

Sport for Development and Peace in Post-Yugoslav Context

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| Tiivistelmä – Referat <p>Konfliktien jälkeiseen sovintotyöhön on hyödynnetty monia metodeja. Yksi näistä on urheilu. Ennen hajoamistaan Jugoslavian koripallomaajoukkue oli ainoa, joka todella pystyi haastamaan lajin synnyinmaan Yhdysvallat. Tämä onnistui vain sen kansanryhmien yhteistyöllä. Voisiko koripalloa tänäkin päivänä hyödyntää 1990-luvun sisällissodissa pystytettyjen raja-aitojen murtamisessa?</p> <p>Tässä tutkimuksessa analysoidaan yhden pitkään toimineen kansalaisjärjestön sovitteluohjelmaa, joka pyrkii edistämään entisen Jugoslavian eri kansanryhmien välistä dialogia ja yhteistyötä koripalloseurien avulla. Tutkielmassa pohdin, kuinka urheilua hyväksikäyttävä sovitteluohjelma tulisi suunnitella, jotta se vähentäisi eksklusiivista nationalismia.</p> <p>Tämä työ tutkii serbialaisen kansalaisjärjestön rauhankasvatusohjelmaa, joka käyttää urheilua sillanrakennusvälineenä eri kansanryhmien välillä. Kansalaisjärjestön toimintaa analysoidaan Michel Foucault'n hallinnan teorian (governmentality) kautta, sekä vertailemalla ohjelman toteutusta muihin vastaaviin hankkeisiin. Pyrin myös selvittämään mahdollisen Jugonostalgian roolia hankkeen tavoitteiden saavuttamisessa.</p> <p>Työtä ohjasivat seuraavat tutkimuskysymykset: 1) Kuinka ohjelma määrittelee hallinnoitavat subjektinsa? 2) Millä keinoin ohjelma pyrkii saavuttamaan tavoitteensa?</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin analysoimalla hankkeen viimeisintä saatavilla olevaa loppuraporttia, sekä osallistuvan havainnoinnin keinoin kerättyä aineistoa kahdelta koripalloseurilta vuosina 2018 ja 2019. Tutkimusaineistona toimivat siis vuoden 2009 loppuraportin lisäksi leireillä kirjoitetut muistiinpanot, niiden aikana otetut valokuvat ja videot, sekä leirillä nauhoitetut ryhmähaastattelut.</p> <p>Leirien osallistujat nähtiin omien etnis-uskonnollisten yhteisöjensä edustajina, mutta samalla leireillä vaalittujen arvojen tulevana lähettiläinä omissa yhteisöissään. Rakkaus lajiin toi nuoret samalle leirille. Yhteisöjen välisiä raja-aitoja murrettiin erilaisten luentojen ja työpajojen keinoin, mutta myös leiripaikka itsessään tuki tätä sillanrakennusprojektia. Kansainvälisen rahoituksen avulla paikallinen hanke on verkostoitunut laajalti niin entisen Jugoslavian alueella kuin sen ulkopuolellakin. Verkostot, joita ohjelma sekä luo että edelleen kehittää, mahdollistavat sen arvojen toteutumisen.</p> <p>Tulevaisuudessa olisi kiinnostavaa tutkia laajemmin millä tavoin leirille osallistuminen on vaikuttanut nuorten myöhempiin valintoihin. Olisi myös mielenkiintoista tehdä vertailevaa tutkimusta toisessa maantieteellis-kulttuurisessa ympäristössä toimivan Sport for Development and Peace-projektin kanssa, jotta mahdolliset hankkeen suunnittelussa huomioonotettavat kulttuuriset tekijät tulisivat ilmi.</p> | | |
| Avainsanat – Nyckelord Sport for Development and Peace; Post-Yugoslavia; Conflict; Reconciliation; Yugonostalgia | | |
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| Muita tietoja | | |

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1. Introduction

1.1 *Aim of the Research*

The aim of the research is to study the possibilities of a sport as a tool for building bridges between communities after a violent conflict by examining a successful program in the former Yugoslavia. First, in the next sub-chapter named The Research Problem, I will introduce the questions that directed the process of answering to the problem at hand. Following the research problem, I will reflect upon my own past related to the topic. In chapter two, I go through past research and literature on the studied themes. The third chapter is dedicated to explaining the theoretical framework used for the analysis. Chapter four introduces the reader to the chosen research methods and the gathered material. The analysis part of the research – in chapter five – is divided into seven sections. It starts by analysing the research done prior to the field trips and explaining the settings in which the participatory observation was conducted in. The latter part is divided into sub chapters based on the theories and earlier research used for the analysis.

Before embarking on the first field trip, I will analyse the final report of the program through Foucauldian governmentality. I will also compare the findings to those of another intercommunity project in an ethnically divided city in the region and further to a theory on the outside driven projects in post-conflict settings. The field trips are aimed at comparing the first analysis to the reality on the ground and to further study the planning and implementation of the program with the help of a theory completed by an expert in Sports for Development and Peace (SDP) programs, as well as by looking for possible manifestations of nostalgia for the shared past.

The very violent wars that broke the country known as Yugoslavia started less than two years after the promising fall of the Berlin Wall. The different ethno-nationalist groups fought each other mainly over territory. Religious institutions were used to boost the nationalisms on all sides. In the case of Bosnian Muslims – often referred to as Bosniaks – the religious identity was a major influencer in the formation of the nationalism. Serbian Orthodox Church and its priests were very visible in promoting the cause of fighting for the survival of their nation. Serbian people were reminded of the fascist occupation and terror of the Second World War, while Croatian political and religious leaders were eager to promote the very same fascist Ustasha ideology of the 1930's and 1940's,

which was strongly backed by the Catholic Church. The influence of the religious institutions in the making and boosting of the different nationalisms was an important factor in the conflict, but it isn't in the centre of the analysis in the thesis, because the aim of the research here is to study a particular type of reconciliation process using sport as the shared language and tool for building bridges over the religious and ethnic identities.

