence (after Serbia had fallen to the Ottomans but before Bosnia had done so, many Serbs fled to the northern Bosnian regions is just one example). Others were down to economic impetuses as land and livestock were devastated by political machinations. Still others were as a result of re-population by different groups for political reasons, such as the Ottomans encouraging Serbs to settle in the Krajina region in Eastern Croatia leading to an active Serb Orthodox population in the Croatian region bordering Bosnia's west frontier. As a result there were large numbers of Catholic and Orthodox communities throughout Bosnia.

included modern day Croatia. The nationalist phenomenon included two key concepts for the Balkans; that of self-determination and that of national identity manifesting itself most usually in the quest to distinguish those whom shall (and shall not) be considered a part of that identity. The Balkans, scattered throughout with migrants, contained many instances of what might be termed 'ethnic minorities' within their more restrictive definition of nationality and national identity. The Serbs, equating Orthodoxy with Serbness were developing a culture of Greater Serbia, in which the Orthodox communities in Bosnia were seen not as Bosnians who were Orthodox but as displaced Serbs (or even Serbs living on Serb land which had not yet been formally incorporated into the Serbian State). The Croats, similarly beginning to shake at their Hapsburg shackles, had also grown a sense of a Greater Croatian ideology and claimed Bosnia's Catholics for their own. The Orthodox and Catholic Bosnians, who had long identified through their religion with other Orthodox and Catholic practitioners, began to use the concept of nationality to identify themselves with the Serbs or the Croats from the mid nineteenth century (Malcolm, 1996). Although the different ethnic groups were predominantly distinguished through their different religions, much of their culture, history and language, so often thought to be a core part of creating and maintaining a national identity (Anderson, 1983), were shared.

Uprisings in Serbia between 1804 and 1835, sparked by the murders of various Serb leaders by Ottoman troops in 1804, led to the suzerainty of the Principality of Serbia in 1830 and was seen as the start of a period of national awareness in the Eastern reaches of the Ottoman Empire. On-going challenges by European powers for influence over Ottoman territories (most obviously the 1853-56 Crimean War) severely weakened the power and finances of the Ottoman State. Within Bosnia the interests of the Bosnian Christians were being championed by governments of 'would-be protector powers' as evidenced by the Russian financing of the building of the Orthodox cathedral in Sarajevo in 1872. Submerged tensions in Bosnia, which may be viewed as counter-hegemonic, were becoming more obvious most specifically around discontent at the tax system which required a tithe of one tenth of a crop to be paid to the state. When following the total failure of the 1874 harvest

the tax collectors resorted to violence to force mainly Christian peasants to pay, the peasants retreated into the mountains and fashioned themselves into an organised armed resistance, an action which was swiftly replicated across northern Bosnia. The fighting between the predominantly Christian peasantry and the predominantly Muslim administration was bitter and characterised by brutality, ensuring that their mutual hatred of the Ottoman rulers were eclipsed somewhat by their hatred of each other (Malcolm, 1996).

The Russians declared war on the Ottomans in 1877, hoping to capitalise on the growing sense of nationalism in South-Eastern European countries in an effort to regain territorial losses suffered during the Crimean War. However a desire to limit Russian expansion towards the Mediterranean combined with the likely outbreak of unrest between the adversarial Christian and Muslim populations meant that the European powers could not countenance such an action. The Great powers of Europe met in 1878 to draw up the Treaty of Berlin giving Austria-Hungary administrative rights over Bosnia, even as Bosnia remained nominally a part of the Ottoman Empire. The Muslims who remained in Bosnia after the Turkish Ottomans left retained their own distinct religious and political identity, identifying with neither Serbia nor Croatia. Serbia and Croatia, both in the thrall to the idea of a Greater Land, attempted to establish through an *“intellectual and cultural courtship”* that *“Bosnian Muslims were ‘really’ Croats or ‘really’ Serbs”* (Malcolm, 1996, p. 152). Increasingly nationalistic Serb and Croat disagreements over the fate of Bosnia signalled the pronounced rivalry between the two (Burg & Shoup, 1999). To some extent the notion that Bosnia has been in a state of permanent liminality for decades is reflected in the inability of its two powerful neighbours to agree upon the status of the country.

Sensing an opportunity to rid the region of the Ottomans, in 1908 the Austro-Hungarians annexed the province and took the opportunity to redistribute previously Ottoman administered lands (known as *vakufs*). Under threat from Christian cultural and economic dominance, Bosnia’s Muslims began to organise themselves politically as a distinct and separate group, with their own identity with the aim of resisting being subsumed into one of the larger and more powerful neighbours.

Even at this point of time, the Austro Hungarian Administrator of Bosnia, Benjámín Kállay⁵⁰, recognised the danger nationalistic fervour posed to the country. He introduced a policy to encourage a sense of Bosnian-ness, i.e. a sense of belonging to Bosnia (Ramet, 1996) which included the introduction of a national flag and coat of arms (Burg & Shoup, 1999; Hoare, 2007). However, even within the Bosnian Muslims (those most likely to embrace such a policy given the lack of an external sponsor-state) uptake of the concept of unity was limited with the Muslims preferring to pursue for greater religious, educational and political autonomy as *Muslimani*⁵¹, hoping to retain links with Turkey (Burg & Shoup, 1999). Austro-Hungarian policies in the region were inflaming Serb and Croat nationalists⁵² whose views on self-determination were being spread across Bosnia via a network of teachers, priests, school-teachers and newspaper readers. By the beginning of the twentieth century observers could sense the failure of this programme. One pedagogic practice however was to prove very influential in creating a sense of self and others.

Nationalism Arrives in Bosnia: So Does Football

As the region strived to throw off the remnants of the Ottoman Empire the Austro-Hungarians endeavoured to consolidate their power in the Balkans whilst the Great Powers of Russia and Austria-Hungary used the Balkans as a playground for greater political games⁵³. Despite the relatively stable understanding of the Bosnian borders, there was little sense of a national Bosnian state or national Bosnian identity. The country had forever been underdeveloped and its heritage had been formed and influenced by a succession of external actors (Burg & Shoup, 1999). In the

⁵⁰ A role he was to hold for 21 years

⁵¹ Meaning 'Muslims' but a term that is distinct from the previously used term '*Turci*' (understood to mean those adhering to Islam) because of its political connotations of being associated with the recently expunged Ottoman Empire.

⁵² A failure to introduce land reform that would have affected the mainly Christian peasants was a prime example of such discontent. Other factors included a pre-requisite to speak the Magyar language to be considered for employment in the state infrastructure.

⁵³ Russia backed the Balkan nations, helping to establish the Balkan League, (a formal alliance of Balkan States) against the Ottoman Empire, to gain influence against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The British secretly took steps to encourage Greece to join the league in an attempt to counter Russian regional influence. Austria considered Russian backed Serbian ambitions on Austrian held Bosnia to be a possible cause for conflict, but could not secure German support. Germany and France believed a war in Europe was forthcoming but felt they were not yet ready for such an event and chose to stay out of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

neighbouring states of Serbia and Croatia the nationalist concepts of self-determination, unity and identity were gathering strength and crucially for multi-ethnic Bosnia were based upon a mono-ethnic hegemony.

Even by Balkan standards, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were exceptionally unstable. Other countries of the region, fearing the Serbs would try to emulate the *Piedmonte* success in creating a unified Italy, grew increasingly wary of Serbia and their territorial ambitions, primarily concerned that a unified Slav, Orthodox people would have the effect of turning the Balkan Catholics and Muslims into a minority (Judah, 2009). Popular opinion in Serbia - which had achieved notional independence for the first time in centuries - demanded a unification of peoples and lands outside of the established Serb boundaries thereby pushing Serbia into a series of '*rash adventures*'⁵⁴ (Mazower, 2000, p. 102). These were ruinous, violent conflicts with both Bulgaria and the remnants of both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires (known collectively as the Balkan Wars)⁵⁵ led to numerous regional migrations throughout the region, scattering Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Muslims and others across the southern Balkans (Judah, 2009; Hoare, 2007). With a growing sense of a peoples 'right' to self-determination and statehood, such dispersals were to prove problematic.

Political instability and transformation at the turn of the century had not dented the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in the region. The Austro-Hungarians focussed upon developing Bosnia's economic potential; mining and forestry industries were modernised and across the nation factories appeared in towns as the Austro-Hungarians invested in large infrastructure projects including bridge building, railways and improving the mountainous roads in an attempt to address the arrested development of the region (Burg & Shoup, 1999). This investment in infrastructure

⁵⁴ Serbia declared war on Turkey in 1876 to support Orthodox Christians in Bosnia. In 1885 Serbia invaded Bulgaria. In both cases Russia, looking to firm up Serbia's loyalty were needed to intervene to avert Serb humiliation.

⁵⁵ The first Balkan War in 1912 pitted Balkan countries against the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. The Second Balkan War of 1913 saw the former Balkan allies splitting as Bulgaria fought Serbia and Greece. These were the largest of the conflicts but there were many revolutions and insurrections from the 1870s until 1914 across the Balkans against the Ottomans, Austro-Hungarians and each other.

lead to a thriving Bosnian export economy (Malcolm, 1996). The new wealth enabled the sons of the wealthy to pursue an education and travel further afield to Northern Europe to study. They were to return with new ideas and pastimes, one of which was football.

Industrialisation and urbanisation in northern Europe led to the concept of leisure time and saw a breaking with traditional community links. Sport (and Association Football in particular) became an important cultural milieu in industrial urban areas (Russell, 1998). The rapidly industrialising Yugoslavia was no different and formalised, organised sport rapidly gained popularity. Sports Clubs appeared supported financially and in their infrastructure by the aristocracy⁵⁶ who were of the mind that sport was desirable both to keep the general population in good health, and functional in the sense of being variously '*morally educational... and to raise the patriotic spirit... to prepare young people for army service or war*' (Zec, 2011, p. 4) The young men promoting football in this era in the Balkans were generally university educated. The popularity of football amongst this demographic gave the Austro-Hungarian authorities cause for alarm; in the overarching atmosphere of nationalist rebellion within provinces of their Empire, gatherings of young men were distrusted. As a consequence many organisations such as sports clubs found themselves banned.

A Balkan Brazil⁵⁷

Tensions and divisions between the different nationalities are forever reflected in football clubs the world over. The Balkans proves no exception. The first football clubs in the cities of Bosnia became in the early years of the twentieth century. Although HŠK Zrinjski⁵⁸ was formed in 1896 by Croats living in Mostar as a sports club for young people it was not until 1905 that the club could actually become an officially registered legal entity as the Austro-Hungarian rulers, recognising the

⁵⁶ Serbian and Croatian aristocratic families whose power originated from the feudal systems continued to be dynastic throughout the region until World War 2.

⁵⁷ Football commentator Jonathon Wilson highlights how obsessed were the Yugoslavs with emulating the Brazilian style for free-flowing football that when Red Star's Belgrade built a new stadium in 1963 it was immediately christened the *Marakana* after the stadium in Rio de Janeiro. (Wilson, 2006)

⁵⁸ *Hrvatski športski klub* – literally Croatian Sports Club.

potential for sports clubs to generate political activism had banned it. The student club FK Slavija Istočno Sarajevo⁵⁹ (Slavija East Sarajevo FC) was founded in 1908 following a trip by Sarajevo gymnazija⁶⁰ students to Zagreb which, legend has it, culminated in the first football subsequently appearing in Sarajevo. By 1913 the club had split along ethnic lines as Croats left to form their own separate Croatian sports club by the name of SAŠK (Sarajevski amaterski športski klub (Sarajevo Amateur Sports Club)) - the remaining Serbs rapidly renamed their now ethnically homogenous team SŠK(*Srpski Športski Klub* (Serb Sports Club)).

The media began to take an interest in football matches, particularly when teams claiming to represent different nations competed. Such national representation took on extra significance with victories acting as confirmation of a nation's legitimacy. Defeats were deplored; a Serbian team from Belgrade travelling to play two friendly matches against the successful Croatian club HAŠK⁶¹ in Zagreb in 1911 were berated in the prominent Belgrade newspaper *Novosti* (News) for disgracing the name of Serbia when they failed to win (Zec, 2011, p. 8).

The football clubs appearing in the Balkans at this time reflected the increasing sense of nationalism. This was manifested most obviously via the overt and deliberate display of nationalist symbols. The Croatian team HNK⁶² Hajduk Split, founded by pro-Croats in 1911 incorporated the Croatian crest as part of its emblem as a direct statement of their support of a unified Croatia in defiance of the Austro-Hungarian policy of prohibiting the unification of Croatian provinces. The sense of defiance was and remains most evident in the name '*Hajduk*' a word which is appropriated in praise of the romanticized bandits of folk-lore who stole from the Ottoman and

⁵⁹ Originally known as *Đački sportski klub* ĐSK (Students Sports Club) or *Srednjoškolski sportski klub* SSK (High School Sports Club) the club changed its name in 1921 to FK Slavija and became a club for young men rather than school children.

⁶⁰ These are elite secondary schools for students considered the most likely to attend University.

⁶¹ *Hrvatski akademski športski klub* (Croatian Academic Sports Club)

⁶² *Hrvatski nogometni klub* meaning Croatian Football Club

Hapsburg authorities to redistribute funds to the poor whilst defying unjust ruling authority⁶³.

The football clubs reflected how the young men of the time saw themselves. Their self-narrative was that of leaders of a resistance to the dominant political authorities. In the unpredictable and volatile nature of the times leading up to the First World War before the Ottomans had been finally expelled from the Balkans, the Austro-Hungarians had banned official gatherings. For young men to gather together with football as the excuse *was* a *de facto* resistance movement, such meetings were defiant even seditious. To secure a ground at which to play their fixtures (as SŠK did at the end of 1913) demonstrated the clubs intentions to contrive to operate irrespective of what the law stated. Football, both in the playing and spectating, provided an opportunity for the politically submerged to coalesce behind messages of resistance and nationality be it deliberately political or for the enjoyment of transgressing the impositions of the powerful.

Football: Class and Conflict

Nationalist political tensions in the regions culminated in Sarajevo on the 28th June 1914 when a young Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg in protest to Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia. In the days following the assassination anti-Serb sentiment sparked riots in Sarajevo which spread to other areas of the country. 5,500 Serbs were imprisoned and 460 were sentenced to death, a sentence carried out by a Bosnian Muslim militia (Donia, 2006). Serbia was widely regarded as being behind the assassination and the Austro-Hungarians swiftly moved against Belgrade, declaring war on Serbia on July 28th 1914, an act that eventually drew Europe's major powers into a bloody conflict lasting four years. Serbia was to be disproportionately affected by the conflict, losing two thirds of its male population between the ages of 15 and 55 to war and disease, but when liberated by Allied

⁶³ The legend of the *hajduci* is very much akin to that of the British tale of Robin Hood. In reality the *hajduci* were as likely to be bandits and highwaymen as freedom fighters resisting foreign occupation and unjust laws and authority.

Forces in 1918 it formed the new Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs creating the long desired pan Serbian state. (Judah, 2009).

Bosnia, which had been relatively unscathed by the war, become a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. However the southern Slav hegemony was not accepted and demonstrating the monarchy's inability to build a supporting cultural bloc was instantly embroiled in constant political manoeuvrings between the Croats and Serbs. The Serbs favoured a centralist constitution against the more regional desires of the Croatians, an issue that was to dominate the Yugoslav political scene for the entire inter-war period, causing continual and ever growing tensions. The Bosnian Muslims rapidly became astute in employing political strategies to consolidate their own positions and developed a clear and distinguishable identity of their own as Bosniaks⁶⁴. The Yugoslav Muslims held the balance of power between the Serbs and Croats in the Yugoslav National Assembly and were able to secure a number of concessions including the retention within the state of a regional-administrative identity for Bosnia⁶⁵. Mirroring events across Europe during this period, the rapid industrialisation of Bosnia's cities led to a rise in socialist and communist movements. This had implications for football in Bosnia.

Prior to the First World War football clubs in Bosnia had predominantly been created for students and the youth. Football was played informally throughout World War 1 but without a formal league system. Once the War was over, a formalised league system was put into place by the Sarajevo football sub-association, a part of the *Jugoslavenski nogometni savez JNS* (Yugoslav Football Association)⁶⁶ reflecting the country's status as a province of the newly founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and

⁶⁴ It is during this period that the term 'Bosnian Muslim' came to identify a more political orientation rather than a religious moniker. This inter-war era was also characterised by a degree of secularization, particularly in urban centres. The Bosniak population were relatively relaxed about Islamic practice and dress. Women seldom wore the veil, and were encouraged to study and take employment in factories.

⁶⁵ This echoed the *sandžaks* regions established by the Ottomans which were later subsumed into the Austro-Hungarian *Kreise*. Bosnia was the only region to obtain its identity in such a way during this period..

⁶⁶ The JNS was founded in 1919 and affiliated to FIFA in 1923.

Slovenes⁶⁷. Footballs popularity continued to grow. Towns throughout Bosnia formed clubs for the benefit of 'workers' throughout the 1920s. FK Željezničar founded in 1921 in Sarajevo was originally the Sarajevo Railway Workers Club, FK Borac Banja Luka created in 1926 was originally a workers sports club, as was FK Radnički Lukavac created in 1923 (*Radnički* means worker). Other clubs were founded with explicit Communist Party connections. With an increasingly strained political atmosphere between the Serbs and the Croats within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes⁶⁸ the Communist Clubs were noteworthy for their philosophy of ensuring all nationalities were welcome by inviting players of all ethnicities to join. The Mostar club FK Velež was reformed by the Communists in 1922 after their original *Radnički* (Workers) sports club had been banned by the pre-war authorities. The re-creation heralded their communist links through their choice of a Red Star as the club emblem. In the northern industrial town of Tuzla the Communist Party of Yugoslavia formed the club FK Gorki (which was to become FK Sloboda) in 1919. FK Gorki also made a point of being multi-ethnic, unlike the other four clubs already established in Tuzla which represented the Croat, Serb, Bosniak and Jewish sectors⁶⁹.

Croat and Serb nationalism sentiments remained strong in many regions of Bosnia in this era and was often most obviously visible through the regions football clubs. Football had become immensely popular, crowds of 35,000 would attend matches in Mostar. The two 25,000 capacity stadia in Belgrade were often filled. The authorities were well aware of the power of footballs symbolism. In Mostar Croats had been encouraged by the authorities to join the city's Yugoslav sports club, but felt excluded and marginalised by the dominant Serb population in the club. They refused and reformed their HŠK Zrinjski club with specific ambitions to represent their Croatian identity in the city and across the region. They soon found themselves banned by the

⁶⁷ The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was commonly known as Yugoslavia from its 1918 formation. In 1929 the King Alexander abolished its Constitution and changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, such nomenclature remained until the Nazi invasion in 1941.

⁶⁸ The Croats believing themselves to be marginalised, became increasingly suspicious of the perceived Serb dominance and the centralisation of power in Belgrade in particular. It is during this period that ultra-nationalist organisations, such as the nationalist Ustaša Croatian Revolutionary movement began to use terrorist tactics as they sought to create an independent Croatian state.

⁶⁹ These clubs were named Zrinjski, Obilic, Bura and Makabi respectively.

authorities over the use of their overly nationalistic emblem (in this case the Croatian *šahovnica*⁷⁰) (HSK Zrinjski, 2012).

The popularity of the Communist Party challenged the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. A miner's strike in Tuzla in December 1920 led to disorder which saw the deaths of a policeman and four miners. Overnight a government decree prohibited all Communist activities, seized the Party's property and arrested the Party leaders⁷¹. Under the orders of the decree, known as *Obznana* (meaning 'announcement'), Communist Football Clubs including Mostar's FK Velež and Tuzla's FK Gorki were banned⁷². With the Party driven underground and abroad there was an inevitable divide between those agitating for a more revolutionary approach to overthrowing the State and those who did not believe Yugoslavia was ready for a Workers Revolution. The more extreme faction founded the terrorist group *Crvena Pravda* (Red Justice) and attempted – but failed - to assassinate Alexander Karađorđević, the Prince Regent of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. A later successful assassination in 1921 of Milorad Drašković the author of the reviled *Obznana* and the Minister of the Interior. Less than a decade later in 1928 the now King Alexander I of Yugoslavia reacted to the assassination of the increasingly powerful Croatian People's Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić⁷³ by refuting the constitution and introducing a Royal Dictatorship on January 6th 1929. The Communist Party immediately called on the working class to join an armed uprising. Whilst many heeded the call the Communist Party had over-estimated their influence; their uprising was isolated and easily repressed by the State. Party Leaders were either killed or incarcerated and the Party's internal organisation was effectively

⁷⁰ Zrinjski's shirts and crest display the Croat *šahovnica* – the red and white checkerboard emblem of Croatia and the Croat coat of arms.

⁷¹ The decree was issued the night of the 29th/30th December 1920 and remained in place until the adoption of a new constitution which excluded the Communist Party from any involvement in the national Constitutional Assembly. The Constitution was adopted in June 1921. The Communist members of the Assembly voted against it.

⁷² The Tuzla's club FK Gorki immediately tried to reform but its reincarnation was also banned.

⁷³ Stjepan Radić, along with five other Yugoslav politicians were shot in the National Assembly in Belgrade on June 20th 1928 following an increasingly unstable and ethnically provocative period during which Radić's Croatian Peasant Party was unable to attain the support required from other political parties to challenge the dominant Serbian People's Radical Party. Radić died from the injuries sustained in the assassination in August 1928 and his death caused a rift between the Croat and Serb relations. He became an icon of both the working class and nationalist Croats.

destroyed. The history of Mostar's FK Velež – renowned for its communist heritage – indicates the extent of the destruction of the Communist Party during this time; the President was jailed, many supporters were also incarcerated. Although the club was not formally banned, its activities were halted by the 'decapitation' of the management team. The club was only able to continue playing once younger members not known to the authorities were recruited (FK Velez, 2012).

Important as the Communist Party activities were to the development of Bosnia it would be an overstatement to say this was true across the country. Although rapidly industrialising the challenges of Bosnia's mountainous terrain meant it had always lagged behind the rest of Western Europe. During the inter-war period the economy had begun to develop with a degree of industrialisation around the major urban centres but overall Bosnia retained a predominantly rural society with an agrarian economy.

The Beautiful Game and Political Symbolism?

Early football matches throughout Yugoslavia were predominantly informal affairs. A desire to create a more formal association led to the formation of the *Jugoslavenski nogometni savez* (Yugoslav Football Association) JNS in 1919 with regional centres in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo. Initially the JNS was based in Zagreb reflecting Croatian teams' longer experience of the game by dint of Croatia's geographical proximity to the established footballing territories of northern Europe. The popularity of football seemed endless, evidenced by two stadiums built in Belgrade in the late 1920s, each capable of holding up to 35,000. The state, keen to demonstrate the Kingdom's modernity and its 'European-ness' were supportive of these constructions, providing substantial financial help clubs to build such stadia (Zec, 2011, p. 15).

Such enthusiasm for the game placed a rising amount of income in the hands of the clubs. Whilst such monies were initially used to maintain grounds and training equipment there was soon sufficient funds to begin paying players a small wage. Whilst professionalism in football in Britain had been evident for decades, it was only in the 1935 that the JNS permitted payment to its players and amateurism was quietly

abolished. However in order to receive salaries they were required to formally forfeit their right to participate in the administration of their clubs. Against the rising communist ethos of the time, the footballers effectively handed economic power to the club owners in exchange for salaried employment (Zec, 2011).

By 1929, the increasingly fractious nationalist tensions⁷⁴ were reflected in tensions within the JNS. The Serb city of Belgrade was the undisputed capital of Yugoslavia and the Serbs felt that the national football association should be headquartered there, not in the Croatian capital of Zagreb. The Croats, already fearing a dominant Serb hegemony, strongly resisted the idea. The Serbs acted by disbanding the JNS and reforming the association with a new, Serbian name *Fudbalski Savez Jugoslavije*⁷⁵(FSJ). In fury and as retaliation Croatian delegates banned Croatian players from joining the Yugoslav national team for the first World Cup held in 1930⁷⁶.

The ever-increasing political tensions between Serbs and Croats was clearly reflected in football. So toxic was the atmosphere between Serbs and Croats that in 1934 the Minister of Physical Education, wary of football's potential for providing a catalyst to violence, felt compelled cancel the Championship Tournament for that year (Zec, 2011). It became clear that the FSJ could not continue to function given the degree of animosity between the Croatian and Serbian sub-associations. As the impetus for recognition of a separate Croatian region gathered steam⁷⁷, the creation of separate national football associations became inevitable. In 1939 the FSJ was abandoned and the Supreme Football Association (*Vrhovni nogometni savez VNS*), was formed as an umbrella organisation within which the various national associations would represent their constituent people. The authority of the VNS was weak and its

⁷⁴ A consequence of the Royal dictatorship and the introduction of a new internal administrative division (from 33 oblasts to 9 *banovinas*) which Croats felt had been formed to divide and weaken Croat nationalist tendencies against an increasing Serb political hegemony.

⁷⁵ The distinction between the Serbian term *Fudbalski* and the Croatian equivalent *Nogometni* is evident in the abbreviation NK or FK in many football club names.

⁷⁶ The Yugoslavs attained a very respectable fourth place finish, an achievement only rivalled in the region by the third place finish of Croatia in the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

⁷⁷ Ongoing Croatian pressure throughout the 1930s led to the Cvetković-Maček Agreement in 1939 which created a single Croatian *banovina* (internal Yugoslav district) which was specifically designed to include as many ethnic Croats as possible. The Banovina of Croatia was created by the merging of two former *banovine* and including some areas of other *banovine* with large numbers of ethnic Croats.

mandate restricted to the organisation of the Championship League, which was now held within national boundaries; cross national games were only held in the final play-offs.

Independence and Resistance

By the 1930s, the Kingdom was under increasing pressure as different ethnic groups within the state agitated for greater autonomy. A rise in political parties during this time reflected the interest the population had in participating in government, but the electorate had become ethnically based in the nationalistic ethos of the era (Andjelic, 2003). The global economic depression of the 1930s hit Bosnia hard and added to the tensions of an already unstable political situation. The shadow of approaching war pervaded Europe as the sense of Serb and Croat nationalism was ever increasing. Serbia and Croatia began efforts to absorb Bosnia into one state or the other, claiming the Bosnian Serb and Croats as their own.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been split into nine '*banates*' in 1929 each carefully designed to avoid following ethnic or religious boundaries. In 1939 however the Croats managed to obtain a new agreement for the creation of *Banovina Hrvatska* (Banovina of Croatia). This Croat banate had far greater autonomy than the other banates and incorporated as many of those considered to be ethnically Croat as possible⁷⁸. Much of the Bosnian region of Herzegovina (with its *de facto* capital of Mostar) was included in this *banate* placing the region under Croat control.

Bosnian based Croat football clubs, such as HŠK Zrinjski in Mostar were important tools in the expression of a submerged identity of Bosnian Croats. It was around football fixtures that public expression of support for the Croat regionalist impulses - away from Serbian Belgrade - could be most obviously heard and seen. In addition it was also where Bosnian Croats could emphasise their Croatian credentials and identity; football fixtures facilitated the very public statement of their desire to cede from Bosnia in favour of joining a Greater Croatia. The Communist Clubs were also demonstrating displays of resistance to the increasingly insecure state hegemony. In

⁷⁸ Cvetković-Maček Agreement settled August 23 1939.

Mostar the Communist FK Velež fans were regularly demonstrating against the Yugoslav regime following their matches, despite continued police action threatening the club and its activities⁷⁹.

The arrival of war in the region in 1941 saw organised football in Bosnia cease. Most footballers left their clubs to fight in the various armies. However, who or what they were fighting is a complex picture. Many wars were fought in Yugoslavia during this period: Yugoslavia fought Germany (to whom their army had capitulated in April 1941) and the Axis fought the Allies. At the same time several civil wars were fought as the tensions of the inter-war period boiled over (Hoare M. A., 2013). In the chaos of conflict came unexpected regional specific alliances which would shape the wider conflict, a pattern to be repeated in the 1990s wars.

Football Recognition and Soft Diplomacy

In 1941 invading Nazi German forces recognised Croatia as an independent state (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (often referred to as the NDH)* - Independent State of

⁷⁹ The Velez club web-site tells a reader of how on September 1, 1940 Velez played a match against Crna Gora of Podgorica in Montenegro after which demonstrations against the regime occurred. Many banners were displayed with messages such as "Down with Imperialism" "We want Bread and Work" " Down with Tyrants -We want Freedom". That night police took into custody anyone identified as part of the demonstration. The web-site tells of the following:-

September 2, 1940 the demonstrations continue in Mostar, main strike for the working people is a huge deal at this time in the city, the city is in shock. Some are asking for the people to attack the policemen and free their protestors from jail. In the club everyone agreed that it is best for the club to take all the trophies, all archives, money and jerseys be put in a safe place. On September 2, 1940 Velez was told that it was not functional anymore and they needed to shut down. Practices were forbidden, but because of the generosity of club MOSK {MOSK Jedinstvo-the word means 'Unity'} players still practiced and worked out, even though forbidden to play for players held their heads high and went to Tuzla and Split with their club. When the police chief of Mostar found out that Velez had competed in Dalmacija, he did everything in his power to find out how this happened. He had found out through the newspaper about what was going on even though the players gave out the information. After all of this member of Velez Mesak Cumurija took all the trophies and everything else wrapped newspaper around it and put everything in barrels of petroleum and buried it somewhere. During the war he was arrested and taken away, he died in Sarajevo, Mesak Cumurija took his secret to the grave. After the war there was a search for the missing items but they were never found. War came to Mostar and Velez as a symbol of workers and freedom becomes forbidden by fascist government which have held in Mostar. Velez became a symbol for the freedom fighters because a chunk of its fans are in the Partizan party. [sic]

Croatia) in 1941, the boundaries of which included most of Bosnia and controlled by the ultra-nationalist Croatian group the *Ustaša*⁸⁰ headed up Ante Pavelić⁸¹ who were in turn under the influence of Nazi Germany. Once in power they were responsible for the construction of concentration camps in Yugoslavia, including the infamous Jasenovac camp in which some 100,000 Serbs, Jews and Roma are estimated to have been murdered (BBC, 2005)⁸². As a newly independent state the NDH authorities were keen to be recognised as such by global bodies. Even then FIFA recognition was an important step to international recognition (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998). FIFA admitted the state into its membership in July 1941 and Croatia played a number of international matches, primarily against Germany, Slovakia and Italy (FIFA, 2009). A Croatian football league, *Prva hrvatska nogometna liga* (Prva HNL) was developed in which some Bosnian Croat football teams, such as HŠK Zrinjski and ŠASK participated.

Whilst the Croatia territories remained relatively calm throughout the war, Bosnia was the site of intense fighting. Opposition to the occupation emerged in the form of two main resistance groups; the predominantly Serb *Četniks*⁸³ and the multi-ethnic *Partizans* led by Josip Broz (better known by his Communist Party *Nom du Guerre*; 'Tito'), the General Secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The resistance groups fought against the Nazis, the *Ustaša* and each other. The Allies tended to support the *Partizans*, having assessed them as the most militarily capable. The Bosniaks, uncomfortable with the dominant nationalistic ethos of the Serb *Četniks* and the Croatian *Ustaša*, tended to support the *Partizans* but had reservations about their

⁸⁰ The Ustaše was a Croatian Nationalist Movement dedicated to the creation of an independent Croatia at any cost which sought to exclude non Croats from political life. Those they considered as undesirable were to be subjected to mass murder. Their activities were based around resisting the Yugoslav authorities. In 1941 Croatia's army was comprised mainly of non-Ustaše men, but the Ustaša organised a militia with a feared reputation of mercilessness (said to consist of five 700- man battalions).

⁸¹ A Croatian nationalist, Pavelić founded the Ustaše whilst in exile following the Royal Dictatorship in 1929. When Vladko Maček, head of the Croatian Peasant Party which held political control in the Banovina of Croatia in 1941 refused to cooperate with the invading Nazi forces, the Germans turned to Pavelić to head the newly proclaimed Independent State of Croatia.

⁸² As ever the casualty estimates remain political. Serbs put numbers killed at Jasenovac at between 700,000 to 1,000,000 whilst Croats continue to insist the figure is under 10,000 (Glenny 1996:203)

⁸³ Četniks Serb nationalist movement first active as a resistance movement against the Ottoman occupiers. They gained particular notoriety as a paramilitary group active in World War II using terror tactics against Croat and Muslim civilians as well as the Partizan groups and their supporters. In the 1992-95 conflict Serb paramilitary groups styled themselves Četnik and were active in 'ethnic cleansing' operations. The term has come to denote extreme Serb nationalism and is used in a derogatory fashion.

Communist links, particularly regarding the Communist suppression of religious expression (Hoare M. A., 2013)⁸⁴. Ultimately there were examples of all types of Bosnians fighting for all of the main warring factions, their choices being informed by who was in control, recent events, local history, ethnicity and any number of individual antecedents. The fighting was bitter and intense and civilians bore the brunt of it. An estimated 1 million Yugoslavs died between 1941 and 1945, killed in the main by other Yugoslavs. The Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia were particularly targeted; some 17.4% of the pre-war Bosnian Serb population and 8.1% of the Muslim communities are estimated to have lost their lives between 1941 and 1945. (Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

Football clubs continued to function during the war, but under severe limitations. Many of the players joined the armed forces. Stadiums were damaged and became unfit for purpose. Difficulties in travelling meant that any organised leagues were restricted to local matches, leading to a much lower standard of football. Even in these difficult circumstances football was played in Nazi-occupied areas once Jews, Roma and known Communists had been removed from club memberships. Occupying Nazi forces even participated in the game, their participation of using football as a tool to create an aura of normality, masking the abnormal activities occurring throughout the continent.

The Communist Regime: Football's Golden Era?

The Partisans, led by Tito and supported by the Allied Forces gradually gained the upper hand and following the liberation of Sarajevo in April 1945, the rest of Bosnia quickly came under their control. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije: KPJ*) quickly took political power. The Communists, keen to

⁸⁴ Prior to the war the Bosniaks, who also had reservations about the centralisation of power in Serbian hands in Belgrade during the interwar years, had generally sympathised more with the Croats than the Serbs. Initial Bosniak aims concerned securing a guarantee allowing them to continue practising their religion unmolested. At first the Ustaša leadership promised a level of religious freedom but once the extreme Croat nationalists had gained power these rights were not respected. The Bosniaks began to look towards the Serbs to protect their interests, but high levels of Serb violence against Bosniak villages made it difficult for Bosniaks to join them. As Titos' Partisans became more distinctive from the Serb Četniks, many Bosniaks did chose to join despite clear worries concerning communist intentions to respect religious freedoms. As more Bosniaks joined the Partisans, Četnik forces came to regard the Bosniaks as enemies.

remove the issue of Bosnia as a point of antagonism between the two larger republics of Serbia and Croatia, safeguarded the regions integrity, ensuring it remained distinct and intact (Burg & Shoup, 1999). The Bosniaks, forced to pragmatism, accepted communist rule as preferable to absorption into either Croatia or Serbia. Tito understood that given the nations' recent history and especially following the atrocities that took place under the nationalist banner during the War he would have to carefully monitor and suppress nationalistic instincts to maintain a united Yugoslavia and his position as leader of it (Hoare M. A., 2013). Nationalist structures were thus dismantled as Tito created a single Yugoslav state bound by a communist hegemony. Forces that had fought against the Communists, and those with a nationalistic tendency in particular, were quickly rounded up, placed into concentration camps, executed or forced to flee the country. While the War took the lives of over 1 million Yugoslavs, a further 250,000 Yugoslavs were to die in the immediate post-war years in order to contain nationalistic inclinations which might lead to the disintegration of Communist Yugoslavia (Malcolm, 1996, p. 193).

Once indisputably in control Tito created a single party state and centralised economy but with more flexibility and political decentralisation than the Soviet style of communism (from which he split in 1948⁸⁵). Yugoslavia was divided into republics, and a model of communism developed for each tailored to suit its ethnic mix and industrial strengths. Each republic was ethnically mixed but to varying degrees. Slovenia was the most homogenous of the republics, with Bosnia the most mixed – and often considered as Yugoslavia in miniature⁸⁶.

The inter-ethnic nature of Bosnia made it politically important within Yugoslavia; it represented a microcosm of the Federation. In 1945 Bosnia was the least economically developed and predominantly rural despite the Austro-Hungarian

⁸⁵ Tito's policies initially mirrored those of Stalinist Russia. However he resisted Soviet influence with regards to Yugoslav economic policies. Eventually Yugoslavia was either expelled by the Soviets from Cominform or chose to leave of their own accord depending upon the way in which the sides wished to spin the events. Either way, Yugoslavia was then free to pursue different forms of Communism which permitted it greater freedom in its dealings with the West and associated economic benefits.

⁸⁶ The concept of Bosnia as a miniature Yugoslavia masks an important distinction; Bosnia's well established borders and long history as a distinct region in the Balkans provided for a heritage different to that of Yugoslavia which was the Federation of six separate states.

infrastructural investment and economic development efforts characterised by low levels of employment and high levels of subsistence farming and illiteracy. In an effort to raise the standards of Bosnia to parity with the rest of Yugoslavia Tito concentrated on developing Bosnia's industry, particularly heavy industry such as mining, smelting, armaments production and basic manufacturing which led to an enormous wave of urbanisation as industrialisation attracted large numbers of unqualified workers to the towns such as Tuzla, Zvornik and Banja Luka.

The nature of communism in Bosnia was the most rigid in Yugoslavia and a particularly stringent ethnic monitoring took place to ensure there would be no ethno-nationalist unrest (Glenny, 1996). Political appointments within Bosnia were calculated to maintain the ethnic balance, with no one group permitted to gain dominance or influence. The Bosniaks, although making up the greatest percentage of the Bosnian population, were not recognised as a distinct nationality within Yugoslavia until 1963⁸⁷. The drive for recognition of the Muslim nation was not however one borne of a desire to promote Islam⁸⁸ but to reify a distinct Muslim status in order to prevent assimilation into the Serb or Croats. Therefore although there was to effectively be a Bosnian nation-state within the Federation of Yugoslavia, there was not the equivalent development of a sense of a Bosnian nation. This was to have devastating consequences, as historian Hoare notes: "*without a Bosnian nation to underpin the nation-state, what was woven with such skill and care in the 1940s could be, and was, unravelled a half century later.*" (Hoare M. A., 2013, p. 382). The failure to create a Bosnian nation and corresponding Bosnian identity could indicate the extent to which the Communist era of Yugoslavia is best understood as one of permanent liminality, the instability of which was to become brutally clear with the death of Tito in 1980.

⁸⁷ Prior to the 1963 Bosnian constitution, which allowed Bosnians to call themselves Serbs, Croats or Muslims, the Bosniaks could be either call themselves Serb Muslim, Croat Muslim or Muslims nationality undeclared. It is a measure of the extent to which the Muslims identified with neither Serbia nor Croatia that 90% chose to register themselves as undeclared in the 1948 census. (Malcolm, 1996)

⁸⁸ There was however separate Islamic movement which strived to ensure Bosnia's Muslims did have some contact with the wider Muslim world (including studying at Arab Universities) and the setting up (with Saudi Arabian money) a Faculty of Islamic Theology at the University of Sarajevo in 1977 (Malcolm, 1996)

Familiar tensions between the different republics became increasingly evident from the late 1960s. Serbia, where Serbs were in a minority in two of its provinces⁸⁹ was as keen as ever to centralise power in Belgrade. Other republics, particularly Slovenia and Croatia felt that such a move would give Serbs an unassailable hegemonic position and agitated for a greater degree of autonomy. Although most of the republics had an obvious ethno-majority there were significant groups of a different ethno-nationalism in each. Sporting outlets provided an arena to articulate their difference.

Symbolism and Competition

To prevent catalysts for unrest, the state attempted to curtail the potential for nationalism to become a focus around which any social movement might coalesce; National Festivals went unrecognised, the singing of nationalist songs was forbidden on threat of arrest and imprisonment. The state well understood the threat to its own political legitimacy garnered from ethno-nationalist tendencies to display symbols of legitimation (Ramet, 2006).

Crucially Tito understood the nationalistic significance of the symbolism of football, particularly in Bosnia. The new Revolutionary doctrine wanted all civic associations connected with the old regime, including sports clubs to be abolished, particularly those with a nationalistic heritage. Overtly nationalistic football clubs including those that carried national emblems in their crest were banned. HŠK Zrinjski's participation in the Prvi HNL⁹⁰ and use of Croat nationalist symbols in its club regalia led to the club being banned by state authorities. The predominantly Serb club, FK Slavija Sarajevo, was also banned for its overt Serb nationalistic overtones. Other clubs took the decision not to re-form following the war, the population knowing that the sentiments the club carried and celebrated would not be tolerated by the state.

In their place new clubs associated with the army, police and other state-owned institutes were established. Several well-known Yugoslav clubs were founded

⁸⁹ Namely historically significant Kosovo with a predominantly Albanian population and Vojvodina mainly populated by those of Hungarian origin

⁹⁰ The football league of the pseudo Croat World War 2 state

immediately following the war: FK Sarajevo was formed in 1946 when two clubs were amalgamated in order to form an elite Sarajevo club to represent the Communist Party and Bosnia in the top tier of Yugoslav football. Dinamo Zagreb came about as the amalgamation of several other banned Zagreb clubs, Partizan Belgrade - named after the Tito's Partisan resistance movement - was created as a sports club for the Yugoslav National Army (*Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija*: JNA), Red Star Belgrade was initially formed as part of a youth sports society in 1945, and inherited the stadium, offices, players and even the colours of *SK Jugoslavija* club which had been dissolved in 1945 for its perceived collaboration with Nazi occupiers during the war.

Despite all of this the national Yugoslav team was given strong political support and its successes⁹¹ led to strong support throughout Yugoslavia irrespective of ethno-nationalist traits (Sack & Suster, 2000). The country was a founding member of the European Football Federation (UEFA), and hosted the 1976 European Championships in Belgrade and Zagreb. Football seemed to work for the greater good.

New Nationalisms (and Football Hooliganism)

By the 1970s however ethno-political nationalism was once again evident in Yugoslavia. Initially such manifestation started as a form of economic nationalism as the most economically developed countries of Slovenia and Croatia began to resent the political power of Serbia within the Federation and agitated for greater economic freedoms. Following Tito's death in 1981 it became evident that the Yugoslav form of communism was dependent upon his personal ability to suppress nationalistic tendencies. With no obvious successor able to continue to do so and with Eastern European countries beginning to loosen the shackles of Soviet communism, some politicians began to use the persuasive nature of a nationalist argument to cement their personal positions⁹².

⁹¹ These were notably a gold medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics following the three silver medals won previously at the 1948, 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games. On top of this came appearances in the Semi Final of the FIFA World Cup in 1962 and the two previous quarter final appearances in the 1954 and 1958 World Cups

⁹² Most notably the Serb Slobodan Milosevic and the Croatian Franjo Tudjman.

From the mid-1980s onwards football clubs became a focal point for demonstrating ethno-political nationalistic tendencies. Placards containing political messages appeared on the terraces at games and nationalist symbols, songs and chants became increasingly common. (Colovic, 2002, p. 260). Awareness of football hooliganism across Europe gave antagonistic young male football fans in Yugoslavia an understanding as to how their differences could be played out through terrace violence. Despite their communist beginnings, both Red Star in Serbia and Dinamo Zagreb in Croatia became hubs for nationalist agendas. Franjo Tuđman, the leader of the fiercely nationalist Croatian party HDZ (*Hrvataska demokratska zajednica – Croatian Democratic Union*) became closely associated with Dinamo Zagreb⁹³. Red Star Belgrade became the focus of Serb nationalism to the extent that the club became intricately entwined with the notion of Serbdom itself; to support Red Star was to implicitly support Serbian nationalism (Colovic, 2002). Red Star won the European Cup⁹⁴ in 1991⁹⁵ and following the match a number of jubilant players can be seen celebrating their victory with Serb gestures by “*clearly extending the two-fingers-and-a-thumb Serb salute – signifying the Trinity and affiliation to the Serb Orthodox Church and, by extension, Serbia itself*” (Wilson, 2006, p. 127). Pointedly the non-Serbs in the team were not making the gesture.

The state had ruthlessly controlled nationalistic expressions during Tito’s life and any nationalistic tendencies of the football clubs had been subdued. Although the supporters of the Red Star Belgrade had retained their Serb identity from the clubs inception in 1946 despite the clubs Communist connections, their expansion into open Serb nationalism and the creation of its formalised fan group the ‘*Delije*’

⁹³ Tudjman had long been a passionate sports enthusiast. At the start of his career, whilst attending the Military Academy in Belgrade, he became involved with FK Partizan; he later said this was in order to counter the Serb image of the other major Belgrade club, Red Star. By the late 1970s he had dropped his communist tendencies and returned to his Croatian nationalist roots, echoing his father’s political activism in the Croatian Peasant Party of the 1920s and 1930s. Living in Zagreb he became associated with the successful Dinamo Zagreb club, becoming a very visible, regular nationalist presence at the club’s matches.

⁹⁴ Known as the Champions League since 1992, this annual competition is organised by UEFA.

⁹⁵ Red Star were the unexpected victors against the international star studded French team of Marseille, winning 5-3 on penalties after a goalless draw. The Yugoslav team, with players drawn from across the regions of Yugoslavia, had defeated strong European teams to reach the final (Glasgow Rangers, Dynamo Dresden and Bayern Munich). They are the last former Eastern European club to win the trophy.

(Heroes) did not occur until the political power vacuum of the 1980s. As the nationalist politicians built their personal political power bases, they extended their reach into the supporters clubs. Hard-core Red Star supporters groups amalgamated into one formalised group in 1989 and were transformed by the sudden emergence of a leader; Željko Ražnatović. More commonly known as 'Arkan', Ražnatović was a career criminal, with convictions for bank robbery and a history of prison escapes throughout Europe⁹⁶. With known political connections to the Yugoslav Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs (including the new nationalistically minded Serb politician, Slobodan Milošević). Arkan, as the leader of the *Delije*, transformed the group from one prone to occasional outbursts of nationalistic chanting to a disciplined group, capable of extreme violence (Judah, 2009). The club provided the group with an office within then Red Star stadium and began to pay for a hard core group to attend away matches (Fowler, 2004).

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an increase of football hooliganism across Europe. The same period witnessed a period of intense uncertainty as the post-socialist moral and value system merged with Western European ideas (Buyandelgeriyn, 2008). The unpredictability of post-socialism was clearly demonstrated in the markets as the new rules and regulations of a market economy were hastily laid down upon traditional values and individual interests of a previously communist society, leading to a reinterpretation of Western style capitalism and an understanding that privatisation of state run industries resulted in increased poverty and marginalisation (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999). As national borders were redefined the politics of nationalism become focussed upon contestation with other ethnic identities, which in a period of intense uncertainty and increasing economic marginalisation had the potential to ignite violent conflict.

Although the prevailing global geo-political perception of the 1990s conflict was one of 'ancient hatreds' and irreconcilable nationalist sentiment, it is important to note that Bosnia had a rich tradition of pluralism, diversity and tolerance particularly in the

⁹⁶ His criminal record included robbing banks in Sweden, armed robbery in Germany, Belgium and Holland (and multiple escapes from prisons). Arkan is rumoured to have been involved with political assassinations as well as episodes of espionage. When he died, in 2000 – shot in a hotel in Belgrade by assailants with unknown motives – Interpol still had seven outstanding arrest warrants for him.

urban regions (Donia & van Antwerp Fine, 1994; Bose, 2002; Hoare, 2007). It was to prove the success of the ethno-political elite to create and then manipulate violent conflict as a method of subverting political change (Gagnon, 2004). Football was to prove a crucial tool in this process.

Football: A Predictor of War?

Many Yugoslavs pinpoint the moment they first began to feel that trouble was on the horizon to the specific date of June 28th 1989. The date holds particular resonance in Serb folklore as the anniversary of the defeat of the Serb troops by Turkish forces at the battle of Kosovo Polje⁹⁷. In 1989 the then President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, used the occasion to deliver a particularly nationalistic speech (Glenny, 1996). Suddenly it was impossible to ignore the impact Serb nationalism was having on Yugoslavia and other ethnic groups became increasingly wary of Serbia. The elections in Croatia the following year were unexpectedly won by the Croat nationalist HDZ party as Croats looked to protect their interests in the face of what they perceived to be aggressive Serbian nationalism. The increasingly tense atmosphere was reflected at football matches. By the time Red Star Belgrade arrived in Zagreb to play Dinamo in May 1990, it was clear to many that the occasion would not be tranquil.

Following Red Star was Arkan and 3,000 of his *Delije* followers who had prepared to fight. Awaiting for them were the Dinamo 'Bad Blue Boys' (BBB), an organisation established in the mid-1980s and an immediate focal point for Croat nationalists. In the disorder that had begun on the terraces of the stadium, the Croat fans felt the predominantly Serb police force was attacking Croat fans whilst protecting the Serb ones. The players were aware of the disorder and Dinamo's (and the future Croatian national team) captain, Zvonimir Boban, became a Croat hero when he ran towards a policeman beating a fallen Dinamo fan and karate kicked him to the ground. (Wilson, 2006). There was strong evidence that both sets of fans had planned the violence: stockpiles of stones and weapons were evident on both sides and a pre-

⁹⁷ June 28th was also the anniversary of the date Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo. The Archduke had been warned not to inflame Serb nationalist sentiments by visiting Sarajevo on this date but chose to ignore this advice. Princip remains a Serb hero for his actions in hastening Serb independence.

meditated use of acid to break through metal perimeter barriers facilitated the clash. The Croats broke through the segregation barriers, overwhelming the police and in the ensuing riots - lasting for over an hour - hundreds were injured. The disorder ended when the stadium was set alight and the crowd fled. This game proved to be the last before the Yugoslav league system collapsed and some would argue the state itself. (Fowler, 2004). It is obviously an overstatement to suggest that this event was the beginning or even the cause of the Balkan wars⁹⁸. However, it certainly reflected the mood of the time and was the most visible indication of the submerged discontent.

Why politicians used football as a tool to create a nationalistic environment was not immediately obvious. Certainly some Serb politicians, most obviously Slobodan Milošević, were harnessing nationalism as a tool to cement their own personal power within the Serbian political milieu but other influences were also at work. The terraces of Serbian football clubs included groups that were mimicking the Italian and English football hooligan habits of the time and were creating regular unrest, enjoying their non-political football related clashes with the communist police. Football was the carnivalesque rebellion *du jour* against Communist state structures. Supporters of Red Star Belgrade in particular promoted their Serb-ness with a concomitant tradition of distrust of the communist regime inherited from their antecedents who fought Tito's communists during the World War 2⁹⁹. As nationalism reappeared onto the agenda in the 1980s the supporters celebrated their *Četnik* inheritance, and declared themselves as extreme nationalists.

This shift from football enthusiasm to political partisanship was not a difficult transition. Football fans subcultures contain deep divisions in terms of 'friend' and 'foe' making such groups ripe for political manipulation (Vrcan & Lalic, 1998). Some form of this manipulation was required to harness and encourage the unstructured nationalistic sentiment: It wasn't until Arkan, with his close relationship with the Serb

⁹⁸ A statue outside of the Dinamo Zagreb Maksimir stadium heralds the event with a plaque reading 'To the fans of this club, who started the war with Serbia at this ground on May 13, 1990'

⁹⁹ Red Star was formed from the remnants of the Belgrade club SK Jugoslavija, inheriting their stadium, players and colours. SK Jugoslavija was disbanded after the Communist regime took power because their participation in games during WW2 led to them being labelled 'collaborators' by the Communists.

nationalist politician Slobodan Milošević took over the leadership of the *Delije* that its display of Serb-ness became systemic and disciplined. Such was the tension within the political milieu following Tito's death that Milošević's actions were perhaps driven not by the intention to exploit Serb nationalist sentiment but by a need to ensure such sentiments were not exploited by a leader of a rival Serb nationalist political party¹⁰⁰ (Judah, 2009). Milošević and other Serb politicians of the time are perhaps best understood not as a nationalist but as political opportunists who embarked upon employment of nationalism as a way to achieve their immediate and personal political aims but did not understand the potential long-term implications of their actions (Zimmerman, 1996). Placing nationalist politics in the spotlight permitted them to secure power within the Serb sector of society opened the possibility of their utilisation by others to achieve their own, separatist aims (Judah, 2009; Ramet, 2006). As violence, mistrust and fear mounted throughout the population nationalism would come to be an accepted tool of politics for all sides.

Not all the Yugoslav nation was nationalist, nor were all its football clubs and supporters vehicles and voices for nationalist sentiment. Many deplored the violence surrounding football. Some clubs resisted the impulse towards the creation of a nationalist milieu; still others explicitly condemned hooliganism. In 1991, just after the clash between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade had irrevocably linked football hooliganism with political and state nationalism a new fan group – the White Angels - were formed in support of Zagreb's other club, NK Zagreb. Against the prevailing nationalistic atmosphere this fan group explicitly stated:

"The whole point of supporting your club is in having a good time, and at a (sic) same time in a worthy representation of your own club at your own and other stadiums, which includes a restraint from any form of hooliganism in the streets or the stadiums and confrontations with other supporters groups." (White Angels Zagreb, 2007).

The sense of football both as a tool of and resistance to the growing nationalistic hegemony of the era demonstrates football's integral dichotomy.

¹⁰⁰ Vuk Drašković and his Serbian Renewal Party.

Supporting to Soldiering: The Conflict Years

In June 1991 Croatia declared independence following a period of increasing Croatianisation of the region. The Croat administration had once again begun to overtly use the nationalist red and white chequer-board flag, a particularly inflammatory gesture to the Serbs who connected it with the *Ustaša* regime and their attempts to expunge all Serbs from Croatia during World War 2. Furthermore, the Croat administration were felt to be systematically marginalising the Serbs, notably dismissing non Croats from their employment and preventing them from occupying positions of power within the state (Glenny, 1996). Clashes between armed Serb paramilitaries and Croat militia in the Krajina region of Croatia immediately followed as Serbs in Belgrade pledged to support the Serbs in Croatia (Ramet, 1996). Conflict between the independence-orientated Croats and the Serbs, still insistent on a Federation of Yugoslavia was inevitable (Glenny, 1996). By September 1991 a full military operation using the JNA but also newly established Serb paramilitary units such as Arkan's 'Tigers' and Šešelj's¹⁰¹ newly styled *Četnik* army was working to try and link up areas of Serb settlements in the Krajina by driving out Croats living in between. In the far north east of the country tensions between Serbs and Croats around the border town of Vukovar led to the establishment of an improvised Croatian defence force within the town, which was attacked by Serb militias in August 1991. The town resisted the Serb attack for 87 days during which an estimated 6.5 million projectiles fell on the town, 1000 civilians were killed, 25,000 were wounded and 31,000 civilians were eventually deported (Balkan Insight, 2013). The destruction of the town was total. The links between Red Star's *Delije* and the Serb paramilitaries were illustrated at the Belgrade derby fixture that autumn as described by journalist Dave Fowler in The Observer:

"Abruptly, the chanting stopped. The crowd watched as a group of Serbian paramilitaries (the self-styled 'Tigers'), dressed in full uniform, took up positions in the north stand. There were about 20 of them and, one by one, they held aloft road signs: '20 miles to Vukovar'; '10 miles to Vukovar'; 'Welcome to Vukovar'. More road signs were brandished, each one bearing

¹⁰¹ Voyislav Šešelj was a Serb born and raised in Sarajevo. A law professor by training, he was an anti-communist activist who became active in Belgrade politics in the late 1980s, eventually forming the Serbian Radical Party which had strong *Četnik* connections.

the name of a Croatian town that had fallen to the Serbian army. From high up in the stand, Arkan, the notorious commander-in-chief of the Tigers and director of the Red Star supporters' association, emerged to receive the delighted applause of supporters who were no longer fractious but united in hatred of a common enemy - the Croats. The match continued, but what took place had less to do with sport than with ardent nationalism and with what it meant to be a football supporter in a country at war.” (Fowler, 2004: online)

Football was proving its use as a tool for subsuming core identities and replacing them with nationalist ones. Nationalist ethnic difference may not have been a root cause of the conflict but the ethno-political elite actions were ensuring that it became so. Football provided the locale to witness with great clarity that the Yugoslav hegemony was neither complete nor accepted by the population as a whole.

The population of Bosnia nervously watched the developments in their neighbouring nations. Serb controlled TV showed news footage of burnt-out Serb villages and dead bodies from Krajina. The Serb media raised the possibility of pogroms and Islamic fundamentalist *Jihad*, and Bosnian Serbs were encouraged to arm themselves in preparation for expected attacks from their ethnic neighbours (Silber & Little, 1996; Burg & Shoup, 1999). It was increasingly obvious that the Federation of Yugoslavia had collapsed.

Slovenian and Croatian independence meant Bosnians had to make a decision about whether to secede from what was rapidly becoming a Greater Serbia. Bosnian Serbs did not want Bosnian independence, but contemplated the splitting of Bosnia allowing the Bosnian Serb area to remain with Serbia. Bosnian Croats did not want to remain as a minority within a Serb controlled territory and their political parties, matched the Serb demands for a mono-ethnic territory which could potentially re-join Croatia (Silber & Little, 1996; Glenny, 1996). Bosniaks, worried about their potential marginalisation in either a Serb or Croat controlled state, preferred independence. The referendum on independence¹⁰² from Yugoslavia was held on 29th

¹⁰² The referendum was held following a request from the European Economic Community which refused to recognise Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent nation without a referendum of its population. The referendum was held by the parliament, newly elected in the free elections of 1990, but against the wishes of the Bosnian Serb parties who strongly opposed independence from Yugoslavia.

February 1992 but few Bosnian Serbs participated having been strongly encouraged to boycott the referendum by the nationalist Bosnian Serb political parties (including Radovan Karadžić's Serb Democratic Party (SDS)) in an attempt to refute the legality of the referendum itself (Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 1996). Correspondingly the vote for secession was resounding and Bosnia was recognised as an independent state on 6 April 1992¹⁰³. The Bosnian Serbs, began to put up barricades around Sarajevo. In response some 50,000 Bosnians of all ethnicities took to the streets of Sarajevo to demand peace, but snipers on the Holiday Inn Hotel, under control of Bosnian Serbs at the time, shot and killed two young women in the crowd¹⁰⁴ (Malcolm, 1996). The siege of Sarajevo which was to last over three and a half years had begun.

Concerned that Bosnian independence would mean the JNA would be regarded as a foreign (and therefore illegal) force Milošević reorganised the army, withdrawing non-Bosnians but retaining Bosnian Serbs as a nucleus of the armed forces in Bosnia. The use of Serb paramilitaries with no obviously identifiable chain of command to Belgrade such as Arkan's Tigers became necessary to support the Bosnian Serb Army led by General Ratko Mladić (Burg & Shoup, 1999) Fresh from the fighting in Croatia the Serb paramilitaries were experienced and disciplined units, many of whom were violent criminals released early from jail terms by Serbian politicians in exchange for their participation in the conflict. The most notorious were those controlled by Arkan who had recruited directly from the terraces of the Red Star football club (Vrcan & Lalic, 1998). Perhaps the football fans subculture inclination towards the 'tribal' need to dominate fed the excessive violence practiced by such paramilitary units at this time. Interestingly the fans willing emasculation of their rivals, so evident in football chants globally, may have contributed towards the high levels of sexual violence experienced by Bosnia's civilian population throughout the conflict.

¹⁰³ The European Council recognised Bosnia's independence on 5th April 1992, the US did so the following day.

¹⁰⁴ The medical student Suada Dilberović, a Bosniak born in Croatia and Olga Sučić, a Croat.

The war in Bosnia continued across the country for the next three years and was notable for its military targeting of the civilian population¹⁰⁵. The conflict cost an estimated 100,000 lives (Research and Documentation Center, 2007) of which 65% were estimated to be Bosniak, 25% Bosnian Serb and 8% Bosnian Croat, the remainder being classified as Jew, Roma or other. An estimated 2.2 million - over half of the population - were displaced from their homes due to fighting and 'ethnic cleansing' policies (UNHCR, 2008). Statistics are, of course, intensely political and ever-disputed. All sides committed atrocities during the conflict, particularly against civilians. All ethnicities suffered, not only from the fighting but from the harsh conditions brought about by the conflict, but peace could not be realised until 1995.

¹⁰⁵ The war in Bosnia was complex and fragmented; three sides fought as enemies and allies, with the Bosnian Serbs supported by Serbia and the Bosnian Croats supported by Croatia. As violence erupted the International Community placed an arms embargo upon Bosnia. This did not affect the Bosnian Serbs who were already heavily armed and assisted by the JNA and the paramilitaries. The Bosnian Croats were similarly helped by Croatia and initially provided the bulk of opposition to Bosnian Serbs. The Bosniaks however, without patronage from an external country were left heavily under-armed and reliant upon UNPROFOR, the protection of the UN force deployed into Bosnia in June 1992. The International Community decided to create 'safe areas' for civilians, including Sarajevo which was by then under siege by the Bosnian Serbs. UNPROFOR, created by a UN Security Council Resolution in February 1992 was originally dedicated to ensuring conditions for peace during the Croatian War. However, with the outbreak of violence in Bosnia in June 1992 the mandate was expanded to include humanitarian assistance for civilians and the protection of UN designated Safe Areas (including Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Tuzla). UNPROFOR was mandated to keep the peace and could not use force unless in self-defence; they were thus powerless to stop the fighting between the different factions.

By the middle of 1993 the Bosnian Croats began to undertake 'ethnic cleansing' operations of their own to create an area which could become the Croatian Community of Herzog-Bosnia. Their subsequent cleansing of Bosniaks broke the uneasy alliance between the Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. Mostar, a city renowned for its tolerance during the atrocities of World War 2 became the centre of bitter fighting between the two factions. The Bosnian Croats occupied the hills above the city and the West bank, and in an act that came to symbolise the war, destroyed the Stari Most (old bridge) which for centuries had united the city. However, in other areas of Bosnia, notably Bihać in the West, the alliance held as the two sides continued to fight the Bosnian Serbs.

International mediation eventually created an agreement in February 1994 between the Bosnian Croats and the Bosniaks whereby government would be divided into Cantons allowing the Bosnian Croats control of the areas in which they were in the majority. The Bosnian Serbs continued laying siege to the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla as well as the UNPROFOR safe zones. The International Community relief missions provided food and medical supplies to these areas, overrun by people displaced by the conflict. Eventually the conflict ground to a halt with little gains being made by either side. In June 1995, the Bosnian Serbs began to move in on the UN designated Safe Area of Srebrenica in Eastern Bosnia. By mid-July the town was over-run. UNPROFOR troops, hamstrung by their mandate were unable to do anything to protect the population and approximately 8,000 Bosniak men and boys disappeared, later confirmed to have been executed by the Bosnian Serb troops, directed by Ratko Mladić.

Surviving in the Post-Conflict Milieu

Negotiations for peace began in earnest in September 1995 following heavy Serb defeats in Croatian Krajina¹⁰⁶ and NATO airstrikes¹⁰⁷ on Serb positions in August 1995. The Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) signed in Dayton, Ohio in November 1995 stipulated that Bosnia would remain as one country, but would be split into two Entities; the Serb Entity known as the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation - an uneasy alliance between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats¹⁰⁸. The national Bosnian Government, based in Sarajevo was mandated with responsibility for foreign and monetary policy. Any domestic policy and law was to be set by the Entity Level governments. However, within the Federation the government and legislative structure for domestic issues was further divided into 10 Cantons, each roughly corresponding to ethnic divisions¹⁰⁹ each with its own government and legislative and fiscal powers¹¹⁰.

Bosnia's post-conflict period is dominated by the document that brought the conflict to an end. The Dayton Accords are widely recognised to have been successful in terms of stopping the violence, but the compromises it had to undertake in order to achieve the peace left serious challenges to the peace-builders in the post-conflict era¹¹¹. The complex political and legal structures implemented to ensure that no one ethnic group could be dominated by another has resulted in an unwieldy, almost unworkable political system, vulnerable to manipulation by ethnic factions. Regions in which one ethnic group is in a majority are governed by a local administration of

¹⁰⁶ In August 1995 the Croatians surprised the Serbs with a lightning military strike that saw them retake the Croatian Krajina in what became known as Operation Storm.

¹⁰⁷ Known as Operation Deliberate Force, the NATO air strikes were a coordinated campaign to undermine Bosnian Serb military assets. The air strikes were triggered by the Bosnian Serb military actions, which included the invasion of the Safe Area of Srebrenica in July, the bombing of the Kapija marketplace in Tuzla in which 72 civilians were killed in May 1995 and the second Markale massacre in Sarajevo in August 1995, combined with a number incidents in which Bosnian Serb military detained UNPROFOR personnel. The strikes continued from August 30th to September 20th 1995 consisted of 3,500 sorties by 400 NATO aircraft.

¹⁰⁸ The fate of Brčko, a city in northern Bosnia, could not be agreed upon. It is now a protectorate of the International Community and neither a part of the RS nor the Federation.

¹⁰⁹ Five Cantons are predominantly Bosniak, three are Croat majority and the remaining two, Central Bosnia and Herzeovina-Neretva, are ethnically mixed, which means that special legislative measures are maintained for the protection of the interests of both groups.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix I for full political administrative structure of the post-conflict Bosnian state.

¹¹¹ The complex political and legal structures implemented to ensure that no one ethnic group could be dominated by another has resulted in an unwieldy, almost unworkable political system.

its own ethnicity. In the central government, (responsible for non-domestic foreign and monetary policy) key positions are rotated between ethnic groups supported by two deputies of a different ethnicity. Such a set up was necessary for the achievement of the Dayton Accords primary objective - the cessation of violence. It has however been heavily criticised ever since for establishing a structure which has rendered effective governance of the nation almost impossible and for sustaining a sense of division and ethnic mistrust (ICG, 2011). As Paddy Ashdown (High Representative to Bosnia 2002 – 2005) famously said *“It was a superb agreement to end a war, but a very bad agreement to make a state”*¹¹².

The complex political and legal systems designed to protect ethnic groups against dominance from the other groups has in reality encouraged political parties to be nationalistic and entrenched ethnic divisions. Political groups know that to achieve power they need secure the votes of their own ethnic group which will deliver to them the reserved ethnic positions. There is no incentive for groups to appeal to other ethnicities. Indeed there is a sense of *‘irreconcilable conflicts and perverse incentives’* (ICG, 2012, p. 11) for a candidate elected to an ethnic quota post; the post is designed by the constitution to represent the ethnic group to which he/she belongs, but such representation is in a conflict with the obligation to represent those of a different ethnicity who voted for the candidate. Additionally Bosnia’s political parties have tended to take the tactic of positioning themselves as the protector of ethnic interests, usually at the expense of others, utilising scare tactics to persuade worried voters to vote for the party best able to protect their ethnic interests (ICG, 2003). The heightened nationalist rhetoric that invariably precedes an election campaign has come to be understood as predictable because politicians who are able to instil fear in their electorate tend to prevail in elections (Lippman, 2010). Voters have a history of failing to vote for multi-ethnic political parties and political parties who have attempted to appeal across ethnic borders.

The Dayton Accords created OHR but provided no parameters by which OHR might judge its work to be completed. As such the PIC (which oversees OHR) has been able

¹¹² Quoted by Ed Vulliamy in an article for The Observer newspaper on 2nd November 2005.

to alter the agenda, providing no clear threshold to signify the end of the international engagement within the country. Bosnia has become stuck in the post-conflict era, unable to fundamentally transform itself to a stable state and with no clear guidelines about what has to happen for the *status quo* to be altered.

Public Good: Private Gain

Political stagnation has been common at all levels of Bosnia for over a decade. After the national elections of 2010 party political bickering delayed the formation of a state government for 14 months, only for it to collapse less than six months later. The failure of the politicians in the city of Mostar to agree upon a mayor meant that for over a year they could not form a functioning city council - the corresponding delay in agreeing a budget meant those employed by the state, including teachers, health workers and fire service did not receive salaries. Efforts by the International Community to implement constitutional reform to tackle the political entrenchment have failed¹¹³ as such reforms have instead a tendency to lead to power struggles within the Bosnian elite (ICG, 2012).

Whilst international agencies focus upon attempting to strengthen and democratise state institutions large numbers of Bosnians political elite have become renown for *“milking the public coffers or appropriating public goods – whether in the name of the ‘national cause’ or for private gain”* (ICG, 2002, p. 1). The system of corruption is deeply embedded within the political elite: *“Governance in post-war Bosnia was not simply corrupt; its pernicious qualities went much deeper than the graft and bribery commonly found in young democracies”* (Toal & Dahlman, 2011, p. 234) Patterns of economic practices derive from war-time patronage systems that have endured into the peace. An individual’s position within an ethno-political elite and their relationship to those in other ethnic elites provides an ability to manipulate the

¹¹³ Most recently the 2010 talks held in Butmir which focussed upon how to implement the European Court of Human Rights decision in the Sejdic-Finci case that ruled the structure which restricted certain positions to people of a particular constituent people was discriminatory against those who were not from that ethnicity (most notably the Jewish and Roma populations). The talks held to alter the constitution in accordance with the ruling were unsuccessful and not even the threat of EU membership derailment has led to any progress on altering the Dayton Accords, to the bafflement of the International Community. This case is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

provision of state and bureaucratic services. The respected global coalition against corruption, *Transparency International*, highlights the endemic extent of political corruption in Bosnia, with public sector appointments and public procurement programmes particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The complexities of the convoluted legal system also serve to obscure transparency and accountability of the political elite, who take advantage of the weak legal framework and the inconsistent application of the law. Judicial appointments are blatantly influenced by political parties. The number of prosecutions for corruption are low - an estimated 70% of corruption investigations are dismissed and even those that are tried are unlikely to finish in an actual conviction; in 2010 only two final verdicts for corruption resulted in jail sentences (Transparency International, 2013). The close connections between the political elite and criminal networks, many of which developed during the conflict are widely recognised (Toal & Dahlman, 2011; Hoare, 2007).

The institutionalised ethno-political milieu, created by the Dayton Accords and manipulated by the political elite, has significantly hampered the peacebuilding efforts of the International Community. The peace-building process stalled in the early 2000s and continuing efforts to reform the Accords and the Constitution have been blocked through their effective veto by the elite political leaders on all sides. A genuinely vibrant civil society, one strong enough to hold the state to account, has not developed, its formation hampered by a reliance upon (rapidly disappearing) funding from the International Community and the lack of a robust legal and political framework within which it could be capable of operating effectively. Twenty years after the conflict was halted, the country appears to be stuck in the immediate post-conflict moment, requiring a heavy international presence to ensure peace is upheld and is unable complete its reintegration into the global geo-political scene. It is the ethno-nationalist elite who, in this transitional period between conflict and reintegration, may be understood to be liminal Tricksters, preventing the reintegration of Bosnia as a functioning, peaceful state in order to protect their personal positions of privilege and influence.

Football Restarts: War Without the Shooting?

Organised football came to a halt in the summer of 1992 as many of the players and supporters joined their respective armies¹¹⁴. In the absence of regular recreational use, the structures of football were used during the conflict. Stadiums were used as camps or holding centres for displaced people and/or ethnically cleansed prisoners¹¹⁵. Pitches were used as collection points for prisoners on their way to execution¹¹⁶. Other pitches were used as cemeteries, most conspicuously in Sarajevo where pitches which were next to the FK Sarajevo stadium Stadion Koševo¹¹⁷, are today a mass graveyard, split into three areas: Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox reflecting the multi-ethnic composition of Sarajevo throughout the conflict. Yet others, on the frontline of the conflict were almost entirely destroyed, the pitch and the surrounds heavily mined¹¹⁸.

Amidst such atrocities, informal football games were played and players trained when the population felt safe. In areas which were under siege - such as Sarajevo - safety was not guaranteed; the wide open space needed for a game of football made the footballers and spectators easy sniper and mortar targets. Football was thus riddled with danger: In June 1993, 20 civilians were killed by a mortar attack on a football game in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinje. In May 1995 a mortar landed on a football game taking place in Sarajevo killing several civilians. In April 1993 the football field in Srebrenica was shelled during a game killing 62 civilians, many of whom were children. Despite this in March 1994 a game was played in FK Sarajevo's stadium, Koševo between a side representing Sarajevo and UNPROFOR personnel (UNPROFOR lost 4-0). Later that year the inaugural Bosnian championships began, with predominantly Bosniak clubs although travel across the country to meet the

¹¹⁴ The pre-conflict leader of the FK Sarajevo *Horde Zla* (Hoards of Evil) supporters group, Ismet Bajramovic became a commander in the Bosniak dominated *Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* (Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina), ARBiH

¹¹⁵ For example the FK Drina stadium in Zvornik

¹¹⁶ The pitch in Nova Kasaba was used to hold Bosniaks from Srebrenica captured by the Serbs in July 1995. They were later massacred.

¹¹⁷ Koševo Stadium also hosts the Bosnian national team matches when they play in Sarajevo. It was used for the opening ceremony of the 1984 Winter Olympics but was almost destroyed during the conflict. Renovated in 1998 it was re-named the Asim Ferhatović Stadium in 2004, but remains commonly known as Koševo after the neighbourhood in which it is located.

¹¹⁸ A notable example is FK Željezničar's Grbavica stadium in Sarajevo.

opposition clubs was at times difficult (Wilson, 2006). Normality was in the eyes of some a football match. The desire to present a semblance of civil society continued even if the seams were in places breaking.

Whilst the political structure was created in 1995 by the Dayton Accords the football association structure evolved in the decade between 1992 and 2002. When Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia in March 1992, the Yugoslav Football Federation in Bosnia was dissolved. Three Football Associations each representing an ethnic group were immediately created; the Bosniaks re-founded *Nogometni/Fudbalski Savez Bosne i Hercegovine* (Football Association of Bosnia & Herzegovina – N/FSBiH¹¹⁹) which had originally functioned between 1920 and 1945 when Bosnia was a *Banate* in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serbs founded the Football Association of Republika Srpska (*Fudbalski savez Republike Srpske* or FSRS), and the Bosnian Croat founded Football Association of Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (*Nogomentni Savez Hrvatske Republike Herceg-Bosne*). Each ran their own mono-ethnic league during the conflict years.

Despite the difficulties football clubs banned under the communist regime for nationalist tendencies took the opportunity to reform. These clubs, especially given their history, remain strongly nationalistic with their fans drawn from a mono-ethnic lineage. HŠK Zrinjski, the Croat team in Mostar banned by Tito for its participation in the Prvi HNL during World War II and the use of nationalist Croat symbols reformed in 1992. The Sarajevo based Serb club FK Slavija, banned in 1945 reformed in 1996. FK Velež, the other Mostar team whose communist heritage had led to such success between 1945 and 1991, continued to stress their multi-ethnic ethos but inevitably became more Bosniak in character after the re-formation of HŠK Zrinjski drew away many of their Croat fans. FK Velež's 25,000 seater stadium, Bijeli Brijeg (White Hill), was based in the west side of the city and once the Bosnian Croats had taken over the area, expelling Bosniaks as they did so, the newly re-formed Bosnian Croat team HŠK Zrinjski annexed the stadium. FK Velež were forced to build a new stadium - named Vrapčići after the neighbourhood in which it is based - which opened in

¹¹⁹ The Croat term 'nogometni' and the Serb/Bosniak term 'fudbalski' both mean football.

January 1995 and now has a capacity of 7,000. Supporters of FK Velež still cite Bijeli Brijeg as their home stadium, considering Vrapčići to be a temporary base. Derbies between the two – the usurped and the occupying - are hotly contested affairs, both on and off the field.

The characteristics of the top Bosnian football clubs remains varied. Some are seen as very politically orientated; to support the team is to declare and exhibit an ethno-political allegiance with the most notable examples being the Bosnian Croat clubs HŠK Zrinjski and NK Široki Brijeg and the Serb club FK Borac Banja Luka. Bosniak teams, such as FK Velež in Mostar mindful of the need to promote an ethos of a national Bosnia, are more likely to declare themselves as multi-ethnic, albeit with few local non-Bosniaks choosing to support them the club has an aura of Bosniak exclusivity despite their rhetoric. Other teams have a genuinely multi-ethnic support base, notably FK Sloboda of Tuzla, reflecting the indisputably multi-ethnic nature of the city from which they hail. There have been some new comers¹²⁰ to the football milieu since the conflict but others have been unable to weather the difficult economic climate of the post-war milieu and have been forced to stop their activities¹²¹.

Returning to Play

A central tenet of the Dayton Accords were to ensure that the objectives of ethnic cleansing policies were not legitimised. As a result there was a strong emphasis upon enabling the return of those displaced by the conflict with Annex VII of the DPA detailing the rights of refugees and displaced persons to return home. Return began slowly and was frequently impeded by ethno-nationalist politicians. However a strong international impetus forced through the return of property to the pre-war owner via the Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP) which by September 2004 was considered to have been 92% completed (OHR, 2004). Statistics have not

¹²⁰ FK Olimpik in Sarajevo was founded during the conflict in October 1993 by Sarajevans who wanted to play football and went on to become the fourth top flight Sarajevo club.

¹²¹ The club of the Bosniak-Croat town of Žepče, NK Žepče founded in 1919, was dissolved in 2010 despite relative domestic success in their winning the 1st Federation League in 2002 and having enjoyed 6 seasons in the Bosnian Premier League during which they qualified for the UEFA Cup in 2005/06

monitored how many of those who regained their property chose to return to actually live in their pre-war homes. Political wrangling delayed a census in post-conflict Bosnia, the first to take place since the conflict began in October 2013. As a result it has been almost impossible to gauge the true numbers living in any particular area. Fears about physical security, reluctance to return to painful memories, a new life made elsewhere and a desire not to have their children educated in a different ethnic system have all contributed to decisions not to return. By contrast some have regained their pre-war property and choose to use it as a weekend home or a place to come back to during the summer. Many of those forced from their homes as children and young adults have chosen to remain abroad.

The experiences of village football clubs since the conflict are as varied as the experiences evidenced by the larger clubs. Usually the clubs in villages not 'cleansed' by the conflict restarted footballing activities as soon as the leagues were reformed in 1996 albeit many struggled with the post-conflict economic realities. The different demographics of cleansed areas (even following a concerted campaign to encourage the return of those displaced) meant that many clubs from these areas have never reformed. Clubs which were once multi-ethnic are now ethnically divided, footballers who once played for clubs find themselves on the 'wrong' side of the ethnic divide. Minority returnees, those who have returned to an area in which their ethnicity does not have political control, particularly struggle to locate a club for whom they are able to play. Other areas with new villages made up of the displaced who have not returned carry ambitions to create new football clubs reflecting their new ethno-political reality. Football continues to reflect the political milieu of the country as it has done for the past century.

Hegemonic History and Liminal Narratives

The history of Bosnia is one of a country with an ethnically divided population which has regularly been exploited by leaders often resulting in periods of intensely violent conflict. Historically such conflicts have been followed by periods of hegemonic dominance, such as the Communist period following World War II, which have ultimately fallen as processes of counter-hegemony and resistance gathered support.

By understanding conflict to be a liminal moment for societies, it is also inferred that previous conflicts have progressed beyond the post-liminal state even though the hegemony established was to relatively rapidly prove incomplete and unsustainable.

The fundamental difference between the most recent 1990s conflict and those that have gone before is the presence, actions and power of the globalised International Community. On this occasion a very specific picture of the post-liminal state was defined. By placing an organisation such as OHR at the centre of post-conflict processes, the International Community intimated that Bosnia was to remain in a liminal state until OHR was closed. It is the crossing of this threshold and the on-going presence and actions of OHR in the post-conflict Bosnian state that maintains the liminal state. Turner believed the liminal process reinforced the structures of the wider society (Turner, 1969), and the insistence of the International Community in creating a very definite vision for post-conflict Bosnia echoes this; Bosnia is to resemble what the International Community believes to be a functioning European state. Until the threshold of the closure of OHR is crossed which may only happen once the country has fulfilled a number of PIC set criteria, Bosnia is unable to complete the liminal process and there has been no opportunity for hegemony to become established.

The international nature of the post-conflict milieu in Bosnia complicates the realisation of hegemony. Traditionally hegemony was constructed within the national borders with one dominant group endeavouring to convince other groups of the rightness of their dominance. In Bosnia's case two groups had the potential to be dominant; the local political elite and the International Community. In this situation actions may be understood as simultaneously hegemonic and counter-hegemonic; governmental offices in the RS which display a Serbian flag are supporting the dominant Serb hegemony in the RS, but such an act is simultaneously an action of resistance defying the International Community. In this complex geo-political landscape the supra-national, NGOs and the elite ethno-nationalist politicians are concomitantly hegemonic but carry counter-hegemonic potential. This is best illustrated through the experiences of one village in the RS to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 4

A Bosnian Chronicle and Personal Journey

The historical rise and fall of hegemonies and the role in football in sustaining and resisting them is easily visible in the history of the village of Divič. As such the village lends itself as the site of an ethnographic study. Detailing the history of the village, its football and the hegemonic and liminal processes present provides the geographical, historical and specific cultural parameters of the research permitting a reflection upon an ethnography in a post-conflict environment and considers the cultural prism through which such research must be viewed and understood.

Relaxing with coffee by the Drina River on the waterfront 'beach' in Divič it is difficult to comprehend that conflict could have so recently scorched this landscape. Bordered on three sides by the Drina, within the steep confines of the mountainous Drina Valley the village lies just two miles south of the city of Zvornik. The history of the region and the regions football however is a microcosm of Bosnia's history and reflects the intricacies of the nation. Strategically situated on the crossroads between Sarajevo, Belgrade, Tuzla and Bijeljina Zvornik has long been an important Bosnian town. The town developed a history of trade as an important crossing point of the river between Bosnia and Serbia¹²². The importance of Zvornik was symbolised by the construction of a medieval fort Kula Grad (Tower City) which was later reinforced by an Austro-Hungarian fortress on the rocky outcrop overlooking the town.

Prior to the inter-war industrialisation of Zvornik, Divič villagers would have made their living through subsistence farming and by ferrying travellers across the river. (Divic.net, 2008). The village's original mosque was built soon after the Ottoman occupation when the village would have been entirely Muslim. The lives of the villagers in this period would not have been unlike those portrayed in the Nobel Prize

¹²² The city is located at the point where the steep Drina valley becomes a flood plain. As such river crossings were possible here and a bridge was built across the river in 1929. It remains an important border crossing into Serbia today.

for Literature winning author Ivo Andrić's book, *Bridge on the Drina*¹²³ written in 1961. The inter-war period saw development of forestry and manufacturing (particularly textiles and wood products) in and around Zvornik. The close proximity to the rapidly industrialising city meant that many Divič residents found employment in the factories of Zvornik.

Football Kicks Off

Football reached Zvornik by the 1920s with two clubs active in this period. The first recorded match took place in 1924 between Zvornik and the neighbouring silver mining town of Srebrenica. By 1933 the two clubs *Zmaj od Nocaja* (Nocaja's Dragon) and *Sloga* (Concord) were participating in the leagues organised by the Yugoslav football association JNS through its Sarajevo based sub-association (Vukic, 2010). The two clubs amalgamated after World War 2 to create the elite club, FK Drina.

Village football occurred on an *ad hoc* basis with annual competitions based around the Communist May Day celebration and enthusiasts ever seeking to find appropriate fields to play. By the 1960s the young men of Divič began to push for the creation of their own team, and persuaded local resident and former FK Drina player Abdullah Vilić to represent their wishes with the Divič *Mjesna Zajednica* (MZ)¹²⁴. The MZ President was reportedly resistant to the idea at first but Abdullah Vilić spoke eloquently of the young men's and the MZ members, reportedly enthused by his rhetoric, backed the foundation of a club. This was a common experience; many villages formed clubs not formally recognised by the Yugoslav authorities.

¹²³ Set in Višegrad, a town 175km south of Divič, the novel charts the history of the Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge from its construction in 1577 until the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914. A representation of classical Ottoman architecture the bridge is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The bridge plays a central character in the book, witnessing the ebb and flow of empires through the lives and destinies of Muslim and Orthodox residents. It charts the differences between communities, from the relative togetherness during the period of the Ottoman Empire to their separation and division with the rise of nationalism throughout Europe as Bosnia becomes an Austro-Hungarian territory.

¹²⁴ Mjesna Zajednica are collectives similar to village councils operating on a smaller scale than the lowest level of state organisation, organised and run by citizens. They address daily governance issues that affected their lives. They were established by the Communist regime and have endured into the post-conflict era despite confusion over their legal status. Initially ignored by the International Community they are now recognised as important institutions with successful track records in engaging with citizens on civic issues.

At first there was no suitable local pitch for the Divič team, now named FK Mladost (meaning 'youth'). They thus travelled some 3km into the hills to a patch of flat ground and just 'a very cold stream' for washing and drinking from. By the mid-1960s, following the construction of a hydro-electric dam just north of the village and the creation of the 'Drina Lake' (which had led to the flooding of several village properties) the community started to excavate the river for stone which they placed onto a swampy area in the centre of the village to create the base for a football field. Workers from the Hydro-electric dam helped them, lending equipment and labour. The pride in both the industrial prowess and communal spirit by which the creation of the football field was remembered is indicative of how Bosnians recall the Communist era. It was a time of development co-operation and progress, wherein technology was utilised to overcome the natural environment. For the older generation it confirmed their position as citizens of a developed, energetic nation.

State assistance played a part. Football Clubs in this time were financed through the *Savez Organizira Fiziske Kultura (SOFK)* (Organisation for the Administration of Physical and Cultural Activities) which held responsibility for the funding of clubs, investing in stadiums and enabling participation via competitions. Any sporting club could apply for funding but needed to submit a proper financial plan and demonstrate their capacity to administer a club before funding was approved. SOFK was funded through state taxation which varied according to region. In the Zvornik region a tax of 1% on personal income funded SOFK activities, half of which was spent on sport, the other half on cultural activities including music and art. State funding of clubs placed the state firmly in control of the sporting milieu. In 1970 SOFK decided to formalise the establishment of 10 clubs in the Zvornik region. Many villages were interested in having a football team but had to demonstrate their capacity to form and run a club according to the legal and political framework. Clubs were required to have a pitch and a stadium of a suitable standard, but the financial backing to create such facilities was only available from local state structures. In many ways this was the region's golden era for football. Zvornik was an industrial centre for Yugoslavia. The Karakaj suburb (located just north of Zvornik) had several large factories providing more than 18,000 jobs (Toal & Dahlman, 2011). Such activity had brought

money to the region and clubs were able to supplement their SOFK income by seeking sponsorship from prosperous individuals or from Workers Unions. Players, whilst not salaried by the club, were paid 'bonuses' for victories.

The popularity of football meant those with positions within the football structure had local influence. Presidents who contributed towards the club did not expect a return for their largesse, but would expect an element of status and recognition. The bigger the club, the broader the influence. The poaching of players was rife, and despite official policy denying it players were regularly offered financial incentives or promised employment to encourage them to play for other villages. The connections and drive of individuals were key to clubs, they were the ones who could overcome the necessary hurdles for formal recognition and those managing the clubs sought on-going successes and the concomitant ongoing social recognition.

The economic prosperity of the era and Tito's suppression of nationalistic expressions led to relative harmony between the different ethnic groups. The strict method of state funding of football clubs was designed to reinforce that notion of parity. That said there was football-related disorder. The extent to which sporting glory was desired was reflected on the field; referees were occasionally assaulted up after games by irate players and fans and some games were aborted after spectator disorder. Although clubs represented villages, and almost all villages were either homogeneously Bosnian Serb or Bosniak most clubs fielded multi-ethnic teams – at their strongest FK Mladost, the club representing the Bosniak village of Divič¹²⁵, fielded some eight Bosnian Serbs. Players from before the war confirmed that ethnic tensions at this time were minimal, but were most certainly present and visible at football matches despite the state's efforts prohibiting nationalist expression. Spectator abuse of players on the basis of their Muslim heritage was common during this period, even though the team fielded many Bosnian Serb players. The players were apparently unaffected by such abuse, one commenting *'it was just something*

¹²⁵ In the 1991 census 98% of the village classified themselves as Bosniak, the remainder as Yugoslav, Croat, Serb or other.

spectators shouted, it didn't mean anything'. [Abdullah Vilić, ex player, manager and President of FK Mladost, Divič; October 2009]

Although the political agenda during the 1980s began to use elite football to promote nationalism (as detailed in Chapter One) the Zvornik clubs did not experience such influence. People in the Zvornik region were aware of the rise of nationalism and were concerned by events in Croatia, but were not expecting conflict to happen in their own region. Bosnians in Zvornik remembering the May 1990 events in Zagreb were fully cognisant politicians were behind the unrest. They were to learn that football could lose its innocence in a very short time.

Conflict Comes to Divič

Armed conflict and murder arrived rapidly and unexpectedly to Zvornik. Tensions between the different groups in the municipality had been increasing throughout the previous summer as the conflict in Croatia intensified. The different groups began to isolate as Bosnian Serb police erected barricades throughout the city. Bosniaks were prevented from moving freely around the area by the Bosnian Serb dominated police force. In early April 1992 units from what had been the JNA were stationed around the town. Negotiations between the local Bosniak and Serb political parties led by the later mayor Branko Grujić broke down once the paramilitary Arkan, the ex-leader of the Red Star *Delije* so prominent in the football violence in Zagreb the previous year, arrived following his units capture of the northern city of Bijeljina. Serb residents of Zvornik appear to have been warned about an up-coming attack and fled the city, many advising their Bosniak friends to do the same. A period of tank shelling preceded the Serb infantry attack on Zvornik. The town fell within a few days and the surrounding villages followed¹²⁶. With Zvornik and its surrounds in Serb hands, the Serbs had established uninterrupted supply lines from Serbia to the key cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights, 1994).

¹²⁶ Key villages for the Serbs to occupy included the Bosniak villages of Divič and the mountain top fortress town of Kula Grad, with its panoramic views of the Drina valley.

The events of April to June 1992 are best considered via the testimonies of Divič residents recorded by the international NGO Human Rights Watch in 1995:

"Divič came under attack on April 26, 1992, and was among the first Bosnian towns to be "ethnically cleansed." Divič was surrounded on three sides by Bosnian Serb soldiers and paramilitaries claiming affiliation with Serbian paramilitary leader Željko Ražnjatović (a.k.a. "Arkan"). Also, the village was simultaneously shelled from Serbia by the Yugoslav Army (JNA) which positioned its artillery in Sakar, a village located on the opposite bank of the Drina River, in Serbia proper. The attack lasted for eight hours and continued until the morning of April 27. During the shelling, Serbian troops entered the village, but they allegedly encountered no resistance from the Muslim inhabitants. The Serbian soldiers claimed to be working with the JNA, asserting that they were there "to protect the civilian population." The villagers believe that these soldiers were members of Arkan's paramilitary force and other volunteer formations from Serbia. The Serbian troops searched the homes for weapons, beat the villagers and looted their property. Some civilians were killed, but most remained in their village through the following month.

On May 26, 1992, Muslim civilians were forcibly put on buses belonging to the "Drinatrans" company, were driven toward the Bosnian government-controlled town of Olovo, but were brought back to Zvornik, where they spent the night. The following day, all able-bodied men - a total of 180 - were ordered to get off the buses at the Drina stadium in Zvornik¹²⁷. Women and children were driven to the Bosnian government-controlled city of Tuzla. The men were held at the stadium for five hours, then taken to Novi Izvor, a former office building that had been turned into a makeshift prison. Branko Grujić, President of the Zvornik chapter of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), visited the men and advised them to sign loyalty oaths to the new Bosnian Serb regime. Most of the Muslim prisoners complied. On May 29, 1992, the remaining men were taken away from Novi Izvor and never seen again or were transferred to Čelopek, where they were incarcerated in the dom kulture (i.e., a local hall where cultural or civic activities take place).

Dušan Vucković, nicknamed "Repić," appears to have been first seen in Čelopek on June 10, 1992, when he arrived with about ten of his soldiers. He forced all fathers who were captured with their sons to climb up on the stage and perform fellatio on one another; those who refused, were killed. Another eleven men were beaten to death or shot. A total of fifteen prisoners were killed by Vucković and his men on June 10. Throughout this time, the other prisoners were forced to sing Serbian national songs. The surviving prisoners were given ten minutes to wash the blood of those beaten or killed, and those who were ordered to carry out the bodies were never seen again.

Thereafter, Vucković and his soldiers came to Čelopek prison almost every night to beat, torture and kill prisoners. On one of these visits, on June 10,

¹²⁷ The Gradski Stadion (City Stadium) is FK Drina's stadium.

Vucković asked a prisoner named Nurija Bikić, " Who is the handsome boy [standing next to him]." When Bikić said that the sixteen-year-old boy was his son, Vucković shot the teenager in the head saying, "You don't have a son any more!" Vucković also mutilated the ear of the prisoner Enes Čikarić'. In another instance, on June 27, 1992, Vucković came to the prison, picked up a machine gun which stood by the guard's chair and shot randomly at the terrified crowd, killing twenty-five prisoners. The Čelopek prison was closed down on June 29, 1992, and the surviving eighty-four prisoners were taken to Zvornik and then onto the Batković detention camp, near the Bosnian Serb-controlled town of Bijeljina, on July 15, 1992." (Human Rights Watch, 1995).

The village of Divič was occupied by a Serbian paramilitary unit named *Draganovići* after their leader Dragan Vasijković. They used the hotel and football field at Divič for the military training of local Serbs (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights, 1994, p. 11) An Imam in the Divič Mosque was taken prisoner by the *Draganovići*, hung by his hands and beaten with iron rods. He was later removed and taken to the stadium along with 400 other Bosniaks who were moved to a concentration camp in Karakaj. (United Nations Commission of Experts, 1994). Following the expulsion of the Bosniak inhabitants Divič was resettled with Serbs displaced from other parts of Bosnia; the mosque meanwhile was razed to the ground, its foundations used to build an Orthodox church and the name of the village was changed to Sveti Stefan (St. Stephen) thereby eradicating 500 years of Muslim heritage (International Court of Justice, The Hague, 2006).

The Village Returns

Scattered throughout Bosnia and Europe, the villagers of Divič began to return in August 2000. Some 16 men and one woman accompanied by SFOR¹²⁸ personnel walked across the mountains, to begin rebuilding their homes. The Zvornik administration, run by the nationalist Serb party the SDS, obstructed the returns process, delaying evictions, stalling on resolving disputes, delaying the issuance of required documentation, postponing the replacement of infrastructure and the non-provision of services such as utilities provision and waste collection to contested areas. (Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

¹²⁸ The Stabilization Force, SFOR was a NATO led multinational peacekeeping force in Bosnia from 1996-2004.

Serbs displaced during the war who had then settled in Divič (or Sveti Stefan as the village had been renamed) were displaced once again by returnees reclaiming their properties. Serb nervousness over their own residential status led to a number of riots in the Zvornik region, including one that shut the main north south road for several days in a protest about the Serb housing situation (Toal & Dahlman, 2011). Although the International Community in the form of SFOR and then EUFOR¹²⁹ were present, the local police force was totally Serb and included some officers who participated in the ethnic cleansing of the Bosniaks in 1992 (Kleck, 2007). Returnees felt extremely vulnerable. As Bosniaks were returning to the village Bosnian Serbs also remained, unsure where to go but also encouraged to do so by the ethno-political elite. Relations between the two groups were tense. In December 2002, with the numbers of Bosniak returnees to the village now outnumbering the Bosnian Serb 'settlers', violence erupted¹³⁰. Reports place the motivation for the altercation firmly in the hands of the Bosnian Serb political authorities in Zvornik who had consistently obstructed the return programme and were actively discouraging Bosniaks returnees from remaining in the region (Toal & Dahlman, 2011). However, this violent event is of particular note for it led to the first arrests and subsequent conviction of Bosnian Serbs for return-related violence by the predominantly Bosnian Serb police force, an encouraging sign for the International Community working to create respect for the rule of law as a part of their hegemonic vision (Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

The conflict had decimated the local economy. Factories and offices had been destroyed and those that functioned had no job vacancies for Bosniaks. Economic power remained in the hands of the nationalist Serb ruling political classes. Intense political rivalry between local Serb politicians led to constantly changing political administration. The war-time elite moved to become the town's '*entrepreneurial class*' whose local businesses were readily utilised as patronage networks (Toal & Dahlman, 2011, p. 267). This entrepreneurial class drove many changes in Zvornik visibly 'Serbifying' the region by building liberally on Bosniak land, including the sites

¹²⁹ European Union Force was the EU led successor to SFOR from 2004 to date.