Although the Vietnam War is commonly seen as the first televised armed conflict, the Yugoslav wars represented a new level of daily real-time peeks into a bloody civil war throughout the 1990's for anyone who watched the daily news. Those news clips were also the first introduction to the region for me. Later I got to know locals from different parts of the former Yugoslavia and had a chance to do several trips in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as an internship in Slovenia. Since the early 90's my number one hobby has been basketball and one of my first coaches was from the region. Back then Yugoslavia was the second-best country in the sport.

This research studies an SDP program from Serbia that has used basketball as the tool for bridging the divided communities of the former Yugoslavia. I study the program by analyzing the latest final report available on their website and by conducting participatory observation on two basketball camps in Serbia. The latest available final report was written about the basketball camp organized in 2009. I used Foucault's theory on governmentality as the basis for the analysis, but also compared the case to Steven Sampson's article on project life and Azra Hromadzic's article of a school project in Mostar to see if the final report bared resemblances to these two. Later, I got a chance to participate the basketball camp during two consecutive years. During those field trips, I participated and observed the planning and implementation of the program by keeping in mind my earlier analysis of the final report of 2009. I also studied the program through the Ripple Effect model by Steven Sampson and looked for possible manifestations of nostalgia for the shared Yugoslav past.

Only the names of the people who are either organizing the camp or had volunteered there for several years are mentioned in the thesis. In addition, I do mention the names of the two visiting skill trainers and one local lecturer, as they were influential experts for the program. For the sake of equality none of the names of the local trainers or the participants are mentioned – for the latter group it is evidentially also because most of them are underaged. Local names are

written with Latin alphabets and without accent marks, which creates wrong pronunciations for some of the names.

1.2 Research Problem

The research problem can be formulated as: “What type of ingredients should a successful SDP program consist of in a post Yugoslav context?” The research problem is tackled by studying a successful SDP program that has for the past 11 years been bringing youth together from different parts of the former Yugoslavia. The research is limited to a case study on one SDP program in the region. The case study concentrates on a Peace Education Program run by a Serbian NGO called the Sports Humanitarian Organization PLAY (from here onwards PLAY). The purpose of the research is to shed light on how PLAY tries to reach the set goals. To do this, I will use Michel Foucault’s theory on governmentality in studying whom in this case are governed and how. For a more in-depth analysis I will further compare the case to other similar projects in the region and beyond. In addition, I will look for possible manifestations of nostalgia for the shared past.

The research questions are: 1) How are the targets of the project, mainly the youth participants, presented as a category or categories? 2) What type of technologies are used to address the goals of the project?

First, the programs final report from 2009 is analyzed through the lenses of Foucauldian governmentality and it is compared to an interethnic school project in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. I will see if the depictions of youth as subjects are similar to those pointed out by Azra Hromadzic in her study of the Mostar school project. Also, reflections of the notions of project life depicted by Steven Sampson, in his article on international interventions in the former Yugoslavia, are looked for in the report. Later, two field trips will be made to the basketball camps of 2018 and 2019. The mission for the field trips is to verify the results of the analyses done on the earlier final report and to study the planning and implementation of the program based on the Ripple Effect model designed by an academic SDP specialist John Sugden. This is done to see if the program is planned and implemented so that it takes into consideration the broader environment in which it operates and tries to influence. Further, the aim of the field trips is to look for possible nostalgic appearances for the former Yugoslavia. The motivation for the last objective is the fact that the goal of the program is to build bridges between youth from different parts of the former Yugoslavia and to see if the shared past is utilized to strive for a more positive common future.

Nostalgic conversations about the success stories of the shared past, especially related to basketball, are something I have come across time and again during my travels in the region.

1.3 Author's Background Related to the Topic

As the thesis is an anthropological study, it starts off by introducing the author's own background, motivations and other possible connections in relations to the researched topic. When conducting participatory observation, the researcher should always reflect upon his subjective perspective to the studied issue. The aim of an academic research is always objectivity, but social science is also about interpretation of the various factors influencing the research process itself as well as the data gathered. Already by participating into the studied project, the researcher influences the studied situation. The researchers should reflect on their own background in relation to the studied topic to be able to avoid possible subliminal biases. Stef Jansen, a scholar who has done extensive anthropological research in the region, once explained the thought process behind every anthropological study he conducts. To him it is always a balancing act between an almost autobiographical perspective in relation to the studied topic and a complete concentration solely on the research subjects.

Since I had been interested in civil crisis management for years, I looked for courses that would add to my previous master's degree and enable me to steer my career towards conflict management and peace building. I had previously studied two business degrees in international programs that both included courses in intercultural communication. I applied to a new master's program in the University of Helsinki, called Religion, Conflict and Dialogue, in which the idea was to bring together students with different cultural and study backgrounds to study armed conflicts and violent - religious as well as political - radicalization from different perspectives. During the program, we got to study different types of life philosophies, including religions, to find new ways for dialogic approaches. We were also encouraged to concentrate our studies mainly to one conflict or geographical area. My previous degree programs included several courses in cross cultural communications concentrating mainly on different Asian cultures. I had also both worked in South Asia and studied in South East Asia, but this time I decided to concentrate on a region within Europe. I picked the countries of the former Yugoslavia, because I have done extensive traveling and a six-month internship in the region since the early 2000's.

The 1990's armed conflicts caused tremendous human suffering and tore apart the country known as Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The conflicts were also broadcasted almost daily in TV news throughout the decade. In the early 90's I also started playing basketball in the Helsinki YMCA and one of my first coaches was from the region. His coaching emphasized playing for the team over individual scoring abilities. During high school I got to know more people who had moved to Finland from the region. It was ideal to combine my interest for the game of basketball and to the region in my second Master's thesis.

Around the same time as I made my first trip to Serbia, I also started reading articles and books related to the break up wars and more generally about the history of the region. During and after my military service, in 2003, I also got to meet people who had taken part in UN and NATO peacekeeping missions in different parts and times of the break-up wars. Their experiences differed a lot depending on the place and time of their mission. At the time the difference in perspectives was puzzling, but also fascinating and it motivated me to read more. It thought about the complexity of conflicts, the difficulties of finding reliable information during those conflicts and the importance of considering the motivations of the writers. Nowadays online- and social media have made worldwide delivery of information almost instant, but the capabilities of these new mediums are also used for political purposes and economic benefits.