¹³⁰ This violent event is of particular note for it led to the first arrests and subsequent conviction of Bosnian Serbs for return-related violence by the predominantly Bosnian Serb police force (Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

of mosques demolished during the conflict and the erection of a number of monuments to Bosnian Serbs . Further intimidation ensued as they ensured that Bosniak agricultural produce was banned from being sold in Zvornik. Bosniaks had to travel to the Federation to sell their wares. Possible employers - often former friends and colleagues of Divič residents - were well aware that a number of Serbs known to have defended Bosniaks during the conflict had been killed by Serb paramilitaries and were nervous to acknowledge the returnees.

Many of this Serb political/entrepreneurial class were known to have been an active and prominent part of the Bosnian Serb conflict administration; members of the dominant Serb nationalist parties, SDS¹³¹ and SNSD¹³² who governed Zvornik in the post-conflict era included Branko Grujić (the Mayor of Zvornik and President of the city's Bosnian Serb crisis staff when Zvornik was attacked by Serb paramilitaries in April 1992 had visited Divič detainees to advise them to sign loyalty oaths to the Bosnian Serb regime) was arrested in 2005 and sentenced to six years for his role in the attack on Zvornik. Dragan Spasojević, Jovan Mitrović and Dragomir Vasić all of who had held political positions in Zvornik since the conflict have all been investigated for war crimes and/or assisting indicted war criminals including the Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadžić. The impunity with which those who orchestrated and carried out war crimes signifies the extent to which those in control of the region remained virulently opposed to a Bosniak presence.

Most of the village residents were to eventually reclaim their property. The OHR administered Property Law Implementation Programme (PLIP) confirmed a 91.44% implementation ratio of property in the Zvornik municipality by 30 September 2004 (PLIP, 2004). However, relatively few returned in a *meaningful* way. Some reclaimed their homes but remained living in Tuzla (where many of the women spent the war). Others continue to live in France, Australia and the USA but reclaimed their old homes and return to the village during the summer. Some of those who do live full time in Divič refuse to re-register their papers to the Zvornik municipality and must

¹³¹ Srpska Demokratska Stranka (Serb Democratic Party)

¹³² Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats)

therefore return to Tuzla for every contact with the state including pension payment and medical treatment.

These factors mean that the village is now predominantly populated by elderly residents, many of whom returned to be near the graves of their parents¹³³ and because they felt that it was their spiritual home. Many of those who disappeared from Divič are yet to be located. The on-going discovery of mass graves¹³⁴, a tragically frequent occurrence in this region, remains a traumatic reminder of the losses the village incurred. Every year the coffins of Divič villagers whose remains have been identified are carried to the village cemetery following a burial ceremony which, due to the lack of a mosque in the village¹³⁵, is performed on the village football pitch.

Relationships with old Bosnian Serb friends and colleagues have proved to be almost impossible to renew; the times of a joint celebration for the return of a Yugoslav army conscript or the sharing of baklava at *Bajram*¹³⁶ are no longer. With few Bosniaks obtaining employment in the region there has been little opportunity to rekindle or develop cross-ethnic workplace relationships. Perceiving a lack of security and unwilling to educate their children within the Bosnian Serb school system many of the villages young families have chosen not to return full-time. Young people have not been able to find employment and have been forced to leave to search for employment in the Federation or abroad. The village has a small shop, a bakery and a café but residents remain unsure about whether the village will be able to survive in the future¹³⁷.

¹³³ Caring for bones of their ancestors is an important aspect of Bosnian culture. Bosnian Serbs were known to dig up the graves of their ancestors to take their bones with them when they left an area. Graves are well tended across the region and the thought of not being able to care for their relatives resting places is a source of very real anguish.

¹³⁴Continually being located across the Drina Valley area, these graves contain those killed during the conflict, including those cleansed from Zvornik in 1992 and many of those killed in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. The most infamous are located in the valleys of Kamenica just south of Zvornik and the Crni Vrh (Black Peak) area to the north west of the city.

¹³⁵ The village's mosque was not rebuilt until 2012 which was after the period of research.

¹³⁶ The name given to the Bosnian Muslim celebration at the end of Ramadan. The traditional sweet baklava dessert would be made and for the second day of celebrations and share with anyone who visited. Prior to the conflict it was common for Serbs to visit their Muslim neighbours on this day.

¹³⁷ Views expressed by members of the Divic Women's Society and the Islamic Society in April 2010

Football offered some sense of normality and identity. By 2007, some five years after the arrival of the first returnees to Divič, the community felt ready to reform their football club. By this point houses had been repaired and the immediate concerns of the returnees regarding safety were slowly fading. The community wanted to create something for the young people of the village, to encourage them to stay. That said the village was not big enough to support a football club, so many of the players were recruited from other Bosniak returnee areas in the region. The club, once multi-ethnic had become exclusively Bosniak. Although the managers and the players stated they would welcome Serbs as they had before the war everyone acknowledged the unlikelihood of a Serb player coming to play for them in these early years. Serbs were thought to be more likely to play for their own local clubs and would be reluctant to subject themselves to the likely verbal abuse from spectators of rival (Serb) teams who it was suggested would be unable to understand why a Serb player would choose to play for a Bosniak club (interviews with Sehad Pašić and players of FK Mladost, 2008 and 2009). The club registered with the local (Serb) authorities, completing without problem the bureaucratic tasks required for every club to join the local Serb league. In 2007 they, plus one other Bosniak club from the adjoining Milići, Nova Kasaba, became the first Bosniak clubs¹³⁸ to register in the Bijeljina area leagues¹³⁹. For the first time since the end of the conflict football fixtures between clubs of two different ethnicities were to take place in the Zvornik municipality: was this evidence of reconciliation via sport or a proxy for further but lower level conflict? How could an observer opine on matters and with what epistemological evidence could their opinion be based on?

¹³⁸ The Srebrenica club, FK Guber - a mixed Serb/Bosniak club - joined the local leagues the previous year.

¹³⁹ Chapter 5 addresses the reintegration of the club into the Serb leagues in more detail.

A Post-Conflict Ethnography

At a traditional Bosnian *roštilj* (barbeque) Milan Lukić¹⁴⁰, a senior FSRS¹⁴¹ official¹⁴², asked of this author: “*Why are you here? Why have you come here to this region? People like you normally go to Srebrenica.*” He was being neither rude nor aggressive but was seeking to place the researcher “*into the social landscape defined by [his] experience*” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 63). His question was valid. Any ethnographer ideally has the ability to answer it. The primary focus of the question addressed the choice of the Zvornik municipality, and the Bosniak returnee village of Divič in particular, as a location for such research. Yet an ethnography is a narrative told by a researcher about a particular facet of daily living in a distinct time and space (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The researcher observes and/or participates recording their interpretations of the scrutinised activities through a range of sources and constructs a representation through which to present their findings. Postulating that every researcher will have some impression on the activities they are researching, ethnographies require a high degree of reflexivity for the researcher influences upon data gathered and needs to consider the extent to which their construct is defined by their own culture, attitudes and beliefs (Andrews, 2007; Heyl, 2007; Okely, 2012)

The how and why research is done in a particular locale is often a mixture of careful planning and fortuitous moments (Okely, 2012). The geographical location of this research was both fortuitous and calculated. Through work with a Bosnian NGO several years previously I already knew the region, although not well. I was familiar with the conflict history of the region and the challenges the local population faced in the immediate post conflict period. I had already done some work with minority returnees and was aware that it was in these villages that issues surrounding

¹⁴⁰ Not to be confused with the Milan Lukić, who was a former head of the Serb paramilitary group the White Eagles and convicted of Crimes against Humanity by the ICTY in July 2009.

¹⁴¹ *Fudbalski Savez Republike Srpske* (FSRS) is the Football Association for the Repulika Srpska and is responsible for the administration of all football leagues in the RS except the Premier League, which is run by N/FSBiH.

¹⁴² Milan Lukić was a senior figure in the RS football world, a Commissioner for the Judgement of Football Related Disputes and held with responsibility for allocating referees and delegates for matches. His seniority in the regional organisation was offset by his close links with the village team of Budočnost Pilica, for whom he once played.

reconciliation would be most keenly contested. A chance invitation to help with the implementation of an economic programme led me to coffee with the Women's Group in Divič. They revealed the village had just reformed their football club and were playing Bosnian Serbs teams as a part of the local league. Football had risen from the ashes of conflict, was crossing ethnic boundaries and was doing so without any influence from the International Community.

The Divič region was a site well suited to the strictures of an ethnographic study. What constituted the village was well defined. Divič has clear geographical boundaries (being bordered by the Drina river on three sides and a major road on the fourth). Being exclusively inhabited by returned Bosniaks it is socially and politically homogenous. It was one of only two Bosniak villages in the region to have a football club and its football heritage was long-standing; the club was founded in 1971 and reformed in 2006. When I first met the Divič residents, their first home fixture had just taken place; a contest between the village and Čelopek where 107 villagers had been killed by Serb paramilitaries in 1992. The notoriety and shocking nature of the fixture (covered in more detail in Chapter 5) ensured football was at the forefront of people's mind. Many were very willing to articulate what they thought about the correlation between football and reconciliation. In turn the task of the research was to interpret and re-tell the tales told.

Reflecting the Researcher

Mr. Lukić was by no means the only person to question why I, a British mother in her late 30s, who has never played a match of football and did not speak much Bosnian¹⁴³, had assumed to research this topic. I presented a certain picture to those I was coming to research which would shape the way in which people reacted to me. It is the character of ethnographic research to be reflective, to contemplate what has been observed and to consider how observations provide an indication of the meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices.

¹⁴³ By the end of the research my Bosnian had reached a level where I could go for a coffee with a non-English speaker. However, I was never confident enough to undertake a formal interview without the presence of a translator.

At the same time there is a need to contemplate how our own characteristics, personality and actions have an impact upon what we are studying.

Although I have never played football, I have always been 'sporty' and was a young, naïve enthusiastic volunteer on SDP programmes in South Africa and Sierra Leone during my twenties. I first visited Bosnia in 2003 on an extended field trip as a part of an MSc in Humanitarianism, Development and Human Rights¹⁴⁴ researching refugee return. I had originally intended to complete research on the topic of sport-for-development and had never quite put the intention behind me. The birth of my first son created an opportunity for me to start studying the topic part-time. The choice of Bosnia within which to base the research for this thesis was automatic. It was a country I knew well, had previous experience in working within and my husband and I were happy to relocate to with our (by now) two young sons. My husband, a software developer, was able to continue his work in the Bosniak city of Tuzla and it was here that we were based throughout the period of the research.

Being a non-Bosnian/Serbian speaking female who didn't play football, by necessity my research was always going to be predominantly observation based. The highly visible nature of me as a researcher, being both British and female and frequently accompanied by – usually - female translator, ensured all verbal research was conducted on an overt basis. Although visual clues could be garnered without having to provide full details of my research to everyone met, the well-developed regional inter-club network ensured that within a short space of time most people knew the purpose of my presence.

Football in Bosnia is a male dominated subculture and from the outset my gender presented limitations. Firstly it brought an additional contextual layer as the research was conducted within a gendered space within which I was of the wrong gender. Although, as feminist thinkers have long pointed out, gender should not be understood as binary, my 'outsider' status had to be acknowledged, even embraced (Woodward, 2008). My connections with the Divič football club in particular arose

¹⁴⁴ From the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University.

from my status as a female and a mother, which framed the research with the footballers within the club.

Along with other female ethnographers researching within male dominated subcultures, personal safety was a consideration (Poulton, 2012; Lumsden, 2009; Sampson, 2003; Palmer, 2010). I never personally felt endangered by risks posed from being within a post-conflict or a football environment as I was almost always accompanied by my (usually female) translator and a well-known and respected gate-keeper. However, the majority of the interviews were conducted within public spaces, most usually cafes or bars, and as such could be overheard. Questions from internationals focussing upon corruption, particularly of the regions elite, were often unwelcome by the interviewee and always heard by others. In this particular context the research was unable to pinpoint the current local ethno-political corruption even though it was commonly acknowledged by locals and internationals alike.

Although Bosnian women are very active in sport and the region has outstanding female handball, volleyball and dance teams, most women do not engage with football. As a female I found that one of the first things I needed to prove to most of the football clubs I interviewed was my footballing credentials. Despite coming from a Chelsea Football Club supporting family, I would never describe myself as an avid football supporter. My interest in the game lies more in the impact football has than the actual game itself. However, people I was talking with would want to know who I supported and then frequently tested me. When a member of the Bosnian Serb club FK Radnički Karakaj asked the seemingly innocent question “*What do you think of Ivanović¹⁴⁵?*” they expected a reply which included something about his two recent goals for Chelsea FC in the Champions League¹⁴⁶. This football banter was an important part of every interview I conducted with footballers and their clubs and required trawling the internet to follow Balkan players in the UK Premier League.

¹⁴⁵ A reference to the Serbian defensive midfielder Branislav Ivanović, who joined Chelsea FC from FC Lokomotiv Moscow in 2007.

¹⁴⁶ Ivanović scored two goals for Chelsea in their 1-3 victory against Liverpool in their Champions League match 8th April 2009.

The seduction of football knowledge was on a par with the seduction that children are capable of. The family is at the heart of south-eastern European culture and children are embraced by the whole society. My two young sons often accompanied me to watch local matches to the particular delight of members of the Divič women's group one of whom commented that she enjoyed seeing the boys because there were so few children who lived in the village now. The management of other clubs also enjoyed seeing English boys watching their teams and occasionally organised impromptu U-6 'international' matches. The glimpse provided of my own 'normal' family life permitted the region to get to know me as an individual, taking people away from their more formal, professional academic façade. These glimpses provided me with the most telling examples of how divided Bosnian society remains: One evening, after a large dinner and several beers two Bosnian Serbs started to ask me about life in a Muslim city. They asked about my children and particularly whether they attended a nursery in Tuzla. I confirmed that the boys did and the two men they began to mimic the Islamic call to prayer and the Muslim genuflection. Then they asked whether I had problems with sending my children to learn about Allah. Before it escalated, the most sober amongst them quickly hushed the others, but for a minute the mask had slipped and the gulf and prejudice between the communities was apparent.

Predetermined Perceptions

A post-conflict ethnography is a complex task. Researchers in any environment can never be truly objective; they will have a political stance or viewpoint through their acquired perspectives. Researchers who are 'insiders', i.e. a member of a group involved in the conflict, will have personal experiences and /or socio-political sensitivities. The 'outsiders' - those not connected to a group involved in the conflict - will still have perspectives acquired and framed through personal political views and the global media (Hermann, 2001). I fell into the latter category. An undergraduate at the time of the Balkan conflicts I remember the media coverage well. I recall watching the destruction of the Croatian city Dubrovnik by Serb shelling, the Bosnian Serb siege of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and the ITN news footage of the emaciated

Bosniak men in the Trnopolje camp which became the iconic image of the conflict¹⁴⁷. Bosnia was daily news for almost three years. It became the daily, macabre soundtrack to the lives of many Europeans, a bloody, brutal conflict in the centre of our continent, just a three hour flight from London, but feeling far removed from our own daily lives.

Preconceptions of Bosnia and Serbia arose from the media portrayal of the conflict. Serbia had continued its nationalistic policies throughout the 1990s, culminating in the war in Kosovo and NATO's retaliatory bombings of Belgrade in 1999. The International Community understood Serbia as the aggressors and British media consolidated that sense which was later to be strengthened by the numbers of Serbs indicted and tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague, a source of constant irritation for Serbs who claim they have been unfairly targeted. An ethnography would have to unpick the extent to which my perceptions derived from previously attained negative portrayals of Serbs. Post-conflict research in Bosnia has often highlighted Bosniak perceptions. Initially the Bosnian Serbs regarded this research with suspicion, particularly given the choice of the Bosniak city of Tuzla as our primary residence, but becoming a familiar figure at the Bosnian Serb clubs combined with a wider understanding of the pursuit of the Bosnian Serb perspective for the research led to clubs interviewed later in the research process being markedly more welcoming, even looking forward to their turn to be interviewed¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁷ The most notable, even iconic, image of Fikret Alic derived from stills of footage broadcast by British news channel ITN on August 6th 1992. The images were widely published by the global media (including the front cover of Time magazine) and can be viewed on <http://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/tag/fikret-alic/>. ITN was subsequently accused by the magazine *Living Marxism* of deliberately misrepresenting the camp to give the impression that the Serbs were running concentration camps. ITN bought a libel action against *Living Marxism* and despite high levels of support for *Living Marxism* including high profile literary figures of William Boyd, Doris Lessing and Auberon Waugh, the court ruled that the ITN team had accurately depicted the state of affairs and that their journalists had been libelled. During the trial BBC World Affairs editor, John Simpson, publically apologised for his support of *Living Marxism* publically stating that ITN's account was accurate (The Observer, 22nd April 2012).

¹⁴⁸ Tabanci – interviewed 22nd October 2009

My experience of Bosnia was centred on Tuzla, a city proud of its ethnic tolerance despite its conflict history¹⁴⁹. Its industrial heritage led to strong communist roots, as demonstrated by the popularity of its communist backed football club FK Sloboda (originally called Gorki after the Russian Socialist poet Maxim Gorky). Its citizens took particular pride in the fact that Tuzla was the only municipality in Bosnia not to elect a nationalist party just prior to the conflict in the 1990 elections. To spend time with Tuzlans is to put aside notions of inherent Bosnian ethnic hatred and mistrust. In this city all ethnicities live, work, school and drink together, usually with some enthusiasm. Tuzlans themselves sometimes underestimate the extraordinary nature of their city and the depth of ethnic distrust outside their city boundaries.

Tuzla experienced a wide scale influx of refugees, many from the Drina Valley region of Eastern Bosnia. The city's infrastructure was poorly equipped to cope but the city became renowned for its generosity. Tensions between the urban and ethnically tolerant natives and the rural, traumatised and increasingly nationalistic incomers could, at times, be strained occasionally manifesting itself in disagreements over practical issues such as rubbish dumping. The construction of my Bosnian reality was ever evolving but initially informed by those who had lived through the conflict and continued to live in an environment of tolerance and were and remain keen to present Bosnia as a modern European country. Tales of extreme nationalism were apportioned to nationalist politicians whom the speakers would insist did not typify the population.

¹⁴⁹Tuzla's mayor during the conflict, Selim Bešlić, was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to protect Serb citizens and to resist the conflict. In May 1992 a hastily formed defence force fired upon a JNA convoy that was leaving the army barracks in the north of the city, killing 50 members of the army. Tuzla citizens see the episode as an important moment in preventing the town from falling into Serb hands, whilst Serbs see it as a war crime. The Bosnian officer in charge, Ilija Jurišić (himself an ethnic Croat) was convicted of Improper Battlefield Conduct in 2012 and sentenced to 12 years in prison. Tuzla was besieged by Bosnian Serbs for 10 months in 1993 and on May 25th 1995 71 civilians were killed in one Serb mortar strike as they congregated by the Kapija (City Gate) in the centre of the town to celebrate the Day of Youth. Despite the intense hardships suffered by the city, the citizens made a point of embracing all ethnicities, encouraging them to remain in the city.

Structuring Data in Unstructured Settings

The field research which began September 2008, sought to examine the casual notion that football might aid reconciliation processes in post-conflict communities. The research sought to examine all the ways the game had affected the communities' interactions not only in the creation of social interfaces between previously antagonistic communities but its role as an influence or conduit of interactions within the legal and political frameworks. It was swiftly apparent that the influence of football on a village community was not solely derived from the activities of its own football club. The activities surrounding larger clubs and national teams had a very evident bearing upon the villages, with definite and specific implications for the reconciliation processes. Any data collection would have to bear in mind three different levels of football: grassroots, club and (inter)national. The subsequent research consisted of three distinct sets of data:

- *Formal and informal interviews:* These were conducted on both an individual and group basis. My lack of fluency in Bosnian/Serbian meant a translator was always present.
- *Observations of football matches.* The FK Mladost Divič club was watched playing home and away fixtures. I was also to attend the Bosnian National side's crucial FIFA 2010 World Cup play-off fixture against Portugal in Zenica.
- *Documentation Review:* These included match reports and other associated reports from match officials, N/FSBiH (known to all as Savez) and the police. Also reviewed was the legal framework of the RS regarding the establishment and running of sports clubs, the Zvornik municipal government policy regarding sports clubs and details of NGO activity in the Zvornik municipality.

Football as played is primarily a recreational activity. Most of those participating do so informally. However, within the informal nature of a recreational activity there is a hierarchy; some conversations were more formal than others depending upon the participants, their role within the club, their relationship with each other and their comfort with the interviewer, (and interpreter) and at times the facilitator of the

meeting. Interviews conducted with officials of the municipal government or with the representatives of Savez were invariably conducted in their offices in a formal auspice. By necessity most of the research interviews were pre-arranged to ensure the presence of a translator. The formal nature of arranging an interview placed the research very definitely into the public sphere. Divič was an hour's drive from home which limited the amount of time that could be spent there. This physical distance at times curtailed opportunities for chance observations and conversations. Occasionally it was possible to arrange a casual conversation, most memorably with two policemen who had entered a bar for a quick post-shift coffee but such circumstances were unusual.

The majority of the football related activity occurred on weekday evenings and weekends. The research has a bias towards data collected at those times. After a few months of visits to clubs with weekday activity (such as the Divič Women's Club) and for more formal weekday office based interviews¹⁵⁰ such visits became less frequent in comparison to visits made during the evenings and weekends when people had leisure time and activities at the forefront of their minds.

My Bosnian was conversational but not good enough for research purposes. As a result I was accompanied by a translator for all pre-arranged meetings. Budgetary constraints (a consequence of self-funded research) at times limited the extent of the research. For reasons of cost it was not possible to employ a simultaneous translator, which led to a loss of fluidity in conversations. The number of documents analysed was limited as the cost of translation, particularly of legal documents, proved prohibitive. Occasionally costs could be minimised by specifying the sections to be translated. Many of the documents were in Cyrillic which complicated the translation process.

In such scenarios translators are the bridge through which everything must cross. Attention often focusses upon them. With the right translator this works to the researcher's advantage: I found I was able to watch closely whilst the respondent

¹⁵⁰ For example with those based in the Municipality administration, with International Community representatives or with the FK Drina (a large football club) management.

spoke. Interviews could be fairly disjointed, as the interviewee spoke, occasionally at length before the translator could translate. Waiting for the flow of words to finish I could listen but more importantly pick up visual cues which gave additional information about what the respondent was saying.

Being female, urban and university educated, I found the best combination was to work with female, urban and university educated translators, preferably those who carried a similar political outlook to me thereby presenting a similar front. In many ways we reinforced our own characteristics. This appeared to make things easier for the research participants. Interviews with male translators seemed to add an additional layer of complexity as those being interviewed were often disconcerted.

The presence of translators impacts on an interaction. The translators added a further prism through which words and experiences passed. What was actually said was liable to altering slightly according to the translator's own experiences and construction of Bosnia. Drawn from English Language students from Tuzla University, meaning that they were usually Bosniak, urban and young, the translators had had varying experiences during the conflict; some had experienced fighting¹⁵¹, some had become refugees¹⁵², others had remained in Tuzla besieged by the Bosnian Serbs¹⁵³. Since then all had gone on to participate in a University education. All the translators I used were under 30 and few had previously been to the Zvornik region.

Bosnians are able to infer much about each other without exchanging actual information. The establishment of a person's ethnicity is ascertained as soon as they are introduced; names often provide the clues. Whereas most of my translators were of the Bosniak ethnicity, it was not always evident to those being interviewed who would usually make an assumption based on their inherent cultural knowledge. The actual ethnicity of the translators turned out to be less important than their perceived

¹⁵¹ Amel Dersević was originally from the Bosnian enclave of Bihac. During the conflict he and his family were trapped in his house for days when the Bosnian Serbs advanced to try and take the town.

¹⁵² Dijana Karamehić, half Croat and half Muslim was originally from Doboj and evacuated to Germany in 1993 as her family fled the city just ahead of the Bosnian Serb army.

¹⁵³ Jasmina Mulaosmanović continues to live with her family in the apartment block that still bears the scars of the shells fired at it by the Bosnian Serbs stationed in the hills outside of the city.

ethnicity. Research participant deduced that I was present with (and presumed I was being influenced by) a young, urban Bosniak.

A benefit of having a translator meant that I had another pair of ears and eyes. Often we would discuss what had been said and the translators would suggest alternative understandings of the situation albeit their perspective would be tempered by the prism of their experiences. One such incident stands out: I had questioned the Bosnian Serb club, *Jordan FK*, about reported incidents of nationalistic chanting. They had responded affably claiming these chants were not nationalistic and that no Bosniak listening would have been offended. My Bosniak translator confirmed that she would have found the chants to be nationalistic and would have been offended by them.

Custodians of Knowledge

Ethnographic studies depend upon the researcher's ability to access a community. Inevitably there are those who have access to that community and who can choose to facilitate or restrict such access. Commonly known as a 'gatekeeper', such individuals have undeniable influence upon the research. This research benefitted from the assistance of several gatekeepers. As described in the preface the initial contact with *Divič* was through an NGO economic programme run in conjunction with the *Women's Club*. As the delivery for the programme was progressing, the women came to talk to me and my children. It was in the *Women's Club* that I met the trainer of *Mladost Divič*, *Sehad Pašić*, for the first time. His mother called him and asked him to come to the club to meet with me, so unexpectedly my first contact with him was as a son rather than a football manager and in a *Women's Club*, a venue at which I was arguably more at home than he was¹⁵⁴.

Contacts within *Divič* only provided me with one side of the reconciliation process, I would need contacts with the Bosnian Serb clubs and villages that surround *Divič* to garner a more accurate picture. *Sehad Pašić* gave me the number of *Mirko Milošević*

¹⁵⁴ Pašić commented as he sat down for the interview that although he had lived in *Divič* for many years, this was the first time he had been to the *Women's Club*.

the head of the OFS Zvornik¹⁵⁵ whose responsibilities included the running of the region's leagues throughout the area, including the league in which Mladost Divič was now playing. Milošević proved to be the key to the research, providing access to numerous clubs as well as numerous officials in the higher echelons of the N/FSBiH and FSRS. A Bosnian Serb he had grown up in Ročević, a village north of Zvornik. He had played for the village side Jedinstvo Ročević as a young man, but since the war had become active in football management, including a stint as the President of FK Drina Zvornik, the region's top club¹⁵⁶. He retained positions in the FSRS and N/FSBiH and was the most influential man in football in the area and was well thought of within the national organisations¹⁵⁷.

Unusually for a Bosnian Serb Milošević supported the national Bosnian team over the Serb one, and actively encouraged his sons to do so as well. He would be regularly teased by other Bosnian Serbs about his national team of choice but was proud of his decision and unafraid to be defined by it. His choice was about looking forward; he loved Serbia and closely followed the Serbian national team but he believed he should follow the team that represented the country in which he lived reasoning

"If we keep being separate [supporting different football teams] we will always be divided. We'll never manage to move on from what happened... we'll be stuck here forever." [Mirko Milošević, August 2009].

Intrigued by the research, Milošević believed that football assisted reconciliation and was a key to breaking down barriers. Aware that football in Bosnia was developing a reputation for nationalistic violence, his instinct was to help any research which might show the less negative traits of football's legacy always qualifying the less attractive aspects of football by stressing the unusual nature of the event. He would spend considerable time reiterating his belief that football could be a positive force:

"It is the individuals who seem to make the break through and who can transcend issues. Once the craziness of war is behind them and peace is

¹⁵⁵ *Opština Fudbalski Savez Zvornik* – regional football association Zvornik.

¹⁵⁶ Drina Zvornik usually plays in the 1st RS League but was promoted to the Bosnian Premier League in 2010, spending one season there before relegation.

¹⁵⁷ Milošević was easily able to arrange interviews with a number of influential people within the Football Associations.

established then the reappearance of an old favourite or someone who was well known can help to sort out a lot of problems, create an atmosphere of friendliness. Old networks, people who have played together, supported together will make the links. Football does this.” [Mirko Milošević, November 2008].

A generous and kind man, in his late 40s, Milošević lived in an apartment block in Zvornik with his wife, a lecturer at a Serbian University and their two sons. He regularly returned to his parents’ house in Ročević, where he had grown up and whose club he had played for in his youth. He was well-off by Bosnian standards but by no means a wealthy man; his car, a Mercedes, was clearly showing the years of travelling around the difficult Bosnian roads.

At the grass roots level Milošević was the most powerful man in local football. When he called clubs to meet me, they came and on time. Fascinated by what I wanted to know he sat in on most of the conversations, but once he had introduced me to the clubs President, he would respectfully keep a polite distance. The footballers of Divič liked and respected him, as did most of the Bosnian Serb clubs of the region but not everyone was positive about him. The President of Trnovica had just discovered Milošević had docked his club three points for fielding a team with suspended players against FK Jedinstvo Ročević, Milošević’s old club, shortly before I interviewed him. The interview, which had been arranged by Milošević, was strained from the start with the Trnovica President seemingly deliberately provocative. In sharp contrast to other club managers who proved to be cautious in how they spoke to a British inquisitor, the President of Trnovica made a number of obviously nationalistic statements. Such obvious antagonism was unusual and did not make sense until Milošević revealed that there was a problem between the two of them and revealed that Trnovica had not wanted to participate in the research.

In our many drives together, Milošević, my translator and I had long conversations ranging from football to family, jokes to judgements. Milošević would often explain the background to a response in an interview, setting the context, but also inevitably framing the narrative from his own perspective. The challenge then for me as a

researcher was to deduce the extent to which my gatekeeper's presence and patronage influenced the responses to my questions.

Participation: Voluntary and Involuntary

One on-going dilemma was the extent to which those who participated in the research were doing so voluntarily. Any participant could withdraw without issue, similarly they could choose to not answer questions or discuss distressing incidents. Whilst every interviewee signed a consent form – as per University procedure - the extent to which their participation was completely voluntary remains uncertain. Often however the respondent had been called to the interview by someone who had influence over them, someone they did not want or could not afford to disappoint. It placed the researcher in a position of authority, for the interviewee had little power to refuse to participate. The quality of the material gathered during such interviews was occasionally limited. The most extreme example of this was the referee Zoran Taborin. He had been the referee of the notorious Divič-Čelopek fixture in September 2007. He failed to turn up to the first meeting. The second time, Milošević called me having arranged a meeting with Mr. Taborin and again he failed to show. It emerged that Taborin had driven into Serbia (where mobile phone signals were notoriously patchy and it was easy to 'hide' from unwanted phone messages). Despite numerous efforts from Milošević Taborin had not returned into contactable range by the time I had to leave a few hours later. Milošević, who viewed himself as Taborin's boss, was furious. Later that week Milošević called again and asked me to come to Zvornik for dinner. Just before we arrived Milošević called once again and explained that the dinner would be at Taborin's home and that Taborin did not yet know that I was to be his guest. The Bosnian culture is a welcoming one; Taborin could not turn us away at this late point. He politely entertained us and answered our questions, but was not forthcoming with his responses. Attending a further meeting at a later date, again under duress, he again participated as little as he could hope to given his constraints of employment, friendship and social obligations.

Responsibility of Representation

The Drina valley suffered enormously during the Bosnian conflict. Since the war's end the area has experienced an influx of journalists, researchers and development professionals. The greatest focus has understandably been upon Srebrenica and on ethnically cleansed Bosniak villages.

The Bosnian Serb villages in the Zvornik region have had a totally different experience of interaction with the International Community to the Bosniak settlements. With villages largely intact and populations that were not displaced during the conflict they have been largely ignored by the International Community and have seldom experienced any interest from researchers¹⁵⁸. They were wary of researchers, presuming that we would carry the perception gained from their understanding that the global media portrays Serbs as the aggressors. Their suspicion of those from Western Europe is bolstered by the Serb ethno-political elite who accuse the international media as forever portraying them as the villains and that the ICTY unjustly singles out Serbs to punish for the atrocities of the conflict. Consequently, many Bosnian Serbs have a tendency to presume the external world is biased against them. Their proximity to Srebrenica contributes to their wariness of inquisitors from the outside world. Helped by an introduction from an influential Bosnian Serb, the Bosnian Serbs proved hospitable, entertaining and generous, but wariness and mistrust was always present -interviewees selected their words carefully when discussing difficult topics, including relationship with Bosniaks or what had happened in Srebrenica. The population was keen to present their perspective and concerned they would be misrepresented.

In any research an ethnographer will always have to reconcile issues of representation and responsibility. The manner in which the researcher responds to the research and how that research is presented poses dilemmas (Dauphinee, 2007). Participants have no say in the ways in which they are represented or how their comments and actions are analysed and portrayed. This places a huge degree of

¹⁵⁸ This was particularly noticeable when respondents were asked to sign the consent forms. Bosniaks would invariably tell me how many consent forms they have signed for other researchers, whereas the Bosnian Serbs often asked why I needed to obtain their signatures.

responsibility upon the researcher. It is perhaps an irony that in a research concerned with the location and implication of power relations it is the researcher that has the ultimate power, deciding what counts and how it shall be interpreted. Milošević would regularly tease about how the research was only interested in 'trouble' and pointed out hundreds of matches which had taken place without incident. His point was understood: Would highlighting fixtures evidencing elements of nationalistic antagonism disproportionately emphasise the divisions between the ethnic groups, disregarding the overwhelming numbers of games in which no such antagonism had been present?

In this delicate post-conflict context misrepresentation has the potential to add to destabilising influences. The research entailed a number of conversations during which people were critical of others and then worried that they should not have said what they did. The concerns were that somehow if found out such comments would cause friction as well as unnecessary pain. The participants understood once they had shared their account they had lost control of how and what way their words could be disseminated. Some asked for information given not to be repeated. The challenge then for the researcher was how to convey the information in such a way that the essence is understood without the particulars being identified.

This ethnography holds the possibilities for misrepresentation of one group in particular. The ethno-nationalist elite are sketchily detailed throughout. In part that is because of the complexities of proving disingenuous aims and motivations, an action I felt could prove unsafe to both me and my translator (as the journalist Elizabeth Neuffer highlighted in her research in Zvornik in 1999 (Neuffer, 2003)). Presenting any group of people as a single entity disguises a multitude of attitudes and beliefs. Ethno-nationalist elites are, of course, a full range and within the range are men and women who are endeavouring to bring stability to Bosnia. Without evidence of corruption it is not possible to name particular politicians in this research, but where convictions have been attained I have indicated so. Almost without exception the Bosnian population views politicians as corrupt and the single greatest factor holding the country back. It is this perception garnered from those most

impacted by the actions of the ethno-nationalist elite that informs the research within.

An ethnography demands that the researchers should endeavour to put themselves into the respondents place in order to fully comprehend actions and assumptions of both the respondent and the ethnographer (Heyl, 2007). This researcher has no real knowledge of the fear and terror that people caught up in a conflict or how it feels to know that there is a camp filled with neighbours but be too frightened of the armed men claiming representation or how it would feel to return to a village where so many friends, neighbours, sons and husbands were last seen alive. Nor may this researcher truly know how it would feel to return to a village after the conflict is supposed to have finished and sit there, night after night, awaiting for an attack, hoping the International Community were patrolling the area¹⁵⁹. As such it must be recognised that knowledge gained from ethnographic research may never be fully complete (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

War Weary to World Wary

Following the mass killings of Bosniaks from Srebrenica in July 1995 and the continued discovery of their mass graves across the northern Drina valley, the attraction of the region for those wishing to research conflict and its effects is obvious. Srebrenica was and remains a special case, both in terms of what happened there and in terms of the International Community response. The events of July 1995 are rightly regarded as the single worst atrocity on European soil since World War 2. The exceptional nature of the horrors suffered continues to attract development professionals, agencies and researchers. The reaction of the International Community since 1995 has demonstrated a determination to atone, to compensate for the abandonment of the town effectively consigning the Bosniak men to their fate despite the formal UN designation of the town as a 'Safe Area'. Attempts to redress the tragedy have ensured a large International Community presence and the city has accommodated numerous NGO programmes, including numerous SDP programmes

¹⁵⁹ A situation explained by Bohaija Pezerović, head of the Divič Women's Club. Interviewed 10/12/2008

run by OFFS. This focus of this research was not to Srebrenica with its unique and terrible history, more representative communities.

There is a certain sense of ‘adventure tourism’ of research in a post-conflict arena. For those that have grown up in the stable communities of the West there is a certain frisson of being immersed in an area where:

“The danger may have passed, but it has only recently passed, and other, conflict related perils are still in place, for example, landmines and other unexploded ordnance as well as uncertainty in the political sphere and potentially dangerous, anti-western Serbs with hair trigger tempers and homicidal tendencies” (Dauphinee, 2007, p. 45)¹⁶⁰.

A generation of reporters, NGO workers and academic researchers made a career from the Bosnian conflict (Dauphinee, 2007). Almost all were able to come, experience and then, crucially, go, fingers flying over keyboards recreating the world they were departing in order to illustrate it for the world they come from and were returning to. Earnest graduates of conflict and/or peace studies visit Srebrenica, attend the genocide memorial in Potočari and attempt to imagine what it was in July 1995. But ultimately they all depart, leaving behind those who have nowhere else to go and who don’t need to imagine what it was like. Others replace them, and all too often repeating the work that has already been done. It is an uncomfortable truth for a researcher, including this one, that the real beneficiaries of any research are not the participants but the researchers themselves.

Questions about experiences during the conflict may be intrusive and unhelpful for the participant. Commenting on her work about the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee the social researcher, Molly Andrews, argued there is an assumption that the retelling of an experience can be beneficial. As such it is believed that the recording of personal stories for posterity ensures that traumatic experiences are not be forgotten by the world and even that something beneficial can come of them. As Andrews states this is an assumption from those who have not lived these experiences and highlights that far from being a healing process, the

¹⁶⁰ Dauphinee highlights how the US State Department advice was still describing the RS as anti-Western and potentially unsafe as late as 2007.

retelling of conflict experiences can in fact be psychologically detrimental, bringing further trauma to the narrator (Andrews, 2007).

The research found people who were keen to articulate what had happened to them during the conflict and those who didn't want to speak a word on the topic. It was a considered research tactic never to ask what had happened to people during the conflict. The on-going war crimes tribunals at The Hague and witness testimonies gathered immediately after the events concerned by NGOs such as Human Rights Watch provided sufficient first hand narratives about the events in Divič, Čelopek, Zvornik and surrounding villages. If people wanted to talk about their war experiences it was on their initiative and at their suggestion and if they chose to speak, I listened. However, the research was not based upon what happened during the 1992-1995 conflict, but on what had happened since the refugees began to return in 2000. It is not that what happened during the conflict has no relevance, but that like reconciliation itself, the research needs to be forward looking if it is to establish the ways in which football affects that process.

Those who wanted to talk about their conflict experiences did so often. However, such disclosures were not without personal cost. Speakers often seemed removed from what they were saying; eyes glazed almost as if they were reciting a learnt speech. Alarmingly such narrative appeared practiced. Clearly this wasn't the only time people had spoken to researchers about their experiences. There was a sense from some people that if the village wanted International Community assistance it needed to prove how much it was needed. If the various representatives of the International Community who came to the village wanted them to recollect their experiences then that they would in order to get their financial and material assistance. However, as time has progressed so the interest of international researchers, journalists and NGOs has moved elsewhere leaving a sense of desertion, disappointment and bewilderment.

The ball keeps rolling

By constantly re-referencing and continually re-asking questions over a two year period the research hoped to have developed an understanding of the role of football

that reflects the nuances of the complex post-conflict environment. The writing up of such research brings a perception of completeness which is, of course, an illusion. Reconciliation remains a long, uneven process influenced by many considerations. Since the period of active field research closed, things have changed. Mladost Divič is no longer playing football and did not participate in the 2011/12 or 2012/13 season for a myriad of reasons; some financial, some social. The political nationalist rhetoric has intensified, leaving a worsening political situation in Bosnia and the possibility of a return to conflict a step closer. The Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladić arrested in Serbia in 2010, 16 years after his indictment by the ICTY, is now on trial at The Hague for crimes which include events in and around Zvornik in 1992. Riots in Tuzla and Sarajevo in February 2014 have brought about talk of a 'Bosnian Spring' with a Citizen's Movement emerging and threatening to oust their ethno-political representatives. The research carries some belief that positive outcomes can be built upon and the negative, disruptive influences the game carries can be minimised. By highlighting an individual village and placing it within a broader historical and social context one hopes a deeper appreciation of the dynamics of football might be available.

SECTION C

What follows shows the role of football in developing the International Community vision of a stable, democratic, post-conflict hegemony but also how it has been used by the ethno-political elite to perpetuate a state of permanent liminality. Looking first at football at the village level highlights how the Divič football club has undergone a ritual of reformation and its activities in the RS football League system may be seen as a liminal event, a sign of a transition from the state of conflict to one of peace. The club further highlights how the International Community agency is evident within the local football milieu through their structures and infrastructures. As football clubs develop organic links between each other the activity of the football world serves to reinforce the development of a stable post-conflict environment. However, without sufficient finance to operate clubs increasingly rely upon the patronage of an ethno-nationalist elite who are able to utilise their influence to exploit a sense of instability, reinforcing the sense of permanent liminality that has prevented the region from developing an accepted hegemony. As such the ethno-nationalist elite may be considered as liminal Tricksters, using football as a tool to perpetuate their personal position of influence.

The section later turns to examine professional club football and the national team identifying the ways in which the elite football impacts on the returnee village of Divič. It is here that the use of football for the perpetuation of a permanent liminal state by Bosnia's Tricksters is at its most evident as clubs and supporters are utilised to reinforce the nature of ethnic division, tension and instability. Finally analysis turns to the institutions of football and the impact of those who staff them may have upon the processes of a post-conflict region. It examines the role of fan groups in resisting the dominant groups' ambitions (whether the International Community or the ethno-nationalist elites) and highlights the role that the football influencer might have, whether a part of the International Community vision of a post-conflict Bosnia or the ethno-political elite maintenance of the instability of the liminal period.

CHAPTER 5

Playing on the Pitch: Village Level Football

Football at village level is believed by some to have the potential to support the reintegration of a returnee village into the wider region. In its review of the 2005 Year of Sport and Physical Education the UN asked the question: *‘Why use sport as a tool in conflict and post-conflict situations?’* One response was that *‘sport has the power.... to bind communities together’* (United Nations, 2005, p. 84). Such development is believed to buttress a peaceful stability, supporting the International Community’s vision of a multi-ethnic region in the post-conflict period. Simultaneously ethno-nationalist symbolism and identities remains deeply embedded within the game of football and local derby fixtures provide a locale for the perpetuation of animosity, reinforcement of dominance and reification of division. The following chapter examines how processes surrounding village level football both support and detract from the rebuilding of the region’s stability in this post-conflict period.

There is no doubt that many of those involved in football in the Zvornik region believe sport as able to contribute towards rebuilding the region reasoning there is no equivalent tool for reinforcing the resurrection of networks between the two hostile ethnicities the region hosts:

“Football helps. It really helps. It brings the youth closer together and passes over the bad things that have happened here before”. [Mujo Tulić: Bosniak official in Birac League, April 2010]

“Sport is born between people – it brings people together. We are living here, we need to live together and sport is the one thing that we have that brings us together.” [Sehad Pašić, Manager of Mladost Divič, October 2008]

“We wouldn’t have any contact with them [Divič]. We would stay strangers forever without football”. [Cvjetok Stojić President of FK Jordan, August 2009]

Divič’s football club is an important community organisation: it is also a visible representation of the community and indeed inseparable from the identity of the village. The football club creates a link with neighbouring villages by virtue of playing in the same league system. That said, not all commentators of the game see the

inevitability of community binding. Inherent in footballs dichotomy is the extent to which it can also provide a platform for maintaining a hegemony of division, reinforcing the permanence of the period of liminality. Football culture tends to '*privilege the syntactic over the semantic*' as people define themselves not in terms of what they are, but in terms of what they are not (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001, p. 267). Football's identities are deeply rooted in terms of rivalry and matches routinely become an avenue for expressions of difference which has the potential to be exploited by the ethno-nationalist Trickster.

Seeking the Return Ball

The return of Bosniaks to the Zvornik region was fiercely resisted by the region's ethno-political elite and only occurred only following intense pressure from the International Community. The ethno-nationalists were aware that the protection of their own personal positions of power required tactics to ensure they would be effectively able to manipulate the population. Although deeply fragmented and riven with inter-party rivalries, Zvornik's nationalist Serb politicians were united in their opposition to Bosniak returns, fearing that returnees could shift the balance of power in the region (Toal & Dahlman, 2011).

To counteract the numbers of returnees the ethnocratic elite focussed upon ethnic consolidation, constructing new homes for Serbs displaced to Zvornik during the conflict to encourage them to remain¹⁶¹. Returnees first moved back to uncontested spaces, i.e. those away from the major towns and strategic villages. Those who return to Zvornik have not been successful in challenging the 'Serbification' of the town. The limited employment potential and continuing discoveries of mass-graves of Bosniaks killed during the conflict continue to heighten tensions between ethnic groups, ensuring that returns to the already contested and increasingly hostile urban areas remained slow. The ethno-political 'Tricksters' had ensured their political power base was secure. The *status quo* remained with hostility and distrust between the different ethnic groups evident. By 2004 it was evident that the Bosniak returnees would be mainly based in

¹⁶¹ The construction companies of which were reported to have close contacts with various members of the ethno-political elite (Toal & Dahlman, 2011)

rural areas and were not of sufficient numbers to challenge the Serb urban political dominance nor hold the balance of power in any election.

Within this ethno-political setting and amid the International Community actions, village football clubs of all ethnicities reformed; an important liminal ritual of the post-conflict period. All clubs irrespective of ethnicity received funding from the Zvornik municipal government, subject to demonstration that they have met certain criteria most pertinently a suitable pitch and club house and that the club was staffed by people capable of ensuring the club fulfil its legal and financial obligations. In reality those villages which had clubs prior to the conflict were able to reform. Villages of all ethnicities that do not have a historical football legacy have struggled to create a new club. The budget from the Municipal government was not sufficient to cover the full costs of running a club so all needed to raise additional monies within their local communities. Traditionally clubs have looked to local manufacturing and industry to obtain sponsorship, but many such industries were privatised as part of the post-conflict economic programme and have struggled to survive firstly in the post-conflict economy and secondly as a consequence of fall-out from the 2008 global financial crisis. Few clubs have been able to obtain meaningful sponsorship from this source. Most clubs have looked towards their diaspora and to prominent individuals within their community to make up funding shortfalls.

Re-entering the Field

As explained previously the primary research locale was the Bosniak village of Divič and seven neighbouring Bosnian Serb villages and their respective football clubs. Since their return to the league in 2007 Divič have played in the third level of the RS League, known as *Područna Liga 'Birač'* (Zonal League of Birač) which is the lowest league formally run by the RS Football Association; FSRS (*Fudbalski Savez Republika Srpska*)¹⁶². All the clubs analysed herein were in the same league as Divič in the 2007/8 season but some have since been promoted. All the clubs included are based in the Zvornik municipality and, with the exception of Divič, lie to the north of the city¹⁶³. Only one club in this region, FK Pecka in Ročević did not participate in the research - whilst amenable to being

¹⁶² For more details of the structures of the league system in the RS see Appendix II

¹⁶³ See Map 5 for the precise geographic location of the clubs

interviewed logistical reasons prevented meetings from going ahead. The other clubs who play in the league are based in the Milići municipality¹⁶⁴ and for reasons of cost, were not formally interviewed or visited¹⁶⁵.

The majority of the aforementioned clubs were founded in 1971, although most had existed on an informal basis for several years previously, playing friendly matches and May Day tournaments but without legal recognition or state funding. In 1971 the Yugoslav Organisation for Physical Culture (Savez Organazija Fiske Kultura – SOFK) launched an initiative to formalise the unofficial football games and competitions run by clubs in the region, and together with their local representative, Obren Ekmedžić¹⁶⁶, set about identifying 10 clubs that would have the capability, capacity and local support to participate in a formalised league. Other clubs have since managed to demonstrate the criteria required and have joined the league system.

League matches usually take place on a weekend afternoon, most often a Sunday, with kick off time varying between 2.30 and 5pm according to the agreement of the clubs. Occasionally, if it suits both clubs and with the agreement of OFS Zvornik, a match will take place on a weekday afternoon, usually a Wednesday. Regardless of day or time the match is a social affair, some 50 - 100 people (almost all male) will gather to watch, how many depends upon the success of the team and whether the fixture is a derby match; such fixtures are always keenly anticipated and hard fought. Visiting teams seldom have more than ten travelling supporters, few clubs have the means for transport to provide support at away games. In common with other rural regions throughout Bosnia, football in and around Zvornik is almost exclusively male. No women play for clubs at any level or in any age group, although a few reported some interest from girls to participate at a pre-teen level. Women make up a very small percentage of spectators at the club games, although in Divič, where the field was located in the centre of the village, there was a noticeably higher number of women spectators, many of whom would watch part of a fixture if they were passing the pitch.

¹⁶⁴ Milići is adjacent to the Srebrenica municipality, a 40 minute drive from Zvornik.

¹⁶⁵ These clubs included FK Budućnost in Skelani, FK Birač of Derventa and the Bosniak FK Jadar from Nova Kasaba.

¹⁶⁶ Obren Ekmedžić is a well-known and well respected football administrator in the Zvornik region. Although retired he would later work with the Open Fun Football Schools to facilitate the only OFFS project in the Zvornik region which took place in 2002.

Divič is unusual in having its pitch located so centrally. The benefit of such a location means that there is a cafe, bar and shop which sell to spectators. The other village club pitches are generally more remote consequently spectators bring their own refreshments and the more enterprising will bring extra to be sold. Many pitches are in agricultural areas, one or more sides of the field is usually flanked by crops, effectively ensuring the spectators cluster in one section. Urban areas have different parameters; in industrial areas pitches may be flanked by railway lines requiring spectators to move in the event of the impending arrival of a train. The village club pitches were usually described using the Bosnian word '*stadion*' usually translated as 'stadium'. However whilst the English word infers a sense of a building with stands, turnstiles and enclosure the Bosnian pitches have none of these features; the grounds essentially being a pitch with rudimentary fencing in accordance with FIFA regulations and a club house. With such 'enclosure' there is no way to prevent spectators from attending.

Identity Crisis? Football and its Communities in Zvornik

The relationship between sport, identity and representation is nuanced, evanescent and ephemeral (Bairner, 2009; Tuck, 2003; MacClancy, 1996). In this region the fluid dynamic between sporting representation and identity is well demonstrated. Many players represent villages they don't live in and in all villages there are residents who don't support the clubs that ostensibly represent them. However, with the notable exception of FK Guber in Srebrenica, the clubs are mono-ethnic; football thus reflects the clear divisions between the two predominant ethnic groups in the region.

In more prosperous times, prior to the conflict, clubs were keen for success and fielded players of all ethnicities drawn from homes across the region. The poaching of players from other clubs was rife and whilst a club such as Mladost Divič would be known as a Bosniak club representing a Bosniak village, it selected many Serbs¹⁶⁷. Likewise Bosniaks routinely played for nominally Serb clubs. Post conflict no clubs have selected a player of opposing ethnicity for their senior team, nor have they a member of a different ethnicity in their management structure. Two Serb clubs (from Jordan and Karakaj) had fielded Bosniak players in their youth teams and other Serb clubs claimed to be hopeful

¹⁶⁷ Including the senior Bosnian Premier League referee, Zoran Taborin in goal. Mr. Taborin was the referee for the Divič vs. Čelopek game discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

of emulating them. Most clubs and players commented that selection was based upon merit and the lack of integrated senior teams evolved from the reluctance of players to play for a club of a different ethnicity rather than unwillingness of clubs to select such a player. As one club manager explained:

“I don’t think the clubs have a problem with it [selecting players of a different ethnicity]. They will select whoever is the best as it will mean that they will win more. The bigger problem is the spectators. Even before the war people would always shout at Serb players playing for Divič, and we had lots! But now I think any Serb player who came to play for us would have so much abuse shouted at him by the opposition spectators. I don’t think anyone wants to do that. Why would you? We would select a Serb player. It is in our tradition to. But they don’t want to play for us” [Sehad Pašić, Manager, FK Mladost Divič October 2008].

The reluctance of footballers to play for clubs of a different ethnicity stems from concerns regarding the reception the players would get from the club’s supporters. The open nature of the pitches and a lack of a legal framework governing spectator behaviour at football matches means that clubs have little control over their supporters or their actions and individual players are potentially vulnerable to verbal and possible physical abuse. Although an element of ethnic abuse during football matches was – inevitably - present prior to the conflict the players, irrespective of ethnicity, had a shared history; they had attended school together, grown up together and were a collective. In the post conflict scenario the absence of such formative collective experiences would leave players of a different ethnicity isolated and particularly vulnerable to hostile supporters. Players are aware of this:

“It would be difficult for them [Bosniaks] for them to play for us. They don’t know us. They have no knowledge of us. We didn’t go to school together so there is no history between us. I think that would make it difficult for them”. [Nenad Stevanović, senior player at FK Budućnost, Pilica, August 2009].

By placing the blame for the lack of multi-ethnic team at the feet of the individual players the clubs are able to portray themselves to a British researcher as tolerant, forward looking and distinct from the ethno-nationalist ethos. It also suggests that the ethno-nationalists have successfully consolidated Serb dominance, removing the need for concern about participation of Bosniaks in Serb organisations. The *status quo* is not

under threat ensuring the Trickster ethno-nationalist dominance is secure. A Serb club could easily utilise the skills of a Bosniak player with no threat to its own Serb identity or ethos.

By asserting that it is the supporters who would not tolerate a player of a different ethnicity the clubs demonstrate their distinctiveness from their supporters. The dualism of football is ever present as clubs concurrently claim to represent their village, yet are also able to purport to not support the values articulated by many of their supporters. The team itself is required to carry such representations, yet the individuals on the team may not be a fair representation of their support.

Representing Illusions: A Village and its Club

The formation of new football clubs is closely regulated by strict laws and obligations which require significant financial investment and a proven ability to manage a similar organisation. FK Mladost was able to do as required is due to its pre-conflict history¹⁶⁸. Other Bosniak villages, although expressing a desire to found a club have not been able to do so. With Bosniaks reluctant to play for Serb clubs FK Mladost Divič serves as the playing conduit for returnees across the Zvornik region¹⁶⁹. Aware the village would not be able to maintain a club using players solely from the village¹⁷⁰ FK Mladost encouraged the enrolment of Bosniaks from other villages; the Mladost manager estimated in 2010 that at any one time around six players representing Divič on the field were not from Divič itself. The footballers from other villages face increased hardships when participating in the club; most young men do not own a car, public transport to and from other villages is difficult and it is an additional cost on a non-essential activity. Most non-Divič players are unable to make all three weekly training sessions. This additional expense comes on top of the player's registration fee (50KM payable annually to Savez), medical checks and any disciplinary fines that might be incurred.

¹⁶⁸ The laws in 1971, when many of the village clubs were first formally established were as stringent.

¹⁶⁹ Bosniaks who have returned to villages in the municipality of Milići would be more likely to play for the Nova Kasaba club FK Jadar which joined the Birac League the same time as Divič.

¹⁷⁰ Young men of a footballing age have not returned to Divič in great numbers, preferring to study elsewhere, emigrate in search of work or have simply made a different life away from the village since their displacement 20 years ago

Although all of Mladost footballers are Bosniak, the pressures faced by the Bosniaks from other villages often more remote than Divič, can be noticeably different. Historically Divič residents took advantage of their close proximity to the industrial and administrative jobs in Zvornik and Karakaj, whilst the more remote villages relied upon agriculture for a living. Divič residents still have a tendency to look for employment in businesses, administration and manufacturing, whilst Bosniaks in remoter villages remain focussed on working the land. All Bosniak villages were ethnically cleansed, many experiencing severe fighting and atrocities, but their conflict experiences are not identical; Divič residents were held in Čelopek, Bosniaks from other villages were held in other camps across the region. Tensions with neighbouring villages over war-time experiences are not necessarily the same for the players representing Divič as for the residents of Divič itself. Divič residents not involved in football are untroubled by Divič being represented by Bosniak men from other villages. As far as they are concerned the club represents Divič, irrespective of who is actually on the pitch.

Over half the families in Divič were represented at the Founding Assembly of FK Mladost in 2006. Most felt the club was important to provide the younger members of the village with a suitable leisure activity and felt that a football club would encourage the younger people to remain in the village. Still others understood it to be a part of the reintegration process, a part of re-establishing themselves within the wider community echoing the sense the club reformation was a ritual of a wider societal liminal transition to a post-liminal reintegrated state:

“Why did we start the club up again? I was thinking that we needed some form of communication. We could not stay isolated forever. At some point we have to go to Zvornik and the other villages” [Salih Kapidžić, former President of FK Mladost, Divič, July 2009]

The club is therefore considered a tool of connection and communication. Concurrently for some residents of Divič their club represents a defensive parry to Serb domination, a visible demonstration of their resistance to being air brushed from the regions consciousness:

“I like the club. I like that they are there. I like that they go to these villages and play. It says to everyone that we are still here. You tried to get rid of us but you

couldn't. We are still here and you have to learn to live with us". [Divič Women's Club, interviewed Dec 2008]

Clubs coalescing around a resistance identity have a tendency to emphasise ethnic differences with their identity built upon difference, defiance and symbolic resistance (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001). On match days the club house sports a Bosnian flag flown specifically during the games duration, an unusual sight amidst the usual red, white and blue flags of Serbia flown at all the Serb clubs included in this research. The village match is the occasion at which Bosnian national identity can be symbolically displayed and celebrated and is a deliberate statement of resistance to the overwhelming Serb cultural, political and economic framework in which the returnees now reside and indeed play football.

Some Serb clubs commented that in addition to the Bosnian flag, Mladost supporters would fly the green flag with the Islamic crescent representing the Bosnian Muslims from their mosque, specifically removing the flag from their mosque to provoke arriving Serbs. However, during the period of research there was no mosque in Divič and at no point was the waving of an Islamic flag by Mladost supporters at a match witnessed. In the absence of such symbolism one must read into the apocryphal story how the Serb perception of Divič inhabitants remains framed in terms of religious (and hence a national Bosniak) identity.

Simultaneously the club, revelling in its ethno-religious differences and reflecting more than simply community solidarity, could be said to represent Anderson's 1981 idea of 'submerged nationhood' which in the case of Bosnia remains wrapped up in religious difference. The concept of 'submerged nationhood' seems relatively straightforward but contains within it *"a breadth of internal rivalries and resistant identities"* (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001, p. 274). This applies both to the village and the club itself. Within the village of Divič itself there are divisions around the football club. There were a number of dissenters at the Founding Assembly who objected to the cost of the club's reformation being funded by the community as a whole. Some questioned how people could think of leisure and recreation when so many were grieving over lost relatives, an opinion that highlighted that whilst some in the community were ready to move

forwards with a football club, others were unable to contemplate doing so and saw in the football club a frivolity that flew in the face of the serious task of reconciliation and rebuilding.

Tensions are ever present between Divič village organisations and the football club. There is, for example, an unmistakable lack of cooperation with the water sports club with whom the football club share a club house; the latter club has a car donated to them by UNHCR which the football club, despite its problems obtaining transport to travel to away matches, does not use because *'they would make it too difficult for us to do so'* (interview with Kenan Kapadžić, Captain of FK Mladost, February 2010). A move to apply for funding to renovate the club house for both clubs floundered when the disagreements between the boards of the clubs could not be overcome¹⁷¹. The distrust between the two clubs eventually led to the departure of two senior and influential citizens from the board of the football club as younger members felt that these senior board members participation with the water sports club led to their divided loyalties¹⁷². Such suspicion and animosity within organisations is not unusual; the Divič Women's Club is riven with accusations about the dispersal of funds donated by NGOs and diaspora and suspicion of financial mismanagement of those in positions of responsibility within the organisation. It should be noted the generally high levels of corruption and mismanagement throughout all levels of Bosnian society means this level of suspicion and mistrust within organisations is not uncommon; Divič should not be considered as unusually fractious.

Whilst divisions within the village are thus to be expected, the notion of representation of the Divič community is further complicated by the complexities of identifying exactly what that community entails. Some residents have returned to the village to live there on a full-time basis. Others have reclaimed their property to use only at weekends and holidays remaining resident (and schooling their children) within the Bosniak areas in the Federation. Still others have made their permanent base abroad but use their village property as a holiday home. There is a noticeable difference in the village demographic

¹⁷¹ The root cause for this disagreement is unclear but likely to lie in the tensions between the older members of the community who run the Water Sports Club and the younger members who took control of the Football club in 2009.

¹⁷² Salih Kapadžić, President of Assembly of FK Mladost and Abdullah Vilić, President of FK Mladost 2006-2009.

between winter and summer. During the former fewer people are around, those who are remain predominantly inside their houses. In the summer, as is common throughout Bosnia, people live outdoors. The café is full, the water sports club ensures the 'Lake' is full of boats and kayaks and there is a holiday feel to the village. Refugees of the conflict who have remained living abroad are more likely to visit Bosnia in the summer leading Divič residents to joke that the population of their village doubles in those months.

Across the country every summer witnesses a large influx of ex-pat returning Bosnians. The behaviour of these Bosnians is markedly different to those who live in the country full-time. Returning ex-pats - particularly the younger ones - are back for leisure. The traditional Bosnian activities of *roštilj* (barbeques), drinking home-made *sljivovica* (plum brandy) and beer as well as coffee are fully embraced. To some extent many ex-pat Bosnians view the country as a 'wild west', a place where relatively lawless behaviour unacceptable in their daily lives elsewhere will be tolerated¹⁷³. Curiously these ex-pat Bosnians, particularly the second generation too young to have memories of Bosnia before the war, have a tendency to hold more extreme nationalistic views than those who live in the country full time. The full time Bosnians complain about the attitudes of holiday Bosnians, commenting that they are stuck with the attitudes of 1995 and tend to have not moved forward in reconciling themselves with the other ethnicities as those who live daily in Bosnia have been forced to do.

Who the club represents therefore varies markedly throughout the year. This is true across the region as people who are studying or have employment elsewhere, including Serbia and other areas of Bosnia, return to their home villages during the summer. The Bosnian Serb villages, resident in the region throughout the conflict, have a less obvious diaspora and corresponding diasporic effect.

Unpicking Serb Uniformity

Within the moniker 'Serb' lies a full range of characteristics and influences evident in the different communities around Zvornik. The most obvious examples of the differential between those villages defined as Serb exist in the villages of Čelopek and Pilica, both of

¹⁷³ As an example the standard of driving deteriorates markedly as those driving on Western European licences drink drive with impunity.

whom have a substantial number of Serbs displaced during the conflict who have chosen not to return to their pre-war homes. In both cases the numbers are so great that there are moves to create new MZs for them. Within other MZs such as Karakaj the displaced Serbs still tend to live together in one area, so although integrated in terms of part of the same MZ and facing the same issues, they remain geographically separate from the original Serbs. Whilst relations between the different Serb communities tend to be good, there remains definite distinctions. Local Serbs have admitted to tensions between the different Serb communities often arising from their different mentalities - the newer Serbs had often been displaced from urban areas and had experienced a different conflict to the Zvornik Serbs. Their differences had lessened with time as the communities grew more together via friendship, marriages and children.

Supporters of Mladost believe that if they are going to have a problem with the supporters of a Serb team the problems tend to stem from those Serbs who came to the area during the war. Some Divič residents commented that the antipathy of these newer Serbs towards the Bosniaks may have arisen because of personal experiences during the war, which unlike the Zvornik Serbs involved displacement and resettlement. Furthermore other Divič people believed that those with whom they had a history before the war would be embarrassed to behave badly towards them now, the displaced Serbs have no connection with the Bosniaks of Divič and thus no internal limits to stop them from venting their anger. Indeed some of these 'new' Serbs were initially given properties in Divič and were then displaced a second time after the conflict when the Divič residents reclaimed their properties but were encouraged to stay in the region by the ethno-nationalist politicians endeavouring to ensure the returning Bosniaks were not capable of impacting the balance of power in the region. Such actions ensured ongoing tensions between some Serb and Bosniak returnee communities to the benefit of the ethno-nationalist Tricksters.

Although all the Serb clubs have some defining characteristics in common, most obviously their 'Serbness' as evidenced by the display of the Serbian flag at all matches, the clubs are not monolithic and display a range of characteristics differentiating the clubs. Some hail from more agricultural areas (Trnovica, Pilica) others have a more urban, manufacturing bias (Karakaj). Some clearly struggle for financial survival

(Tabanci, Pilica) whilst other are noticeably more wealthy (Ročević). Some have reputations for competitiveness and a desire for promotion (Ročević, Trnovica, Čelopek) others pride themselves on the spirit of the club (Karakaj, Jordan).

Unlike Bosniak teams who play a team of a different ethnicity almost every week, Serb clubs, secure in their ethnic and cultural dominance need only identify or display their Serbness on the few occasions they play a Bosniak team. As supporters of Divič have long become accustomed to their team playing a Serb team, carrying their Bosniak identity closely and daily, supporters of Serb teams visit their Serbian identity less frequently and as a result have had less opportunity – or need - to become accustomed to doing so within the local football milieu. Divič's proximate footballing neighbours, Jordan and Karakaj, have taken the opportunity to play against the Bosniak team regularly and are the clubs most used to cross-ethnic matches whilst clubs further afield are less used to doing so. Jordan and Karakaj's stronger connections with their Bosniak neighbours is evidenced by the Serb players confidence as manifests in their visits to Divič for non-football related activities, usually to do with the water sports club.

“Our President's brother knows people from Divič so it is easy for us to organise to play them. We always play friendlies with them when we want more practice. We played a match with them just yesterday. No refs, no police, nothing. Just friendly. We played with them before they re-joined the league. We have no problems playing there. They are very friendly as hosts. They always host as they hope to be hosted and do not deserve to be treated badly”. [Ljubiša Jeremić, Captain and longstanding player of FK Jordan, Jordan, September 2009].

Such familiarity via proximity and experience has served to strengthen connections reinforcing stability of the area and the shared enthusiasm for sport – both football and water based – has played a part in the normalisation of affairs and may be understood as a part of the liminal ritual of football as the community progresses towards a stable peace.

Conciliation, Exclusion and Hospitality

Many players at the Serb clubs interviewed commented how the first time they played the Bosniak clubs they were apprehensive about their possible reception but such apprehensions have faded as good, non-confrontational and even welcoming

experiences built a confidence. This ritualistic building of relationships supports the International hegemonic ambitions. The Bosniak returnee communities have long relied upon the support of the International Community, initially to ensure their safety (through protection from the SFOR/EUFOR), but more recently to provide financing to rebuild their homes and to monitor the RS political, administrative and legislative frameworks to ensure that the Serb hegemony upholds the human rights of the returnees. In return in order to ensure continued good will from the International Community organisations the Bosniaks are aware of the need not to be seen to provoke hostilities. Instead Bosniak football teams in the area, starting with the mixed team of FK Guber in Srebrenica who joined the league for the 2006/7 season, made a conscious and explicit decision to use courtesy to disarm the suspicions of their football opponents. The head of OFS Zvornik, Mirko Milošević described FK Guber's first season as follows:

“All Guber's away games were of more interest and had more spectators than would be expected. Tensions were definitely higher than for a normal game.... Wherever Guber went the games were rough, players tackled hard and they were aggressive. Guber reacted by behaving really well. Teams commented on the good reception they had when they went to Guber to play. Fair play on the pitch and warm hospitality. Next time they had to play Guber the toughness and roughness on the field was much less. The next season their good behaviour tactic paid off. There was a sense of being embarrassed to play rough when Guber had been so gracious and hospitable.” [Mirko Milošević, June 2009].

The Bosniak ex-President of FK Guber and former Mayor of Srebrenica Abdurahman Malkić confirmed the tactic:

“We decided to ‘gentlemen’ the opposition. We always guested teams with the most courtesy whatever the situation had been when we travelled there. We made a decision not to make the visiting teams uncomfortable, whatever happened when we went there. We play for the sake of the game and find that the teams appreciate this. Often, the next time we go there, we find it to be completely different to how it was when we first played.” [Abdurahman Malkić, ex-Mayor Srebrenica and ex-President of Guber Football Club in Srebrenica, June 2009].

Entering the league a year later, Divič had clearly learnt from Guber's experiences. A former player who had captained Ročević the first time they played Divič commented about the team's first trip to Divič:

"We were worried about going to Divič. There had been a bit of trouble at their first game with us and we had had to ask the spectators to be calm because we were worried about how it would be when we visited there. But we were surprised. We went there on Easter Sunday and all their players said 'Happy Easter' to us, even though they were Muslim. They asked if we had had any eggs. They were very positive and we were surprised. We were all expecting there to be some trouble but there was nothing." [Aleksandar Pisić, Captain of FK Jedinstvo Ročević in 2007/08, August 2009].

In this context the role of football as a ritual, framing the first and subsequent contacts between communities is clear. Football on these occasions could not be considered liminoid, the playing of a football match led to a change. The communities involved did not have the same relationship that they did before the game. The process of participating in a league structure thus provides the possibility of re-establishment of normalised relations and may be understood as a liminal ritual, aiding the progress of a society to a post conflict, post liminal state *provided* the matches are not accompanied by incidents of violence or nationalism. The same applies elsewhere. The OFFS scheme compared making the first contact with a community of different ethnicity to breaking the 'post war ice' (Gasser & Levinsen, 2006). Football is understood to be the catalyst, the activity capable of bypassing conflict history and bringing communities together for the first time. Understandably, it is the first contact between the communities that is felt to be the most difficult. Clubs, players and management of both Bosniak and Serb clubs all felt apprehension the first time they played a club of a different ethnicity, but believed that as long as the encounter went well, that apprehension was much reduced with each subsequent visit. The Bosnian Serb clubs situated further to the north were the most apprehensive about their reception in Divič. Domestic football leagues provide the possibility of building upon that first contact in a regular and managed format enabling second and subsequent contacts which are able to build upon that first interaction. However to be a hegemonic building tool the extent to which the contacts developed through football are genuinely meaningful we need ask does the contact of football develop into relations outside of the football milieu? Furthermore if football

was not present would such connections be made through alternative avenues must be established?

FK Mladost plays a Serb team almost every week, which means that generic fears about playing Serbs at football have been alleviated with experience. By returning to the region villagers have accepted their status as an ethnic minority and the prerequisite that relations with Serbs must be constructed at some level. Football remains just one aspect of how they interact with surrounding Serb areas.

“We have no problems to go to most of the matches. We have no problems for them to come here. It is how it is”. [Sehad Pašić, Manager FK Mladost, Divič, October 2008].

When asked whether they felt football helped them get to know their neighbours the Divič players explained how such interactions were very situational:

We meet each other on the field now, but not anywhere else. We don't see each other after a game or go for coffee. We have no problems with the other players, there are no problems for them to come here but we don't really mix with them apart from on the field.” [Bahrudin Brkić and Šemso Pandur¹⁷⁴, players at FK Mladost Divič. June 2009]

Players, managers and football officials all reiterated how outside of the competitive context little socialising existed between different clubs. Football as it was played provided a moment to engage with each other, but that link was not further developed: Younger players did not go for a drink or a coffee after a match nor meet socially in town. Managerial staff, many of whom knew each other from before the conflict, had contact details for other clubs (supplied by OFS Zvornik) and might meet for a coffee to discuss details about upcoming matches but no more than that. The older members, with personal connections from before the conflict have found it easier to establish footballing links than the younger members who do not have the historic links born of experience with others of a different ethnicity. The period of time that has elapsed since the conflict means few players are old enough to have had links with Serbs before the

¹⁷⁴ Brkić was from Divič, but Pandur was from the nearby Bosniak village of Glumina (a village opposite Jordan).

conflict, whereas those able to rebuild cross ethnic friendship have been management. The hierarchical nature of these tentative connections has ensured that the junior players regard such connections as something for management not themselves.

Each season allows two formal moments at which senior members of the clubs congregate off the pitch. These are draws for league schedules¹⁷⁵:

“They [senior club members including chairmen, managers and captains] come when we make the draw at the beginning of the season. Every club sends someone. Afterwards they might stay and talk, have a coffee. But then they leave”. [Mirko Milošević, March 2009].

Aside from the formal draw there were no other occasions that football fraternities met outside of the stadium. The culture of socialising around village football is less marked than in other countries. Without an additional network of school or work, the game as it is capable of being a ritualised catalyst for connection does not provide enough engagements to create a sustainable relationship outside of the actual football match context. The contact between individuals is not sufficiently frequent to overcome inherent suspicions and override the competitive nature of footballs interactions.

Showing Spectators the Red Card

Across the region clubs were cognisant that the way in which they presented themselves had potential to reflect upon the village they represented. For football clubs success on the field was certainly an important factor in the representation of their identity, but clubs that did not have ambition for promotion had a tendency to portray their team in terms of both moral and ethical superiority. The extent to which teams were seen to play fair was felt to reflect on the way in which the community instilled values into their young men. Communities felt their football teams should reflect their village’s inherent moral fairness, echoing the functionalist assumptions that lessons learnt on the football field are then applied to daily life.

¹⁷⁵ The Bosnian football season is divided into *Jesen* (Autumn) and *Proljeće* (Spring). The harsh winter climate makes matches during December, January and February unplayable. The draw takes place before each half season.

Whilst claiming credit for the perceived characteristics inferred by their players ‘fair play’, clubs were quick to distance themselves from their supporters if their conduct did not conform to the clubs desired image. In doing so they were acknowledging they had no framework within which they could operate to sanction supporters whose actions were not acceptable. Football related violence is not a recent phenomenon in the region as one ex-player and later football official explained:

“Before the war I was in charge of a game between Divič and Turčić. I gave a penalty and they didn’t like it. There was a big fight on the pitch so I cancelled the game. I had to go into the stadium. I didn’t hide though, but I didn’t come out of the stadium. I was there for about two hours. They [the teams and the fans] were going to attack me. The police had to send for reinforcements. It wasn’t as bad as at a game at Bratunac in 1991. The hosts went to the changing rooms and beat up the referee. He almost died.” [Milan Lukic, ex Budućnost Pilica player and an OFS Zvornik official, September 2009].

Ethnic differences have been one distinction used by supporters to antagonise opposing teams and their supporters, prior to the conflict.

Before the war Mladost had Serbs and Bosniaks playing for them. When we used to go to play at Serb villages our Serb players needed protection. It wasn’t as bad in the higher leagues when we were promoted but at the municipal league the problems were so bad. But it was all about the score. There was no problem to go to the villages normally. We used to date women from there, go to dances there. But the nationalist abuse was just an excuse. There will always be a difference about something. When we played a team near Lukavac everyone was Muslim but there was a big fight because of what they said about our goalkeeper’s mother. [Salih Kapadžić, President of Mladost, Divič February 2009].

That ethnic difference is not the sole catalyst for violence at football matches becomes clear when considering the immediate post-conflict football matches in the period before Bosniaks began to return to the region. Serb clubs reformed in 1996 and joined the FSRS league system. Levels of disorder at village level football fixtures soon reached worryingly high levels:

The worst was just after the war. People still full of the craziness of war. There used to be crowds of 500 at all the games. So many people came to watch. They bought guns to the games and there was so often fighting. How no one was killed in that time I do not know. [Mirko Milošević, President OFS Zvornik, April 2010]

The violence, seen by several senior OFS Zvornik officials as the worst football related violence since the conflict, was not ethnically driven – there had yet to be Bosniak return and no Bosniaks were playing in the league.

It was so bad then, the crowds were so big and there were always guns. And that was just Serb teams playing. Can you imagine what would have happened if they [Bosniak clubs] had been playing? [Milan Lukić, Senior OFS Zvornik official, September 2010].

Football officials were relieved that the general population had the opportunity to progress beyond the ‘craziness of war’ before the Bosniak teams reformed. Local football officials are convinced that the interlude of a football match provided an important venue for people to let off steam away from their daily lives. This, they believe, was of particular value in the immediate post-conflict period when the impact of the violence was still raw and that combining such emotions with fixtures containing Bosniaks before people were ready would have been irresponsible. It must then be questioned whether football, the understood locale to express otherwise unacceptable emotions, could become an avenue for reconciliation? There will always be those who chose football as the site for such emotions and, in the absence of an overarching legal structure to govern supporter behaviour at a football fixture, are using the liminoid moment of emotional release to perpetuate a sense of instability and possible violence.

For many watching the weekend football is a liminoid moment and a time of diversion from daily life; snacks and alcohol are freely available, often sold by entrepreneurs setting up impromptu (and illegal) stores from their car boot. During the research clubs expected 50 or 60 spectators for each game, numbers significantly reduced from matches played in the immediate post-conflict period¹⁷⁶. The vast majority of supporters cheer for the home team, few clubs are able to organise for transport for their

¹⁷⁶ Opinion differs as to why the spectator numbers have been so substantially reduced. Some cite the ease of availability of the English Premier League and German Bundesliga matches. Others believe it is because the young are more interested in computers and gaming. Still others commented that it illustrates the extent to which the economically active men have been forced to leave the region in search of employment.

supporters to travel with them to away games and few supporters have the financial ability or the transport capacity to organise it themselves.

Almost every club has a core element of supporters who do not behave towards the visiting teams in what might be termed a respectable fashion. As the following responses explain, these fans are a law unto themselves regardless of age or gender:

“We have a group of people, about 10 or 15 who are abusive to visiting sides. They do it to everyone, not just Bosniak teams. We have asked them to calm down, but they don’t. They are the older men who have lost children during the war.” [Branislav Jović, trainer of FK Jedinstvo in Ročević, August 2009]

“Sometimes we have had a problem with some young boys. They sing nationalistic songs which can cause a problem. We have to talk to them, tell them to stop. Normally they do after we talk to them.” [Cvjetok Stojić, chairman of FK Jordan, Jordan, September 2009]

Inevitably the clubs are full of tales about the woeful behaviour of supporters of other clubs, irrespective of nationality:

“We went to Trnovica. Their field is surrounded by corn. They threw husks at us all through the game. There were lots of insulting and nationalistic chanting. Almost all from the young members of the crowd.” [Amel Pašić, FK Mladost, Divič, July 2009].

“It is the older women at Divič. They wear headscarves and come and swear and make nationalistic comments to the opponents. There is one, she always comes onto the field to shout at us. We’d prefer a younger women to chase us on the field!” [Milan Radić, trainer, FK Tabanaci, Tabanaci, October 2009].

“The problem is always with the spectators, never with the footballers. The spectators might be getting drunk during a match. They have the time to do so. Actually it is worst when we play other Serb teams. Trnovica are the worst of all. It is really bad when we go there” [Aleksander Pisić, previous captain of FK Jedinstvo Ročević; August 2009].

Without exception every club cited football spectators as the people most likely to create problems at a match. Whilst players could play hard or play foul and use unacceptable language they did so within the disciplinary system of club, game and overarching structure of football. Players and managers behaving improperly did so within the context of regulations that governed inappropriate conduct. Players understood

disciplinary procedures that were enacted; poor conduct would be disciplined within club structures which themselves are informed by the rules and guidelines regarding inappropriate behaviour imposed by Savez and indeed the supra-national footballing bodies of UEFA and FIFA. On the pitch a red or yellow card led to a financial penalty for the players and their clubs and a possible suspension, the length of which depended upon the severity of the crime. Given the average net monthly income in 2011 in Bosnia was estimated to be 804KM for those lucky enough to have work (Federal Office of Statistics, Bosnia & Herzegovina, 2012, p. 118) personal fines of 50KM for a red card and 10KM for a yellow were a substantial dent in players' incomes.

Football spectators, however, have no such framework. During the period of research there was no single law that could be used to address supporter's behaviour surrounding football matches. Misbehaving fans might be charged under criminal law, with serious infractions the only actions likely to attract police attention. Repeated efforts were being made by football administrators and legislators to introduce a single law to address football hooliganism across the country, but had been repeatedly delayed by political obstructionism at the national level by ethno-politicians who resist any impetus to apply a national law to a domestic problem, preferring that such issues are dealt with on an Entity or Cantonal level. Such obstructionism may be understood to be the action of a Trickster utilising their power to maintain the status quo of uncertainty. By preventing the construction of a structure the problem of supporter behaviour continues to be unaddressable and the divisive nature of the actions are perpetuated.

Football in the region has always encompassed a sense of ethnic identity and ethnic differences have forever been exploited by spectators in their efforts to malign opposing teams. Football may provide a connection but that connection will be considered through the prism of difference and rivalry, of which ethnicity is one attribute. Violence of any kind between different ethnic groups always holds the potential to be exploited by those wishing to highlight antagonism and meanwhile endeavouring to utilise the tension to create a more fundamental instability. With football the activity driving the rare moments that communities of different ethnicities come into contact in a competitive environment, it also has the potential to become the vehicle by which nationalist groups are able to promote the vision of intolerance and difference,

irrespective of whether the cause of the violence that between the communities was actually ethnically related.

Creating Conflict or Reflecting Reconciliation?

For those examining the extent to which reconciliation processes are established in post-conflict communities' football provides an unparalleled opportunity to witness social and cultural strictures adopted by the communities themselves. The football match provides a venue, a time and a mirror through which to examine social interaction and behaviours. What such analysis reveals is that the vast majority of matches are unremarkable; two teams of 11 men meet, compete and leave. Spectators watch, some shout – mostly supportive and occasionally abusive – at the teams and the officials in charge. The matches provide a useful indicator to assess parameters as to what is unacceptable, who finds it so, and how behaviour deemed inappropriate is assessed and dealt with by the communities themselves.

Some matches obviously fall outside of the established parameters and these provide glimpses of the extent to which established hegemonies are truly established, highlighting resistance and bringing into the open opposition opinions and cultural difference. Between 2007 when Mladost rejoined the league and 2010 when the active research for this thesis came to a close there were four such matches of note. These matches manifest the likely form of ethno-nationalistic tension, but also charted the extent to which the communities policed their own, indicating the extent to which nationalistic actions are recognised, en/dis couraged and form a part of the regional hegemony.

i. FK Jedinstvo Ročević vs. FK Mladost, Divič: September 26th 2007

One of the first matches played by FK Mladost following the entry into the league in September 2007 was just two weeks after violence had erupted at the Divič vs Čelopek fixture highlighted in the introduction and detailed later in this chapter. Although Bosniak players had rejoined the league a year earlier playing for the mixed FK Guber team, this was the first time Jedinstvo had played an exclusively Bosniak team. Bramislav Jović, the trainer of FK Jedinstvo remembered the occasion:

“One of their players had a beard. The supporters used that as a way to insult him¹⁷⁷. Usually players ignore the abuse from the crowd, that is all part of the game, but this player didn’t ignore it. He got really cross. The captain [Aleksandar Pisić] ran across to try and calm the crowd down. They were people who had lost children during the war and they were really angry. But it was the player shouting back at them that had really inflamed them. It is unusual that a player does that, usually players don’t pay any attention. Anyway, he ran over to the crowd and said to them things like ‘we have to go and play there, please don’t make it any more difficult for us. They will have supporters there, we don’t want to have to go if they are going to be hostile like this to us. We have to behave well to them. They are our neighbours!’.” [August 2009]

FK Jedinstvo was Mirko Milošević’s old club, he had grown up in the village and played for them as a young man. Milošević went to watch Divič’s first game there:

“I arrived about 5 minutes late and there were a group of about 5/6 youngsters there who were drunk. They were shouting abuse at the substitutes and coach of the Divič team. The players of Jedinstvo stopped the match and went to the supporters to remonstrate. They asked why they were doing it and asked them to stop and that the place for competition was on the football field. The youngsters stopped shouting abuse. After the game I saw some of them go up to the coach of Divič and apologise. I don’t know if someone had talked to them and made them do it but the reaction of the [Jedinstvo] players and people saying that you couldn’t do that meant that they knew they were wrong.” [December 2008]

The game proceeded, with less abuse from the crowd but remained combative on the pitch. Three yellow cards were awarded against either side, but the experience of the Serb club saw them emerge 7-1 victors. The match report, prepared by the Bosnian Serb officials, makes no mention of the crowd, stating that the audience had been ‘fine’ and that there had been ‘no incidents’. On being asked why nothing about the incident had been noted down in the referee’s report Mirko Milošević commented:

“I am the President of Savez in the municipality. The match reports go to me. I was there and I saw what happened, and I was happy with the way it was dealt with, so there is no point in making a report to me about something that I already know.” [August 2008]

¹⁷⁷ The style of the facial hair was viewed as being synonymous with Islam in the eyes of some of the Serb fans

Mr. Milošević was aware that to make a formal report would highlight the incident to his superiors, both within the football and political milieus. Milošević had personally supported Divič in their application to re-join the league and wanted to ensure that any problems from their inclusion could not be utilised by others for their own political gains. He was happy with the actions of the club in dealing with the potential situation and saw no reason to further dwell on the incident.

It is here, at the football matches, that it is possible to see the extent to which the vision of peace or division is embedded within the men of influence in these communities. The actions of more influential members of the community signal the extent to which nationalist abuse of their neighbours will be tolerated in the village football setting. At this football match the potential for an escalation of tension between the communities was possible, but the actions of the senior footballers and older members quashed that potential. This internal monitoring of communal behaviour is surely key for the creation of a cultural bloc. Football provides the opportunity to witness and experience such communal behaviour action and represents a victory in the War of Attrition for the International Community's implementation of their post-conflict vision.

Could the replication of the actions of Jedinstvo's captain and Ročević's senior community members be replicated elsewhere? Senior referees and OFS Zvornik officials, Milan Lukić and Zoran Taborin, who have officiated many of the matches that Divič played commented in conversation that there was some scope for players to be trained in how to respond to such politically motivated actions to minimise the likelihood of creating conditions that would inflame the crowd still further. In admitting this they also recognised that such training was unrealistic at this level:

"These footballers are amateurs; they are not paid to attend training. They have to work, they can't just take time out to attend training if they aren't going to be paid for it."[Zoran Taborin October 2009].

Such a comment highlights that football is a recreational activity, voluntarily attended. Whilst regulation is tight in terms of log books confirming player's eligibility, medical checks and so forth, it must be realised that to implement training in toleration (and non-response to provocation) such as the type mentioned above is an unrealistic

expectation. If football is to succeed as a tool of reconciliation it must do so without additional pedagogic interventions.

The Ročević club were embarrassed by some of their supporters and knew that they presented an unfavourable picture of their village. They tried to talk to the culprits, but recognised that they couldn't stop them from coming to watch the games.

“You can see our pitch. Anyone can come here. How can we stop people from coming to watch us if that is what they want to do? We have talked to them, they cause problems for us at every match but then they have something to drink and we can't stop them.” [Bramislav Jović, Trainer FK Jedistvno, August 2009].

However, according to the senior members of the club and Mr. Milošević, when the abuse against the Bosniak team came from the younger members of the community, the older members acted quickly to impress upon them that such behaviour would not be tolerated. To some extent this was to protect their own team, they knew that Ročević would have to travel to Divič and didn't want to create additional problems for themselves when there. Ročević were clearly a strong team and to travel to a village with particularly hostile spectators could cause them to drop points harming their ambitions for promotion. However, there is also an element of embarrassment about what happened and a sense that for the conflict to be put behind them all would have to avoid and act to stop nationalistic behaviour. Not to do so would continue to splinter the wider community and create on-going problems for everyone.

ii. FK Jordan, Jordan vs FK Mladost, Divič: May 10th 2009:

This match occurred towards the end of the second season that Divič were playing in the league. Jordan and Divič are neighbouring teams and played a number of friendlies prior to the Bosniak's team re-entrance into the league. The fixture highlighted how within the region the establishment of what might be considered acceptable behavioural parameters may not be consistent between the different ethnic communities. What is considered 'playful' or 'a part of football' by some can be considered offensive - on a nationalistic basis - by others.

The match report (prepared by the Delegate) commenting on the crowd stated:

“The local audience behaved incorrectly towards the guest, singing offensive nationalist songs” and further “luckily there were no incidents even though there could have been some easily, therefore I think that the host team needs to work harder on this so that it wouldn’t spread further and turn to vengeance.” [Delegates Report of the Regional Primary League Birač between FK Jordan and FK Mladost Divič 10th May 2009]

The incident was serious enough to merit a further formal report to the OFS Zvornik commenting

“the local audience, in spite of the presence of the police who was there and allowing for the local audience to insult guests by singing insulting songs such as “Who says it, who is lying that Serbia is small?” and songs about Draža Mihailović¹⁷⁸, which provided the tensions on the bench as well as amongst the guests who put pressure upon the referee and delegates afterwards so the game went into an unexpected direction and one of the guest representatives had to be taken away off the bench as a result.” [Additional Officials’ Report of the Regional Primary League Birač between FK Jordan and FK Mladost Divič 10th May 2009]

The President of FK Jordan who had been present at the match confirmed that there had been an issue:

“There were two or three boys, aged 15 or so, singing nationalistic songs behind the pitch, which caused a problem. After 5 minutes or so people from the club went up and went to tell the boys to stop. No one said a word after that. Look, it was nothing. Those songs were nothing. They are not nationalistic. No one would find them nationalistic. The delegate shouldn’t have written a report about it. The whole thing was about nothing.” [Cvjetok Stojić, September 2009]

The Bosniak official who had been Delegate at the match, remembered the game and the chants well:

“the Jordan supporters were singing nationalistic songs. The songs were undoubtedly nationalistic, whatever Jordan say about it. They are offensive to Bosniaks. Jordan wanted to know why I had reported these songs in the match

¹⁷⁸ Draža Mihailović was a World War 2 Cetnik leader who organised guerrilla squads actively opposing the Axis and the Partizans. The Communist Yugoslav authorities captured Mihailovic and he was tried and convicted of high treason and war crimes (including a form of ethnic cleansing and genocidal massacres) and executed in July 1946. Serbs point to Charles du Gaulle’s consideration that Mihailovic was a hero and the American government’s decision to posthumously award of the Legion of Merit to Mihailovic as examples of his heroism and unfair treatment under the Yugoslav authorities. Croatia and Bosnia in particular continue to view Mihailovic as a war criminal.

report. I said it happened so I reported it. I did have concerns: Why didn't Jordan act sooner to try and stop these songs? That was part of the problem so that was why I had to report it. I wouldn't have noticed if the other team had been Serb but Divič is Bosniak so it was offensive. I don't know if a Serb referee would have reported this thing. Probably not." (Mujo Tulić, April 2010)¹⁷⁹.

FK Mladost were nonplussed by the event; their players commented that the nationalistic chants heard at this game were not unusual:

"It happens at every match. I can't remember that match in particular, it would be just like all the others" [Kenan Kapadžić, Captain of FK Mladost, Divič, March 2010]

The management of FK Mladost were surprised that the delegate had included that aspect of the game in his report. They had more concerns with the exclusion of one of their players because he had been suspended following an earlier game¹⁸⁰. Mujo Tulić commented:

"Divič were causing problems, they were protesting because I wouldn't let one of their players play." [Mujo Tulić, April 2010]

The Jordan President elaborated:

*"Divič were having a row with the delegate [Mujo Tulić] and I had to stand between them in order that they did not come to blows. We think Tulić and Divič have had problems before"*¹⁸¹ [Cvjetok Stojić, September 2009]

Clearly, the issue of nationalistic songs and symbols at football matches remains opaque. What is offensive to some, is inoffensive to others. A Bosniak delegate reported the songs, a Serb delegate almost certainly would not have done. Critically, there exists an element of understanding that certain types of behaviour, which would not usually be

¹⁷⁹ Later, my Bosniak translator confirmed that she and those from her community would find the songs the Jordan supporters were singing to be both nationalistic and offensive.

¹⁸⁰ Amel Pašić confirmed that it was he who had been attempting to play whilst suspended, but didn't recall the nationalistic songs during the match.

¹⁸¹ Officials from Savez confirmed that Tulić and Divič have indeed had a number of problems and commented that there was a rumour that Divič were going to request that Tulić not be a delegate for their future matches.

displayed, may be accepted at football matches on the understanding that it is 'other worldly' and not transferable to other cultural domains. Football's culture of exaggerating difference is highlighted at matches, and ethnicity remains one element of difference which may be drawn upon at any multi-ethnic game. Offence however seems to lie in the eye of the beholder.

Of particular interest about this incident is that the formal means by which a complaint could be registered were open and accessible. The Bosniak delegate felt confident enough to be able to complain about the Serb nationalist songs through the formal channels, which significantly are operated and controlled by the Serb hegemony. Whilst the culture of the region is undeniably Serb, the first signs that Bosniaks feel able to openly resist the aspects of that culture through official channels controlled and operated by Serbs is a promising step. International Community actions in their Master of Ceremonies role have created functioning structures through which human rights may be protected. This must be considered an important step in the installation of their vision of a post-conflict Bosnia.

iii. FK Mladost Divič vs FK Trnovica, Trnovica: 6th April 2008

In their first season back in the league system, Mladost was not a team competing for promotion. This fact diffused some potentially competitive tensions around their games. However, some teams that played against them expected an easy victory and could become frustrated when one was not forthcoming. A match against FK Trnovica was suspended in the 85th minute when fighting between the players threatened to escalate. Although nationalistic behaviour was not at the heart of the incident, the ease with which it was invoked and abused is obvious.

This game was close to the end of Divič's first season and the first time Trnovica had visited the village. Trnovica had had a successful season and were expecting a comfortable win. However, an 85th minute goal by Divič put the home team into the lead. The referee's report states that a Divič player (No. 13 Amir Kapadžić) then provoked the FK Trnovica team and kicked the ball out of the stadium into the adjacent lake. In the resultant tumult members of both benches came onto the field, together with some spectators. It took the match officials and the police a few minutes to regain

control of the situation and by the time they had done so Trnovica had withdrawn their players from the pitch and refused to come out to play the final five minutes. The game was abandoned. The manager of FK Trnovica remembered the match well:

“We were surprised when there was trouble at this match, we were not expecting there to be any problems. But there were some older women in the crowd who were all swearing and making nationalistic comments to us. Then, when we were leading a Divič player was swearing all sorts of nationalistic abuse to us, and then they scored 2 goals and the match was turned around. The same player had some more trouble with one of our players and everyone tried to beat each other. No one did but some Divič supporters entered the pitch. We didn’t feel safe so we went to the club house and the game was stopped.” [Slađan Pantić, Manager FK Trnovica, August 2009.]

In a written statement to the OFS Zvornik the management of FK Mladost objected strongly to the accusations that their players had caused the match breakdown:

“Why would our reserve players enter the field in a moment when we have been winning the game with a score 2:1, a few minutes before the end of the game? Our players were happy because of the lead – they were congratulating each other on their success because it was evident that our rival cannot follow our play in the last 20 minutes and that we have secured the victory for our team. We have lost many points in previous decision of referees’ and nobody of the guests was harmed, including the officials. This game would be interpreted differently had the score been different. We think that our guests had no courage to admit that they were defeated and that was the cause of the termination.” [FK Mladost’s letter to Football Union of Zvornik, Statement on the termination of the game between FK Mladost and FK Trnovica dated 11th April 2008.]

Mladost also pointed out that there is a fence surrounding the pitch at Divič and no audience member could get onto the field, all on the field were all officials. The referees and linesmen concurred that the incident had begun with Amir Kapadžić whose demeanour on the pitch had been aggressive and unsporting. The delegate at the game was once again the Bosniak Mujo Tulić who agreed with the officials.

“I agree on the fact that the person to blame for the entire situation is the player of the host team, no. 13, Kapadžić Amir, who had been making problems by his irritating remarks and unsporting behaviour from the moment he entered the field. I have the feeling that he was ordered to behave like that by his superiors in the team.... I think that neither of the teams is mature enough to deal with this kind of tensions caused by political motives. I also think that they should be

educated in that matter in order to continue the trend of the championship.”
[Official’s report on a player exclusion, FK Mladost Divič vs FK Trnovica, Trnovica:
6th April 2008p; Mujo Tulić, Delegate.]

Mr. Tulić later elaborated on his comments:

“I find the teams and their players immature to react to each other in such a manner. Everything needs time and it all depends upon the people leading the teams. In Mladost the Captain and the President, Amir Kapadžić, are too young - not really mature enough. They don’t always think rationally with an objective head. They are too passionate, too involved. They will learn but right now they don’t always react in a manner which will defuse situations.” [Mujo Tulić, April 2010]

The Zvornik branch of Savez required that Amir Kapadžić give a written statement regarding his role in the incident.

“It is said that I have been making problems from the moment I entered the field. And in [the] 78’ [minute] I get a yellow card. I wonder if I had 18 minutes of bonus time to show my entire cursing repertoire!¹⁸²” [Statement of Amir Kapadžić to Zvornik Football Association dated 9th April 2008.]