Studying the issues related to the topic has taught me about the importance of understanding multiple narratives and the importance of avoiding making conclusions too soon on such multifaceted topics as conflicts. Getting objective information from conflicts is a very challenging task. Examining multiple perspectives to a matter does not mean that any of those perspectives would override facts. Opinions are only opinions until they are scientifically proven, and science will then correct itself if new facts arise through scientific methods. In the case of social science, the researcher does interpretations based on his own perspective, which should be considered when studying new findings.

During my travels in the region I had noticed time and again how people in different parts of the former Yugoslavia used to reminisce the past success of their shared national team. I lively remember a car ride from my first trip to Belgrade. We were on our way from a night club at Splava to some random joint in the cellar of an old house in Banovo Brdo district. A friend of mine told me to jump into his friend's car and we would meet up again at the destination. I crammed

into a small car – a Yugo if I remember correctly, with four Serbs who I had just met. During the ride we got into a conversation about a shared hobby, basketball, and quickly we were talking about the great Yugoslav team of 1990 that won the World Championship that year. The team consisted of players from Croatia, Serbia and one from Slovenia, headed by international stars such as Vlade Divac, Drazen Petrovic, Toni Kukoc and Zarko Paspalj, but also the 1991 team, that won the Eurobasket, and added more international “goats” to the team such as Dino Radja, Aleksandar Djordjevic and Predrag Danilovic. I mentioned that I had been a big fan of Drazen Petrovic in the 90’s when I was playing in the Helsinki YMCA.¹ I remember sweating when I got a firm reminder that he was a Croat who openly supported the country’s independence. As our designated driver was scorching through Belgrade night traffic, I was relieved to hear that while the other members of our starting five agreed with the reminder, they also agreed with me that Drazen was a very skilled player and that it was sad that he’s career and life ended too early because of a car accident. The gang started sharing memories of the best plays and wins of the Yugoslav team. I later noticed similar moments of reminiscing of the success of Yugoslav basketball on my other trips to Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. As I studied other courses at the Aleksanteri Institute that referred to the phenomenon called Yugonostalgia, the success of Yugoslav basketball came up again as one of its main components. The shared nostalgia related to basketball in different parts of the divided communities intrigued my interest.

2. Previous Research

2.1 *The Break-Up*

Yugoslavia faced a multitude of problems. The republics strived for more power, and were encouraged to do so by several Western governments, while the Kosovo issue was never properly addressed – not even in the Dayton Peace Accords – and Serbia tried to gain as much as possible before all was going to end. People who officially stated their national identity as Yugoslav, was very low, and it didn’t change significantly from the 60’s until 1989.² Klanjsek and Flere examined the census data from 1986 and 1990 and their findings indicate that no significant

¹ More about Drazen Petrovic and the later ethnopolitics related to his background, see Perica 2014, in Abazović & Velikonja (eds.), 111-113; and the documentary film *Once Brothers* directed by Tolaijan in 2010.

² Sekulic et al. 1994, 85,89,95.

need for independent states existed among the youth in the former data nor among the adults in the later census data. Kosovo Albanians and later Slovenes were the only peoples within Yugoslavia who showed such emancipation. Klanjsek and Flere made the assumption that it was thus entrepreneurial manipulation, rather than longing for mono-national states that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia.³

Susan Woodward and John Lampe, among others, have studied the economic problems Yugoslavia faced especially in the 80's and the reforms made to tackle these issues.⁴ Others have pointed out the difficulties that the socialist system had in a neoliberal hegemony. Again, there can hardly be a simple explanation, or one reason, for the final break up. It seems that all parties to the 90's wars committed crimes prohibited by the Geneva conventions, including those involved in the humanitarian intervention.⁵ Further, the top-level leaders of the biggest warring sides Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic all died before they were convicted of those crimes. On the other hand, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic – both representing the Bosnian Serb leadership and among the most well-known fugitives of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) – were sentenced as members of various joint criminal enterprises for genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches against the Geneva Conventions.⁶

Several authors have pointed out the difference in perspective between 'local' and 'Western' research. Florian Bieber explains that both Western and Balkan scholars have often fallen into the trap of hindsight bias, i.e. studying the history is affected by knowing the end outcome of the past events. Memories can be reshaped by later experiences, and the later history can be seen as inevitable or foreseeable. Bieber also describes how we tend to take in such new information more easily that fits the previous narrative in our minds. Yugonostalgia as an overly positive view of the 'good old times' has developed from the disappointment to the current state of affairs in the Balkans after Yugoslavia's destruction.⁷

³ Klanjsek & Flere 2011, 791.

⁴ Woodward 1995; Lampe 1996.

⁵ Lowe 2000; Shah 2007; Gazzini 2001; Roth 2000; Schwabach 2000; Mandelbaum 1999; Jokic 2003; Cohn 1999; Rosen 2013.

⁶ ICTY 2019. For further information, an interesting documentary on the most horrific violation against the laws of war in the former Yugoslavia: Srebrenica Massacre: is it meant to be? – VPRO documentary 2015.

⁷ Bieber et al. 2014, Introduction.

Sergej Flere points out that more scholarly work is done by authors who have moved away from the region than by those who still live in the post Yugoslav states. The topics of social scientists are overwhelmingly related to the break-up of Yugoslavia instead of other important local issues. The research papers coming from the region in the 90's were more clearly affected by trauma and nationalism than today. Flere states that although the variety of reasons that scholars abroad give to the end of Yugoslavia is much wider than coming from Balkans, there are clear differences in the Balkan literature as well, depending on which post-Yugoslav state the author is from. Balkan authors very rarely tend to use ancient hatreds or incompatibility of nations as reasons for the wars, in contrast to some 'Western' scholars. Another point that Flere makes is that Serbian authors tend to see outside influence and geopolitics as one of the reasons more often than their colleagues in other Balkan countries. Flere agrees with Wachtel and Bennett's argument that the reasons leading to the end of Yugoslavia were multidimensional and the end itself resulted from a 'multiple organ failure'.⁸