Despite a sense that Trnovica were amongst the most nationalist of clubs, there was not a sense that political motivations were at the heart of the incident. Mr. Milošević commented that he believed Trnovica had been expecting an easy victory and were frustrated by the late goal scored by FK Mladost and were perhaps over-sensitive at losing unexpectedly at a crucial point in the season:

“When people think they will win easily, they find it difficult to lose. They [Trnovica] thought they would win and when they didn’t they looked for a way to get the match cancelled.” [Mirko Milošević August 2009.]

The concern remains, however, that nationalistic sentiments have the potential to easily and rapidly attach themselves to a ‘regular’ football incident. It is such nationalistic sentiments which may conceivably escalate into an uncontrolled life of their own

¹⁸² Official records show that Amir Kapadžić was substituted onto the pitch in the 60th minute as a replacement for Semso Pandur.

causing a more serious incident with wider-ranging consequences that football passions may bring that evidences the danger inherent in competitive sport. This is Trickster territory. Ways in which such incidents are handled can inflame nationalist sentiment and division and ensuing instability reinforces the Trickster position.

War Minus the Shooting?

There are some matches that are outside the range of what might be termed 'normal'. These encounters take on an aura greater than 'football', drawing in members of the population who would not otherwise participate in the football milieu. The match retains a greater significance than a football fixture; it becomes more than a game.

Divič's home match against Čelopek in September 2007 was one such match. Fierce derby rivals before the war, their conflict history led to intense concern that any ensuing football fixture between the two villages had the potential to manifest significant levels of unrest. Since their return inhabitants of Divič had little reason or desire to visit Čelopek and contact between the two villages had been minimal. The main road from Zvornik to Bijeljina runs through Čelopek, but although the church and a few cafes are situated on it the majority of houses, the football pitch and the site of the *Dom Kultura*¹⁸³ are well off the road. Despite regularly using the road few Divič residents make the turn off:

"I have driven by the centre many times but I have never stopped. Never gone in there. It is not that I'm afraid to go there. I feel safe. But there is something inside me that stops me from going there. I know what happened there. I know what happened to my brother." [Salih Kapadžić, President of Assembly of FK Mladost, ex President of Divič MZ and President of Association of Returnees in Zvornik Municipality, October 2009.]

Differences in perceptions of Čelopek and its residents following the events of the conflict are obvious. Some feel that the most important aspect for reconciliation is for people to feel that there has been some justice for their crimes; they want to see people admit to and be punished for their actions. Divič residents have testified at War Crimes Tribunals at The Hague and in Belgrade about events in Čelopek: it is common

¹⁸³ Literally 'house of culture', and the one-time site of the camp in which the Divic inhabitants were held captive by Serb paramilitaries. It has been demolished since the conflict.

knowledge within the village who has testified. Some residents feel that these trials are key to being able to move forward. Others, including the President of the Divič MZ Enver Ferhatbegovic questioned whether such trials kept people too rooted in the past, constantly looking back to what happened and unable to look to a different future.

The true role of local Čelopek residents in the *dom Kultura* camp is unknown. People in Divič understand that the camp was run by the ‘Yellow Wasps’, a group of Serb paramilitaries from Serbia itself¹⁸⁴. Some Divič residents say that some Čelopek residents did their best to help their old neighbours, even smuggling cigarettes and bread to the detainees. According to evidence presented at the ICTY it was protests by the local Serb women about what was happening in the camp that prompted the removal of the prisoners from Čelopek to the less brutal Batković camp in Bijeljina¹⁸⁵. Simultaneously there is a sense that the camp could not have been maintained without the indirect support of local residents, with local companies providing buses for transportation of detainees and it is also believed the escorts and guards were drawn from local members of the reserve police¹⁸⁶. Most Divič residents retain a perception that Čelopek residents had limited possibilities; they were frightened of the paramilitaries and frightened they would be killed if they tried to interfere with them.

For Divič residents, it is more the geographic location of Čelopek, than the people who lived there, that remains the focus for their antagonism for what happened. For those who live in Čelopek, Divič remains a complex and emotive issue; it forces them to address what happened in their village during the conflict, highlights what was done in their name and their own impotence in being unable to prevent events and possible regrets for what was not done. Unwilling to face many of these issues, some prefer to adopt the political line that the evidence presented during such trials was a sham, an indication of an international conspiracy and bias against Serbs. Throughout the

¹⁸⁴ The Yellow Wasps were reputedly formed by the President of the Zvornik SDS party, Branko Grujić (elected as Mayor of Zvornik in 2012) but consisted primarily of men from Serbia itself. Members of the Yellow Wasps were charged by the War Crimes Chamber in Belgrade, the first war crime trial to be transferred to Serbia from the ICTY in The Hague. Dušan Vučković, the man believed to have been in charge of the camp in Čelopek and who carried out the worst of the atrocities, was one of those to be tried; he died suddenly in a Belgrade jail a week before the commencement of the trial. Divič residents were called to give evidence at this trial.

¹⁸⁵ As stated by the prosecution at the trial of Momcilo Krajisnik at the ICTY in The Hague (Sense Tribunal, 2005).

¹⁸⁶ This was also cited during the trial of Momcilo Krajisnik (ibid)

research Čelopek residents were reticent to discuss the conflict; Divič residents commented that Čelopek people were unable to accept what had happened in their village and were influenced by the Serb politicians whose denials and justifications of actions committed during the conflict continue to colour the perceptions of ordinary Serb residents.

iv. FK Mladost, Divič vs FK Srpski Soko, Čelopek: 2nd September 2007

On the day of the football match, FK Srpski Soko supporters arrived in a bus from Čelopek, having already been drinking for some hours. The numbers arriving took everyone in the football sphere by surprise; no one was prepared to answer as to why so many had turned out for the game or who had organised such a level of support. The supporters of Divič, who had also turned out in numbers to watch their first home game since before the war, were not expecting so many arrivals. This element of the unexpected, combined with a growing sense that the match was about far more than just football, was the spark that led to unrest. Who the teams were, who they represented became an irrelevance. The game became instead simultaneously an event about the conflict as a whole and about individual experiences during the war.

Mirko Milošević was the delegate for that game and described it as follows:

“We couldn’t believe it at the draw when we saw that the first home game for Divič would be against Čelopek. Of all the teams. Can you imagine? Their first home game. We knew it would be a hard game. But we couldn’t believe it would be their first game. I couldn’t believe it. Čelopek usually have about 20 supporters but this time they bought about 100 by bus. The match was very rough on both sides. There were five red cards and ten yellow cards¹⁸⁷. The supporters were vocal. Several times there were very rude nationalistic songs sung by the Čelopek supporters. Divič supporters also sang songs, but they were not as bad as the Čelopek ones. Songs were loud when the play came close to the supporters. At 85 minutes a Čelopek player hit a Divič player very hard with both legs. The Divič player stood up and kicked and punched the Čelopek player. All the players gathered around and there was some more pushing but no more punches. A Divič reserve ran onto the pitch and hit a Čelopek player, who was not involved in the match or the original incident, with both legs in the back. The police couldn’t stop the supporters running onto the pitch. Čelopek supporters were much more aggressive. Many of them were drunk. The management and players of Čelopek tried to push away the supporters, tried to stop them coming onto the pitch. Divič

¹⁸⁷ Four red cards were for Divič, of which three were in the 85th minute. Čelopek had one red card, also in the 85th minute. Milošević was mistaken in the number of yellow cards awarded; there were nine in total, five for Divič and four for Čelopek, all given before the incident in the 85th minute.

also tried to stop their supporters from running onto the pitch. The police were far outnumbered and I was really worried that it was going to turn nasty. There was nothing to prevent it from happening. The intervention of the players and the coaches persuaded the supporters off the pitch. We played for another minute or so. After the game people from Divič threw things at the buses. I didn't see the incident but I called Centrotrans¹⁸⁸ and they confirmed that there had been damage to their buses. It was the worst incident I have seen here in Zvornik. It was right on the edge. It could have got much worse.” [Mirko Milošević, December 2008]

Predictably the Čelopek team felt Divič had instigated the incident.

“I was hurt during the game. Their number six had been sent off and he ran onto the field and hit me. It was a tough match but we played fair. We are not nationalistic. We go to Srebrenica and have played them with no problems. Guber have inspired us. If those guys can play together on a team then we are not going to question that. Our supporters have cheered for Guber when they came to play here¹⁸⁹. It wasn't us that caused the problems in Divič.” [Dragan Tananović, Player for Srpski Soko, Čelopek August 2009]

The manager of Mladost Divič had a different view:

“Their supporters were drunk. So many of them. And they bought three buses of people with them. Three buses! You've seen how many supporters we normally get at a game. Not three buses. They tried to provoke us. They sang really offensive songs saying 'we are going to kill you like we did in '92'. There were some minor incidents with our supporters at the game but they did nothing too serious.” [Sehad Pašić, manager FK Mladost, October 2008]

No one was prepared to confirm who had arranged for the Čelopek supporters to come. The hire of buses suggests a pre-knowledge of the numbers, such a knowledge which was not then communicated to the police or Savez official prepared to act on such information. Given the intensely emotional nature of the fixture it is highly probable that such actions, which would have been understood as being inflammatory and likely to lead to ethnic related disorder would have been taken by those with an interest in encouraging such disarray; one can only suspect a Trickster to be at work. The fixture

¹⁸⁸ The company operating the buses

¹⁸⁹ Mr. Malkić, ex-President of FK Guber, independently confirmed that Guber had received a particularly warm welcome in Celopek.

may have figuratively been between Divič and Čelopek, but the instability that ensued would cause broader Bosniak-Serb tensions in the wider region.

The residents of Divič believed that the supporters of the FK Srpski Soko who came to Divič were those who had been displaced from other parts of Bosnia during the conflict.

Those ones [from Čelopek], the ones we know, we knew from before the war, they didn't cause the problems. It is the new ones who don't know how to behave. [Bohana Pezerovic, Divič Womens Club, December 2008].

At this match, a match focussed upon conflict histories of two villages, that the issue of identity at the games is most intriguing. Just over half of the squad (9 out of 16) who represented Divič on that day was from the village itself. Other Bosniak villages in the region all had their own individual experiences during the conflict and many of their inhabitants were held in camps in the region (including some in the buildings adjacent to the football pitch in Karakaj), but the seven footballers not from Divič itself did not necessarily have the same immediacy of emotion concerning Čelopek.

This football fixture symbolised much to many and many of those who usually eschewed football made a point of supporting their team on this occasion. Football was an irrelevance but symbolic as it facilitated the first meeting between these two villages even if the teams contained many not from the villages in question during the period in question. The levels of violence derived from a broader sense of ethnic and historical antagonism; an over-riding sense of tension attaching itself to an opportunity, a moment when two villages with a difficult ethno-political history, faced each other in opposition. Football provided the venue, the time and the occasion for people, large numbers of whom were unconnected with the immediate issue, but willing to confront within an atmosphere of antagonism and revenge.

Should the fixture have gone ahead? The Divič community was much divided about whether the club should have played Čelopek. The Women's Group were most vocal in their opposition to this match

"We don't have any problems with them playing Serb teams. They are a football club! Of course they must play other teams. But playing Čelopek? What about those who lost family in Čelopek? How do you think they felt about the football

match? Some people asked the players not to play the match. We didn't want them to play. Surely they could not turn up to the game? But they said that they had to play if they wanted to participate in the competition." [Asia Dokić, Divič Women's Group, September 2008].

The players from Divič confirmed that they were nervous about playing Čelopek and that relatives and neighbours had asked them not to play the match.

"They said we shouldn't do it. But we said that if we were in the league then we had to play them. We couldn't be in a league and not play them. So we did. But we weren't comfortable doing it." [Mirsad Bikić, captain of FK Mladost when they played FK Srpski Soko of Čelopek. Oct 2009].

Mr. Milošević, himself a Serb from Ročević, just north of Čelopek, when asked how the Čelopek residents felt about playing Divič¹⁹⁰ replied:

"We didn't know what was happening at the camps. We didn't know. Many people now don't believe what they say went on there. The camps were not run by us, they were run by others not from round here. I think the village doesn't want to think about it. They don't want to know. I think they would rather not know, so it is easier if they don't have to play Divič as that reminds them. They came to the game because they wanted to make sure their team was ok, they knew that there would be problems. But they had been drinking which made the problems worse." ¹⁹¹

This being football there was the return fixture the following March to consider; the game at Čelopek itself, burdened as it was with the history of the conflict now had more recent emotive events at Divič at the initial fixture to contend with. There was intense concern about the potential for violence this fixture. The FK Mladost players were understandably concerned:

"People didn't want us to go. They were worried what might happen. But we had to. We listened to them but we had to make our own minds up about what to do

¹⁹⁰ No other Čelopek residents were prepared to talk about events in the village during the conflict.

¹⁹¹ Mr Milosevic was unusually candid when talking about events that had happened in the region during the conflict. He once said that he knew what had happened there because an old, trusted friend of his had been called there for medical reasons and she had told him what had happened. He believed that others from a Serb background who didn't have such an external verification remain unable to believe what happened within their village and to this day prefer not to address it.

and we decided to go. Many people didn't like it, but they couldn't tell us what to do. We felt we had to go." [Kenan Kapadžić, player FK Mladost, Divič].

"We were worried. We asked the police to be there for our protection. But our supporters didn't come so we played and then left." [Sehad Pašić, Manager of Mladost, interviewed October 2008].

This time OFS Zvornik and the local police force were acutely aware of the potential of violence at the game and were prepared:

I class 'mixed matches' as High Risk and notify the police that there should be five or six officers present. At other matches there should be two or three policemen depending on the history of the teams playing. We talked to the police. When Divič went to Čelopek we knew there might be a problem. I called the President of Čelopek to make sure they were prepared. I made a memo for the police and there were 40 police at the game. In the end hardly any supporters came. Actually I think there were more police than supporters in the end! The Divič supporters didn't come. [President of OFS Zvornik, Mirko Milošević, December 2008]

Čelopek were promoted at the end of the 2007/8 season which meant that the two teams played in different leagues and by the end of the period of research there had been no further fixtures between the two teams. Kenan Kapadžić who played the matches against Čelopek in 2007 and took on the role of President of the club in 2009, reflected on the possibility a future fixture list drew them against Čelopek again:

"I don't think we will play them again. People don't want us to. If we get a fixture with them I think this time we won't show up and let them win the match by forfeit 3-0." [Kenan Kapadžić, February 2010]

The manager of Čelopek, who had come to the region after the conflict, had a different view.

"We would like to play them. Why not? They are our neighbours. We should play them. I will call them to ask for a game. I think it is time"¹⁹². [Željko Nestorivić, August 2009]

¹⁹² This call was never made. Certainly by September 2010 there had been no further match between Divič and Čelopek.

Mr. Milošević expressed relief at the way things evolved on the pitch in that the two teams did not have to play each other. That said he knew there was a possibility of Divič and Čelopek playing again someday:

“They will have to sometime. If they are in the same league then they will have to play. But it has been easier not having them play. Maybe the next time they play it will be different. They will be more used to each other. Divič have been in the league for longer. But it will be a problem. We will have to be very careful.”[Mirko Milošević, February 2010]

In the event financial problems for FK Mladost and a lack of suitable candidates for the club’s board led to the club pausing its membership of the FSRS league¹⁹³ in 2011. Seemingly coincidentally this was the same season that FK Srpski Soko was relegated back into the same league as FK Mladost. This event happened outside the period of active field research and it has not proved possible to evidence further whether the two events are connected.

Policing the Pitch

Football matches between clubs of a different ethnicity provide an obvious potential flashpoint in a post-conflict region. The way in which the police monitor matches and respond to any incidences will be highly visible and potentially contentious to both communities. Bosniak villagers have returned to the region with a high level of mistrust of local police, controlled as they are by the Serb political and administrative infrastructures and predominantly staffed by Serbs - some of whom are known to have participated and/or supported the ethnic cleansing efforts of the conflict (Kleck, 2007).

All matches are considered public gatherings. As such there is a legal requirement that police should be notified prior to the event and once informed uniformed police should be present. The usual requirement is for two officers throughout the game, but OFS Zvornik may request a greater uniformed presence if it feels the match has the potential for unrest. The onus for organising the policing of matches rests firmly upon the OFS

¹⁹³ Clubs with financial problems were permitted to remain a registered part of the league until they resolved their issues. The Bosnian Serb club, FK Tabanaci, was in a similar situation for the second half of the 2008/9 season and 2009/10 season, but managed to re-establish active participation for the start of the 2010/11 season.

Zvornik officials; the police wait for them to flag up a match as a potential problem and respond accordingly.

We treat all the games the same, whether they are Serb vs Serb or Muslim vs Serb. We have to work out how many supporters there are going to be, that's how we know how many police to be at the match. We talk to Savez [OFS Zvornik] about it, they will tell us if they think there will be a problem. We work with them. Normally there will be one or two police as there are normally only about 50 supporters at a game. [Bosniak police officer, Zvornik Municipality Police Force, October 2009]

In reality police are not always in attendance at matches, or are only present for a part of it. The Bosniak delegate, Mujo Tulić, who has officiated at many matches at this level commented about the police:

Sometimes they come but stay just for five minutes and then leave. But if Divič is playing they usually stay for longer. They stay for the whole time. But if Divič is playing a smaller club further away then the police don't always stay, even if Divič is playing. [Mujo Tulić, April 2010]

Developing confidence in the police and their ability to protect their interest is an important part of the return process and contributes to the stability of the region. With time and experience some people in Divič are beginning to trust the police and to trust they will respond to threats to their security. As noted earlier a return related violent incident in Divič in 2002 when villagers were attacked by local Bosnian Serb youths was of particular note because it was the first incident to lead to convictions of local Serbs by the local police force in Eastern Bosnia for ethnically motivated returnee related violence (Toal & Dahlman, 2011). The rights of Bosniaks were upheld by the Serb police and judicial frameworks an indication the International Community rituals of establishing the rule of law have been adopted to some extent within the region.

As football provides a non-threatening situation at which the police and the villagers can become accustomed to each other and develop an ongoing regular relationship, trust is developed and strengthened. In the tenseness of a post-conflict milieu, any activity which encourages such an on-going relationship will assist the process of security improvement, thereby developing a more stable environment for wider peace and

reconciliation processes to occur. Police at games are generally relaxed, sitting by the club house next to spectators, management and reserves¹⁹⁴. Football provides a chance for local officers to chat with villagers, share a mutual enthusiasm and demonstrates a subtle opportunity to break down mutual suspicion.

The Business of Football

Although the municipal government is supposed to provide funds for clubs to ensure the upkeep and maintenance of their pitches and club houses, many find themselves in serious financial problems. FK Tabanci was forced to withdraw from the league for two seasons because of their inability to finance travel to away games and during the period of research several other clubs, including Pilica, Čelopek and Divič itself¹⁹⁵ were in danger of having to follow suit. The football associations endure, even within the most arduous of conditions, because so many Bosnians want to participate in football, be it playing, coaching or spectating. Somehow, in the harshest of economic climates, clubs manage to find some levels of sponsorship whether they are Premier League or local village. Money is found for football:

“Kravica came to play. They were already changed and standing by the bus with their supporters. We didn’t have the money ready to pay the referees and they demanded money before the game. We had to ask people in the village for money. Kravica were getting ready to leave. They were getting back onto their bus. Everyone lent us a little bit so we could play.” [Sehad Pašić, FK Mladost Manager; October 2008].

All clubs have an element of sponsorship from local businesses, but with the global economic crisis of 2008 compounding the already fragile post-conflict economy of the region, sponsorship for clubs was in the region of 50KM-100KM (EUR 25-50), not enough to cover the costs of hosting one match, let alone a full season. In order to remain solvent, clubs are forced to look to influential and wealthy local men. In the post-conflict era men with money are often those who have benefitted from the conflict and post-conflict black market economies. There is a sense that these men, who have profited so much from instability and an inadequate rule of law, are not in a hurry to re-establish a

¹⁹⁴ See Appendix IV

¹⁹⁵ Divič did indeed suspend their position in the league in 2011 due to financial problems.

robust, lawful society, it is in their personal interest to maintain the liminal state. It is to these men that clubs must turn to in order to ensure their continued existence. Village football thus becomes a tool of the Trickster.

Football clubs are instruments of influence. Before elections politicians visit clubs to try and ensure their support - and that of their supporters - in upcoming elections in exchange for funding or infrastructural developments such as a new club house:

“We always see the politicians before an election. Always! Of course we do. All the football clubs do. They come and offer us money. But we never see any money from them if they are elected.” [Nenad Stevanović, senior player FK Budočnost, Pilica]

Clubs retain a high degree of cynicism about politicians’ motivations and are fully aware of the tactics utilised by politicians to try to ensure the footballers support. Despite such cynicism clubs seldom pass actual funding opportunities up:

“This is our new strip. The SDA¹⁹⁶ bought it for us.” [Sehad Pašić, Manager of FK Mladost October 2008]

Bosniak political parties demonstrating in the run up to October 2008 elections that they were aware of the need to secure Bosniak votes in the Zvornik municipality. Bosnian Serb parties were also aware of the need to entice Bosniaks to vote for them:

“The Mayor came to see us. He wanted 200 votes from us and in exchange he would find eight jobs. He won again but we didn’t get eight jobs. Maybe three but not the eight he promised.” [Mujo Tulić, Chairmen of the yet to be endorsed Bosniak club FK Glumina, April 2010]

In this instance the Bosnian Serb Mayor was highly aware of the possibility that Bosniak votes could have an impact upon the election and visited the Bosniak village club in a blatant attempt to buy Bosniak votes through the promise of employment.

“Everyone in the MZ is associated with a political party and a community club will always have members of the MZ on its committee, so there is always an influence of politics in football. We like to have the politicians/MZ members as they are

¹⁹⁶ SDA is a Bosniak party who prior to the October 2008 elections were hopeful of gaining seats in the Zvornik municipality.

educated and tend to make better decisions” [Goran Ivanić, an old player for FK Budoćnost, Pilica; February 2010]

The legacy of communism in Bosnia has meant that the political arena is active in almost all aspects of life. For there to be an overlap in personnel between clubs, MZs and local political parties is to be expected. Indeed, some prefer it that way because of the inroads to the corridors of power and their presumed wisdom.

The Village Hegemony

Those working against the regions transition to a post post-conflict state are seldom explicit about their actions. Whilst there is no overt use of football as a vehicle for instability and discord, politicians and businessmen are, as ever, deeply embedded into the very fabric of the game throughout the country. Therefore, although there is no direct evidence of village level football being used explicitly to create conditions of instability and discord, there is no doubt that clubs in the region are strongly influenced by politicians and businessmen. The Tricksters looking to prolong the period of liminality understand well the power of football and its ability to reach young men across the region.

Football matches, by bringing together communities of different ethnicities in an environment where the communities are clearly differentiated, permits the observation of minor incidences, and provides an avenue to address the extent a hegemony has been accepted. The way in which the influencers of local communities police their own highlights the dichotomy ever-present; on the one hand nationalistic behaviour is ever present and unremarkable, on the other should influential people within the community act upon overtly nationalistic behaviour at games, such as unacceptable chanting, and ensure those responsible are left in no doubt that their behaviour is not acceptable means the hegemony of the International Community is strengthened. Conversely tolerance of nationalistic behaviour by influencers signals tacit approval of such sentiments and becomes embedded into the local counter hegemony.

In the Zvornik region there is evidence of an establishment of a stable, peaceful society yet simultaneously signs that the state of instability and permanent liminality is

becoming embedded, almost hegemonic. Divisions and difference are highlighted, yet familiarity breeds acceptance. Crucially, the imposition of a hegemony is not uniform; clubs develop different attitudes and reactions when playing teams of differing ethnicity. Here thus is Gramsci's War of Position; the cultural bloc is not uniform but the site of a power struggle. In such a position the possibility of tensions flaring at a football match remains high. In matches between different ethnic groups these tensions contain an inherent element of nationalism as such criteria provides the most obvious moniker of difference. Clubs and their players have an important role to play in managing such situations, but at this level there is little support of managers or delegates wishing to explicitly address these issues. Footballers are young and seldom mature enough to manage communal flash points. At this level footballers are also amateurs, who give their time and money in order to play; to expect them to attend training sessions and developing some pedagogic ability to address such high profile, emotive situations is unrealistic.

The influencers in football remain those within Savez. Savez notifies the police, chooses the referees and delegates and is responsible for disciplinary measures. They are governed by guidelines from FIFA and UEFA, but ultimately they are answerable only to the local football associations. The individuals within the Savez hold the key for the extent to which the vision of a stable, democratic post-conflict hegemony or the reinforcement of liminality will be adopted through the milieu of football. The International Community, as the Master of Ceremony guiding Bosnian society through its post-conflict liminal phase are present in their role of supra-national organisations. They supply the infrastructure and laws by which the game operates and is operated by. The reformation of clubs may be understood to be a ritual of the transition beyond conflict and the interaction with the legal and political infrastructures of the state are closely followed and defined by the International community. Yet at all points lie the Tricksters who are embedded to a higher degree at the local levels and whose power within the clubs and the local FA is more tangible.

Symbolism of different nationalities at village level is forever present. As village clubs of differing ethnicities meet on the football field the sense that ethnic identities are represented by the football teams is unescapable. Such ethnic symbolism and

representation is further emphasised by elite Bosnian clubs and the National team itself. Although this football does not occur within the confines of Divič the impact of the football of elite and national teams is keenly felt throughout the village and it is to this element of football in post-conflict Bosnia that we now turn.

CHAPTER 6

When Dragons Roar and Eagles Soar¹⁹⁷

With a divided cultural and religious landscape, football is unusual in Bosnia for presenting a popular pastime to which all ethnic groups readily and enthusiastically subscribe to (Sterchele, 2007; Kinder, 2013). For those striving to implement a single Bosnian nation that represents all three ethnicities, the Bosnian national football team is an important tool. A football match presents the opportunity to create a sense of shared belonging, of collective community and provides the opportunity for people to envisage a joint future based upon common and shared experiences. When the Bosnian national football team qualified for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, journalists asked: “*Can football heal where politics fail? If a country risks falling apart, can the national side supply the glue to stick the feuding bits back together?*” (Traynor, 2013). Could the success of a single multi-ethnic national team be a tool for the International Community in their Master of Ceremonies role in creating a united, functioning and multi-ethnic Bosnia? What becomes evident is the nation as a socio-political entity and what we might best term the football national are not always congruent. This chapter examines the role elite football, both at international level and elite club level might have upon post-conflict processes in Divič. It considers the role played by the football supporters in this milieu and examines the way in which fans are using the football occasion to demonstrate their resistance and opposition to each other as well as their resistance to those tasked with running the game and their opposition to those running the state.

Imagination and Consciousness

The concept of nations (and a corresponding sense of national identity) is usually considered to be a relatively recent invention, although with there are clear national elements in premodern ethnic and religious attachments (Smith, 1991). National identity is an ephemeral concept. Antony Smith defines it as “*maintenance and continuous reproduction of the patterns of values, symbols, memories, myths and*

¹⁹⁷ The Bosnian national team has taken on the nickname of the Dragons (*Zmajevi*) whilst the Serbian team is known as the Eagles in reference to their double headed Eagle emblem which has long been the symbol on the Serbian coat of arms.

traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions” (Smith, 2001, p. 30) which provides a sense of a social bond with shared traditions binding the population together. In this sense nations are frequently perceived as ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson B. , 1983) with ‘invented traditions’ (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Hobsbawm and Anderson both recognised sport as a venue for such sentiment, when the passion and emotion of a match provides shared experiences encompassing people within the same community, although such sentiment is recognised to be temporary (Hobsbawm E. J., 1990).

The extent to which the Bosnian national football team is understood by those living in Bosnia to represent them is indicative of the extent to which they view themselves as a part of the collective termed ‘Bosnian’. The Bosniak elite, aware Bosnia would not exist as a viable economic or political entity without Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat ethnicities, encourage the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats to see themselves as Bosnian. The Serbs and Croats ethno-elite, concerned they would be in a minority in a Bosnian state, continue to retain and celebrate the distinctions between the ethnic groups. If a national football side is to be the glue that sticks a country together it is because it provides a construction of a shared community, with shared experiences and rituals. The rituals and symbolism connected to Bosnian national football team fixtures thus provide the opportunity to witness both the extent to which the population of Bosnia views itself as a single collective but also to highlight the fault lines of this society. It is both the tool of the International Community, highlighting the rituals required for the creation of a democratic, functioning and stable Bosnian nation and the ethno-political elite ‘Tricksters’ who prefer to utilise the sport to highlight the likelihood ethnic division and difference will lead to a return to violence.

The potential that elite football holds as a process by which shared values are internalised and collective identities strengthened through the practice of ritual (Durkheim, 1915) appeals to those seeking to apply a function to football. The notion is seductive. The collection of people (Durkheim’s collective conscious) at a football match are drawn together and share emotion and an understanding of the coordinated actions they participate in (singing, shouting and associated choreographies and responses).

This sense of collective conscience, essentially of a shared belonging to a moral community is quintessentially quasi-religious if considered through a Christian perspective. Spectators are likened to celebrants, who attend a service, singing their praise, with deference to certain sacred objects – shirts, scarves, flags, players and mediated through the hierarchy of its clergy – players, managers and fan group leaders (Sterchele, 2007). The events of a match are co-ordinated and rehearsed, with participants understanding the event as one outside of the daily routine, making it a distinctive event at a unique place where special codes of behaviour are expected. It thus exemplifies the liminoid period that anthropologist Turner proposed. For those who partake in the liminal ritual, the participation itself envelops them within a sense of *spontaneous communitas* (Turner, 1974) or *collective effervescence* (Durkheim, 1915), as participants lose their individual characteristics (including ethnicity) to become equal, thus able to share a common experience. Although at one level Gramsci understood culture to be an individual phenomenon he recognised the potential a shared experience brings to the creation of culture (Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000). The International Community would argue the removal of individual characteristics as supporters unite behind one team provides an opportunity to re-define ethnic relationships; a liminal ritual with potential for supporting the construction of a hegemony as a whole.

A Dragon's Blood: Representing Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Bosnian national football team tasked with representing the nation as a whole, is genuinely multi-ethnic and reflects the complexities of Bosnian identity and history. Whilst the Bosnian national team has always been multi-ethnic, non-Bosniak players have become more common since 2000 following the amalgamation of the Football Associations in Bosnia (as detailed further in Chapter 7). Supporters believe that the ethnicity of a player has no bearing upon their likelihood of being selected to play for the national team and the current national squad supports this assertion. The highest profile player, Edin Džeko¹⁹⁸, is a Bosniak raised in Sarajevo during the conflict. The most

¹⁹⁸ Džeko began his career at the Sarajevo club FK Željezničar. His subsequent club career has seen him to move from Bosnia to FK Teplice in the Czech Republic, Wolfsburg in Germany and then Manchester City in January 2011.

capped player in the team's history is its co-captain Bosnian Serb Zvezdan Misimović¹⁹⁹ and a favourite of the predominantly Bosniak support base of the team. Sergej Barbarez²⁰⁰, who played for Bosnia from 1998 – 2005 and considered a Bosnian footballing legend, had a Bosnian Serb father and a mother who was half Croat and half Bosniak, and whilst a great player also demonstrates the difficulties faced by many Bosnians called upon to define themselves by ethnic identity. The predominantly Bosniak supporters of the national side embrace the multi-ethnic nature of their team:

“It’s how Bosnia should be – all three peoples together. If the Serbs don’t want to support us, or the Croats, that’s their problem. But when Misimović plays for Bosnia we’ll cheer for him as loud as for any player” Asmir Selimović, Srebrenica survivor now living in the US quoted by (Vulliamy, 2012, p. 162).

In the years immediately following the conflict the quality of the Serbian and Croatian national teams were far higher than Bosnia, as evidenced by their repeated qualification for major football tournaments during this period, and the most talented Bosnian Croats or Bosnian Serbs with eligibility to play for Croatia or Serbia chose to do so. Equally those unable to win a place on those prestigious teams preferred to put aside their Serbian or Croatian-ness in order to play for the far lower ranked Bosnian national side as their only opportunity to play international football. There is nothing unusual about this: In a globalising world the malleable nature of the nationality of many sportspeople, whose decisions about which nationality they choose to represent is based less upon nationalist sentiment and more on what is best for their sporting career is well documented (Tuck, 2003; Maguire & Tuck, 2005; Bairner & Barbour, 2005). Bosnian Serb Misimović exemplifies this; born and brought up in Germany he represented the former Republic of Yugoslavia at youth level but was dropped from the squad after being told he was *‘fat, slow and arrogant’* by the Serbian coach Vladimir Petrović (Wilson, 2009b) before applying for Bosnian citizenship in 2004.

The conflict history of the country is reflected in their diasporic nature of the team and their supporters. The conflict generated a mass emigration, scattering Bosnians across

¹⁹⁹ Misimović represented the Former Republic of Yugoslavia at U-18 and U-21 levels before opting to play for Bosnia in 2004. His clubs have included Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg (where he played together with Edin Džeko).

²⁰⁰ Barbarez was born in Mostar but became a refugee in Germany fled the conflict in 1992. He played in the German Bundesliga until he retired in 2008.

Europe and North America. The refugees and their children, shaped by their conflict experiences, became and remain very active in their support of Bosnia, as evidenced by the formation and popularity of the Bosnian national team fan group, BH Fanaticos, membership of which is dominated by those living in Sweden, Germany and the US. The national football team provides the opportunity for the diaspora to retain their identity as Bosnians. The diasporic nature of the Bosnian national team itself provides ample opportunity for the diaspora to support one of their own, as the vocal support of Vedad Ibešević, one of 70,000 Bosnians who made St. Louis, USA their home demonstrates.

As the Bosnian team has risen in the world FIFA rankings, the Bosnian national team management has enjoyed increasing success in recruiting from the Bosnian diaspora to play for the national side, including Roma's midfielder Miralem Pjanić²⁰¹ who represented Luxembourg at youth level and was later approached by the French national team before choosing to play for Bosnia. The extent to which Bosnian diaspora provide the core of the Bosnian national football team is reflected in their FIFA 2014 World Cup squad: Of the 24 players named²⁰² 10 had to change their sports nationality to be able to represent Bosnia, 16 of the squad have never played in the Bosnian domestic league and only one player is currently playing for a Bosnian team ²⁰³ (BH Dragons, 2014). The ethno-nationalist 'Tricksters' were well aware of the potential influence the national team could impart; in the years immediately following the conflict the institution with control over the national team, Savez, was itself under the political control of the Bosniak nationalist party, SDA (Gasser & Levinsen, 2006; Sterchele, 2007; Sterchele 2013). The Bosniaks acting to ensure their nationalist agenda remained at the core of the Bosnian national identity effectively excluding Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. The Bosnian Serb and Croat ethno-nationalist elites encouraged people to identify themselves via ethnicity rather than nationality and express support for Serbia and Croatia respectively. The Bosnian national team, multi-ethnic and representing a

²⁰¹ Pjanić's family fled the conflict from Kalesija (between Zvornik and Tuzla) when he was aged two, eventually moving to Luxembourg and learning his football at France's Metz academy. Pjanić represented Luxembourg at U17 and U19 level before deciding to play for Bosnia, making his debut in August 2008. The French national team is rumoured to have enquired about the possibility of Pjanić playing for them claiming he would have qualified by stint of residency

²⁰² FIFA rules stipulate that each country may take a 23 man squad to the 2014 World Cup. The Bosnian manager named 24 players. An additional name was the injured Bosnian Croat defender, Mensur Mujdza, who was injured and it was not known if he would be fully recovered.

²⁰³ Asmir Avdukić, the third goalkeeper plays for Bosnian Serb club FK Borac Banja Luka.

multi-ethnic nation, is thus dominated by its Bosniak heritage, its diaspora and inevitably their conflict experience. Divisions were reinforced and a Trickster ambition realised.

Singing “Bože pravde”²⁰⁴: Citizens of One Country, Inclined to Another

With the exception of Mr. Milošević, the President of OFS Zvornik, every Bosnian Serb football player, manager, administrator and enthusiast spoken to in the course of this research supported the Serbian national football team. As the trainer of the Pilica village team FK Budućnost expressed:

“We are Serb. We have always been Serb. In Yugoslavia we were still Serbs. Of course we support Serbia. Why would we support someone else?” [Milan Lazarević, August 2009].

Although modernist concepts view the nation-state and nationalism as a nineteenth century construct (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1983), ethnic Serbs in Bosnia identify with the pre-modern histories, myths and traditions of Serbia with its dominant ethos of protecting Serbdom, particularly from perceived Muslim infiltration (Judah, 2009) . To seek to impose a new form of nationality upon the Bosnian Serbs underestimates the extent to which they have accepted the Serb legend. Serbs have embraced a sense of ethnic-nationalism whereby the geographic boundaries of a nation are subordinate to the shared heritage, faith and ethnicity of a people (Smith, 1986, 1991).

Much of Serb history and subsequent mentality has been defined by their army’s loss to the Turkish Ottoman Sultans at the 1389 battle at Kosevo Polje (Judah, 2009; Hoare, 2007; Mazower, 2000). Serbian literature and epic poems²⁰⁵ celebrate their battle feats against the Ottomans and, in some cases, call for the extermination of those amongst them who had converted to Islam (Pavlović, 2001; Judah, 2009). The Serb national anthem, *Bože pravde* (God of Justice) reflects the extent to which their mentality is derived from resistance to Ottoman (and therefore Islamic) occupation. In nationalist Serb mentality to be Serb is to be standing firm against Islamic intrusions a feature

²⁰⁴ ‘*Bože pravde*’ (God of Justice) is the official national anthem of Serbia.

²⁰⁵ In particular the 1846 epic poem ‘The Mountain Wreath’ by Petar Petrovic Njegoš which celebrates the struggle to survive under Ottoman oppression and is centred an alleged historical event in the early 1700s, a mass execution of Montenegrins who had converted to Islam. The poem is used by Serbian nationalists to justify the ambition of the creation of a Greater Serbia, whilst it is also claimed that it is a manual for ethnic cleansing and was quoted

reflected in the anti-Muslim undertones of the anthem. This has consequences for football: The Muslim Serb, Adem Ljajić, was suspended from the Serbian National team in May 2012 for refusing to sing the Serbian national anthem before a friendly fixture against Spain for what he called 'personal reasons'²⁰⁶.

Within the Zvornik region all historical, cultural and social parameters point towards Belgrade, a city more accessible from Zvornik than the Bosnian capital Sarajevo²⁰⁷. The Bosnian Serbs are predisposed to study at a Serbian University and look towards Serbia as a more likely source of employment. Geographical, cultural, economic, social and historic factors all reinforce the Serb ethnicity of the region. Bosnia with its different script, its multi-ethnic heritage and diverse religious and cultural population is to a Serb a foreign country.

Notwithstanding their strong ethno-nationalist ethos, most Bosnian Serbs living in Bosnia hold a Bosnian passport, few having applied for a Serbian one despite being eligible for one, deterred by the administrative and financial hurdles. During the period of this research there was increased interest in applying for a Serbian passport, but this was a pragmatic issue; Serbia had been granted visa free access to the EU but restrictions on Bosnian passport holders remained²⁰⁸. However, despite their Serb identity and ethnicity, most acknowledged their Bosnian citizenship within the contexts of being a citizen of the Serb Entity, the Republika Srpska (RS). The ethno-political elite Trickster has a need to ensure that Serb identity continues to trump Bosnian nationality. They proceed to do so by denigrating the Bosnian team as demonstrated by the current President of the RS, Milorad Dodik, who famously said that the only time he would support the Bosnian national team would be if they played Turkey (Vulliamy, 2012). Even those in senior positions within the Bosnian Savez will confess their preference for Serbia over Bosnia: In a rare, unguarded moment, the usually circumspect General

²⁰⁶ Ljajic is from the South Western Serb region of Novi Pazar, which is in the historically Bosniak region of Sandžak which has always been a part of Serbia. Ljajic is himself a Muslim and objected to anti-Muslim sentiments of the anthem (The Independent, 2012)

²⁰⁷ The journey from Zvornik to Belgrade is a distance of approximately 160km, through relatively flat terrain and taking an estimated 2 ½ hours to drive. The journey from Zvornik to Sarajevo is geographically shorter at approx. 130km but travels through mountainous terrain on roads often impassable, particularly during winter.

²⁰⁸ The EU granted visa free travel to the Schengen area for Serbia from 19 December 2009 (Council of Europe, 2009) Unable to fulfil EU conditions, including ability to issue biometric passports, Bosnia was not granted a similar status for a further year, in December 2010 (Council of Europe, 2010).

Secretary of the RS Football Association, FSRS, which is a part of the Bosnian football association N/FSBiH, tried to explain his feelings about the two national teams:

“It is like loving two beautiful women. You can love both. I love Bosnia and I love Serbia. But I love Serbia just a tiny bit more.” [Rodoljub Petković, March 2010].

Bosniaks are resigned to senior officials within their football association supporting a different country, whilst understanding it within the contexts of Serb political aims, they do not condone such sentiments:

“I feel sorry for them. How stupid is it to live in a country but support another one? They live here, they should support Bosnia. But they won’t. It will never change” [Kenan Kapadžić, President and player of FK Mladost, Divič; March 2010]

There are indications that Bosnian Serbs are not rejecting the Bosnian national team with the vigour of the Trickster elite. Many will support Bosnia as their second team; lacking the passion and intensity with which they support Serbia but an identification with the country of their passport none-the-less. Bosnian national team success at a time when Serbian football is struggling reinforces this tendency.

Reluctant Co-Patriots?

In the cauldron of ex-Yugoslav nationalities and approaching two decades since the end of the conflict, the populations have developed a method of supporting more than one nation, in a manner that reflects their own individual heritage and experiences. Whilst Bosnian Serbs continue to passionately support the Serbian national team, from 2009 onwards (when Bosnia just narrowly failed to qualify for the 2010 FIFA World Cup) many Bosnian Serbs began to support Bosnia, not as their first choice nation but out of a desire for the country to do well. For many such a sentiment was startling:

“If you told me 10 years ago I’d feel something for the Bosnian national team, I’d have said, as a Serb: ‘Never!’ But I’ll be watching and wanting them to win” [Mico Simanić, a Bosnian Serb, cited in Vulliamy, The Guardian, 2011]

In the period immediately following the conflict the Bosnian national football team failed to qualify for any major tournament whilst the Serbian and Croatian national

football teams enjoyed considerable international success²⁰⁹ which reinforced the inclinations of Bosnian Serbs and Croats to ignore the Bosnian national team. However, this was to change following Bosnian successes which propelled them up the FIFA World Rankings. Success in football can be infectious and the current buzz surrounding the Bosnian team is in stark contrast to the problems being experienced by the Serbian one. As a consequence, Bosnian Serbs have begun to re-consider their attitude to the Bosnian national team and, in the absence of Serbian success²¹⁰, some have chosen to back them in certain situations, although with less passion than they would Serbia. Furthermore, the Bosnians have developed a crop of excellent players playing at the highest levels in European leagues, including Manchester City's Edin Džeko, AS Roma's Miralem Pjanić and TsG Hoffenheim's Šehad Salihović who have become well known and admired by the Bosnian Serbs.

The Bosnian team has also selected a number of Bosnian Serbs in their line up including Miroslav Stevanović whose playing career began in Zvornik and is very much considered a local boy by the population of the Zvornik region. The Bosnian Serbs might not fly the Bosnian flag but they are at least watching the matches, acknowledging the players and, to a degree, sharing the communal experience of international fixtures; Bosnia's fixtures are watched by Bosnian Serbs (although not with Bosniaks), they are able to identify the players and have an opinion on the structure and tactics of the team. Although the two ethnicities may not be reading off the same page, they are perhaps at least reading from the same book. This may be understood as a part of the post-conflict liminal transition as the two ethnicities near agreement on the construction of a post-conflict hegemony.

Symbols of Glory, Symbols of Fear

National symbolism is the visible expression of communities around which individuals identify with and attach themselves. In this way a football team may act as an '*anchor of meaning*' (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p. 152). The symbolism attached to it provides a vehicle by which communities may strengthen their amalgamation and sense of

²⁰⁹ Both Serbia and Croatia reached the knock-out stage of the 1998 FIFA World Cup (and Croatia went on to gain 3rd place). Serbia was ranked 6th in the FIFA world rankings in December 1998, whilst Croatia achieved a 3rd place ranking in March 1999.

²¹⁰ Serbia failed to qualify for the UEFA Euro 2008 Cup, UEFA Euro 2012 Cup or the FIFA 2014 World Cup

collective. Although the concept of nation in the modern sense is thought of as a modern phenomenon, the symbolism often drawn upon to represent it often derives from pre-modern times (Smith, 1991).

The pre-modern symbolism in the newly independent state of Bosnia was indelibly connected to the Bosniak ethnic group and as such not acceptable to the others. Following the conflict the International Community in a clear Master of Ceremonies role, developed symbols entirely without historic symbolism for use by national Bosnian institutions. This included the Bosnian flag developed in 1998 with agreement with all three major ethnic groups by the then High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Carlos Westendorp, and which holds no particular symbolism for any one of them²¹¹. This flag is widely seen at international fixtures and has been commonly adopted in Bosniak areas. Serb and Croat areas often fly the flags of Serbia and Croatia respectively, although the Bosnian flag is also flown, particularly at formal junctures such as border crossings.

However, many of the symbols and symbolism surrounding the Bosnian national football team continue to reflect its pre-modern Bosniak heritage and carry military connotations. In particular it is supporters waving Bosnia's previous flag; white with the Bosniak *fleur-de-lis* coat of arms in the centre. The *fleur-de-lis* is commonly regarded as a Bosniak symbol and has been associated with Bosnia since its adoption by the Kortomanić dynasty who ruled the Kingdom of Bosnia in the mid to late fourteenth century (Hoare, 2007). Bosnia's hastily formed army *Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* (ABiH) used the fleur-de-lis coat of arms as its emblem throughout the conflict which reflects the dominance of Bosniaks who fought within it. The flag is still regularly flown in Bosniak areas, usually alongside the officially recognised Bosnian flag. Although the most common nickname for the national team is *Zmajevi* [dragons] their alternative nickname, *lilijana* [lillies], clearly demonstrates their Bosniak heritage.

²¹¹ Described as a wide medium blue vertical band on the fly side with a yellow right triangle abutting the band and the top of the flag; the remainder of the flag is medium blue with seven full five-pointed white stars and two half stars top and bottom along the hypotenuse of the triangle. The triangle reflects the geographic shape of the country, whilst the three points represent each of the major ethnic groups. The stars represent Europe and the blue and yellow colours are also that of the European Union.

The lack of a Bosnian form of collective cultural identity can be seen in the failure to adopt an anthem for the newly independent nation. Although the tune for a Bosnian national anthem written by Bosnian Serb composer Dušan Šestić was adopted in 1999, Bosnia remains one of only four countries in the world to have adopted no lyrics for their anthem²¹². At international football fixtures Bosniak fans usually choose to sing the words of the anthem *Jedna I jedina* [You Are the One and Only] written in 1992 by Bosniak musician Dino Merlin following Bosnian independence. Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats have refused to accept these lyrics, preferring to sing the anthems of Serbia or Croatia. OHR has continued to make efforts have been made to develop lyrics acceptable to all ethnicities and in 2009 proposed lyrics were accepted by a parliamentary commission but continue to be blocked at several parliamentary levels; the Tricksters working to prevent a post-liminal symbol from gaining currency as a part of Bosnia's national heritage. However, the overwhelming singing of *Jedna I jedina* at Bosnia's national football fixtures reflects the predominantly Bosniak nature of the support and confirms that the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats continue to identify more with Serbia and Croatia than the nation in which they live.

The nationalist symbolism surrounding the Serbian national football team was also used by nationalists who took up arms during the conflict. The emblem of the Serbian national football team is a Serbian orthodox cross (with four 'C's in each section)²¹³. The cross is a part of the shield held by the double headed eagle²¹⁴ and makes up part of the Serbian emblem on the shirts of the Serbian national team. Serbians, including the tennis star Novak Djoković, regularly use a three-fingered salute which originally echoed the sign of the cross in Orthodox Serb religion to symbolise their Serbian nature. The Serbian Cross, Serb double eagle emblem, the three fingered Serb salute and the Serbian flag were also used by extreme Serb paramilitary units active in the cleansing of Bosniak civilians from the Zvornik region. During the conflict the Serbian Cross was the recognised logo of several Serb paramilitary groups, most notably Arkan's Tiger's and was frequently

²¹² The others being Spain, San Marino and Kosovo

²¹³ 'C' is the Cyrillic symbol for the Latin 'S' represent the phrase '*samo sloga srbina spasava*' which translated reads Only Unity will Save the Serbs.

²¹⁴ The double headed eagle was adopted in medieval Serbia as a symbol of Serbdom and of the Orthodox Church. During the Ottoman occupation of Serbia its use as a symbol of Serb statehood was banned but it was re-established in 1882 when the Kingdom of Serbia adopted it as the Serbian Coat of Arms.

graffitied upon abandoned Bosniak houses to indicate that the property was now Serb, whilst the three fingered salute would be shown by Serb military units, distinguishing their Serb ethnicity. Bosniaks equate such symbols of Serbdom with conflict atrocities.

As Yugoslavia disintegrated and violence spread the significance of the nationalist symbols surrounding the game, on crests, shirts and emblems, became a silent form of confrontation and defiance to the ethno-political 'other' and indeed the wider international community itself. Waving a Serbian flag in Zvornik is done to celebrate heritage, unity and a sense of the collective with a Greater Serbia in defiance of the International Community aims to retain the RS within Bosnia, but such flag waving simultaneously acts to intimidate and oppress the Bosniak minority for whom such a flag represents violence and destruction and reminds them of their personal powerlessness in the face of Serb hegemony. By contrast to wave a Bosnian flag in the region is to manifest defiance and show a distinct form of resistance to the assured Serb hegemony.

Domestic Foreigners

The promotion of football to create narratives of the national is accompanied by a dichotomy very evident throughout the RS. On the one hand, nationalism glorifies nations and people as an ideological entity and may be a useful tool in the '*construction of modern cohesive societies*' (Hargreaves J. , 2002, p. 31). Simultaneously it is a tool for use by the ethno-political elites '*in the struggle over state power*' (ibid). The 'Tricksters' use football to ensure state power remains subservient to their personal power; resisting the power of the International Community led state but also reinforcing division to ensure the state remains weak. This is somewhat overlooked by those looking to create a functioning, peaceful Bosnian state who hope that the multi-ethnic national football team, representing the country on the global arena, will provide some shared experiences and narrative which would contribute to a sense of national cohesiveness.

For Bosniaks in Divič, including the many that have little interest in the game, the day of national team games with the inevitable accompaniment of an overt display of nationalist symbols provides a moment that highlights and reminds the population of their differences. The international fixtures provide a time and place focus and recognised ritual for people across the region to both observe and display their

differences. Existing as a minority within a Serb hegemony Bosniak citizens of Divič are reminded of their vulnerability. Whilst none expect armed conflict to be revived in the immediate future, they are ever-aware that conflict can (and does) occur seemingly from out of nowhere:

“There is never a day that you can really relax. On those days [when Serbia is playing an international fixture] when there are flags everywhere, you really can’t relax. It is best to stay away. At home. I don’t want to go out then.” [Abduraham Okanović, member of Divič Islamic Society, January 2010].

In October 2004 the Bosnian and Serbian²¹⁵ national football teams met for the first time in a competitive fixture. This was an occasion of intense anxiety for Divič residents. The match was certain to be a high profile, emotive event, which was further intensified with a place at the FIFA 2006 World Cup Finals at stake. Amongst fans symbols and displays of ethno-political nationalism would be plentiful and emotions would be running high. Combined with the recent conflict legacy this match had potential to facilitate off-field violence. The police force tasked to protect the Bosniak returnees was predominantly staffed by Serb personnel. As Bosnia prepared to face Serbia on the football pitch, the Bosniaks of the region retreated; some physically left the village to stay in Bosniak dominated areas for the duration of the match, others sat inside their homes with the lights off, listening to the Serbian car horns from cars draped in the Serb flag on the adjacent road hoping that they would not drive into the village itself. This football match demonstrated the way in which one event – in this case a football match - has the potential to impact an entire village, whether individual residents had chosen to engage with the event itself or not.

In the event the region remained calm, both for the first match in Sarajevo and for the return fixture held later that year in Belgrade.

“Overall it was pretty calm that day. You could tell which villages supported who but the only problems were in the stadium. Lots of Serbs [from the Zvornik municipality] went to the stadium to support Serbia. But here it was ok.” [Enver Ferhatbegovic, President Divič MZ.]

²¹⁵ In 2004 Montenegro was still joined to Serbia so the national team was named Serbia & Montenegro. Montenegrin independence was achieved in 2006 following a referendum.

The matches themselves however were marred with incidents between supporters despite heavy police presence at both fixtures. Rival fans threw flares and seats and fought outside of the stadiums leading to fines for both the Bosnian and Serbian Football Associations.

The 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign is the only time that the Bosnian and Serbian national teams have met in a competitive international football fixture. Since then the Serbian national football team fortunes have fluctuated and their supporters have undergone corresponding periods of elation and devastation. Divič has learned to keep a low profile on the days that Serbia plays an international match, aware that the combination of football and nationalism is often combined with alcohol, which can lead to very real problems for the non-Serb residents of the area.

“These matches will always cause a problem. We have the war, it comes between us. But alcohol just makes things worse. Everyone does things they wouldn’t do. The problems here often come when people have been drinking...There is no point in provoking people. They will have been drinking. People do stupid things when they are drunk, things they wouldn’t do otherwise. Better just to stay out of their way.” [Salih Kapadžić, President of the Association of Returnees in Zvornik municipality²¹⁶, February 2009]

The sense of an unpredictable instability reinforces the ethno-nationalist Trickster position as people remain afraid of a return to conflict and return to their ethno-nationalist leaders to ensure safety and protection.

There are times when those avoiding the antagonists cannot evade problems and harassment. One Serbian match in October 2006 happened to coincide with the Bosnian Muslim celebration of Ramadan Bajram²¹⁷. Many people in Divič had gathered on the football pitch in the centre of their village to sing and celebrate the end of Ramadan. For some local Serbs the combination of the nationalist sentiments aroused by an

²¹⁷ The Bosnian Muslim celebration of *Eid Ul Fitr*, the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast.

international football fixture and witnessing the celebration of the Bosnian Muslim identity was overwhelming:

“The young boys came, driving through the village shouting and throwing things out of the car. They were drunk. But we had had enough. The men [from Divič] met their [Serb] car and hit it and it drove back to Zvornik. We had to tell the police what we had done but they chose not to do anything about it. Every time we chose to fight back we have less problems.” [Bojana Pezerović, member of the Divič Women’s Club, December 2008]

The confrontation was an important moment in post-conflict Divič. Residents felt that the disinterest of the police to investigate damage to the Serb car further meant the police understood the Bosniak’s predicament and on this occasion felt the Bosniak actions had not been disproportionate. This may be understood as an encouraging sign for the International Community led Master of Ceremonies; the structures being established – in this case the police – are demonstrating the ability to function outside ethnic identity symbolising they do not remain under the control of the ethno-political elite.

Tensions between the two communities around international football are not limited to Bosnian or Serbian fixtures. The Bosniak Ottoman heritage means that there are close links between the Turkey and Bosnia²¹⁸. Such links are occasionally reflected in Bosniak decisions to support Turkey, most notably in the UEFA Euro 2008 quarter finals when Bosniaks support of Turkey in their dramatic victory over Croatia led to outright violence on the streets of Mostar²¹⁹. Nationalist tensions arising from international football fixtures may therefore stem from Turkish games as well as Bosnian or Serbian ones:

“The worst game wasn’t Bosnia vs Serbia. For me it was Serbia vs. Turkey. There were so many insults then. Every time I went into Zvornik [local Serbs] swore at me, called me a Turk²²⁰. I had to laugh – the Serbs are more Turkish than we

²¹⁸ Such is the close nature of the relationship between Bosniaks and Turkey that N/FSBiH felt compelled to call for fans not to wear Turkish scarves when Turkey and Bosnia were drawn in the same qualifying group for the Euro 2008 championships.

²¹⁹ The violence at the fixture was expected following riots that had occurred in Mostar two years previously when Bosniaks had overtly supported Brazil in a narrow victory over Croatia.

²²⁰ The term ‘Turk’ is a derogatory and offensive expression for a Bosniak (similar to the terms Četnik for a Serb or Ustaša for a Croat)

*are!*²²¹ [Salih Kapadžić, President of the Association of Returnees in Zvornik municipality, February 2009]

Such sentiment reinforces the unpredictable nature of the post-conflict football environment in the Zvornik region, reinforcing the sense of insecurity in the villagers, particularly those who are not followers of football and unaware of the upcoming fixture of two foreign nations.

“For Entire Life!”²²² Elite Clubs and their Supporters

The extent to which football contributes to a shared sense of community (and thus nation) has been and remains readily questioned. (Hill, 1996; Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1997; Russell, 1998 amongst others). The identity derived through football is one always created with the ‘other’ in mind: The sense of ‘us’ leads inevitably to the creation (and distrust) of a ‘them’ (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1997). Identity derived through football remains essentially dialectic, its essence is difference and defined not through what you are, but about establishing and sustaining what you are not. National teams play each fixtures (and each other) relatively infrequently. In the Bosnian context it is perfectly possible to support two teams (albeit with different levels of intensity) as increasing numbers of Serbs chose to do.

This is not the case with club sides, particularly in the smaller leagues. Such clubs play each other regularly and one might say relentlessly. It is at this level that football identity is most strongly derived and erected within various oppositional frameworks. Put simply, whilst supporters of the national sides display their identity through their nationality, the identity of the clubs of the region may be framed through ethnicity or through other, equally significant, parameters. It is at club level that the ethno-political elite influence is most clearly felt and the tendency for football to be used as a tool for the Trickster to deepen a sense of instability and possible return to conflict the most obvious.

²²¹ Salih Kapadžić was alluding to the fact that the Ottoman Empire left the Bosnians to run themselves, by Bosnians who had converted. Serbia, on the other hand, was ruled directly by the Ottomans and were occupied by the Ottoman administration for longer than Bosnia was.

²²² *‘za život cijeti’* meaning ‘for entire life!’ is the slogan of the Maniacs, the main fan group of the Sarajevo team FK Željezničar.

Areas renowned for their strong nationalistic tendencies tend to produce clubs with a strong ethnic identity. The consequent football fan culture becomes uncompromising in its ethno-political nationalism. The defining characteristic of the Mostar club, HŠK Zrinjski Mostar, is its Croat heritage most visible in its name (HŠK stands for *Hrvatski Sportski Klub* – Croatian sports Club) and the Croatian national symbol of the *šahovnica* evident on its club crest. The Serb club, Borac Banja Luka of that town wears its Serb identity as evidenced by the echoes of the Serb flag on the red, white and blue colours of the clubs kit and associated emblems. Other clubs are defined less by what they are and more in terms of what they are not. Nowhere is this truer of the Mostar derby rivals of HŠK Zrinjski, FK Velež. Velež are a team with a strong communist legacy and see themselves as multi-ethnic. In reality they are the team in Mostar that is not Zrinjski and the intense Croat nationalist identity that Zrinjski are perceived to represent. As a result FK Velež has become the club for all who are not Croat nationalists. In reality they have a fan base that is predominantly Bosniak²²³.

Echoing the various ethno-political aims, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat football clubs have a tendency to define themselves via ethnicity whereas Bosniak clubs view themselves as Bosnian and as such multi-ethnic, albeit with a Bosniak majority. However, to focus upon ethnicity as a defining characteristic of Bosnian club fan groups is to misunderstand other facets of identity which are of greater significance to the fans. The prominent Bosnian cities all have clubs in the Premier League²²⁴ where ethnic divisions are more blurred than rural areas. Many of those from urban areas cannot categorically say which ethnic group they are often explaining their mother was one ethnicity and their father another. Instead personal identities are more rooted in non-ethnic criteria, such as urban or rural, core or periphery.

Rivalries between clubs are shaped by many factors, the most usual being one of proximity (Hill, 1996). The derbies between the Sarajevan Bosniak clubs of Sarajevo and Željezničar and the Mostar clubs, Zrinjski and Velež are always tense affairs, liable to spill

²²³ Mostar's Serb population left in the early stages of the 1992-95 conflict. The city is predominantly populated by Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks.

²²⁴ A notable exception is the city of Tuzla whose FK Sloboda club was relegated in 2011/12, the first time it had dropped out of the top flight Bosnian league in 43 years. On hiring the former Bosnian and Croatian national team manager, Čiro Blažević in 2014 it won promotion back into the Premijer Liga in May 2014.

over into violence. In both cities the rivalries originated from the social and cultural backgrounds of their fans: Velež and Željezničar have histories closely identifying the clubs with the workers (FK Velež was a communist club, whereas the name Željezničar translates as railway workers on whose behalf the club was established). The origins of FK Sarajevo and HSK Zrinjski are rooted in the political elites of their respective cities (Armstrong & Vest, 2013).

There is also a vigorous core-periphery tension, with clubs drawn from the latter particularly wanting to defeat the Communist administration favourite of FK Sarajevo. Keen to promote their club the Communist regime were able to entice the region's best players away from their original clubs. The most affected club was the more established Sarajevo club of FK Željezničar who lost large numbers of players leading to their relegation and the birth of an intense city derby rivalry between the fans. With such connections to the state administrators, FK Sarajevo soon came to be the representative of Bosnia within Yugoslav football, becoming the team for Bosnian clubs to beat. The clubs of Mostar, Zenica and Banja Luka continue to regard FK Sarajevo as particular rivals, a relationship that deepens as each encounter adds to the history in football formed files of perceived injustice and the 'The Drama of Power Inequalities' (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001, p. 272).

Such power inequality leads supporters of other clubs to assume a resistance identity to the political and economic dominance that FK Sarajevo represents:

"I went to see Čelik [from Zenica] play at Sarajevo [both predominantly Bosniak teams], but before the game I stopped to see an old friend who is at Slavija [the Serb club of Sarajevo]. I couldn't believe it. There, in the cafes, were all the Čelik supporters drinking together with the Slavija ones. I asked what was going on, and the Slavija supporters said that Čelik hadn't had enough fans to travel from Zenica to Sarajevo, so the Slavija fans were going to go with them to support them against Sarajevo. Slavija didn't care, as long as Sarajevo were beaten they would join in support with anyone." [Mirko Milošević, June 2009].

Sure, we always go with Čelik when they play Sarajevo. We were only separated because of pressures from outside countries, but we'll support any team from ex-Yugoslavia. If [Croatian teams] Dinamo Zagreb or Hajduk Split have a bit of success in Europe, we are happy." [Milorad Lale, President FK Slavija, Sarajevo, April 2010].

This allegiance, framed entirely within the context of rivalry to Sarajevo, is transient and situational cannot be considered to be an example of a post-conflict meaningful friendship between fans drawn from different ethnic groups. It does, however, illustrate the ephemeral relationships that may be forged within the football milieu and indeed the somewhat nebulous choice of club. The nature of the support is *ad hoc* and does not derive from the same cause: Supporters of Čelik and Slavija are both seeking to emphasise their difference from FK Sarajevo albeit those differences are not the same - Slavija is a club from Sarajevo but of different ethnicity, Čelik is a club of the same ethnicity but not from Sarajevo. This strange situation highlights the complexity of club football in Bosnia and the extent to which factors apart from ethnicity play a part in the football milieu.

Affirmation of Opposition: Representation and Resistance

For many in Divič there is little to connect them to a Bosnian club, despite their Bosniak heritage. Some Bosniaks have chosen to support a Bosnian club in the Bosnian Premier League, the most popular choice being FK Sarajevo, although the more local FK Sloboda from Tuzla also attracts some support. Growing up as refugees led many to football allegiances with foreign clubs which they have been able to maintain since their return through live televised matches of the better European Leagues. Their TV sets could not, however, receive coverage of Bosnian football of any form (either club or international) until 2007. Bosnian TV stations have been financially unable to fund the broadcasting of Bosnian Premier League matches and even today very few matches are televised across the country. To support a Bosnian club requires commitment, matches need to be attended in person and media from the Federation must be accessed for news of the clubs, something becoming easier in the age of the internet, but internet access is not yet standard in Divič.

The elite club team in the Zvornik region, FK Drina has a history stretching to 1945, when two pre-war clubs amalgamated to focus upon establishing one high quality club²²⁵. Prior to the 1992-95 conflict the club represented the majority Bosniak population of

²²⁵ The merger was driven by the articulate and capable youth of the region (many of whom had studied at universities in Belgrade and Sarajevo) and the aim of the newly formed club was to develop wider sporting and cultural relationships with other towns across the region.

the city and the majority of players and supporters were of Bosniak heritage²²⁶. The Bosnian Serb club management, when spoken to 15 years after the end of the conflict, were acutely aware of their Bosniak heritage:

“Our golden years were in the late 80s. We played in the third Yugoslav league and we had players from Tuzla, Kalesija²²⁷. Sometimes Sloboda would send us players, they were in the first league but they wanted to keep all their players playing, so they would send some to us We are used to Bosniaks playing for us. The city used to be mainly Bosniak before the war. We would have Bosniaks play for us now: Quality has no borders. But they don’t want to and we don’t have the money to pay for their living expenses.²²⁸” [Rade Vukić, President FK Drina, December 2009].

When Zvornik was ethnically cleansed of Bosniaks in 1992, FK Drina lost its fan base and indeed its traditional legacy wherein families pass on a passion for their club, was broken. The decimation of the of their fan base is clear as evidenced by crowd numbers during the 2008/09 season, when FK Drina were playing the Prva Liga of the RS (essentially the second tier of the national league). The average attendance was an estimated 300-500, in a stadium with capacity for 1,500 that was regularly filled to capacity for matches in the pre-conflict era.

Returning Bosniaks have declined to resume their support of their former club which is now understood to be Serb. Whilst the club itself claims to support Bosniaks and would encourage Bosniaks to resume their places in the stadium, one of the club’s support groups is named *Genocids* [Genocide]. The management of FK Drina were aware of these supporters and their nomenclature and were quick to assert they were not *real* fans, but a small group of young men who had been formally asked by the club to cease their activities.

“Don’t talk to us about them. They are nothing to do with us. They have damaged our reputation. They are people who don’t care about football. They were young lads at that dangerous time of their lives when they are deciding how they want to be. They used to come to the games with banners that we didn’t like and shouting things we didn’t want. We asked the police to talk to them and they did

²²⁶ The father of the AS Roma midfielder and Bosnian national team superstar Bosniak Miralem Pjanić played for FK Drina before the conflict forced him to seek refuge in Luxembourg with his family in 1992.

²²⁷ Tuzla and Kalesija are both Bosniak towns.

²²⁸ The inference being that there are no Bosniaks locally, so any Bosniak players would have to move to the region, which most are reluctant to do.

and they took their banners and left. They were angry but they left. We haven't had them here since then, but I think they may still be together but under another name." [Milamih Rihčić, Vice President, FK Drina. December 2009].

As a small town it is likely that the management of FK Drina were well aware of the identity of the members of the fan group. Fan forums suggest that it wasn't until 2010 that the FK Drina management put pressure on the group to change its name to 'Vukovi' [Wolves] because clubs from the Federation had formally protested following FK Drina's promotion into the multi-ethnic Bosnian Premier League (Hercegbosna Forum, 2013).

Those in Divič, even those not involved in the football milieu, were aware of the group and were deeply offended by their presence.

"Drina? Would people support Drina? Never. They have some supporters called 'Genocids' [Genocide]. How offensive is that! What happened to us, to our husbands and sons! It's disgusting." [Assia Dokić, member of the Divič Women's Club. January 2010].

The ICTY has determined that the massacre of Bosniaks in nearby Srebrenica constituted genocide by Bosnian Serb forces (ICTY, 2001). The mass graves from those killed by Bosnian Serb forces were still being excavated across the Zvornik region 15 years after the massacre. The naming of a group 'Genocids' is clearly intended to be provocative and deeply antagonistic. It is notable that the change of the group's name came about not because of a concern for Bosniak returnees in the area but because N/FSBiH were threatening not to allow FK Drina to participate in the Premier League²²⁹.

The gulf between the villagers of Divič with their local elite club side indicates important issues for the International Community to consider. The footballers within Divič are vibrant supporters of their village team at a local level and their elite teams at an international level. The lack of support for a team at a regional level reflects their lack of engagement with regional institutions relying upon the immediate village vicinity or the broader international arena for support. For the international community, wishing

²²⁹ The FK Drina stadium was not compliant with standards required for clubs in the Bosnian Premier League. FK Drina undertook works to update their stadium but knew that they would not be completed in time for the start of the 2010/2011 season.

to build a peaceful society and then wishing to leave, such a lack of connection at a regional level suggests that their vision for a post-conflict Bosnia will be unsustainable without their continued presence in the country, and as such the period of liminality will remain to the benefit of the ethno-nationalist Trickster.

A World of Maniacs, Hordes of Evil, Convicts, Vultures and Genocides²³⁰

The theoretical debate about football hooliganism has, in general, been characterised by the dominance of English fans, and English theoretical approaches (Spaaij, 2006). Marxist approaches to the phenomenon tended to be interpreted as a working class resistance to the increasing alienation to the professionalism and commercialisation of the game, and the changing relationship between the spectators and the game itself (Taylor, 1982, 1987). The dominance of the English experience in research into football hooliganism tends to manifest itself as an issue of class, particularly working class males and their conflict with the 'civilising' impulses of other strata of society (Dunning, 1981, 1999). This approach is much criticised as being too heavily generalised and the extent to which it might be universally applied has been heavily questioned (Armstrong, 1998; Finn & Giulianotti, 2000).

The range of local and regional variations in national cultures, social background and recent histories suggest that what we label as 'hooliganism' is in fact a nuanced and highly diverse sociological phenomenon. The globalisation of football, with the Champions League in Europe and easy media accessibility to prominent teams suggests at one level a homogenisation of football cultures. Yet the football sphere remains a complex interaction of global forces and local phenomena; there are uniform spaces, cultures and ritual behaviour associated with football, yet these are heavily influenced by local history, culture and experiences (Finn & Giulianotti, 2000). Across the Balkans numbers of violent incidences between football fan groups have been increasing in recent years²³¹ with ethno-political patronage alleged to be driving violence as Ultras groups become the frontline of nationalistic tensions (The Guardian, 2012). The UNHCR

²³⁰ Fan groups of FK Željezničar, FK Sarajevo, FK Čelik, FK Borac Banja Luka and FK Drina respectively.

²³¹ The most notorious incidents have involved Partizan fans following the murder of Toulouse fan Brice Taton in Belgrade in 2009, the abandonment of Serbia's Euro 2012 qualifying match with Italy after 6 minutes following violence from Serbian fans, and riots in 2010 in Zagreb in which Dinamo Zagreb's fans fought with police in the city centre.

was sufficiently concerned about football hooliganism and the nationalist element to mention it in a 2012 report, which noted:

"Nationalist rhetoric inspired violent incidents at football stadiums between Serbs and Bosniaks in Banja Luka and between Croats and Bosniaks in Mostar. The renewed ethnic dimension to football hooliganism reminded citizens of similar incidents at sporting events before the wars related to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s" (Freedom House, 2012).

It is at elite football level that the 'Tricksters' are most active; it is at this level they are able to encourage behaviour that contributes to Bosnia's sense of instability and emphasises that the country is still in a period of transition. However, despite historical links between political parties and football clubs, links between political parties and the most violent ultras remain unproven although commonly alleged across the Balkans (Manasiev, 2012).

Fan groups have always been present at Bosnian clubs, with a spate of confrontations between rival armed groups at Yugoslav football matches since the 1950s (Dunning, 1981) and violent confrontations between supporters of leading Yugoslav teams became more common throughout the 1980s: The FK Sarajevo's supporter entity, *Horde Zla* (Hordes of Evil) formed in 1987 were engaged in several serious incidents with other teams including the 1988 stabbings at matches with Partizan in Belgrade and Velež in Mostar, well before the infamous clash between Croat and Serb fan groups at the match between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star in May 1991 forewarned of the violence to come.

The football mentality can lend itself to greater conflict. Many of the football fan groups in Yugoslavia took up arms when the conflict began, moving from 'ends to trenches' with comparative ease (Vrcan & Lalic, 1998). Most infamously the Red Star supporters group, the *Delije*, formed a part of Arkan's paramilitaries. Elsewhere the FK Sarajevo's *Horde Zla* joined the Bosnian Army to defend the city of Sarajevo and FK Borac Banja Luka's *Lešinari* (Vultures) continue to invoke the memory of those who joined the Army of the Republika Srpska by claiming the current generation have an obligation to protect the glory of Borac because of those supporters who gave their lives for Serbian causes during the conflict (Lesinari, 2010).

Whilst the consensus is that it is the political tensions that are driving the increased numbers of football fan-related violence, there is an awareness that football-related violence could be the catalyst for more widespread, uncontrollable violence as one observer noted: "*The agility of leaders and the population's patience need only fail once to ignite serious violence,*" (ICG, 2011b). The ethno-political elite are able to use football related incidents to their benefit. The most serious incident of fan violence in Bosnia in October 2009 undoubtedly held this potential. The autumn of 2009 was a '*sensitive and potentially dangerous moment*' (ICG, 2009) as the International Community had instigated talks to try and implement constitutional reform, vehemently resisted all ethnic groups. Elections were approaching, traditionally a time when nationalist politicians stress ethnic tensions, before highlighting their personal ability to protect their ethnic interests.

The predominantly FK Sarajevo travelled to the Croat city of Široki Brijeg on 21 October 2009. The FK Sarajevo supporters group *Horde Zla* [Hoards of Evil] were nearing the stadium to attend the match between their team and NK Široki Brijeg when a supporter of the Croat team grabbed a firearm from a policeman and shot dead an FK Sarajevo supporter, Vedran Puljić. Prior to the match all eyes had been focussed upon the Mostar derby and the likely violence between HSK Zrinjski Ultras and FK Velež's Red Army fan groups. Although FK Široki Brijeg and FK Sarajevo were predominantly supported by fans of differing ethnicities, violence was not expected at this game and police and security forces presence had been minimal (Armstrong & Vest, 2013). Rumours swept the country that the alleged perpetrator²³² was a Croat war criminal whose political connections had mysteriously enabled his escape from prison just hours after being detained and many Bosnians suspected political influence was in play. Many Bosnians feared the murder of a fan of a Bosniak team by a Croat had the potential to be the catalyst for more serious violence when a Catholic church in a predominantly Bosnian Croat area of Sarajevo was damaged by a thrown rock and anti-Croat graffiti (Balkan Insight, 2009). There was a very real concern that the ethnic tensions most evident in the political milieu were affecting ordinary Bosnians.

²³² Oliver Knezević, a former member of the Bosnian Croat military unit Kaznjenicka Bojna of the HVO.

In the days that followed the *Horde Zla* organised demonstrations in Sarajevo which alleged ethnic provocation, police brutality and wilful neglect and raised the possibility of political interference (International Relations and Security Network, 2009). The *Horde Zla* were joined by fans from across Sarajevo including arch rivals *Maniaci* (the Maniacs, *Željezničar* fan group), and other Bosniak team supporters from cities such as Zenica and Travnik. The *Široki Fan* group, *Škipari*²³³ also organised protests numbering several thousand in *Široki Brijeg* at which many Croat dominated clubs from cities such as Mostar, Tomislavgrad and Lipno also attended. The incident did not lead to further ethnically related violence²³⁴, but further football related clashes occurred at the return fixture in April 2010.

In the years immediately following the conflict the leagues were ethnically divided so few teams played teams of a different ethnicity. By 2002 the three separate football federations were working under the umbrella of N/FSBiH (recognised by FIFA and UEFA) and the Bosnian Premier League was played across the nation by teams of all ethnic groups. Fixtures between groups of different ethnicities were closely monitored by the police and the international security forces with a few clashes evident between supporters. Violence between football groups grew after 2006, closely mirroring the increase in political tensions between ethno-political groups at state level. By 2011 political brinkmanship was at levels not seen since before the conflict amidst International Community efforts to reform the constitution and there was very real international concern that ethno-politically motivated violence could reappear (ICG, 2011b). A series of violent incidents between football fans in autumn 2011 in Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka²³⁵ led to a ban on away fans until the end of the 2011/12 season as those within football suggested that the high levels of ethno-nationalist political

²³³ Referencing the Croatian anti-communist guerrilla group active in the region during WW2, the group has nationalistic Croat tendencies and has been involved with incidents at which it displays a flag with a Swastika on it.

²³⁴ Although *Hordes Zla* are predominantly Bosniak, Vedran Puljić was in fact a Croat, limiting the ability of politicians to utilise the shooting as an ethnically motivated issue.

²³⁵ Violent incidents at Bosnian Premier League matches had been growing throughout the season. Relatively small incidents at the fixtures of *Zrinjski* vs *Olimpik* (August 2011) and *FK Slavija* vs *FK Sarajevo* (August 2011) were followed by serious clashes at the *FK Borac* vs *FK* fixture in September 2011 which resulted in abandonment of the match and a three match ban on home supporters for *FK Borac*. Soon after the *HSK Zrinjski* vs. *VK Velez* (September 2011) was abandoned and a five match ban for home support for *HSK Zrinjski* was imposed. The final incident before the overall ban was a match between *FK Željezničar* and the Croatian team *Hajduk Split* which resulted in wide scale riots outside of the stadium and serious injuries to a *Hajduk* fan.

tension was driving the increased incidents of fan violence (Reuters, 2011). The Tricksters were inflaming instability at the moment the International Community were attempting to coerce the elites into unwanted constitutional reform that would damage the elites personal positions.

Although several clubs and their fan groups, including FK Borac Banja Luka, HSK Zrinjski and FK Drina are driven by their ethno-political identities, to presume that fan violence is solely based around nationalist tendencies would be inaccurate. Rivalries between clubs are based upon many factors, of which ethnicity is just one. The biggest clashes between rival fans in Sarajevo are between the Bosniak clubs, FK Sarajevo and FK Željezničar; derby matches with the Bosnian Serb club FK Slavija tend to be less eventful. However, by 2010 there had been a marked increase in violent clashes between supporters. Although there are many incidents of inter-fan violence, Bosnian football fan groups regularly also engage in violence against the security forces, players and match officials and fan violence occurs within the stadium, outside the stadium, in town centres and wherever the fan paths cross. Fan violence is not limited to violence against the opposite team. In 2009 Tuzla's FK Sloboda fan group Fukare's bus had to travel through Mostar following their match in Široki Brijeg. The supporters of Mostar's HSK Zrinjski's caught sight of them and threw lit distress flares into the bus, setting it alight. This led to subsequent violent clashes between the two groups. In 2009 in Konjić, (a town of some 30,000 residents with a football team that plays in the second League of the Federation (i.e. third tier of Bosnian football)), serious rioting and football related violence occurred when Zrinjski fans, on their way to Sarajevo to support their team against FK Slavija passed the *Horde Zla* bus travelling towards Mostar to for FK Sarajevo's match against FK Velež. The violent clashes left one participant seriously injured, hospitalised a further three and caused significant property damage.

The unpredictability of the fan violence makes it very difficult to police Bosnian matches. The lack of consistency within the legal framework makes punishing perpetrators complex and the political manoeuvring which has stalled the creation of a uniform national law which would enable prosecution of perpetrators may be understood as a Trickster tactic. Serious levels of fan violence continue to occur perpetuating a sense of political instability, whether the violence is motivated by ethnic difference or not. The

unpredictability of the fan based violence, the inability of the state to deal with it effectively and the inherent nervousness, born of experience, of how violence can escalate quickly and uncontrollably all perpetuates the feeling of instability within the country. Returnee villages, isolated in an alien hegemony, feel particularly vulnerable. Members of the Divič Women's Group remember how it was members of football fan groups who formed the basis of Arkan's paramilitary group and voiced concerns that it might be the football fan groups who spark further violence against them.

"We know of them [fan groups of Bosnian Serb clubs FK Drina and FK Rudar in Bijeljina]. Those boys are crazy. The war has finished. Haven't they had enough? But I worry. Right now they know when to stop. But what if they forget? What if someone tells them to keep going? Where will they stop then? It was the crazy ones before, the ones released from prison who knew how to be violent who came here to get rid of us. They [Bosnian Serb politicians] could use them again. It doesn't make me feel safe." [Bija Pezerović, Divič Women's Society. January 2010].

The maintenance of a state of permanent liminality is strengthened by the unpredictable nature of football disorder across Bosnia and the general population's response, born of recent experience, to see potential in such disorder for future conflict. The rise of incidents of football related violence in tandem with increased political instability serves to perpetuate the sense of instability across the country. Ethno-nationalist politicians thrive in such environments, aware that an increasingly unpredictable environment will prevent society from transiting their liminal state. The 'Tricksters' historic links with elite clubs combined with very little International Community influence in this area has permitted the ethno-political elite to utilise the situation to their when the opportunity arises. It is regularly alleged that the political elite provide support to fan groups and encourage violence between them²³⁶, although there is no direct proof. As reiterated earlier not all supporters groups are defined according to ethnicity, but clashes between supporters groups of a different ethnic moniker will be portrayed as such whether or not the root cause of the conflict was ethnic; the political elite are adept politicians. The blocking of a united legal framework which would allow police to address the issue is a

²³⁶ This is particularly true of the Mostar clubs HSK Zrinjski and FK Velez whose fan groups regularly clash. It is also regularly alleged that the fan group of the club FK Borac Banja Luka are also supported by the Bosnian Serb political elite.

further example of Trickster behaviour, football is a tool that allows violence and uncertainty to flourish, perpetuating the liminal state and ensuring the Tricksters positions of power.

The extent to which football in all its guises is enabled to support the International Community's post-conflict vision and perpetuate Trickster behaviour depends upon the structure of football itself and ultimately those that populate such structures. It is the institutions that will monitor and guide behaviour, moulding the culture around which hegemony is created. Such behaviour will depend upon the individuals that staff them. These indigenous members of the football institutions will shape the acceptance of a post-conflict hegemony or have the potential to act in accordance with Trickster intentions. It is these institutions and the individuals of which they are comprised to which we now turn to examine the ways their actions may have hegemonic and liminal implications.

CHAPTER 7

Institutions, Intellectuals and Influence

Football is a tool capable of illuminating wider societal and cultural situations in Bosnian society. What follows looks at the role of the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Nogometni/Fudbalski Savez Bosne i Hercegovine* or N/FSBiH), more commonly known as Savez. Analysis explores its role as an institution, upon both football and the reconciliation processes utilising key Gramscian themes of resistance, coercion and negotiation. Institutions, such as sports federations are in the football milieu important facets of cultural hegemony. Often thought of as tools of the hegemonisers, these ideological apparatuses can be considered as generators that allow the power bloc to reproduce their values and systems. At the same time the formation of football associations and associated football infrastructure may be considered as a liminal ritual. The International Community in the form of OHR supported the registration of Bosnia with FIFA and UEFA guiding Bosnia through the rituals of reintegration into the wider geo-political community, which permitted the country to visibly begin to participate in the global arena. The International Community are thus acting as the Master of Ceremonies, guiding through the liminal phase. Registration with FIFA and UEFA, which in some cases has occurred before UN recognition (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998) is a recognised step in the creation of a nation-state, although as illustrated earlier what constitutes the nation-state and corresponding national identity is frequently problematic (Sugden, 2010).

The institutions themselves are, however, staffed with Tricksters. As such they occupy influential positions and are able to utilise their power to influence post-conflict processes to ensure that football acts to perpetuate division and mistrust and ensures the unstable nature of the nation continues, remaining not transiting from the liminal state. What follows presents the personnel and policies of Savez and asks whether their role is indeed one of supporting hegemonic structures or might best be considered as an *ad hoc* self-serving national institution employing influential individuals with a wide range of beliefs but obedient to a supra-national entity. In this football milieu the actions of Savez are capable of supporting the International Community peacebuilding but its

membership might be considered to contain members whose actions reinforce the nature of permanent liminality and on-going division and instability.

Save us From Savez!

An important part of the Gramscian hegemonic process is the acceptance of a leading group's authority and values. This is very evident in what we might term the 'cultural sphere' wherein are promised and established values and identities. Football offers an arena in which the struggle for Bosnian post-conflict hegemony is occurring and is as the aforementioned chapters have illustrated, a significant area of contestation in Bosnia. Control of the football milieu in post-conflict Bosnia is entirely governed by Savez. This organisation holds responsibility for the league system in which some 1,607 clubs are registered with over 20,000 registered players (European Stability Initiative, 2008). Holding overall responsibility for the countrywide *Premijer Liga BiH* (Bosnian Premier League), the Bosnia national team and the implementation of the laws of the game both as dictated by FIFA the World Footballing governing body of the game and UEFA the European governing body all within the legal framework of variously the country, the entity, the municipality and in the case of the Federation the Canton within which the club is operating. Violations of the laws of the game are dealt with by Savez and Savez collects all monies ranging from membership fees to fines. Savez also confirms which clubs have met the in the league structure. Such confirmation is essential; without it there is no funding from the municipal state, by far the largest source of funding for clubs of all levels. Savez is fundamental to the way the game is promoted and orchestrated within Bosnia.

For those attempting to induce a stable, peaceful and functioning society, Savez represents one of a handful of genuinely national organisations in Bosnia and it governs the liminal ritual of footballs reformation across the country. Yet amongst its staff are political appointees whom seem to serve ethnic interests, corrupt officials, rumoured war criminals and those reputed to have links with organised crime syndicates (Centar za Istrazivacko Novinarstvo, 2008b). Herein are football's 'Tricksters'; those interested in ensuring that football is an activity which can prevent social change, thwarting efforts to move into a post post-conflict era and thus ensuring their personal positions of influence and power.

Institutions of Post-Conflict Bosnia

As detailed in Chapter 4, many observers Bosnia has become fixed in transition as it endeavours to move from a state of conflict to one of post conflict in what could be termed a period of permanent liminality. This inherently unstable situation is believed to be sustained by the political structure, created and implemented by the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. The structure itself, with the country divided into two entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation) and the Bosniak/Croat Federation divided still further into 10 Cantons, ensures that power is held and exercised at the ethnic level²³⁷. The multi-ethnic governments (namely the National level and the Federation Entity) are intrinsically weaker than the mono-ethnic institutions.

In state structures where ethnic groups are obliged to share power, key political positions are rotated between different ethnicities with two deputies of the other two ethnic groups in support²³⁸. Ethnic groups have a veto if they deem a policy to be detrimental to their ethnic interest. Such a system, created to bring about a halt to the conflict, endeavoured to ensure that no one 'Constituent People' (namely Bosniak, Bosnian Serb or Bosnian Croat) would be able to impose policies without the acceptance of the others. The various multi-ethnic governments have clear rules regarding their ethnic makeup, with a certain number of seats being allocated to each constituent people. The overall system is highly decentralised with 14 bodies²³⁹ holding political, fiscal and legislative powers.

The history of the formation and structure of Savez was different to the political institution, but the end result holds a number of similarities. Put simply, both the political and football structures have the effect of entrenching power and influence at ethnic levels and creating the conditions for stalemate between ethnic groups. The structure has the effect of centralising power in few hands whose decision making and accountability is protected by the opaque natures of the organisations. The structures created by the International Community as a part of their efforts to guide the nation to

²³⁷ For more detailed information of the Bosnian Political State structure see Appendix I

²³⁸ Including the Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia, the Chairman of the House of Representatives and the Chairman of the House of Peoples.

²³⁹ The central state, the two Entities of the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation, the 10 Cantons within the Federation and the special case of Brčko which is an independent administrative district that is not in either Entity.

a post-liminal state have been manipulated by the Tricksters to ensure their personal power and they are in no hurry to transform what has been so personally beneficial.

Break Up and Make Up

Following the conflict all three ethnic FAs applied to the bodies governing football in Europe, FIFA and UEFA seeking the legitimacy afforded by recognition from supra-national bodies. Neither FIFA nor UEFA were prepared to countenance the acceptance of three separate organisations (which would have given Bosnia three separate voting rights) confirming that only one FA could represent the Bosnian nation-state (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998; Sterchele, 2013). With a political agenda advocating for the eventual break up of Bosnia, neither the Bosnian Serb nor the Bosnian Croat FA was prepared to represent the Bosnian nation as a whole whereas the predominantly Bosniak N/FSBiH was prepared to do so. Furthermore the history of N/FSBiH as the Sarajevo football sub association from 1920-1945 and then the Bosnian affiliate to the Yugoslav FA from 1945 provided the organisation with a demonstrated experience and capability. It was thus admitted to full membership of FIFA in 1996 and to UEFA in 1998. Aware the ritual of international recognition includes membership of the supra-national football bodies, members of the FSRS, who retain ambitions for a separate RS state, continue to advocate for membership of FIFA and UEFA.

Football resumed with vigour following the cessation of the conflict in 1995 but the leagues of the three ethnic groups remained separate until 1998. Leading Bosnian Croat clubs, keen to participate in pan-European competitions, prompted the Bosnian Croat FA to cooperate with N/FSBiH arranging for the leading Bosnian Croat and Bosniak clubs to compete in a playoff system to select two clubs²⁴⁰ to participate in the 1998/1999 UEFA Cup²⁴¹. Following pressure from OHR and clubs of both ethnicities who believed that enlarged league would lead to improved standards the two FAs formally merged in 2000 to create one single Entity-wide organisation and league system. The Bosnian Serb

²⁴⁰ The playoffs were in two groups: Group Sarajevo contained FK Željezničar, FK Bosna Visoko and HSK Zrinjski Mostar, whilst Group Mostar comprised of FK Sarajevo, NK Široki Brijeg and NK Čelik Zenica. The clubs that topped the competition and qualified to participate in the UEFA Cup - FK Sarajevo and FK Željezničar - were both predominantly Bosniak.

²⁴¹ Now known as the UEFA Europa League, the UEFA cup was an annual men's football club competition organised by UEFA for European clubs who qualified for the competition based upon their performance in their domestic league and cup competitions.

FSRS, operating in a different Entity, was more resistant to unification and continued to apply to FIFA and UEFA for formal recognition. UEFA continued to refuse to countenance the admissions of clubs from the FSRS administered league system to participate in Europe. The Bosnian Serb clubs also had aspiration to compete in UEFA's European Club competitions and aware such an event would not occur whilst FSRS was a separate organisation to Savez lobbied FSRS to merge with N/FSBiH. Under pressure from FIFA, UEFA, OHR and its own clubs, FSRS capitulated in 2002; Bosnian Serb teams joined the N/FSBiH administered Bosnian Premier League and FSRS joined N/FSBiH whilst retaining overall control of the league system in the RS. The unification of the FAs to create one functioning multi-ethnic organisation was a significant achievement and one the International Community hoped would represent a step towards a sense of national unification of the three ethnic groups (Kinder, 2013) establishing the clearest example of the International Community acting as a Master of Ceremonies to bring about its hegemonic vision. OHR representative Archie Tuta commented on the unification of the FAs *"you can achieve something with football that you can't achieve with billions and billions of dollars"* (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2002).

Whilst N/FSBiH is a fully national organisation governing the national football team and the Bosnian Premier League, the organisation itself remains split along ethnic lines (Sterchele, 2013). Echoing the political structure the second tier league is organised on an Entity basis, with Serb teams competing in the one organised by the FSRS and Croat and Bosniak teams competing within the Federation. Further down again the leagues (and organisations that run them) are split at a cantonal level permitting ethnic groups to play within separate blocs²⁴².

The extent to which Savez can be understood as a vehicle for ethno-nationalist elites to perpetuate a state of liminality is in stark contrast to the accolades of the International Community forever praising a multi-ethnic national organisation in a still deeply divided country. In reality actions taken by Savez, individuals within Savez and the International Community have illustrated the core Gramscian themes of resistance, coercion and negotiation and provide an insight of post-conflict processes within Divič itself.

²⁴² The structure of Savez is detailed in Appendix II

A Multi-Ethnic Façade: Trickster Infiltration

The General Assembly of Savez is comprised of representatives from the Federation and the RS. Until 2011 it had a 3 person rotating Presidency, one from each ethnic group. The clubs are responsible for electing officials to the lowest rungs of the organisation, and each level then elects those to represent it at the level above. A *de facto* ethnic quota has been instigated by the structure of Savez as each ethnic group votes upon who will represent them on the more senior committees in Savez and an equal number of delegates are elected from each ethnic group. The reality has been a byzantine structure where officials are able to hold many posts simultaneously and are often able to vote for themselves in elections with change, particularly at the more senior levels of the organisation, difficult to realise (Centar za istrazivoacko novinarstvo, 2008a).

In reality Savez is a multi-ethnic façade. The International Community hopes the multi-ethnic nature of the association will operate as a fully functioning genuinely national organisation a model for other Bosnian institutions to follow. However, it contains a number of individuals who do not aspire to the same ideals whose positions of power are protected by the structure of the organisation. It remains in their personal interests to maintain a state with a weak rule of law which will be unable to effectively tackle their less than legal activities.

Unlike the majority of national football associations where key positions tend to be held by those with a proven history within the game and proven capability in administration and committees, key positions in Savez were seen to be held by those who had connections to political parties, often at the expense of those with footballing experience and public respect (Centar za istrazivoacko novinarstvo, 2008a). As a consequence of this reality, allegations of corruption are routinely made against Savez officials. The corruption is said to take a number of forms: Officials are understood to have consistently 'mishandled' Savez monies. This is not idle gossip; the Association's Secretary General, Munib Usanović and Secretary of Finance, Miodrag Kures, were convicted of tax evasion, misuse of Savez funds and abuse of office by the Bosnian State Court in 2009 and each sentenced to five years in prison (Reuters, Bosnia soccer officials jailed for 5 years over tax, 2009). Other officials are said to be engaged in match fixing in return for money. Some accuse Savez to be complicit in the selection of players for

the national team in order to increase their value to their club for potential transfers to Western European clubs. The Center for Investigative Reporting in Sarajevo, in conjunction with the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (a consortium of reporters from South Eastern European countries) published a number of reports in 2008 naming a number of Savez officials including Miroslav Corić and Hamdija Abdić (both members of the Executive Board) as having documented links with organised crime as well as being arrested and charged for acts linked to organised crime. (Centar za Istrazivacko Novinarstvo, 2008b). In Bosnia the beautiful game has some ugly protagonists, whose existence depends on their ability to maintain the current political and legal *status quo*.

Village Level Activities

Those who use the uncertain legal situation and unstable nature of the country are of all ethnicities and visible at every level. FK Mladost Divič has not been immune to such activities. Before the war its manager was Mustafa Obranović who returned after the war with his Serb wife to purchase a house across the river in Serbia. As FK Mladost reformed, Mr. Obranović was well-placed to take on responsibilities for the club as well as coaching the fledgling team as recognised by his status ‘chief of staff’ in the match report against Čelopek, the Divič’s team first home game since the conflict.

At some point during 2007, the club needed to access some money. The documentation required to withdraw KM 3,000²⁴³ was prepared by Mr. Obranović. The signature of Salih Kapadžić was forged and the club’s official stamp used without the club committee authority. According to his supporters in the club Mr. Obranović acknowledged the illegal nature of his actions but felt that circumstances justified them:

“We needed access to the money and Salih [Kapadžić, President of FK Mladost Assembly until 2009] was away in the United States so the club couldn’t get the signatures needed to release the money. He [Obranović] made a mistake, but all the money withdrawn came to the club and there wasn’t any other way. The club didn’t follow the correct procedure. I was very satisfied with the job that Mr. Obranović did for the club. Some people do not appreciate effort and work, but they manipulate the story without having all the information.” [Enver Ferhatbegović, President of Divič MZ interviewed June 2009].

²⁴³ Approximately EUR 1,500. The Bosnian currency is known as the convertible mark and is pegged to the Euro at a rate of 1 EUR = 1.955KM.

In January 2008 Mr. Ohranović was arrested by the Serbian border police on charges of smuggling weapons in Serbia on behalf of Serbian organised crime gangs with whom he had a family connection. He was subsequently jailed for 6 months. His supporters continued to defend him:

“It is no secret that his son-in-law had a problematic brother²⁴⁴. Mr. Ohranović met him here in Zvornik, and without his knowledge the brother put 10 guns into the boot of his car. Mr. Ohranović didn’t know this and took his car across the border to his house, like he did every day because he lived just over there. On this day the police looked in his car, found the guns and arrested him. But it is ridiculous. So much is wrong with it. Why did the police look in his car that day? They knew him, he passed them every day. Why would he have risked taking the guns? He could have just paddled across the river! That would have been no risk. The boats [from the water sports club] are on the river all the time. No one would have noticed him rowing across. Why would he risk taking guns across the border? He wouldn’t have tried it if he had known that the guns were there.” [Enver Ferhatbegović, President of Divič MZ interviewed June 2009].