Reana Senjkovic states that during and soon after the wars, scholars from different parts of the region were often claiming each other's work biased and although symposiums have been put up later to gather works from all over Balkans, these national differences have pertained to some extent. She also notes that some scholars have had the need to avoid critique by studying a different region than their home state.⁹

2.2 Overly Simplified Narratives

The armed conflicts that broke the country known as Yugoslavia caused enormous human suffering. Populist politicians provoked fear and hatred to divide people and their identities through overly simplistic black and white dichotomies of us versus them or good versus evil. Religious institutions were also used to boost ethnic nationalism, which helped the fear and hate mongering politicians to gain more power and mobilize imagined communities against each other. In the West the conflicts were too often explained in an overly simplified and Orientalist

⁸ Bieber et al. 2014, Chapter 6: Introduction. Balkan scholars' cross-regional history project, "committed to historical facts" of Yugoslav history available online at www.yuhistorija.com. For further research, the Yugoslav archives in English online at www.arhivyu.gov.rs/active/en/home.html.

⁹ Bieber et al. 2014, Chapter 7.

terms¹⁰. The Balkan peoples were seen as inherently violent and having ancient ethnic hatreds towards each other.

Dehumanizing communities through overly simplistic narratives of “them” as hostile towards “us” is a common strategy to militarily mobilize people. This was also the case in Yugoslavia. Similar orientalist¹¹ narratives were often used in at least Europe and North America in explaining the conflicts by framing the Balkan peoples as inherently violent and having ancient hatreds towards each other. Serbian political leaders are largely to blame for how violently the Socialist Yugoslavia fell apart, but they are hardly the only criminals in this terrible conflict. Too many Western reporters indulged in demonizing Serbian people in general through creating a black and white narrative of the war. Different sides of the conflicts also used public relations companies and lobbying firms to create a public image of their cause and actions beneficial for them.¹² On the other hand, many scholars questioned the motivation and implementation of the military intervention, as well as the way the intervention was sold to the public with, yet again, overly simplistic narratives.¹³ Some even went so far that they did not see a need for aiming for an objective or even a multi-perspective picture since there was only one side that did not get her view heard.¹⁴ These overly simplistic, and sometimes contradicting, narratives intrigued my interest into the topic.

Just as national communities are imagined¹⁵, so are - at least to some extent - ethnic identities. This is the case almost all over the world, also in the Balkan context. People have travelled and mixed throughout times. The earliest personal identifications in the region are related to the town or village that a person lived in, the religion she identified with and in some places to the larger Empire – not a nation state - her local village was ruled by. In the 18th century, Balkans was referred to as the Rumeli, the former Roman lands that the Ottoman Empire had conquered from the Byzantium. The Orthodox Christians of the region spoke of themselves as the Romans or simply Christians. In the 19th century, all Orthodox Christians, both Slavs and Greek, were often called Greek in Western European literature. Only in the 1880’s names of the successor states of Greece, Serbia,

¹⁰ Jackson 2004.

¹¹ Said 1987.

¹² O’Sullivan 1992; Diggs-Brown 2011, 438. Also, personal discussions with a former colleague who organized PR campaigns in the US during the Kosovo War.

¹³ Oberg 2007; Galtung 2007; Galtung et al. 2014; Mandel 2001; Parenti 2002; Chomsky 1999; President Koivisto 2000.

¹⁴ Laine 2000.

¹⁵ Anderson 1991.

Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania started taking over the terminology used for the different parts of the region.¹⁶

During times of conflict there was co-operative interaction over religious and ethnic lines, but also representatives of different ethnicities and with different religious affiliation were acting on all sides. Both during times of conflict and peace there have been co-operation and peaceful coexistence. Examples of past conflicts in the Balkans like the Serbian uprising in the Ottoman Empire between 1804 – 30¹⁷ – which was actually organized to preserve the Sultan’s rule – and the battles that broke out in the Vojvodina region of the then Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1848¹⁸ both show that the groupings and sides of these conflicts were both ethnically and religiously very mixed. In fact, most of the conflicts in the region have not been ethnic in origin or character. In the First World War there were Serbs fighting for the Central Powers against Serbia. Only during the Second World War, did ethnicity play a significant role in the conflict. Both Ustasha and Chetniks waged war on the basis of ethnicity. But again, many Croats and Serbs opposed them. Also some Albanians and Bosnian Muslims fought on the side of the German and Italian troops, and many resisted the occupying forces with the Partisans.¹⁹ Changing one’s religion and mixed marriages over ethno-religious lines have been common in the region at least from the Ottoman era²⁰ and one third of Bosnian marriages were inter-ethnic before the 90’s. An interesting case of intercommunity co-operation can later be seen in the underground criminal organizations. Often such organizations co-operate in criminal activities across ethno-religious lines.²¹ This is particularly interesting since some of the individuals of these groups might have been in some cases involved in the most serious atrocities against each other’s peoples during the 1990’s wars.²²

2.3 Ethnic Nationalism

Almost all ideologies’ – for example most religions – the fundamental idea is positive, but they may also be used for terrible purposes. There are of course also exclusivist and racist ideologies like Nazism that are destructive from the get-go. Institutionalized religions have been used for boosting exclusivist and

¹⁶ Mazower 2001, 1-4.

¹⁷ Glenny 1999, 1-22.

¹⁸ Glenny 1999, 53

¹⁹ Mazower 1997.

²⁰ Buturovic & Schick 2007, 326.

²¹ Arsovska 2015, 142.

²² Bieber et al. 2014, Chapter 1.

discriminatory ethnic nationalisms during conflicts in the region at least since 1930's, while Nazism also was a destructive ideology in the region during the Second World War.²³

George Orwell has written essays on the different types of nationalism, namely positive, transferred and negative ones.²⁴ Charles de Gaulle stated that Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first. Benedict Anderson points out that nationalism's roots are in fear and hatred of the perceived other.²⁵ Edward Said questions the notion of distinct cultures, in terms of race, religion and civilization. Said notes that they often function either as a form of self-promotion over others or even creating hostility against the "other".²⁶ In the case of the ex- Yugoslav states, although regional particularities of traditions and customs between communities have and do exist, the question of strictly distinct cultures seem particularly problematic, since so many aspects of the cultures seem to be shared in one way or the other. These are largely questions of definition and all of the shared identities mentioned can either be inclusive or exclusive to varying degrees. When given power, exclusivist and discriminatory ethnic nationalism seems to be among the ideologies that have the potential for being the most destructive and thus the worst kind.