The activities of Mr. Ohranović deepened divisions between members of the FK Mladost. Relationships between members of the club management committees were already tense²⁴⁵. The younger members openly backed Mr. Ohranović, playing down his organised crime connections and explaining away his illegal withdrawals of club funds. The older ones portrayed Ohranović’s actions and connections to organised crime as systemic and calculated. Those outside the club tended to consider the actions of Ohranović as being not football related and thus did not implicate the club. They did however comment that there were a number of Divič residents who were thought to be engaged with the criminal elements of the Zvornik region:

“There is so much of it about. There are perhaps four of five young people in the village who operate on the fringes of the criminal fraternity... The international community bought so much money with it when they came but so much ended

²⁴⁴ This individual was Smail Tarić. He was arrested in Belgrade in 2008 on charges of smuggling weapons. Days after his release on bail he was found beheaded in Belgrade. The murder was believed to be perpetrated by members of an organised crime gang who were concerned that Tarić had cooperated with the police. <http://dalje.com/en-world/serbian-mafia-beheads-man-for-revenge-3-arrested/175370>

²⁴⁵ The younger members were concerned that some of the older members did not have the commitment to the club necessary whilst the older members believed the younger ones didn’t have the experience or maturity required to take over the reins of the club. For more details of the tension between the committee members see Chapter 4.

up with the criminals – trafficking of drugs and weapons. Now the international community has stepped back. They just wash their hands of the situation.” [Salih Kapidžić, February 2009]

The organised crime element in the Zvornik region has remained strong since the conflict. As a border town, Zvornik is a staging post for all forms of trafficking. Those involved in crime are also involved in football, although that does not mean that their activities within football are criminal. It is a sign of how far from unusual it is to have tales such as the ones surrounding Mr. Ohranović, that the other clubs in the region were completely non-plussed by the events. None commented on the connection of FK Mladost to organised crime, even when denigrating them in every other fashion. It does however demonstrate the extent of the overlap between the criminal world and the football fraternity, such connections are present at all levels of Savez. The above serves to remind us that amongst the good men of Savez working hard to promote all that is good about football are ethno-nationalist Tricksters of all ethnicities and at all levels of the game.

Corrupting the Football Story

Corruption within Savez and the football milieu is perhaps best understood as simultaneously both a method of resistance against the International Community vision of a post-conflict Bosnia, and an instrument of coercion to force the general population to accept the permanent liminal state. The neo-liberal market economy-driven model of the International Community requires a strict adherence to the rule of law (both domestic and international) and considers corruption as distorting and derailing efforts to encourage development. The high level of corruption long acknowledged across the region is a legacy of the communist era within which a framework of patronage was developed and which was then exacerbated by the conflict and post-conflict economies. It continues to flourish in part because of the historic nature of the activity but in part because those charged with halting it are frequently the same people who benefit from its activities and the associated instability that it brings (Anti Corruption Resource Centre and Transparency International, 2009).

Although officials at matches in the Zvornik region are widely believed by almost everyone to be corrupt (the comment would be *'there were 14 men playing on that team that day'*²⁴⁶, (conversation with Milošević, March 2010) there was almost no sense that football corruption was ever linked to ethnicity. Players and trainers of all ethnicities freely acknowledged the presence of corruption in the regional football milieu:

"It happens all the time. It happens to us, but it happens to the other teams as well. If you want to be promoted then you have to beat every other team. We are the lowest division, we can't be relegated but if you want to get promoted you have to beat everyone." [Amel Pašić, player FK Mladost: June 2009].

"Those who have money, they can buy their way. If they have someone backing the club who wants the club to be successful then they will be successful." [Željko Nestorović, trainer of Čelopek, September 2009]

Allegations of corruption of officials at this level is closely connected to individual gain and such corruption is ethno-blind. Players and management of all clubs understand it to be present but none were prepared to openly accuse or name officials involved. All clubs understand that those pushing for promotion are the most likely to be involved in the attempted corruption of officials and accept that possibility as the *status quo*, reasoning that there is little that can be done to change the situation. Clubs are able to request for certain officials not to delegate at their matches, albeit such a request does not necessarily denote an allegation of corruption²⁴⁷. The wide scale acceptance of corruption and the lack of impetus to prevent its occurrence is indicative of the extent to which Bosnian society as a whole has been infiltrated by such activities and indicates how accepted corruption – however defined - is by the general population. The Trickster in Savez is then concerned with ensuring that the weak rule of law that permits such activities to flourish is maintained. Close links to the political elite provide an opportunity to build symbiotic relationship: Politicians gain influence and power in the cultural milieu, football's tricksters are able to continue their illegal activities. This relationship occurs at all levels as demonstrated by the following example:

²⁴⁶ i.e. the 11 players and the referee and two linesmen

²⁴⁷ FK Mladost requested that the only Bosniak official in the league, Mujo Tulić, did not officiate at their matches following some heated exchanges following his refusal to permit a player he believed to be suspended onto the pitch. There was however no allegation that Mr. Tulić had acted in a corrupt fashion.

“Look at FK Drina. They will win the league this season and get promoted. You will see. They have been backed by the Mayor. He wants them to do well, so they will do well. They will be promoted, wait and see.” [Mirko Milošević, January 2010]

At the time FK Drina were lying fifth in the top RS League. They did indeed go onto win the league and gain promotion for the first time to the Bosnian Premier League and construction work upon their stadium to ensure it satisfied requirements for the Bosnian Premier League began immediately. Their stay in the top flight proved short lived; FK Drina were relegated the following season²⁴⁸.

The effect of such corruption within football affects reconciliation processes in Divič. A senior Savez official questioned on this issue stated quite philosophically:

“How can something like football, that is so rotten at the heart, bring about something so pure? [reconciliation]” [Velid Imamović, Delegate to UEFA and FIFA and head of international department of N/FSBiH, December 2008]

In their role as Master of Ceremonies the International Community’s inability to implement a strong rule of law across the country has impacted the reintegrative part of transition. Such derailing of the liminal path has contributed to the permanent liminal state. The corruption and in around football, so easily seen, experienced and understood by the population at large serves to highlight the lack of rule of law in the country and the population know that what is true in the football milieu is replicated in the political one.

Whilst the overall impact of corruption and mismanagement of football led to reduced money in the game, mistrust of officials and allegations of criminal activity, at the village level this did not appear to be impacting upon the post-conflict reconciliation processes of communities. Although the issues surrounding corruption in football were impacting all teams in the region, the Bosniak teams were not being disproportionately impacted. The Tricksters were not using corruption in football at village level to drive ethnic division. Instead it is used to personal benefit and to highlight the lack of progress made by the International Community in moving beyond the liminal phase.

²⁴⁸ FK Drina were to win the 2013/2014 first RS League and were poised to re-join the Premier League in August 2014.

Corruption within Bosnian football and indeed the political environment of Bosnia is opaque and difficult to unpick. The clubs genuinely appeared to feel that this was not an activity that was linked to ethnicity and therefore did not disproportionately affect them. Furthermore the difficulties of researching corruption and organised crime within the Zvornik area, more detailed first hand research the topic demands was not undertaken. Interviews and meetings with clubs and officials were almost always undertaken in the evenings in a local bar or café, often owned by a relative of a club member. Such venues were open, and many of the meetings were overheard. Conversations about corruption and individuals involved were not appropriate and ultimately beyond the remit of this analysis.

Resisting Dominance

Resistance against hegemony is a complex task in Bosnia where there is no accepted hegemonic state. There are examples however of individuals taking very public stances within the football milieu against the over-riding acceptance of corruption. Such men, in powerful positions within Savez, may be seen as fulfilling the role of Gramsci's 'intellectuals'. For Gramsci intellectuals were traditionally seen to be protecting the economic interests of the ruling hegemonic class, by defending the activities of this class through the influence of class consciousness and rendering alternative attitudes unthinkable for the general population. Traditional Marxist approaches marry intellectuals firmly to the political and economic economy and consider position as deriving from past and present class formations. Gramsci expands argument to encompass 'organic' individuals whose influence stems from their ability to direct ideas and aspirations of the class to which they belong, irrespective of their profession. (Gramsci, 1971). This distinction from the traditional intelligentsia permits the working classes to develop their own intellectuals who are then capable of challenging bourgeois assumptions, but stresses that the ruling classes may also absorb intellectuals, adapting their hegemonic position to encompass their ideals and thus use them to bolster their position.

Without the acceptance of a hegemony, activities of intellectuals are influential not in terms of supporting or buttressing an existing hegemonic ideal, but in shaping future hegemonic possibilities. Gramsci asserts that "*all men are potentially intellectuals ... but*

not all are intellectuals by social function" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 3) which echoes the sense that although all power as evidenced by the need of the hegemonic class to negotiate, not all are in a position to use that power meaningfully (Morgan, 1997). However it does raise the possibility that those in Savez, who are in a position to influence the attitude of the general populations with regards to defining relations between different ethnic communities, may be considered exemplifying organic intellectuals.

As seen in the previous chapter, many of those in Savez may also be understood as Tricksters using their influence to drive ethnic division, reinforcing an unstable state in order to retain their personal positions of privilege. There are however also those in Savez who use their position to build relationships between communities and uphold the rule of law. These influencers are not the liminal Master of Ceremonies – that role is for the International Community – but their work reinforces some of the International Community aims. Bosnian footballing legend Meho Kodro was one such man.

A Very Public Resistance

In January 2008 Savez appointed the former Yugoslav and Bosnian international player, Meho Kodro, to manage the national team. Kodro had been a member of the young Yugoslavian team of the early 1990s that was widely tipped for greatness but for the conflicts and collapse of the Yugoslav state. He had begun his career in 1985 with the Mostar team, FK Velež, but with the outbreak of the conflict in 1992 migrated to Spain where he enjoyed an illustrious career with the Real Sociedad and Barcelona clubs.

Earning his coaching qualifications and experience in Spain, Kodro only agreed to take on the Bosnian job if Savez would guarantee his complete independence in terms of team selection, training tactics and fixture arrangements. As such he was obviously furious to learn that Savez had arranged a friendly without his approval for the Bosnian national team in Iran in May 2008, in an already crowded national fixture list. An accidental revelation from the Iranian team revealed that they were paying US\$180,000 more for the match than the monies had been disclosed by Savez (Wilson, 2008). Kodro refused to go to Iran and was fired by Savez on May 16th (UEFA, 2008). The Bosnian media who had fully endorsed the appointment of Kodro just five months earlier, began to call for a fan boycott of the next official Bosnian match, a friendly against Azerbaijan

in Zenica on 1st June 2008. The players joined the boycott with 19 players including Emir Spahić and Zvezdan Misimović refusing to play. A charity fixture in Sarajevo was hastily arranged to clash directly with Azerbaijan fixture. The Bosnian media was appalled and began to promote a previously arranged charity fixture taking place at FK Sarajevo's Koševo stadium at the same time, an action highlighted by the state television decision to broadcast the charity match but not the official national team fixture (Wilson, 2008). 15,000-20,000 supporters converged on the Koševo stadium in Sarajevo to watch many of the 19 players who had made themselves unavailable for selection for the national team, many bearing banners calling upon the Savez committee to stand down whilst a tiny crowd of an estimated 150 supporters turned up in Zenica to watch Bosnia achieve an unexpected victory. (Wilson, 2008). The Bosnian national team support group, BH Fanaticos, organised a march attended by many other club supporters which marched in front of Savez's offices. The more extreme amongst began to throw stones and flares at the offices in a moment said to be *"the first time on a Bosnian scene that groups from different teams made [a] contract of "non-attacking each other" in the same battle"* (Ultras-Tifo, 2008). Football then bought agency to a previously considered apathy and a sense of unity in protagonists, but only because a greater enemy was available to harness the anger felt at the removal of the potential of progress. How ironic that it was the political institution of football that fulfilled the role of greater enemy.

In 2008 these demonstrations were termed: *"the most serious opposition protest movement in Sarajevo"* (Ozkan, 2008, p. online). The ability of football to draw such numbers of protestors against a state organisation was unprecedented in Bosnia. This protest marked a very real resistance to the state of permanent liminality as displayed by the corrupt nature of the state and its organisations. The brazen nature of corruption within Bosnian organisations is apparent as the fiasco did not result in any Savez officials feeling the need to resign. Instead they hired the flamboyant Miroslav (Čiro) Blažević²⁴⁹ whose rhetoric of success ignited the media and Bosnian national team supporters, and broke the impetus behind the demonstrations against Savez corruption.

²⁴⁹ Blažević, a Bosnian Croat, was and remains a well-known figure throughout Bosnia, probably best known for coaching the Croatian national team to an impressive third place success in the 1998 FIFA World Cup

“Rat u Savezu” – War on Savez!

The 2008 demonstrations against Savez were just one of a number of efforts, BH Fanaticos made to attract the attention of FIFA and UEFA to the distrust Bosnian fans had of their football officials. The national teams away fixtures were targeted by the Fanaticos, to the extent that Bosnia’s qualifying fixtures against Norway²⁵⁰ and Belgium²⁵¹ were both halted as the Fanaticos use of pyrotechnics in the stadiums temporarily created unplayable conditions. With the game stopped the Fanaticos unfurled banners accusing Savez of being Mafia and demanding their resignation. Some banners were even blunter, one read - in English - ‘FIFA - Save Football in Bosnia’. As Davor Ademović, a former BH Fanaticos leader reiterated following the Belgium game in 2008: *“The idea was to capture as much attention as possible in Europe about the association’s work.”* (Centar za istraživačko novinarstvo, 2008c).

The Fanaticos were not just concerned with attracting the attention of FIFA and UEFA: To engage the support of local Bosnians in their orchestrated campaign dubbed ‘*Rat u Savezu*’ (War on Savez). They regularly appeared upon Bosnian TV shows and with a well-developed network selling merchandise across the country in addition to releasing a track by Frenkie, a well-known Bosnian rap artist.²⁵² Banners calling for the resignation of members of Savez were held up at any Bosnian national game and games were dominated by chants of ‘*Savez Napolje*’ (Savez Out). YouTube videos protesting against the actions of Savez and ‘Wanted’ posters with Savez Officials shown behind prison bars were published and posted in public arenas. Such imagery was not lost on a nation where the International Community was still actively searching for war criminals.

The Fanaticos group became recognised as one of the largest and most active civil society groups in Bosnia. However, Gramsci’s organic intellectuals are required to be able to transfer their in-depth knowledge of their profession to achieve political capital, whether anything fitting the category of ‘political capital’ was gained from this occasion is questionable. Whilst their campaign is obviously directed at Savez such is the overlap between the footballing and political milieu there was always the inference that they

²⁵⁰ Played in Oslo, Norway: 24th March 2007

²⁵¹ Played at Genk, Belgium: 28th March 2009

²⁵² The video of which is available on youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qO_b7PgK9Ts

were - subtlety - demonstrating against corruption in the political milieu. The Fanaticos are a manifestation of Gramsci's belief that organic intellectuals despite their ostensible purpose may begin to exude political capital.

However, the Gramscian model hits a problem: the Fanaticos cannot count upon universal united Bosnian (and Bosniak) support. The diasporic nature of the organisation produces a wariness in many local Bosnians. The diaspora have grown up in the West and are schooled in the Western ideologies that have yet to fully take root in the Bosnian population. However, unlike many domestic Bosnians who have had to find a way to live as neighbours with different ethnic groups, the diaspora hold an identity still firmly rooted in conflict. Whilst applauding their ambitions local Bosnians are not always fully supportive of their actions. Additionally local Bosnian NGOs lament that it is football that has motivated people to protest whilst apathetic towards issues of human rights and civil society that are arguably more fundamental to a better life in the post-conflict nation.

Unstoppable Momentum: Resistance and Coercion Combine

The equipoise to resistance is coercion as hegemonic powers use force to implement their vision. As Gramsci argues coercion is used by the dominant group to enforce discipline on those who do not consent. Such coercion is achieved through the use of the ideological and institutional apparatus of political society, namely the police, armed forces, courts and prisons alongside the state apparatus dealing with issues such as taxation, trade and industry (Gramsci, 1971). Any authority that supra-national bodies might have or hold over such national institutions was not considered in Gramsci's writings but there are some clear parallels. A resistance movement to a Bosnian institution may be reinforced by the institutions of the International Community using a form of coercion to bring about desired change.

In 2011, following the widespread protests about Savez corruption, FIFA and UEFA acted to force change in the national football association. As indicated previously, Savez's tripartite presidency system echoed the structure of the political milieu but the procedure was against FIFA and UEFA regulations which stipulate that the national association presidency position must be a single position. Initially aware of the ethnic sensitivities

following the conflict both organisations had tolerated the Savez structure. By 2010 the increasing likelihood that Bosnia would qualify for the finals of a major football tournament thereby establishing itself as a major footballing nation with an illegal FA structure combined with concerns that the tri-partite structure permitted groups to misuse their powers by blocking or delaying 'important decisions' including those which should have dealt with financial risks, financial mismanagement and tax arrears led to both organisations warning Bosnia that its rotating presidency system was against their regulations (FIFA, 2011a).

Decreeing that N/FSBiH had to alter its management structure the organisation was warned on several occasions what the implications of ignoring the FIFA and UEFA's demands would be; as early as July 2010 UEFA confirmed a failure to replace the three man presidency system with a single role would lead to their expulsion (EurActiv, 2010). An October 2010 meeting of both organisations executive committees formally set Savez a deadline of 31st March 2011 by which such modifications had to have been completed. In March 2011 both organisations reiterated that exclusion from European and World football was the likely outcome of a failure to confirm the statue change (ESPN Soccer, 2011).

At the N/FSBiH Extraordinary General Assembly of March 29th 2011 the Serb delegates vetoed the statutory amendments required to comply with FIFA and UEFA regulations. Consequently FIFA and UEFA both expelled N/FSBiH as of 1st April 2011 (FIFA, 2011). The Bosnian national team were banned from participating in any international competition, and no N/FSBiH official or representative was permitted to participate in any international match or event. Bosnia's grants from World and European football bodies were also suspended.

That two important cultural supra-national institutions can ban a country from a paradise that brought a global profile was the clearest example of International Community coercion to force Bosnian organisations to conform to their vision for the country. It may also be understood as a Master of Ceremonies role – the International Community actions showing the route the country must take to complete the liminal phase and be reintegrated back into the wider geo-political society. It also highlights the non-negotiable stance often taken by international organisations towards resolving

Bosnian problems. When the actions are set into the political, social and sporting context of the moment it is possible to appreciate the full Gramscian hegemonic implications.

Politics? Football Is Much More Important Than That!

By the end of 2010, the Bosnian political environs were as tense as they had been since the end of the conflict in 1995. At the heart of the tensions lay a need to implement constitutional reforms deemed necessary because of the effective political stalemate between the different ethnic groups and required before the mandate of the International Community offices in Bosnia (most obviously OHR), could be reduced leading to their eventual withdrawal. Pressure on constitutional reform increased following a 2009 decision by the European Court of Human Rights known as the *Sejdić-Finci*²⁵³ ruling decreed that Bosnia's constitution must be changed because it was discriminatory against those who were not a 'constituent people' (Council of Europe, 2009)²⁵⁴ These reforms are a classic example of the Master of Ceremonies guiding role being undertaken by the International Community.

By the time of the general elections of October 2010, talks about reform had led to an entrenchment of ethnic positions. Here the Tricksters are in evidence, working to prevent Bosnia from leaving the liminal period. The Bosnian Serb politicians were openly talking of cessation from Bosnia and their election campaigns were – as ever - divisive and overtly nationalistic. The Bosnian Croats had created a separate National Croat Assembly and had begun to push for the creation of a third, Croat majority Entity. The Bosniaks meanwhile continued to advocate for state centralisation at the expense of Serb and Croat interests. The election campaigns were nationalist, vitriolic and divisive. The Serb politicians promised their electorate a referendum on the legality of the laws imposed by OHR, a blatant challenge to the International Community's authority in Bosnia (ICG, 2011a).

²⁵³ Dervo Sejdić, a Roma activist, and the Jewish Jakob Finci argued to the Court that the Bosnian Constitution was discriminatory because it effectively barred them from certain electoral posts which were earmarked for people only of Bosniak, Bosnian Serb or Bosnian Croat ethnicity.

²⁵⁴ Constituent peoples are legally understood to be Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats or Bosnian Serbs. Any other groups, including Jews, Roma and anyone refusing to declare affiliation with an ethnic group are defined as 'others' and cannot stand for election for Presidency and for the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly.

It was within this atmosphere that FIFA and UEFA decided to implement constitutional change within Savez. The strength of the Bosnian national team was a clear factor in the decision of the footballing authorities to act against Savez. The qualifications for UEFA's 2012 Euro tournament were well underway and Bosnia were well positioned. The likelihood was that Bosnia would shortly qualify for a major tournament. For FIFA and UEFA that would mean having a country established and competent enough to compete in a finals of their competitions but whose organisational structure was in breach of their own rules and regulations. Perhaps more pertinently the Bosnian officials within Savez itself - many already with a dubious reputation - also knew qualification for a major international football tournament was imminent. Such qualification would lead to lucrative sponsorship deals and 'windfalls' from FIFA or UEFA, in addition to the increased exposure (and value) of Bosnian players (BH Dragons, 2013a). As many Bosnians saw it at the time, the corrupt officials and "*borderline-criminals*" (Bosnia World Cup Blog, 2008) simply could not pass up an opportunity to feather their own nest even it meant implementing changes seemingly detrimental to ethno-nationalist interests. The Trickster's personal interest trumps all others.

Following the demonstrations by the BH Fanaticos, FIFA and UEFA were also broadly confident of the support of the Bosnian fans. However, not all Bosnians were supportive of FIFA and UEFA's actions. With Bosnian Serbs supporting Serbia and Bosnian Croats supporting Croatia (both of whom were having good UEFA Euro 2012 qualifying campaigns) the expulsion of Bosnia threatened to penalise those who supported the national Bosnian team – primarily Bosniaks. A particular resentment of Bosnian national team supporters was the fact that it was the Bosnian Serbs who vetoed the crucial vote which led to the expulsion of the Bosnian team, thereby penalising Bosniaks and those who supported the national team whilst the Bosnian Serbs could continue to support Serbia. The expulsion bought wider discussion and disdain. Bloggers and observers questioned whether FIFA and UEFA were correct to wade into the political morass of post-conflict Balkan politics, suggesting they were depriving the nation of an opportunity to celebrate something positive together.

In the event the expulsion proved to be short-lived: Within two weeks FIFA had created a Normalisation Committee staffed by former players²⁵⁵ and headed up by Bosnian football legend Ivica Osim²⁵⁶. In December 2012 N/FSBiH elected the well-respected Bosniak Elvedin Begić²⁵⁷ as its single president for four years and the Bosnian team continued their Euro 2012 qualifying campaign without interruption. As the footballing commentator Jonathon Wilson puts it:

“While it is debatable whether UEFA and FIFA should be rejecting an administrative structure deemed good enough for the Bosnian parliament, the decision to suspend Bosnia for two months at a time when there were no international fixtures and their club sides were not involved in continental competition can be seen as a masterstroke – applying pressure in such a way as to make the threat serious while doing no damage.” (Wilson, 2011)

The Master of Ceremonies actions of the footballing supra-national bodies coercing the famously obstreperous Bosnian *apparatchik* to amend an institutional structure has not been matched by those hoping to achieve similar accomplishment within the political sphere. Just one month after FIFA and UEFA suspended Bosnia, the respected International Crisis Group commented upon the political atmosphere in Bosnia:

“Bosnia faces its worst crisis since the war. State institutions are under attack by all sides; violence is probably not imminent but is a near prospect if this continues. Seven months after elections there is no state government and little prospect for one soon... Compromises are needed so every Bosnian side can claim enough victory to justify retreat from the brink. The international community needs to step back from over-involvement in local politics to calibrate goals to a realistic appraisal of diminished powers and best guarantee stability.” (ICG, 2011a, p. 1)

The parallels then between football and the general political milieu are fascinating but clearly to be approached with caution. On the one hand Bosnia is a member of FIFA and UEFA and both organisations hold an ability to expel them, which inflicts pain upon both

²⁵⁵ Committee members included Darko Ljubojević (Serb), Dragan Kulina (Serb), Elvedin Begić (Bosniak), among others. The committee observers were Bosnian footballing legends Dušan Bajević (Serb), Faruk Hadžibegić (Bosniak) and Sergej Barbarez (half-Serb, quarter-Croat, quarter-Bosniak).

²⁵⁶ Starting out with the Sarajevo club FK Željezničar, Osim went onto represent Yugoslavia before managing the Yugoslav national team to their quarter final position in the 1990 World Cup. Osim is a Croat by ethnicity but calls himself Bosnian.

²⁵⁷ Begić had a successful track record in transport and communications. He successfully transferred the managerial experience of running the Butmir International Airport in Sarajevo since 1983 to football helping Sarajevo clubs before becoming the Chairman of the Football Association of Sarajevo Canton.

the Bosnian population as well as the individuals within Savez. It is thus in everyone's interests for Bosnia to remain a member of the footballing institutions, particularly with the national team performing well. As organisations FIFA and UEFA themselves were coming under increased levels of pressure regarding issues of corruption (vote rigging and ticket scandals within FIFA were highlighted by the respected sports journalist Andrew Jennings in 2006 (Jennings, 2006), and pressure by journalists and anti-corruption NGOs following the decision to hold the 2022 World Cup in Qatar which led to FIFA to announce anti-corruption reforms (which remain ongoing). Engaging in a high profile action which could be understood as guidance towards a post-liminal period which resulted in no lasting damage was indeed, a masterstroke.

It would be impossible to replicate such an action within the political milieu. Whilst a member of the United Nations suspension or expulsion from that organisation requires persistent violation of its principles and on a recommendation from its security council (Articles 5 & 6 of the United Nations Charter). The organisation of one country's state institutions (particularly one that was developed in conjunction with the UN as happened with the Dayton Accords) would not merit such action. On an equivalent regional basis, Bosnia is not yet a member of the EU. Membership has strict criteria and Bosnia aspires to obtain candidate status in 2014. The EU has specified in the past that the organisation charged with implementing and overseeing the Dayton Peace Accords, OHR (Office of the High Representative) must be closed before Bosnia can be considered a credible candidate. In 2012 the EU altered its stance, issuing a road map for EU candidate status which did not require the closure of OHR but confirmed Bosnia was required to have made the constitutional changes required by the EU Court of Human Rights following the Sejdić-Finci ruling. Political stalling by ethno-nationalist politicians however meant that by 2014 little progress has been made in this area. The Tricksters have been able to derail the International Community actions.

It appears therefore that the 'carrot' of the EU to encourage Bosnian politicians, particularly the nationalists who hold the most power, is not sufficient to coerce them into making the changes required, unlike the 'stick' of suspending Bosnia from UEFA, with all the benefits (both real and potential) that such suspension would retract. Furthermore, EU requirements regarding the 'fight against organised crime', trafficking

and corruption serve as a positive deterrent for those politicians known to have links with such activities. It has not escaped the notice of many Bosnians that many of those charged with preparing the country for entry to the EU are those likely to suffer a personal loss if such an action were to occur. The stalling of politicians to enact a number of key requirements is seen to serve none but themselves. For the Tricksters entry to the EU is not a carrot and does not therefore serve as a negotiating tool.

The Thinking Football Administrator?

As a Master of Ceremonies the International Community provides a possible route through liminality and guidance upon how to achieve transition but it is not present in all aspects of the country. There remains thus an opportunity to see how the Bosnian institutions and those individuals of which the institutions are derived shape the cultural and social hegemony in Bosnian society. It is here that it is possible to witness the extent to which the International Community guidance and route map have been adopted by the Bosnian population as a whole.

The football life of the village of Divič, playing at the lowers level of formally organised football in the RS, is entirely governed by FSRS. The FSRS municipal branch of Zvornik, known as OFS Zvornik²⁵⁸, is responsible for organising the league in which they play as well as liaising with the municipality authorities and the police on behalf of the clubs. Every match is attended by a delegate, referee and two further assistants selected by OFS Zvornik and paid for by the clubs. The match officials submit match reports to OFS Zvornik who are then responsible for taking further action on the clubs or individuals bringing the game into disrepute. More serious incidents or complaints are dealt with by the more senior levels of FSRS - the regional FA in Bijeljina (some 32 miles north of Zvornik, about a 50 minute drive) or at the most senior level of FSRS at their headquarters in the RS capital of Banja Luka (approximately 125 miles distant and a 4 hour journey). N/FSBiH holds responsibilities for the national team and Premier League only; any issues surrounding a Bosniak team within the RS would be dealt with internally by FSRS and without influence from the overall organisation.

²⁵⁸ *Opština Fubalski Savez Zvornik* – or district football association Zvornik.

The majority of matches played by clubs at Divič 's level require a simple report to the Zvornik branch written by the head delegate, which provides details of the match; names and numbers of players, details of goals scored, cards issued and details of any on field incident²⁵⁹. From there all types of football statistics are provided: tables, tables for home and away fixtures, leading scorers, red and yellow cards. Statistics of officials are also recorded and reported. Any irregularities, such as the playing of an unregistered player, is also recorded and dutifully reported and if procedures demand it disciplinary action follows.

In the event of a player being shown a red card or of an incident (either on or off the pitch) which affected the game, an official report by the delegate, main referee and supported by the two assistant referees is submitted to OFS Zvornik. Depending upon the severity of the incident OFS Zvornik will either ask for more information (submitted in the form of an official letter to which players and clubs must formally respond) or fine the club and/or player accordingly. If the incident was thought to create a public disturbance or involved the police in any way OFS Zvornik request a further report from the police, who are expected to conduct their own enquiries. It is unusual for a match to pass without incident and delegates' reports are frequently submitted to OFS Zvornik. They deal with everything ranging from players swearing at the referee, inaccurate marking of the pitch, insufficient security provisions, incomplete or inaccurate registration of players, players attempting to play whilst suspended and non-payment of delegates by the clubs. In an ex-communist society this is not unusual. There was a society that for 50 years saw everything carefully documented and strict adherence to the letter of the law (both football and administrative).

An April 2008 match between Divič and Trnovica (as described in Chapter 5) abandoned in the 85th minute due to trouble on the pitch between both players and spectators was considered by all involved in the games governance to be a 'serious incident'. The President of OFS Zvornik was not present at the game, but following submission of the delegate and referees reports formally requested further statements from both clubs and the police. Such statements were duly received from the clubs and also from the key players which were taken into account when the committee of OFS Zvornik met to

²⁵⁹ A copy of a typical match report is included as Appendix V.

consider the penalties to be paid by the clubs and the players. The police also provided a report written by the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior in Bijeljina. Given the severity of the incident and the nationalistic elements involved, the reports submitted to OFS Zvornik were considered by the more senior levels of FSRS.

OFS Zvornik retains files of papers and reports of every aspect of the footballing environs in its region. There is one notable exception. In the file of the match between Divič and Čelopek - the closest the village has come to real violence against their Serb neighbours since the war - there exists just one piece of paper. A neat handwritten report records the names and registration numbers of every player, officials and the times at which the nine yellow and five red cards were given. There is no mention of the abandonment of the game in the 85th minute. There were no further requests for statements from excluded players. The clubs were not asked to submit statements regarding their role in the fixture. OFS Zvornik did not request a formal report from the police. There is nothing more than the single sheet match record, which represented the minimal amount of documentation legally required for any official football match. Given the plethora of paper for any minor infringement in any other match, the single sheet for this fixture which saw 5 red cards, the home fans stoning the coaches of away supporters, strongly nationalistic chanting by the visiting supporters with direct reference to the incarceration and killing of Divič residents during the conflict is more than striking.

The delegate for the match was Mirko Milošević, also the President of OFS Zvornik. When asked where the rest of the documentation was his response, whilst open and honest, was a little ingenious:

"I was the delegate. I was there and I knew what happened. There was no point making a report as I would just be reporting to myself. What's the point of that?"
[Mirko Milošević, March 2010]

Pushed further and when confronted by the fact that police reports and statements of excluded players are present in every other game the response was a combination of contextual circumstance and avoidance:

"Look, it was a bad time. The match was terrible. It was the closest we have come to having a really bad incident. It could have gone either way. But we have dealt with it. I didn't think we needed to create further problems by making more

reports and paper work. We didn't need that. Let us deal with it. We know how best to do it. We don't need to involve anyone else, people from outside. That wouldn't help. We are the best ones to work it out and that is what we did." [Mirko Milošević, March 2010]

He may well be right in considering himself as the best man to deal with the matter. Milošević is a Savez insider. His presidency of OFS Zvornik is his least prestigious role: He is also Vice President of the Regional Football Federation in Bijeljina, a member of the Executive Board of FSRS and a Vice President of the Assembly of N/FSBiH. He is also a friend of Divič's club FK Mladost and strongly supported their reformation and application to join the FSRS leagues. Bosniaks in Divič think highly of him. When beginning the research in 2008 his name was often mentioned as a reliable source of the situation. The trainer of FK Mladost in 2008 stated:

"You must contact Mr. Milošević. He is the President of OFS Zvornik and he always helps us. He supports Bosnia even though he is Serb. He does what he can for us. He always tries to help. He is a good man." [Sehad Pašić, Mladost Trainer, November 2008]

The President of FK Mladost had similar sentiments, stressing Milošević's connections and resourcefulness and willingness to assist the Bosniak footballers at the club:

"Mr. Milošević gets us tickets to see the Bosnian games. He always finds some for us and makes sure that we get some and that means that some of us can go to the games. He got us tickets for the Portugal game [World Cup Qualifying Playoff in November 2009]. No one could get tickets for that game. Everyone wanted to go. He knew we wanted to go and got us some tickets." [Kenan Kapadžić, Captain and President of Mladost Divič, March 2010]

So, we can ask why did this much respected individual need to defy the procedures of the governing body in the aforementioned incident. Milošević's decision not to provide written reports to more senior levels of Savez despite the serious violence was an act of individual resistance against the Tricksters who Milošević knew would use the fixture and its associated violence to deepen divisions.

Milošević abstained from saying more about his decision not to escalate the details of the clearly ethnically driven violence at the game, but when the conversation was not

directly about the incident his words illuminated his thoughts on some of the staff in FSRS and Savez:

“They [the SNSD²⁶⁰, an RS nationalist political party of Milorad Dodik²⁶¹] are always trying to put their people into our elections. These are not just members of the party, but politicians. We got organised though, made sure that their candidates were beaten. We don’t want them, what do they know about football? They don’t love the game like we do.” [Mirko Milosevic, March 2010].

Milošević knew that if the politicians were elected to work within Savez he would have to work with them, but he was away of their efforts which made him genuinely confident that his knowledge of his regional section of Savez would ensure that the politicians would be outmanoeuvred:

“We have problems with the politicians in Savez. There is corruption everywhere. It is improving – look at the number of away games teams win, no teams ever used to win an away game – but it is still there” [December 2008].

At the time he was candid about the magnitude of the issues facing Bosnian football, the most pertinent of which is the endemic corruption believed by most Bosnians to be present throughout Savez. Certainly Tricksters are functioning within Savez, but also present are those who reinforce the International Community vision for transition to a post-liminal state. Institutions, like the countries they represent, present a myriad of perspectives.

Individual initiatives are clearly key to influencing the football milieu as players of different ethnicities begin to meet each other on the pitches. Did Savez provide any guidelines for negotiating possible problems arising from difficult meetings on the pitch?

“No, there aren’t any specific policies or guidelines to help with likely problems. We are left to deal with the situation as we see best.” [Mirko Milošević; September 2009]

²⁶⁰ *Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata* or Alliance of Social Democrats.

²⁶¹ Milorad Dodik, as President of the RS, has made a number of nationalistic comments and has a clear agenda for the dissolution of the Bosnian State. The High Representative, Valentin Inzko, commented in a report to the UN Security Council that Dodik is “the most frequent, although certainly not the sole proponent of (Bosnian) state dissolution” (Reuters 2012). He has also been allegedly involved in a number of bribery and corruption cases, including the Hypo Alpe Adris Banka affair (BIRN, 2012)

As clubs and players of different ethnicities being to compete upon the football pitch it is evident that the culture in which such interactions will occur is dependent upon the action of leading officials in the local football milieu. Such a situation is precarious and will vary widely across the country. Different clubs, different experiences, different individuals will all lead to a different construction of hegemony as some regions embrace the liminal nature of football wherein the overall process will lead to an altered state and others experience football to be liminoid, an activity best understood as a moment away from the daily life – which itself remains unchanged by football.

Inherited Intelligence

Milošević is a reminder that institutions are constructed of people, with all the vagaries of individual values and idiosyncrasies that people bring to a seemingly rule governed, formal and legal entity. Institutions, while a tool of the hegemoniser, are themselves negotiated at all levels. Hegemonisers use of institutions to impose a set of values upon a general population remains a process of negotiation, yet institutions such as Savez do not speak with one voice but rather as a collection of agents. The culture of the institution of Savez continues to be negotiated internally both through the resistance and cooperation of men like Milošević.

Although Milošević could never be considered to be an intellectual in the traditional sense, his role as an organic intellectual, one which is more practically orientated in which the individual lives and knows intimately the sphere in which he/she is operating. It is such 'organic intellectuals' who have the ability to *'tease out... progressive elements contained within that classes common sense.'* (Jones, 2006, p. 8). In other words those with power within certain cultural activities are in a position to modify or establish the wider population's perceptions and beliefs that shape their actions and acceptance of a hegemonic ideal.

Crucially Gramsci held that intellectuals would have a need to convert their specialist knowledge into political capital. At first sight Milošević is not a politically orientated man, he has little time for the formal politics of the Bosnian politicians nor the international community, but Savez, by dint of the implementation of politicians into its

structure and the overt use of the organisation for political objectives, may be seen as an *implicitly* political entity. Milošević's actions and inactions become a political assertion whether or not he intends them to be. Whilst Gramscian hegemonic theory divides society into two levels - civil society and political society - in post-conflict Bosnia such a division is not so clear-cut, with the political touching all aspects of civil reality. The individuals considered being worth of being listened to also contain those who are those engaged in the wider activities of cultural influence, beyond that envisaged by Gramsci.

The Counter Attack

Tricksters who prefer an atmosphere of instability, division and mistrust are also represented within Savez. FK Trnovica is a club north of Divič situated in the village of the same name. In addition to the senior team, the club runs two youth teams for boys aged between 11 – 14 years and 14-17 years. In 2009 the manager of the club was a Serb and clearly held the Serb-ness of the club to be of utmost importance: *"We are 100% Serb. Actually, no we are 101% Serb"* and later, confirming again the importance of the information *"they [the youth teams] are also 101% Serb. No one else plays for us. We are all Serb"*. In common with many of the Serbs in the region he supported Red Star Belgrade and regularly travelled to Belgrade to support them. He also supported the *Delije*²⁶² who regularly displayed banners adorned with the face of war time Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic who was facing the War Crimes tribunal in The Hague on charges of genocide and war crimes. His defence of such celebration was to accuse: *"Wouldn't you put a banner of your war heroes up?"*

Imparting the culture of Serbdom to his charges was important to him. To participate in this club, members would have to participate in Serb culture. There were no Bosniak players in the team, nor were any likely to come, despite some Bosniak returns to the locale. *"Some used to play here before the war but now I don't know if they want to play. They go somewhere else. Nobody would be ignored if they wanted to play"*. Bosniaks did

²⁶² Red Star's Supporters Group previously run by the War Criminal Arkan and from whose ranks Arkan's paramilitaries were recruited. For more information see Chapter xx

not want to play at Trnovica, preferring not to play at all or to travel to a Bosniak team in the Bijeljina municipality.

Unlike most involved in the football setting he did not believe that football would be able to bring about reconciliation:

“Reconciliation? No football doesn’t help. Well I guess you could say as long as they are playing then they are reconciled but if it needs 20 policemen to be at a game then it is not reconciled is it? If you are reconciled you don’t need police at your game.” Slađan Pantić: [Manager of FK Trnovica, Trnovica; August 2009]

Such a need for division is driven by both ethno-nationalists who need to maintain ethnic separation and by those for whom instability is integral in consolidating their personal power, influence and riches. Such people may be represented in the football clubs that Savez governs. Crucially, however, it is the club representatives who vote officials into their positions at the lowest level of the organisation, and it is from these ranks that the upper echelons of Savez are recruited. It is also the clubs that are the most connected with the Bosnian population and well-positioned individuals within those clubs may be considered as the ‘organic intellectuals’ imparting a vision of intolerance and prejudice. The oppositional views here demonstrate how the process for establishment of Gramscian hegemony through the domination of the cultural sphere must be understood as a War of Position. This shapes how people view their world and defines how they are able to manoeuvre within it to bring about change. Not all see the world in the same way.

Pro Footballers: The Unlikely Intellectuals?

Those with the capacity to convert their specialist football knowledge into political capital, are not confined to Savez officials. Celebrities providing a spectacle have the ability to promote a version of ‘common sense’ that supports a hegemonic vision and as such may be viewed as intellectuals in the Gramscian sense. The Bosnian national team’s recent successes and the success of their players in the most respected European leagues have bestowed a number of players with celebrity status. In June 2009, Samir

Muratović²⁶³, a Bosnian national team who grew up in the Bosniak village of Snagovo²⁶⁴ just to the west of Divič, wanted to offer support to returnees in the area (UNHCR Refugees Global Press Review, 2009). To this end he instigated a match between Tuzla based FK Drina 93²⁶⁵ and FK Mladost in which five further Bosnian national team members participated: Edin Džeko, Miralem Pjanić, Sejad Salihović, Said Hesjinović and Elvir Rahimić. Primarily intended to raise the profile of returnee villages (particularly to Bosniaks living in the Federation) and to provide returnee villages with a positive event that would bring pleasure to their inhabitants, the match was not intended to raise money for Divič.

On June 2nd 2009 the two teams met on the pitch in Divič. In driving rain an estimated 2,000 people²⁶⁶ crowded the touchlines to see the local village team challenge the Bosnian national team players and losing the game by just one goal, 5-6²⁶⁷. The majority of the celebrity players had close personal connections to the region. Muratović, Salihović and Hesjinović are all originate from the Zvornik region and despite being forced from the area by the conflict still had family connections in the area. Pjanić is from Kalesija (a Bosniak town halfway between Tuzla and Zvornik and the site of fierce fighting in May 1992) whose father was a footballer for FK Drina before the conflict (Wilson, 2009). Such personal connections mean that they were fully aware of the hardships facing minority returnees.

FK Mladost players were ecstatic about the chance to play against the likes of Džeko. There was an awareness of the significance of hosting such a match:

“We couldn’t believe it. It wasn’t a serious game, it wasn’t about winning and losing, but about getting together. Everyone got a chance to play. I think 22 people played for us! Quite a lot of the older players played too – they haven’t played in years. I don’t think it will happen again, but we know it was a great experience for us.” [Mirsad Birkić, player for FK Mladost, July 2009]

²⁶³ Muratović was a midfield player who played for FK Željezničar in Sarajevo and was capped 23 times by Bosnia between 1999 and 2010.

²⁶⁴ A small hillside village to the west of Divič, known as the site of mass graves for hundreds of Bosniak war victims.

²⁶⁵ Drina 93 were a team with a history steeped in the conflict. Based in Živinice, just south of Tuzla, the team was established by footballers forced to leave the Zvornik region in 1992/3. The team participated in the N/FSBiH Bosniak league during the conflict, and is still active today, although many of the players are approaching the end of their careers.

²⁶⁶ An estimate from Enver Ferhatbegović, President of Divič MZ and key organiser of the event.

²⁶⁷ A video on YouTube illustrates the event: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8AcQ00Ct8o>

The match was exciting, for those participating and those watching; a positive, joyous event in an otherwise complex and difficult daily life. It provided the village with more than an afternoon's entertainment. Firstly and most obviously, it highlighted the presence of minority returnees, both to the neighbouring Bosnian Serbs but also to Bosniaks living in the Federation. It provided a boost for the refugees who returned to the area and provides them with an opportunity to showcase their village and their capacity to stage an event. The manager of FK Mladost was able to articulate this ambition:

"It was the biggest sporting event in the region since the war. People came from all over – from Tuzla, Banovići, Živinice. They came to see their heroes but right here, on this small pitch. I think it could be the start of something. We know that we can promote our village. We are thinking of organising a concert next." [Sehad Pašić, Trainer of FK Mladost, July 2009].

The experience of organising a celebrity event focussed the minds of those coordinating the event as to how to promote the village and how to use the celebrity cache for a longer term benefit. The head of the village MZ was able to articulate this:

"We knew it was an opportunity to promote Divič. We wanted to portray a positive image of Divič and for any people who are thinking of returning and thinking that it isn't safe. The players who came wanted to help the club which is quite a high profile club in the 3rd division of the RS. Also our pitch is very beautiful and telegenic. We knew it was a chance to promote our village. We have identified tourism as a potential source of revenue and we hoped that something of this level of exposure would help us develop our tourism potential. We had arranged many activities to go with the match; boat trips and the like. We wanted to show everyone what is available in Divič and that it is a great place to visit. But the weather interfered and we had to cancel a lot of things..." [Enver Fehatbegović, President of Divič MZ, June 2009].

This type of engagement places the village and villagers in the political sphere. Events like this require licences from the municipal government, coordination with the police and engagement with the media, which in Bosnia are often controlled by those with political interests. The individual efforts force engagement with institutional bodies, the reactions of which contribute to the definition and shape of the relationship between

Divič and its Bosnian Serb surroundings. Football is thus a facilitator and is effective because it is not overtly politicised.

The event was extremely well publicised in the Federation and it is likely that many of those present cheering the Bosnian national team were Bosniaks from the Federation. It is not possible to evaluate the reach of such an event into the psyche of neighbouring Bosnian Serbs. There were certainly many people present, but no way of clarifying who were Bosnian Serb or who were Bosniak. When interviewed after the event local Bosnian Serb football teams varied in their opinions on the game as the following comments illustrate:

“We went to that game. Why not? It is not every day you can see players of that quality playing. We go to Divič all the time anyway, we have good relations with them. I didn’t see anything in the media about it. They [players from FK Mladost] told us about the match. We saw many people there, Bosniaks, Serbs. Those who could come did.” [Dragan Vidović, President of Radnički, Karakaj – the nearest Bosnian Serb club to Divič, August 2009].

“Two of us went, but it was on a Tuesday so if you had other commitments then you couldn’t make it. The match itself was nothing really. Just a gimmick.” [Cvetok Stojić, President of FK Jordan; September 2009]

“We didn’t go because they didn’t invite us.” [Nenad Stevanović, player for Budućnost, Pilica; September 2009].

“God forbid we would go to Divič to see that game. They wouldn’t welcome us. When would they come to Trnovica?” [Slađan Pantić, trainer of FK Trnovica, August 2009].

“There was a game at Divič? Who played? Džeko? Really? I didn’t know of that game. I would have liked to have seen him play. Did anyone go? None of our players did.” [Kosta Vidaković, President FK Tabanaci; September 2009].

“We would have gone to the game if we had known that it was happening but we didn’t know. Divič didn’t inform the RS media, only the Federation so the only people who went were from the Federation. They didn’t invite us so we feel like they didn’t want us to be there. We felt that we were not welcome.” [Dragan Tananović FK Srpski Soko, Čelopek player; August 2009]

“We didn’t know about the match. We would have gone, I would have taken some of our players. It is time for us to get to know Divič again. But they didn’t tell us so we didn’t go.” [Zeljko Nestorović, trainer FK Srpski Soko, Čelopek; August 2009].

The mix of responses provides an indication of the range of the relationships Divič has with surrounding Bosnian Serb communities. People from Karakaj, the most local village, have the most comfortable, informal and relaxed relationship. They were confident and happy to visit and the networks between the two villages are developed enough to allow information to flow effectively. The villages situated further away to the north have more formalised relationships and feel they need for formal invitation to attend; without one they felt unwelcome and side-lined.

The most common complaint from local Bosnian Serbs about the match was that they were not aware it was happening because Divič had not contacted the local RS media.

“It wasn’t in the media that there would be this game. I don’t know why. But there were a lot of people from the Federation there so I guess it was in the Federation media.” [Rade Blagojević, player for FK Radnički, Karakaj; August 2009]

“They only told the Federation. That was why we didn’t know about it. They didn’t tell the RS media so we didn’t find out.” [Rade Milić, Budocnost, FK Pilica player; August 2009].