During the Second World War, Catholic Church played an influential role in the fascist Ustasha movement that was resurrected again for the cause of the 1990's. The influence of the different religious institutions was visible on all sides and gave another backing for the nationalist ideologies. Mercenaries and foreign fighters with religious, political or circumstantial motivations flocked the ranks of all of the warring sides. Mujahedeen fighters mostly from Arab countries were notorious in the Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) forces, but international neo-Nazis were an equally destructive force on the Croatian side, while mainly Russian and Greek volunteers fought alongside their Serbian Orthodox brethren. The Greek volunteers were also visibly present in the Srebrenica massacre as Greek flags were flown while the so-called UN safe heaven was taken over by the Bosnian Serb forces.²⁷ The religio-political ideologies that divided the communities then

²³ Perica 2002; Perica 2014, 39-40.

²⁴ Orwell 1945, 287-295.

²⁵ Anderson 1991, 141.

²⁶ Said 1987, 325.

²⁷ Konstantinidis 2017.

still exist in South-East Europe, but nowadays also Russian backed European far right movements are building different kinds of international bridges all around the region.²⁸

2.4 Civil Religion

According to Vjekoslav Perica, modern spirituality has shifted from the belief in supernatural Gods, theologies, and religious myths to a much more powerful social forces and individual emotions of patriotic belonging and national identities. Nationalism has also been described as a secular religion by George L. Mosse.²⁹ A patriotic force increasing cohesion within societies called civil religion has been studied since the 2nd century BCE by a Greek historian called Polybius and later by a French author called Numas Denis Fustel de Coulanges, but the term is more known from Rousseaus 1762 philosophical classic *The Social Contract*. Other Enlightenment thinkers such as Tocqueville also wrote about the similarities with religious myths, symbols and practices with those related to the nation state worship and national identity. Civil religion has more recently been studied in the US context by Robert Neely Bellah in the 1960's.³⁰ Perica explains that as regimes such as Communism and Nazism created their own systems of nation state worship they usually had problematic relations with religious institutions, and thus civil religion refers to the systems more tolerant to both religious citizens and non-believers. Nation states require myths, rituals, symbols, but they also require citizens to obey and be governed through bureaucracies, police and armies. The citizens are expected to be ready to lie, kill and die for the state or be punished for disobedience. Nations create myths of their, often historically inaccurate, origin and these myths are needed to create shared national identities. Friedrich Nietzsche and Ernest Renan spoke about the calculation involved in memory making through forgetting. Nationalist histories are myths done by forgetting the unfavorable facts and underlining the ones that make the nation look wise, noble and heroic.³¹

Perica constructs the Yugoslav civil religion of Brotherhood and Unity from the following components: 1) the Myths of the Nation's Origin during the Second World War Partisan struggle and the anti-stalinist era after 1948; 2) the Yugoslav

²⁸ Radicevic 2019.

²⁹ Perica 2002, 4-5.

³⁰ Online Encyclopedia Britannica s.a..

³¹ Perica 2002, 4-5.

spirit of equality and unity of all ethnic groups and minorities; 3) the Tito cult with all its rituals; 4) the foreign policy of Non-Alignment and the Yugoslav model of socialism, ie. Self-Management; 5) the Yugoslav sports and the national team in particular.³² Perica also argues that the Tito cult and national sports were mechanism that managed conflicts within the country.³³ Many of the components in Perica's construction of the Yugoslav civil religion are evidently also part of the later movement of Yugonostalgia.³⁴

Socialist Yugoslavia was far from a perfect society. The socialist federation had its own political trials and prison camps for the dissidents of the system. The purges after the Second World War and confiscations of property by the new state created resentment in the communities affected by them. The socialist federation was still relatively successful in downplaying the ethnic nationalisms that later destroyed the country. The federation was officially comprised of several distinct nations who worked together for a brighter future after successfully resisting the occupying fascist forces of the Second World War. A particular example of the workings of the promoted ideology of brotherhood and unity was seen when the federation's multiethnic national team competed on international arenas. The success of the Yugoslav national team, especially in basketball, also became a big part of a phenomenon called Yugonostalgia. Many people felt nostalgic for the country, because it was destroyed with such devastating violence and because the promises of democratization and neoliberal reforms only ended up benefitting the very few.

2.5 Sport as a Tool for Building Bridges between Communities

As the thesis studies an SDP program I want to examine if there are theoretical prerequisites for sport to be successfully used in post conflict reconciliation processes and especially in building bridges over intercommunity divides. Sports may bring people together, but especially fandom also definitely divides people. Can sport then be used as a tool to bridge divided communities? Team sports seem to sometimes bring up emotions in us similar to those instincts needed by herd animals. George Orwell had a very pessimistic opinion on this, as he

³² Perica 2002, 95; 2001.

³³ Perica 2001, 269.

³⁴ For a critical approach to the Yugoslav civil religion and especially on the cult of personality of Tito, see Flere 2007.

described sport as “war minus the shooting” in his essay *The Sporting Spirit*.³⁵ Others have had a more positive stance on the potential of sports in community cohesion and intercommunity relations, as a cathartic outlet for emotions and rivalry without the need for actual violence. The following positive examples are often brought up in this context. The Olympic truce, or *ekecheiria*, refers to the myth of Greek city states retaining from violence during the original Olympic tournament. Another short truce took place on the Christmas of 1914, when British and German troops decided to play football in the no man’s land in the midst of the First World War. Also cases of sports diplomacy such as that between USA and China in the late 70’s involving table tennis and that between India and Pakistan in early 2000’s organized through cricket games.³⁶ Probably the best known community cohesion process, in which sport played a big role in, was that of South Africa. National sports had been used in the discriminatory politics of the apartheid government, but later after Nelson Mandela was freed from imprisonment and became the president, the success of the national sports teams united the citizens.³⁷ Bruce Kidd has wisely pointed out that sport itself is neither inherently good nor bad, the outcome always depends on the social forces surrounding it in a given context.³⁸