Divič are aware that they made mistakes, not least in their handling of the media.

“We learnt a lot from staging the game, particularly about managing the media and about organising an event on this scale. We are confident we could do something like this again and we have learnt from the mistakes that were made through inexperience”. [Enver Fehatbegović, President of Divič MZ, June 2009].

Many media outlets in the RS are controlled by those with political interests. It is entirely possible that Divič did contact RS media organisations who decided not to publicise the match. Mr. Milošević, who as head of the regional FA was aware in the organisation of the match commented that he believed it unlikely that Divič would not have contacted RS media to publicise their match; after all one of the aims was to raise awareness of the village in the local area. However, Divič were unable to confirm which media institutions had been contacted so such speculation cannot be verified in this instance.

Divič were also aware that they made mistakes in the organisation, as evidenced by MZ President Enver Fehatbegović above. They were also mindful that the opportunity to host such an event would focus attention upon them, with plenty willing to berate the village for any flaws:

“We did think about charging money for people to come. It would have been a good way to raise some money for the club. But we didn’t want people to think that this was the reason that the game had been organised. It was such an honour for the club we didn’t want anyone to blacken the club or the village’s name suggesting that the event was something that it was not. So we decided not to charge. We didn’t want to give people the opportunity to talk the match down.” [Enver Fehatbegović, June 2009].

Even treading carefully there were plenty who wanted to talk the match down:

“They shouldn’t have organised it. A player like Džeko, he shouldn’t be asked to come and play somewhere like Divič. The pitch isn’t good enough and in such conditions? He could get injured.” [Cvjetok Stojić, President FK Jordan, September 2009].

“They wanted us to watch the game? Why would we? They would never come to watch ours? [Memorial match at which famous Serbian players, including local legend Savo Milošević play].” [Milan Lazarević, trainer FK Budućnost Pilica August 2009].

Such a range of attitudes towards the match indicates the complexity of seeking to construct hegemony. The match was an important moment for Divič seeking to normalise life after the atrocities of conflict. Some might understand such an event to be supporting International Community ambitions in the region. It was not. It was a Bosnian initiated event to support Bosniak returnees with little attention paid to the International Community ideals. This was football in a liminoid state, a wonderful opportunity to step aside from daily rituals to enjoy a spectacle, but it did not lead to a different state. To some extent it may have deepened divisions between communities and held the possibility that the Tricksters could use the game to build upon the sense of injustices from some Bosnian Serb neighbours. These elite football players, fulfilling the role of Gramsci’s organic intellectuals, were able to define parameters of public discourse through the provision of this public spectacle. They were endeavouring to

promote a certain viewpoint, of support for Bosniak returnees to a Bosnian Serb region. However, such a view could be argued to create more division; Bosniaks supporting a Bosniak village as a Bosnian team supports the Bosniak political standpoint, being all ethnicities are welcome in Bosnia but within a Bosniak context and such a viewpoint discounts the desire of Bosnian Serbs to be allied with Serbia. Whilst highlighting to Bosniaks from the Federation the on-going presence and difficulties of daily life of returnees, it also emphasised the extent to which the village feels alienated from its environs.

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The actions of influential individuals, combined with institutional obligations provide an illuminating example of how actions retain different implications with different members of the community and highlight how reconciliation – and hegemony - is an irregular uneven process, difficult to assess and opine upon as a whole. The influencers may well be Tricksters, who use their power to ensure that division remains, instability is deepened and the liminal process towards the construction of a post post-conflict hegemony is held up. Whilst the International Community act as a guides, highlighting the route through the liminal process, Tricksters are often able to distort the message to their own advantage. When the Tricksters have obtained positions of power within the institutions such power carries dangerous potential.

CONCLUSIONS

After the Bullets: Football's Role in the Bosnian Post-Conflict Process

Football in Bosnia carries historical and cultural baggage, in particular its connections with nationalism and nationalist objectives, and the globalisation of the sport has impacted the sport at all levels. Social and cultural practices are produced through a series of interactions negotiated and framed through positions of power. Since football first reached Bosnia in the early twentieth century it has reflected the political milieu. A channel for nationalist expression in the first half of the century football was again the conduit of such expression as the political manoeuvring in the 1980s reignited nationalist passions. The clubs have long represented wider social and cultural dispositions and political ambitions of all forms and been focal points of congregation for political expression. Institutes and individuals within the football milieu are well placed to influence the formation of a cultural hegemony.

The complexity of post-conflict Bosnia requires multiple theories to unpick its dynamics. A Gramscian framework goes some way in explaining the neo-colonial role adopted by the International Community which places them in the role of hegemony builder. As the ultimate aim of the International Community is to leave the country, they must build a cultural bloc – a common sense across the population that is strong enough to enforce the International Community objectives without their physical presence. Through democratisation and market liberalisation they seek to build a 'national popular' that provides strong multi-ethnic civil society that is capable of acting as a counter balance to the power of the (previously communist) state. Mandated by supra-national institutions but unwanted by the political elite, the International Community has proved unwilling to engage in the process of negotiation, a key Gramscian aspect of hegemony building. As a result they have not been able to achieve the hegemony they desire and

remain in Bosnia, relying upon coercion²⁶⁸ to implement their vision of a post-conflict Bosnia. The idea of 'national' remains an anathema to two of the three ethnic groups.

Meanwhile the indigenous ethno-political elite have manifest no desire to build a national-popular consensus to cement their position as the dominant class. They have instead exploited the fear of a return to violent conflict in order to retain the current *status quo*. Efforts to consign the country to the torpor of permanent liminality exists in sharp contrast to the dynamic nature of Gramscian theory which based as it is around constant renegotiation of social and cultural parameters. The post-conflict liminal period is envisaged ideally as a guided ritualised progression to an altered state in which the underlying causes of conflict are resolved. The rebirth of football and recognition of the country by the supra-national institutions are but one example of a ritual through which a post-conflict society will pass en route to its eventual post liminal state. Nonetheless the ethno-political elite are aware that their personal positions of power are threatened by such a state and have managed to prolong the state of liminality by persuading the general population of the immediacy of likely further conflict. The ritualised progression into a post post-conflict state has become stuck in a quagmire of stagnant permanent liminality that has endured for almost twenty years. Football has played a role in this.

Since the conflict the political and football milieus have become ever more interconnected; the structures are almost identical, both displaying a structure that ensures ethno-nationalists holding positions of power have been able to dominate, utilising their positions to further ethnic division and mistrust and to secure personal benefit. At the top level Savez has long been staffed by political appointees which makes it almost impossible for those without connections to nationalist political parties to advance within the organisation. The recognised anti-corruption NGO Transparency International commented about the ability of Bosnians to hold positions of power within post-conflict institutions *"anyone wanting to climb up the social or economic ladder within his or her ethnic group has to have support from one or more of the political parties"* The ethno-political elite are not innocent of the gangster state in post-conflict Bosnia as TI clarifies further: *"the new political elite that has emerged in the post-war*

²⁶⁸ Examples of International Community coercion would include the removal by OHR of elected politicians who do not promote the International Community objectives of implementation of democracy, rule of law etc.

context entertains close ties with both criminal and informal economic networks as well as nationalistic political parties” (Anti Corruption Resource Centre and Transparency International, 2009). The FIFA and UEFA driven changes to the structure of Savez are a step in the right direction, but ethno-nationalists remain in powerful positions within the organisation and the organisation continues to be understood by supporters as one riddled with corruption. Could football have the capacity to contribute to reconciliatory processes when its structures remain so clearly dominated by those with clearly divergent objectives?

Building Bridges, Dredging Drains

As renowned peace-building theorist, Lederach (1997) explains communities need to be brought to a metaphysical place where they are able to jointly envisage moving forward with a shared future. In some instances football can provide the impetus to bring people to the same geographic place but having achieved that it can also highlight how far the communities are from being in a position to imagine that shared future. For some the re-appearance of minority returnee clubs in the RS may be considered an important step for the rebuilding of the previously ‘cleansed’ communities. The clubs represented a visible focal point and represent the communities outside the village boundaries. The ability to play football and indeed enjoy the game exemplifies that life is returning to a semblance of normality; the community has reached a point where it possesses time, finances and desire to invest in a leisure activity dedicated to more than the realisation of basic human needs. Football in such circumstances is enchanting.

But the extent to which football really ‘builds bridges’ must then be considered. Certainly football creates (or re-creates) links at local levels between communities that had been lost and broken by conflict. Management and officials of the clubs, who often knew each other from football pitch escapades before the war, meet at the draw for each half-season of the league, swap telephone numbers and share a coffee to make arrangements for future fixtures. However, for the younger players football offers less likelihood of building bridges with Serb communities. They meet their contemporaries on the pitch often in a mood of adversarial physical combat, played out in front of hostile spectators bent on distracting, disarming and destabilising the opposition. Players do not tend to meet players from other clubs in less confrontational circumstances albeit

some know each other from school²⁶⁹, but the post-conflict schooling system retains ethnic divisions and by and large the young men maintain their distance from peers of different ethno-political origins. This absence of contact needs improving upon if the game is going to claim to break down barriers.

Whilst some management and senior players may argue that football is capable of building a bridge, for other members of the village community football reinforces a sense of rivalry and opposition and indeed serves to frame their resistance identity. For many non-football participating returnees the external representation of their village afforded by the village football club is important for it emphasises to their Serb neighbours their continued Bosniak presence. For some Serbs football fixtures with Bosniaks are an opportunity to test social and cultural parameters, the reactions of the wider community to overtly nationalistic comments and songs are illustrative. If nationalist actions are ignored, endorsed or even encouraged then divisions are liable if not to deepen then certainly to become entrenched – whether in the attitudes of Serbs to the Bosniaks or in the Bosniaks who proceed to understand that Serb perception of them to remains informed through ethnicity alone. Conversely if nationalistic actions are challenged by senior members of the community (as occurred in the September 2007 Ročević vs. Divič fixture) a communal understanding that such actions are socially unacceptable is instilled and Bosniaks notice the cultural shift. It is possible to understand such interactions as a skirmishes in what Gramsci termed the ‘War of Position’ reflecting social and cultural attitudes.

At the regional level, the registration of the Bosniak club with the Serb authorities demonstrates a working interface with the Serb political administration. This might be understood as a part of a liminal ritual as a community moves towards a functioning and sustainable peace. Yet the overarching Serb hegemony of the region remains and is reinforced by the football milieu. Within the Zvornik municipality during the period of research there was just one Bosniak who fulfils the requirements of Savez to be able to officiate at matches. The majority of his RS recognised experience was obtained prior to the conflict. Potential officials require the backing of a club to progress, and with few

²⁶⁹ These numbers are small as most Bosniak families prefer to educate their children in the Federation where they learn the Latin script and a curriculum endorsed by Bosniak leaders.

Bosniak clubs few Bosniaks are able to gain the qualifications and the experience required to become officials. Whilst there is a sense that any illegalities surrounding matches are seldom ethnically motivated the Divič vs. Jordan fixture demonstrates that if a nationalist chants are unchallenged because those officials do not recognise such words to be offensive, such attitudes become further ingrained. Serb officials are unlikely to recognise the fortification of Serb hegemony by such actions and consequently Serb hegemony within the football milieu remains entrenched. The regional disconnect demonstrated by the citizens of Divič must remain a concern for the International Community. Without the development of such connection the International Community are forced to remain in the country, reinforcing the liminal status.

The organic intellectuals of Savez are matched by the influence of celebrity footballers. The village used football to promote itself, building its confidence as it negotiated with municipal, legal and state institutions and developing networks and contacts with Bosnian Serbs. The presence of Bosnian national players encouraged Serbs to engage with the Bosnian national team and develops a Serb sense of connection to Bosnian representation. This is all grist to the mill of the SDP lobby. Yet there was potential for those looking to promote a sense of division; mistakes caused through administrative inexperience and naivety led to a sense of marginalisation and increased suspicion between Divič and some Bosnian Serb communities. The ethno-political elite in the region had the potential to utilise the event to achieve Trickster aims, namely the increase of distrust between different communities.

High profile events such as a celebrity match are important events in Bosnia and by insidious reach of the political sphere are forever *political*. The event itself can be seen as a tool of resistance against those striving to ignore and discourage return and as a form of negotiation in the encouragement of engagement of Bosnian Serbs with a Bosnian national institution. However, its effects are multifarious, varied according to previously established relationships between Divič and the surrounding communities.

Managing Disorder

Football matches are theatres of pantomime, suffused with ritual and symbolism and are a time period away from the normal rules and structures of daily life (Archetti, 1999; Lever, 1983; Bromberger, 1995). The match is an irreverent, teasing and carnivalesque occasion (Armstrong, 1998; Finn & Giulianotti, 2000). The football ground and fixture provides for a venue whereby the usual social and class structures are collapsed.

The possibility of tensions flaring at football fixtures remains high, irrespective of the ethnicity of the teams participating. In matches between different ethnic groups these tensions contain an inherent element of nationalism as such criteria provides the most obvious moniker of difference between the clubs and may be invoked regardless of whether the original tension had a basis in ethnic difference or not. Clubs and their players have an important role to play in managing such situations. Footballers are young, seldom mature enough to manage communal flash points. There is little support of managers or delegates wishing to explicitly address these issues. At this level footballers are also amateurs, who give their time and money in order to play; to expect them to attend training sessions developing their ability to address these high profile, emotive situations is unrealistic.

Whilst the international community have not engaged in Bosnian football at this level, their presence and work in other spheres has a noticeable impact and may be seen as a part of their guidance of society through the post-conflict liminal transitional phase. The way in which the influencers of local communities police their own highlights the continuing dichotomy; on the one hand nationalistic behaviour is ever present and unremarkable, on the other influential people within the community are acting upon overtly nationalistic behaviour at games and ensuring those responsible are left in no doubt that their behaviour is not acceptable. The influencers in football remain those within Savez. Savez notifies the police, chooses the referees and delegates and is responsible for disciplinary measures. They are governed by guidelines from FIFA and UEFA, but ultimately they are answerable only to the local football associations. The individuals within the Savez hold the key for the extent to which the construction of a peaceful, stable society or the reinforcement of a permanent liminality may be enforced through the activities of the sport.

The imposition of a hegemony is seldom uniform and this is manifested within Zvornik's football milieu; clubs exhibit different attitudes and reactions to teams of differing ethnicity. Such variance is to be expected, hegemony is constructed by building a 'national popular' and is never total or complete and as such as a core part of the Gramscian framework. This is true of football at any level: although the global phenomenon appears homogenised, it is consumed differently at a local level, depending upon regional history, experience and culture, which are characteristics best illustrated by the country's football teams.

Fighting Fire with Fire?

The International Community hope that a single united multi-ethnic Bosnian team will provide a platform to express a collective identity, with emotional orchestration at an internationally recognised event strengthens a sense of imagined community. Conversely it is recognised that to use football as a tool for nation-building is fraught with danger as differences between national and ethnic identity is problematic. Nationalist sentiment presents a picture of a shared community, with shared myths, history and language. Such links may be neither underestimated nor manufactured: Fifty years as the single nation of Yugoslavia, whose successful national football team had created numerous shared celebrations, was not enough to prevent latent nationalist sentiments from subsequently tearing the country apart. Similarly, the strength of Serb nationalism extends beyond the boundaries of the post-Yugoslav Serbian state, to the extent that a Serb ethnicity has a greater influence than the citizenship of a modern nation-state. Attempts to manufacture a prevalent Bosnian identity amongst Bosnian Serbs are doomed to failure in the face of the strength of the legend of Serbdom. Bosnian Serbs continue (and will continue) to support Serbia as efforts to manufacture a Bosnian identity cannot compete.

Although the Bosnian multi-ethnic national team welcomes supporters from all ethnic groups, it remains tangibly Bosniak. Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats still prefer to support Serbia or Croatia, but do not reject Bosnia as completely as some suggest – those who side with Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik when he said the only time he would support Bosnia would be when they played Turkey (see Vuillamy 2014) are in a minority. Most support Bosnia as a second team, without the intense passion but

enough to induce a shared experience with their neighbours. This is neither the whole hearted commitment hoped for by the International Community, nor the complete rejection suggested by ethno-political elites.

Elite football, whether the national team or that of prominent club, illustrates the dichotomy of the football milieu in Bosnia's post-conflict era. For the residents of Divič football has on-going and often simultaneously contradictory impacts. By its nature football is inclusive as all ethnicities participate together. It provides the occasion to celebrate Bosnian success (particularly as the Bosnian Serbs are increasingly joining Bosniaks in enjoying the supporting the Bosnian national teams 2014 FIFA World Cup journey) to some extent there presents an opportunity to experience a liminal ritual, reframing relationships and entering an altered state. However it may also provide the occasion to reinforce conflict divisions particularly in the display of symbolism closely connected to the conflict, thus perpetuating the liminal state.

The extent to which football represents the submerged identities of its communities and reflects or impacts on the social, cultural, political and economic factors provides historical insights and offers illumination of the current post-conflict environment. Symbols of allegiance at football matches remain a part of the carnivalesque experience. Football fixtures, whether at elite or village level, provide opportunities to display identity both supportive and mocking. Football is not the only occasion at which such symbolism will be displayed but football fixtures, and in particular national team fixtures, provide a framework around which displays of such symbolism may be readily orchestrated.

The dual nature of the symbolism of both groups demonstrate the complexities of the post-conflict environment. Symbols are designed to reinforce their own characteristics and to send a specific message to the other (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Hill 1996; Giulianotti & Armstrong 2001). Yet they are also utilised to speak to the wider international community. Such symbolism in the Bosnian post-conflict milieu frequently carries additional meanings and must be understood in context.

Serb symbolism is dominant throughout the RS; Road signs are in Cyrillic, Serb flags adorn public buildings and Orthodox churches and all Bosnian Serb village football clubs display a Serbian flag. Further Serb symbolism including the double headed eagle and

the Orthodox cross are regularly seen as emblems and graffiti. The Bosniaks, ethnically cleansed by Serbs, with the evidence of such paraphernalia, have no doubt that they are a minority in a Serb area. The overwhelming Serb symbolism reinforces the power inequality between Serbs and Bosniaks in the region such displays consolidate and legitimise Serb hegemony. Further displays serve to remind Serbia – just across the river – of the plight of the Serbs remaining outside of the Serbian project. Bosnian Serbs fought to remain a part of Serbia and need to ensure that they are not forgotten by a Serbia focussing increasingly upon candidacy for the EU. Finally the Bosnian Serbs utilise Serb symbolism to remind the International Community that Bosnia remains divided despite all efforts to instil a sense of Bosnian unity.

In order to their national football team with likeminded enthusiasts Divič inhabitants are required to travel which reinforces their sense of village isolation and their sense of cultural, ethnic and political fragility. Witnessing the extent of such nationalist Serb symbolism encourages residents of Divič continue to maintain close links with Bosniak areas in the Federation and they remain ready to leave the RS at extremely short notice should they feel threatened by Serb nationalist sentiment. By not being fully settled in the area nor having fully committed to remaining engenders the perception of being in transition and keeps the region locked in the reintegration stage of the post-conflict liminal processes, reinforcing a permanent liminality of deep division, suspicion and a sense of being in a state that could easily and rapidly revert to conflict status. Elite football feeds the sense of instability and reminds Divič villagers of the current political status as being one of permanent transition enshrined in a precarious peace. The region feels stuck in a social and political impasse, and every time neighbours hoist different flags to support their nation's football team that impasse – the Tricksters ambitions are visibly - silently - reinforced.

The Bosnian flag, flown defiantly by returnee villages, serves to remind Serbs of their on-going presence in the region; the display is a resistance to the Serb cleansing during the conflict. It also reinforces the Bosnian nature of the region, clarifying that although Serb dominated the region is not a part of Serbia. Flags revealing a Bosniak heritage are not commonly seen in returnee villages whose residents prefer to display the ethnically neutral Bosnian flag. In Bosniak majority areas the Bosniak fleur-de-lis symbol is more

readily evident. Such symbolism, so closely linked to the ARBiH and Bosniak political administration during the conflict, would be inflammatory to Serbs; returnees are aware of their vulnerability.

Whilst national team support is infused with echoes of ethno-nationalism, support for Bosnian clubs demonstrates the importance of other factors in the Bosnian football milieu. The regional FK Drina fan base once reflected the predominant Bosniak population of Zvornik. The dramatic population movement during and since the conflict meant the club no longer had a fan base. The return of Bosniaks to the region was not matched by the return of Bosniaks to the club; in their exile Bosniaks had learnt to love other clubs from Germany and other Western European nations. In a globalising football arena it has been easier for returnees to continue to follow their European clubs than build relationships with an elite Bosnian club. The passion with which returnees play for their village club and support their national side is not matched by an interest in a region club. The regional connect is startling in its absence. Such a disconnect is reflected in the minimised contact returnees have with regional state institutions. Contacts with the Bosniak areas in the Federation, international diasporic connections and close village community organisations are far stronger than at the level controlled by the ethno-political elite reflecting the extent to which returnees chose to engage with organisations outside of the Bosnian state infrastructure. Such an indication has serious impacts for the implementation of the International Community vision of peace, for the current situation relies upon continued International Community presence.

Liminal Ritual or Liminoid Activity?

Football's dichotomy continues when one considers the objectives of the International Community and the ethno-political elite. When viewed from the perspective of the former football takes upon the mantle of a liminal ritual. The re-establishment of clubs and leagues, the restart of formal football activity as recognised by FIFA and UEFA is a sign of a post-conflict region progressing towards a stable peace. The national team's achievements take the nation onto the global stage and provide an opportunity for global recognition of a post-conflict era. Football is a tool to mark the transition to a new period, one beyond conflict. The importance of recognition by FIFA (and consequently UEFA) as a part of the establishment of a recognised nation-state permits newly

independent states or those with aspirations of independence to reinforce their presence on a global arena (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998). This has not escaped the attention of the football Tricksters in the RS who continue to agitate for formal recognition from the supra-national organisations.

Football maybe a leisure activity, but it is economically and politically important and holds disproportionate influence. To see football as a liminal ritual it is necessary to agree with those who dispute Turner's classification of sport as *liminoid* (Rowe S., 2008). One could argue that far from being on the margins of the political and economic spheres, football in Bosnia is best considered as being at it the centre, mirroring and often overlapping the political milieu.

Yet football is a dichotomy. Although it may be a liminal ritual, it is simultaneously a liminoid activity and activities associated with football have hindered the progression of the Bosnian state from entering a genuinely stable peace. Sport has always provided the ability to step away from routine of daily life for a finite period, but on re-entry into the wider social sphere participants remained unchanged. In the case of Bosnia, trapped in a permanent liminal state, the ethno-nationalists have been able to utilise the aspects of the sport that indoctrinate the sense of instability of the immediate post-conflict moment to perpetuate the liminal state. Violence between fans of elite teams, particularly if ethnic in origin (which is not always the case) reinforces the perception that conflict could reappear at any moment in the country. As Supporters groups continue to clash whenever they come across each other, on days they are not playing each other, in towns not hosting a match i.e. outside of the temporal and geographic areas braced for possible football related violence. Such conflict reinforces the sense that violence can come anywhere, anytime and without warning – an understanding many Bosnians have gained from bitter personal experience.

A population in a state of heightened anxiety becomes predisposed for manipulation by ethno-nationalists. Fear pre-disposes the electorate to vote for political parties that promise to protect their ethnic group's interests and security. A returnee village is impacted by the sense of instability created by violence between FK Sarajevo and FK Borac Banja Luka supporters - whether that violence is ethnically motivated or not. Politicians endeavouring to win elections utilise the perception of uncertainty to make

political capital. Connections between elite clubs and politicians are legion and well-known. The way in which clubs are funded through the municipal (and cantonal) state structures provides further links and ensures that the political and football spheres remain deeply intertwined across the country.

Politicising the Cultural?

The key question is whether the cultural and social parameters defined through football may be transferred into peaceful political capital. Gramsci's idea of a cultural hegemony came with the aim of an eventual overthrow of the inequalities of the dominant political regime. Could we ask football in post-conflict Bosnia to be a leader of an equivalent political activism? The close links between the football and political spheres in the nation have been well explored. The infrastructures of the two milieus are very similar and until FIFA's actions of 2011 led to the reorganisation of Savez the similarities in personnel between the two were striking: ethno-political appointees at all levels of Savez were commonplace. The International Community has long been bemused by the seeming lack of civil society activism that would be capable of holding the state to account. The difficulty in forming this vital social class, the one Gramsci envisaged being able to replace the inequalities of the dominant state, has slowed the development of Bosnia and has frustrated any attempts that football might take to be the harbinger of change.

That said it is football that has demonstrated an ability for civil society groups to effectively advocate against institutions. Demonstrations against political corruption in Savez throughout 2007 and 2008, combined with the player boycott of the national team were significant and they were noticed by the supra-national football institutions. Although change in Savez was not forced through until 2011, it has occurred. Whilst FIFA and UEFA were most concerned with the replacement of the rotating presidency structure, their expulsion of N/FSBiH did effectively clear the senior management of political appointees. The organisation is now headed up by 'football men' i.e. men who have a background and history in football and management. Certainly issues surrounding corruption and mismanagement remain but the organisation a very changed beast from the one the fans boycotted in 2008.

Demonstrations with more significant political dimensions were to follow. In 2013 a squabble between the ethno-political elites over the format of identity numbers led to a delay in the issuing of a passport for a seriously ill baby hoping to travel to Germany to receive medical treatment unavailable in Bosnia. Due to the bureaucratic delay the baby died before treatment could be received. Bosnians took to the streets in protest, barricading the Bosnian Parliament building for 14 hours and refusing to let the politicians leave until they had overcome their differences and reached an interim agreement permitting the issuing of unique citizen numbers (known as JMBG²⁷⁰) to resume. Bosnia's national footballers supported the protests appearing in t-shirts with the letters JMBG before their qualifying campaign fixture against Latvia (BH Dragons, 2013). As the demonstrations continued, notable by the support of Bosnians from all ethnic groups, the aim altered to include protests against the corrupt nature of the state (Dedovic, 2013).

In February 2014 uprisings in by factory employees in Tuzla initially concerning the loss of jobs and lack of salary payments by a recently privatized factory rapidly changed into protests against the corrupt nature of the government. The demonstrations rapidly spread across the Federation as people of all ethnic groups called for the resignation of the ethno-nationalist political elites. The protests rapidly turned to violence as protestors set fire to government buildings in Tuzla and Sarajevo. The political elite of the Federation, suddenly realising their vulnerability²⁷¹ were quick to denounce the actions claiming that football supporters groups had pre-orchestrated the violence and labelled protestors 'hooligans' (Deutsche Welle, 2014). Fan supporters groups were certainly involved in the protests; FK Sloboda's Fukare group were forced to defend themselves on Facebook against allegations they had stockpiled hydrochloric acid to use to break into government buildings in Tuzla but the numbers involved and the wide range of demographics of those protesting suggests the roots of the protests lie deeper than trouble caused by 'hooligans'.

As the Bosnian national football team completed their final preparations before facing Argentina in their first ever FIFA World Cup finals appearance on June 14th 2014, the

²⁷⁰ JMBG *Jedinstveni matični broj građana* (Unique Master Citizen Number) is required to obtain Identity Documentation in Bosnia.

²⁷¹ Four Cantonal Prime Ministers have been forced to resign in response to the protests

euphoria and rhetoric surrounding the team had reached unprecedented levels. With Serbia not qualifying for the 2014 FIFA World Cup finals, even the Bosnian Serbs in Banja Luka²⁷² were intrigued by the possibility of what the Bosnian football team might achieve. Equally intrigued were the global media (and marketers) who relished the story of the rise of the Bosnian national team from the ashes of a destroyed country.

At Home Abroad

The young multi-ethnic footballers tasked with the role of uniting a nation are not typical of Bosnia. The diasporic nature of the Bosnian squad reflects the influence of the predominantly Bosniak/Bosnian diaspora. Such influence has deeply impacted the formation of a cultural and social bloc: their attitudes and ideologies have been influenced by their upbringing attending the schools of Germany, USA and Sweden they have fully imbibed their adopted country's advocacy of democracy, free markets and human rights and support the International Community objectives. However, they remain deeply scarred by the events of the conflict and hold the distrust of other ethnic groups close to their hearts. They do not live in Bosnia but they continue to visit and influence the formation of its national-popular cultural bloc.

Of the 23 man squad selected for the 2014 FIFA World Cup Finals, only one, Manchester City striker Edin Džeko, is a product of Bosnia's domestic football structures. Many have even played for the youth teams of other nations; Miralem Pjanić represented Luxembourg, Asmir Begović Canada and Zvezdan Misimović Serbia. Sports players often hold their nationality more loosely than fans; pragmatism for personal success overcomes ethno-political passion (Tuck, 2003; Bairner & Barbour, 2005). Their decision thus to represent Bosnia has not always been straightforward. Some were initially rejected by other squads (as was Misimović by Serbia), others actively chose Bosnia, still more were pursued by Savez officials who encouraged those with Bosnian parents to represent their 'home' country – a job made easier as the national team became increasingly more successful. The fans laud those who have chosen to play for Bosnia and vilify those who have not²⁷³

²⁷² Banja Luka is the capital of the RS.

²⁷³ The most notable is Zlatan Ibrahimović whose parents left Bosnia in the 1960s. Ibrahimović himself was born and bought up in Sweden, who he represents internationally. His perception as that of 'traitor'

The diasporic nature of the Bosnian national team provides further connections for the Bosnian diaspora. The estimated 70,000 Bosnians of St. Louis, USA identify even more strongly with the Bosnian team when they cheer on their compatriot Vedad Ibešević who grew up in St. Louis. The Bosnian national team has played international friendly fixtures in St. Louis on several occasions. The support of the Bosnian national team by the diaspora not only reinforces their Bosnian identity, but promotes the idealised 'homecoming' image by one of their own.

The diaspora are extremely active in their support of the Bosnian national team, travelling to support the team when those in Bosnia are not able to. The overtly diasporic nature of the national team does have an impact upon domestic support. Although intensely proud of their national team, local Bosnians fan groups can feel that the support group is dominated by diaspora. Domestic club affiliations (for those who have engaged with Bosnian elite club milieu) can be stronger than those applied to the national.

Why might we ask was football one of the first spheres to exhibit resistance to the ethno-political actions? As ever in Bosnia the diasporic influence must be considered. Over and over again Bosnian emigrants have shown that their footballing identity is fundamental to their diasporic identity. Yugoslavs took football to their hearts in the early twentieth century and those who have since emigrated to countries where football is a minor sport (in particular the USA and Australia), continue to use the sport as a way to reinforce their Balkan identity (Hay, 2001). Corruption in football damages the sport and the diaspora, used to living in a less corrupt society, cannot tolerate such actions in an activity so central to their identities. The BH Fanaticos, the largest Bosnian national team fan group, originated from and are predominantly supported by diasporic Bosnians, were instrumental in orchestrating protests against corruption in Savez in 2008 yet there was no equivalent protests by diasporic Bosnians against the equally corrupt state. Football, it seems, is capable of being a catalyst for the mobilisation of the diaspora in ways that daily life in Bosnia is not.

by Bosnians is tempered by the oft-repeated rumour that Ibrahimović contacted Savez offering to play for the Bosnian national team, but was unwilling to pay Savez officials the sum they requested in bribes in order to be able to do so.

Policy Implications and Future Research

This research is an ethnography the impact of football upon a post-conflict community. There are two sectors to which it contributes; that of a post-conflict ethnography and of a football related ethnography. Although football is an on-going activity whilst the state of post-conflict is a (hopefully) transitory state, there are similarities between the two; both conflict and football in Bosnia are primarily male dominated, but with wider community implications and, as we have seen, the connections between a post-conflict state and post-conflict football are well-developed. Post-conflict research has often focussed upon the transitional nature of conflict (Richards, 2005) in particular the demobilisation of youth soldiers (Richards, 2003; Theidon, 2007), the reframing of identities (Millar, 2012) and the dynamics of state building in fragile settings (Upreti , Sharma, Pyakurayal, & Ghimire, 2010). Other post-conflict research has concentrated upon the role of justice and of truth and reconciliation commissions in the reconciliation processes (Andrews, 2007) and also the role of 'profiteering' in conflict and post conflict environments (Nordstrom, 2004). Ethnographies in football have tended to focus upon the hooligan element of the game (Armstrong, 1998; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2001; Poulton, 2012) or upon footballers in community clubs (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009).

By combining the two genres, I hoped to demonstrate the role that football plays in a post-conflict context. Necessity dictated that I was not to live within the researched community and that that community was to be wider than originally anticipated. This has led to a number of voices being under-represented or inferred throughout the research. Most plainly I was unable to provide the regions ethno-nationalist leaders with a voice, but was forced to primarily rely upon their perception by others. The focus upon the wider community implications of the football club perhaps led to the footballers themselves being under-represented in the research, particularly those FK Mladić players not from Divič itself. The misalignment of gender and age meant that immersion amongst footballers would never be possible; a younger, footballing male fluent Bosnian speaker may have observed dynamics within the club unavailable to me. Although the research was conducted over a two year period and my presence for predetermined events was assured, by not living within the region the research failed to truly incorporate the unspoken, assumed nature of a regional life and was forced to rely

upon hearsay and what people chose to reveal. Furthermore the period of time taken to write up makes the research difficult to locate within the continuing altering literature landscape in the rapidly developing field of SPD. Moreover, the research is not as recent as could be expected; FK Mladost ceased competing in the regional football league and without returning to Bosnia it was not possible to establish the causes of this development.

Football happens across Bosnia and across its nefarious ethno-political nationalisms. It is the cultural activity capable of persuading previously inimical communities to the same geographic location. It is the cultural sphere that shapes the perception that people have of the world around them and as such shapes their ability to envisage how that world could be changed and how that change might be bought about (Crehan, 2002). This is not well known because in the sport for peace debates the SDP interventions are those most promoted, publicised well-known and researched. Whilst it would be churlish to dismiss them as irrelevant and self-seeking we can say with confidence that they cannot rival the depth, scale or sustainability of domestically organised and administered sport. Thus whilst the recognition for more rigorous academic research into SDP has been oft -acknowledged (Coalter, 2007; Black, 2010; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011; Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2014) there has been less recognition of the need for research into the influence in the post-conflict domain of what we might best call domestic sport . This research hopes to be a small step in illustrating the importance and potential implications of long-standing and grass roots football in the post-conflict domain.

Another recognition is needed however, one that accepts the existence of fundamental differences in the various societies that are in the stage of the post-conflict. All will vary in the nature of conflict experience, International Community involvement and the implementation of peace processes and conditions. The labyrinthine and intricacies of plays of power in any post-conflict situation will always be complex. Sport – as we have seen - adds to the labyrinth and the power plays. This means that any inquiry has to be multi-faceted and not led by tick box criteria around numbers attending. Evaluations that are over-concerned with metrics and which evidence a singular disciplinary approach will never be able to explain the complexities and contradictions at play

(Darnell, 2012). Any consideration around the role football might play upon social and cultural post-conflict processes necessitates a framework with the ability to illustrate the complexities of the post-conflict environment. Consideration must also be given to the place the game does not reach because football is an important part of the construction of a cultural hegemony. Those in Bosnia who are not engaged in the sport, notably women, are impacted by its activities. Many do not see the game as progressive but containing ever-evident nationalistic, divisive impulses. There are many within the sport who play with passion but peacefully and with a subtle sub-text of building a new normality but if they are not supported the potential will always be there for those looking to retain division for their less-peaceful ends.

An unexpected outcome of the research was the identification of the extent of the influence the diaspora have upon the region's football whether at village or national team level. To fully consider the role football has in post-conflict processes demands further research on the diaspora, to consider which members of the diasporic community are active in the nation's football and how and why they have chosen to participate in this way. In particular it is important to research the processes of diasporic advocacy for demonstrations for political change and the extent to which that is driven through the milieu of football. As progressive generations of Yugoslav emigrants are seemingly increasingly ethnicised (Hay, 2001) the influence the Bosnian diaspora hold in prominent Bosnian footballing organisations will shape both how Serbs and Croats regard the Bosnian football milieu and how Bosniaks in Bosnia relate to their diasporic cousins abroad. Such relationships demand further research, for they have implications in the post-conflict processes across the region.

An insider at Savez contemplated whether it was possible to achieve a culture of peace in Bosnia through football when those running the domestic game are as corrupt as the personnel who constitute Savez (Armstrong & Vest, 2012b)? For football to provide the Bosnian population with a belief that change can be achieved the systemic and endemic factors within the football association that militate against the formation of such a perception must be addressed. A role exists here for football's supra-national bodies. By forcing through the removal of the rotating tri-presidency post in Savez, FIFA and UEFA have already shown that difficult decisions can be achieved in the football milieu which

have hitherto proven impossible to implement at the more obviously political. Addressing divisive nationalist tendencies, corruption and abuse of power within the national football association would provide the grounds for FIFA's desire to see 'football' - and implicitly itself - win the Nobel Peace Prize, but it is perhaps one that is beyond an organisation itself so mired in corruption controversies. Meanwhile the people of Bosnia seek salvation in the domestic game from the good people who remain enchanted by football in both its delivery and performance and who recognise that at times, in places and with some players some notion of stability might be accorded their society that agrees on little but is agreed totally on the Rules of Association Football.

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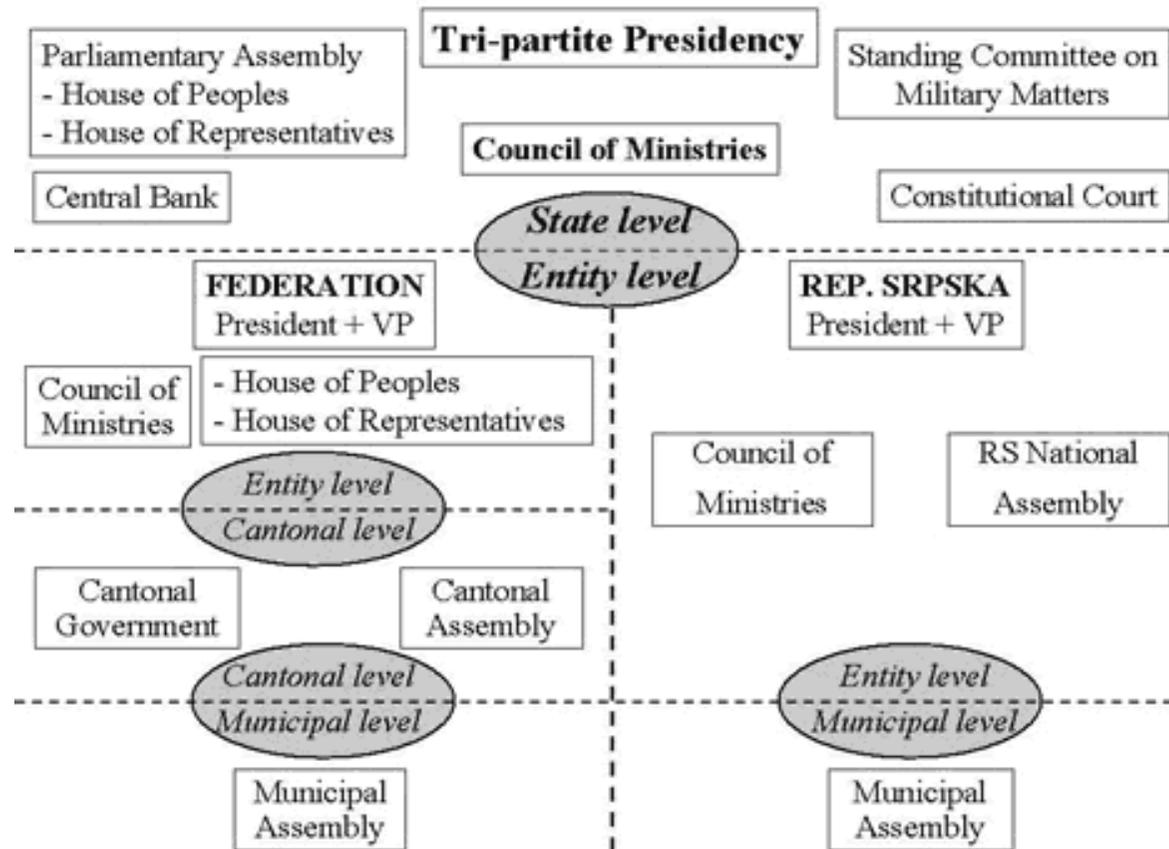
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Appendix I

Political System of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(Source: SFOR Informer online

<http://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/125/p03a/b01031a.htm>)



Appendix II



Source: https://reportingproject.net/football/sub_structure.html

Appendix III

Summary of Village Football Clubs

FK Mladost, Divič (Third RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Mladost is one of two Bosniak teams in this league (the other being FK Jadar from Nova Kasaba near Milići). The village lies just south of Zvornik and its pitch is the centre of the village on land reclaimed in the 1960s from the Drina River. It was one of several clubs in the region formed in 1971 and has a long history of competition with the Bosnian Serb village teams. Prior to the war the village and club were known to be Bosniak but the club routinely fielded mixed teams, although Serbs playing for them might expect some verbal abuse from opposition fans of Serb villages for electing to play for a Bosniak club. Post conflict, FK Mladost is the only Bosniak club in the Zvornik municipality. An estimated five or six players at any one time are from the village of Divič itself, the remainder are from other returnee Bosniak villages which do not have a football club of their own and who do not wish to play for more local Serb village teams. Aware that they would be unable to afford the increased travel costs of in the higher leagues, the club has no ambition to rise up the league structure. In common with all formally recognised clubs in the region FK Mladost receive some finance from the Municipal government which they supplement with additional monies from ex-players and one-time village residents now living abroad, but finances remain a serious concern and the lack of funds jeopardise the long-term viability of the club.

In 2011, after the period of research for this thesis, the club paused its activities, unable to finance ongoing play in the RS football league system.

FK Radnički, Karakaj (Second RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Karakaj is the industrial suburb north of Zvornik and an important border crossing into Serbia, the suburb is based around a crossroads connecting Zvornik with Bijeljina in the north and Tuzla to the west. The suburb, always industrial, was the site of an estimated seven Serb paramilitary run detention camps²⁷⁴ holding Bosniak men detained following the fall of Zvornik (United Nations Commission of Experts, 1994).

²⁷⁴ Sites include the Technical School, the Ciglana brick factory, Novi Izvor quarry, the Ekonomija - an agricultural cooperative, the Glinica aluminium factory and the JNA barracks in the village.

The football pitch is situated beside factories and a railway line which requires spectators to clear the track if a train arrives during the match. The club is Divič's closest football neighbours and they have a good relationship. Indeed, before formally returning to the league Divič played a number of friendly matches against Karakaj. Karakaj's promotion to the 2nd RS League in 2008 means that the two clubs have not had a formal fixture for years but despite this they continue to play regular friendly games as a part of their training programme.

FK Radnički was well supported and able to attract attendance for matches, particularly for derby matches such as those against the Čelopek team. However they lack financial backing to realise ambitions for promotion, and even struggled with the financial commitment of playing in the second RS league.

FK Jordan, Jordan (Third RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Jordan is just a few minutes by car from Karakaj, along the road to Tuzla. The club was formed in 1996, making them somewhat younger than most of the other clubs in the region. From 1996-1999²⁷⁵ the club utilised the pitch at Divič whilst raising funds to build a pitch and clubhouse in their own village. Their current pitch, built in 1999 lies adjacent to the road, with the far side cut out of a small hill. The club has a well-utilised club house and is supported by those in the village. Jordan also maintain good relations with Divič, playing regular friendly and league matches, although there have been incidences of nationalism at their games.

Despite their relatively short history FK Jordan has known success; in 2002 there were enough members to field three teams and their senior team won the second RS league but they were unable to provide the finances required to formally be promoted. The increasing economic challenges following privatisation of the regions industrial plants led to less monies being available for football and by 2008 the team had been relegated.

FK Srpski Soko, Čelopek (Second RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Čelopek is a village some ten minutes' drive north of Zvornik. During the conflict a number of Serb refugees displaced by the conflict elsewhere in Bosnia came to the village and have since chosen not to return to their pre-war homes. New housing funded by the state and developed by the ethno-political elite now homes them in two areas in the MZ, Ekonomija and Ulice. The size of the population in this area has led to requests by the new areas to create their own

²⁷⁵ This period of time was before any Bosniaks had returned to Divič and the village was entirely populated by Serbs.

separate MZs and football clubs. The club's pitch is situated some distance from the main road and is bordered on two sides by trees with houses nearby. Like most clubs in the region suffering from the decline of industrial sponsorship following international community driven privatisation of local industries the club has economic problems, with electricity to the club house frequently being disconnected due to non-payment of bills.

The history between Divič and Čelopek is such that any meeting of these football clubs will be a highly charged affair. They have met just twice since FK Mladost reformed, both times in the 2007/8 season. Since then Čelopek have played in a higher league. Such is the tension and emotional price for people from Divič to play a team from Čelopek that some Divič players have said that they will refuse to ever play Čelopek again. The manager of Čelopek expressed a theoretical wish to meet with Divič but has not actively tried to arrange it.

FK Tabanci, Tabanci (Third RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Tabanci is just further north than Čelopek, almost a 20 minute car drive from Divič. Prior to the war there were significant numbers of Bosniaks in the area, many living in the bigger town of Kozluk to the north and the remainder in small hamlets surrounding the village of Tabanci and there have been significant returns to the region. Prior to the conflict Tabanaci was a mixed team. Following the conflict most of their players were drawn from Kozluk, but any Bosniaks in Kozluk who want to play football are playing for Divič.

During the period of this research FK Tabanci was in serious financial difficulties, which they attributed to the lack of municipality funding, asserting that the municipality had only given them half of what they should have received²⁷⁶. They played the Autumn half of the 2008/9 season but were insufficiently financially viable to compete in the Spring section²⁷⁷. In 2009/10 Tabanci remained as a member of the third RS League but did not play any matches²⁷⁸. By remaining a part of the league they were not required to undertake the registration process again and their membership of the league structure ensured their funding from the municipal government for the following season. By 2010, when they had been able to muster sufficient financing to participate as a fully functioning club, they were able to do so with no financial or administrative penalties.

²⁷⁶ The municipality was supposed to give every club KM 3,000 each year, but the previous year the club had only received KM 1,500.

²⁷⁷ The club were able to pay referees and match officials but had not been able to gather the funds to transport their players to away fixtures.

²⁷⁸ The 3rd RS League is the lowest league and there is no relegation from this league.

FK Trnovica, Trnovica (Third RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Trnovica, a further ten minutes north of Kozluk, but was a well-supported club capable of attracting 120 supporters with regular agricultural activity surrounding the pitch and the club house, and a small shop and café close by. The club was consistently regarded by other clubs as the most difficult to play against, partly because its pitch was smaller than regulation and partly because spectators were right next to the pitch. One side of the pitch was adjacent to a maize field wherein spectators had a reputation for throwing husks onto the field of play to undermine the opposition. Of all the teams in the league interviewed for this research, Trnovica was the most openly nationalistic.

FK Jedistvo, Ročević (Second RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

Ročević was a bigger, slightly wealthier place than the villages of Tabanci and Trnovica just south of it. FK Jedistvo were the old club of the President of the OFS Zvornik branch, Mirko Milošević. The comparative wealth of the area translated to greater financial backing for their football club; their club house was recently renovated, with two floors and all amenities, including office space. The club had ambitions to play in higher leagues, competing hard to win promotion, but were yet to realise their ambitions.

FK Budućnost, Pilica (Third RS League in 2008/9 and 2009/10)

The furthest north of the league clubs is FK Budućnost in the village of Pilica whose name is infamous for the July 1995 execution of an estimated 1,200 Bosniaks from Srebrenica in the days following the Serb invasion²⁷⁹. It is situated near a second important border river crossing with Serbia. The pitch itself is just outside of the village towards the neighbouring village of Lokanj. The club has very little money and the club house was in the worst condition of all the teams, with no electricity, water, windows and, in truth, the four walls barely holding together. Similar to Čelopek there have been many displaced Serbs settled in this area. Substantial numbers of new housing has been constructed on the edge of the village. The 'new' Serbs are in the process of trying to create their own football club and MZ and are content to see the established village club impoverished and close to extinction.

²⁷⁹ The Branjevo Military Farm and the Pilica Culture House are two known sites of execution and mass graves in Pilica have been excavated since 1996.