Professional sports organizations are active in antiracist educational programs and development work, but some fan groups often also include violent hooligans. In the Balkan context, football hooligans were turned into paramilitary groups and the same happened in Rwanda.³⁹ Richard Mills has written plenty on Balkan football and the politics related to it. Interesting cases can be found from his studies on for example Sarajevo’s football clubs. In retrospect, the riot on the 13th of May 1990, during a football game held at the Maksimir Stadium in Zagreb, Croatia between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade, or the Bad Blue Boys and the Delije respectfully, seems like a prognosis of what was to come. Around 3000 Serbian fans of the Delije fan club had travelled to Zagreb with Zeljko Raznatovic, alias Arkan. Later some of the Delije fans were turned into a notorious paramilitary group called the Arkan’s Tigers.⁴⁰ Second round of Croatia’s first multiparty elections had just been held on the 6th of May and

³⁵ Orwell 1945, 300.

³⁶ Sugden 2010, 259-260.

³⁷ Sugden 2010, 262-263.

³⁸ Sugden 2010, 262.

³⁹ Vivod 2013, 24.

⁴⁰ Sugden 2010, 262.

nationalist HDZ party had won under the future war time president Franjo Tudjman.

Although sports most definitely also divide people, using sports as a tool for intervention in post-conflict settings for promoting development and peaceful social relations has increased in popularity since the late 1990's. Later these types of projects were placed under an umbrella term, Sports for Development and Peace (SDP).⁴¹ The SDP sector has also emerged as a substantial academia of its own, which most often has utilized sports studies as an interdisciplinary platform to bring together anthropologists, sociologists as well as political scientists.⁴² The United Nations has also promoted it in development and peace initiatives. Sports had been used in post conflict reconciliation processes before, but in 2001 Kofi Annan raised sport on the UN agenda as an important tool in achieving the millennium development goals. In 2003, a task force with representatives of ten UN organizations such as ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNV, UNAIDS, and WHO published a report that stated "sport at all levels, from play and physical activity to elite and competitive sport" being a "powerful and cost-effective way to advance the millennium development goals".⁴³

According to Giulianotti – a scholar who has written plenty of articles related to SDP projects – sports in general is found to have multiple benefits in implementing development and peace projects, but there are reasons for particularly using basketball as the chosen sport in the context of post Yugoslavia.⁴⁴ Vjekoslav Perica has written on many occasions about the importance of the Yugoslav sports and national teams in the making of a common Yugoslav identity. The multi-ethnic ideology of brotherhood and unity both gained from and spurred the success of the Yugoslav reprezentacija. The national basketball team of Yugoslavia was amongst the very few who could compete neck and neck with the most dominant national team in the world, namely that of the United States. Perica has also argued that besides Tito cult, the national teams' success was one of the key elements in managing ethnic tensions in the country, as well as being an important component of the Yugoslav civil religion. The

⁴¹ For an overview of SDP projects around the world, see the Swiss Academy for Development's SDP Platform available online at <http://www.sportanddev.org>.

⁴² Giulianotti 2011, 279.

⁴³ United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace s.a..

⁴⁴ Giulianotti 2011, 291.

national basketball team's success has later also evolved into an influential part of a phenomenon called Yugonostalgia.⁴⁵

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Foucauldian Governmentality

The analysis is based on Michel Foucault's theory on governmentality. Foucault gave a lecture in the College de France in 1978, in which he made an account of the problematics related to a government, or rather governing. Foucault's governmentality means: "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target the population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security".⁴⁶ Foucault coined this definition by going through the historical developments in the use of power, and more specifically the shift of power from sovereignty, to a state of justice, further to an administrative state and finally to the current governmentalized state.⁴⁷ However, the definition of the phenomenon does not restrict the use of the power within the borders of a nation state. Hromadzic studied a school project in the segregated Mostar that brought together youth from two separated communities to study under the same roof. Sampson on the other hand studied the history and present reality of civil society activities in the Balkans, namely projects implemented by NGO's.

To Foucault, political economy is the principal form of knowledge and political rationalities are more or less systematized ways of thinking. The rationalities are used to problematize individual as well as institutional actions, while they are also the solutions to these actions. Apparatuses of security are the technical means of governmentality. The political technologies are the practices that turn the rationalities into actions. Population is the target of both the rationalities and technologies. What the term population refers to is the dependent of the particular case under examination. According to Foucault, the forms of governmentality are always historically specific. This is because the forms are mutually constitutive, so that they interact with each other, depend on each other and both produce as well as are products of particular discourses of the time.

⁴⁵ Perica 2001; 2002; 2014a; 2014b.

⁴⁶ Foucault 1991, 102.

⁴⁷ Foucault 1991, 103.

Another important point that Foucault makes is that the power of governmentality is always distributed. In the model, he rejects the conspiratory idea that power would be in the hands of any individual, group or institution. Instead, governmental power is distributed across a social landscape, which includes but is not only limited to different types of standards, educational institutions, methods of surveillance, policies, programs, expert knowledges, capabilities, as well as tools of measurement and evaluation. Further, governmentality exists always in plural. This refers to the idea that within any state, political system or society there are always or at least often several co-existing governmentalities. In Foucault's words: "Government is defined as a right manner of disposing things so as to lead not to the form of the common good [...] but to an end which is 'convenient' for each of the things that are to be governed. This implies a plurality of specific aims: for instance, government will have to ensure that the greatest possible quantity of wealth is produced, that the people are provided with sufficient means of subsistence, that the population is enabled to multiply, etc".⁴⁸

3.2 Mostar School Project

To avoid researching the topic with blinkers on, I also wanted to compare the program that PLAY is operating with another program that tried to sew up interethnic divides in the region. For the purpose I looked into an academic study of an interethnic school project in a particularly divided Bosnian town.

In her article, Azra Hromadzic studied a school project in a Bosnian town that is strongly divided by the war into two separate communities, the Catholic Croats and the Bosniak Muslims. These two communities live on the opposite sides of the Neretva River that cuts through the town. The youth usually attend different schools, but in this project high school students were brought under the same roof for the first time. The students have a different name for the school building, the street on which it is located, and the groups have separate curriculums and class rooms. One of the only spaces that they share and in which they are in interaction is the unisex bathroom area in the school. Between classes the students spent time in the bathrooms smoking cigarettes and joking about each other's religions and traditions.⁴⁹ The target population of the project was the

⁴⁸ Foucault 1991, 95.

⁴⁹ Hromadzic 2011, 274-277; 279-281.

ethnically segregated youth of the city. They were both seen as the future of the country, but also as representatives of their ethnic societies that were incompatible in the same physical space. The existing problems were again physically represented in the way that most of the school's spaces were divided based on ethno-religious lines. The youth later found their own space that was not separated by authorities. It was the unisex bathrooms that the teenagers took to themselves to share over the ethno-religious lines.

3.3 Project Life

Another aim of the research is to see if the program bears resemblance to the norms of project life depicted by Steven Sampson. His notions of project life are quite critical of the foreign imposed strategies in planning and implementing humanitarian NGO projects in the former Yugoslavia.

Steven Sampson researched NGO projects in the Balkans and coined a rather controversial term to describe the way international interventions have been implemented since the Cold War, namely benevolent colonialism. Humanitarian projects are posed from outside the post conflict states and the projects are executed according to the blue prints brought in with them. These blueprints and the processes include project language and ideologies, as well as the praise of formal, i.e. Western, institutions over the local ages-old traditional ones. Projects bring experts and funds to the region, but later locals are also given opportunities to get formally educated abroad for running the projects. This education also brings with it the socialization of the locals to the Western and thus “modern”, neoliberal values and ways of doing things. Often the exits of the international organizations lead to local problems as the local realities haven't been taken into consideration before, or at any other stage of the projects. Sampson also grouped these Western project influences into four controls, namely the control over money, project personnel, knowledge and concepts.⁵⁰

3.4 Planning and Implementing Successful SDP Projects

This sub-chapter introduces a model for designing and implementing successful SDP projects. I will use the same model in analyzing the peace program under investigation in this thesis. The aim is to find out if the NGO takes into consideration and utilizes the wider context in which it operates in.

⁵⁰ Sampson 2003, 35-38.

Professor John Sugden has extensive experience of both academic research as well as planning and implementation of SDP projects. He is a co-founder of the Football for Peace Program and an Emeritus Professor of Sociology of Sport in the University of Brighton, as well as an advisor for the United Nations. He stresses – through a critical left-realist analysis – that planning and implantation of SDP projects should not be too idealistic or simplistic. In order to be effective, SDP projects should take into consideration the humanitarian perspective, be fully accountable for the local context, engage and employ locals, as well as it should interact and co-operate with the national and regional policy processes.⁵¹

He has constructed a ripple effect model to guide the practical SDP work. The model is represented as the waves created by dropping a stone into a still pool of water. The outer circles represent a context specific moral framework of human rights that should be informed by the transcending social and political processes, for example ongoing peace processes. The structure, content and goals of a project should be designed based on these realities. The inner circles represent the practical work and the values spread by the project. Further, the very center represents the target audience and participants, who should be surrounded by trained adult volunteers, both from the region and abroad, as well as any other locally useful and important adults from the local communities. The most important work is evidentially done within this inner structure of the model. In between the inner and outer circles represent a network of partners who can articulate the ideas created within the project to a wider community and policy makers. The work of the networks partners is important for it may influence the processes in the transcending social and political context and thus also affect the regional human rights situation. Each of the levels are then subject to monitoring, evaluation and research. The findings may aid in developing the project itself or the regional or even international realities as the ideas developed within the project are spread through academia to those in power. The model goes well with Lederach's web approach in which the strategy is to first have a local focus but later build networks of human relationships between individuals, communities and institutions. These types of networks then also protect the project from minor setbacks.⁵²

⁵¹ Sugden 2010, 270.

⁵² Sugden 2013, 92-94.

3.5 Yugonostalgia

3.5.1 Longing for the Shared Past

This subchapter takes a look at the cultural phenomenon called Yugonostalgia. Both during my studies and travels I have come across nostalgic conversations and other representations of the positive aspects in the shared Yugoslav past. The success stories in sports especially in basketball has often been a common conversation topic even in settings that didn't directly relate to the sport.

According to Vjekoslav Perica the success of the Yugoslav national team was an influential part of the civil religion, as well as it mitigated conflicts during turmoiled times.⁵³ These shared experiences are still reminisced even among people who didn't live during the Yugo-era.⁵⁴ The studied NGO uses basketball as the tool in bringing communities together in the region and I want to see if this type of nostalgia plays a part in reaching their objective for a more positive common future between the communities in the region.

The Cultural phenomenon of nostalgia took different forms in the post socialist states in their transitions into neoliberal market economies. Yugoslavia had broken away from the official influence of Stalin and the Soviet Union already in 1948 and was a founder of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. The socialist system of Yugoslavia was thus distinct from the Soviet states of the eastern bloc with relatively open borders, thriving popular culture with plenty of influence from the United States and a market economy of its own kind. On the other hand, the breakup of Yugoslavia was much more violent, and characterized by ethno-religious divides and resurrection of old myths for nationalistic purposes, than the independence processes of the other Eastern European Soviet states. In this chapter we will look at some of the representations of a cultural movement called Yugonostalgia and take one interesting project as a case example of the phenomenon.

According to Vjekoslav Perica, even when Yugoslavia was struggling in the political and economical crisis of the 1980's, the country was still loved by millions who also had faith in its survival. The 14th, and the last, congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was held in the January of 1990. Instead of shouting nationalist slogans, Croat and Slovene delegates shed tears while they

⁵³ Perica 2002, 95; 2001, 269.

⁵⁴ Perica 2002, p. 206-208. More information on Yugoslav sports in relation to politics and nostalgia see Perica's (chapter IV) article in Abazović & Velikonja (eds.) 2014.

were walking out of the last session. Yugoslavia's so called lost generation had been educated in towns and cities throughout the country. They were well educated, multicultural and had an optimistic and open view of the future, but they were also too fragile to save the country from the future turmoils. Urban youth culture, sports, Yugo pop and rock music, satire and the civil religion were the last line of defense, but unfortunately, they were no more capable in changing the country's path from the coming nationalist fear and hate mongering. Examples of the last waves of collective Yugoslav patriotism were the Olympics held in Sarajevo, the last Youth Relay, Tito's funeral and the success of Yugoslav national teams in different sports. The vivid urban culture presented in youth magazines, cinema and satire TV shows promoted democratization and ridiculed nationalist myths. Many celebrated pop and rock artists and bands defended the unity of the country that had inspired them.⁵⁵ Perica also claims that sports was one of the most effective forces of cohesion for the unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia, and that even after the country's collapse sports continued to celebrate that unity.⁵⁶

In 1992, seven thousand people were marching on the streets of Sarajevo for brotherhood and unity, to preserve the five-hundred-year-old tradition of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs living together in the city. They were fired upon by snipers.⁵⁷ During the violent conflict, in 1992 a survey showed that 4.5 million people identified themselves as Yugoslavs by nationality, instead of the ethnic identities promoted by the nationalist propagandists.⁵⁸ 70 percent of the respondents to a survey done in Croatia in 1997 perceived Tito as a great statesman and a year later 80 percent of respondents preferred Tito over the new Croat nationalist leader Tudjman. A social sentiment named in the press as Yugonostalgia started spreading more and more in the latter half of the 90's. Yugonostalgia was presented in all types of mediums and cultural forms, as well as in sports events. The former Yugoslav national basketball team's coach, Bogdan Tanjevic, who at the time was the head coach of team Italia, proposed in a 1999 interview a basketball league between the successor states of Yugoslavia.

⁵⁵ For more information on the Yugoslav music scene in relations to politics and Yugonostalgia see Baker 2008; Mišina 2011; Velikonja (chapter III) article in Abazović & Velikonja (eds.) 2014.

⁵⁶ Perica 2002, p. 206-208. More information on Yugoslav sports in relation to politics and nostalgia see Perica's (chapter IV) article in Abazović & Velikonja (eds.) 2014.

⁵⁷ Perica 2002, 206-208. More information on Yugoslav sports in relation to politics and nostalgia see Perica's (chapter IV) article in Abazović & Velikonja (eds.) 2014.

⁵⁸ Perica 2002, 201.

Tanjevic saw this league being part of the wider Balkan Peace Process. The proposal received attention and the Adriatic League was put up in 2001 as a reconciliation effort with international financial support. Nostalgic Online sites and communities dedicated to Yugoslavia started spreading the WorldWideWeb. One of them was called the Cyber Yugoslavia.⁵⁹ An interesting nostalgic community with its own national symbols, constitutions and anthems, for all those who felt they did not agree with the nationalist movements that had destroyed their former home.⁶⁰

Post Yugoslav regimes tried to exploit the fame of various apolitical personalities for their nationalistic purposes, although these celebrities of sports and popular culture also reminded many of the multi-ethnic composition of Yugoslavia. This was done by revising their careers and biographies to meet the needs the nationalistic rhetorics, or by rejecting those who did not fit the narrative, because of their place of birth, ethnicity or attitudes toward nationalistic ideologies. Perica states that sports was referred to the "most important secondary issue in the world" for the citizens of Yugoslavia, as well as in the post conflict states and it is a major part of Yugonostalgia. In the case of athletes whom Perica has studied, the multitude of loyalties and affiliation through international networks before and after the breakup of Yugoslavia, as well as their complex heritage made the task almost impossible.⁶¹

3.5.2 Theorising Nostalgia

"Twentieth century began with utopia and ended up with nostalgia."⁶² The word nostalgia has its roots in two Greek words, nostos and algia. Nostos stands for a return home, while algia refers to longing. The term nostalgia was first used in a 17th century Swiss medical dissertation in which it referred to a curable disease that displaced people were diagnosed to suffer from. Svetlana Boym defines nostalgia as a historical emotion that entails three characteristics. It coexists with modernity or the present time so that it is a new understanding of a certain time and space. There is a desire to turn that understanding into a private or collective mythology and so defy the irreversibility of time. Nostalgia also combines the present needs with the memories of the past and thus affects the future as well.

⁵⁹ Perica 2002, 206-208.

⁶⁰ Cyber Yugoslavia (1999). Available Online at <http://www.juga.com/>. For more information see Stevanović 2017.

⁶¹ Perica 2014, 50-51.

⁶² Boym 2007, 7.

Unlike melancholia, nostalgia is also about collective memories. According to Boym, nostalgia can bring people together with its universality, but without critical reflection it can also create monsters. Some type of nostalgia for an ideal homeland is often part of nationalistic ideologies, but politicians who resort in this type of nostalgia can create an idea of homeland that is discriminatory and thus destructive.⁶³

19th century thinkers thought that Enlightenment and technological progress would cure nostalgia, but instead technological advances have increased the pace of life so that longing for a time of less stress and anxiety came with those advances. Similarly, globalization with all its complexities has increased a need for smaller collectives with shared memories and ideals. Boym also points out the fact that nostalgia has often followed big turning points of history, like revolutions, and presented itself in the form of unrealized possibilities of the past together with the unpredictable future. She also notes that as terms related to globalization such as progress, modernity and virtual reality were first used by poets and philosophers, also nostalgia represents itself in riddles and puzzles which one should be reflectively aware of in order not to fall into its alluring simple solutions.⁶⁴

According to Boym nostalgia is not only related to a physical displacement but also to the change in the conception of time. She considers modern nostalgia as a longing “for the impossibility of a mythical return”.⁶⁵ Due to the complexities of the present reality, modern nostalgia takes us back to a more easily comprehensible time and place that never really existed. In response to the Enlightenment, romantic nationalism highlighted the particularities of a nation. National poets started writing about each nation’s nostalgia for the homeland that in reality had never existed. These writers also came up with unique words to describe their nations yearning for the imaginary homeland. It should not come as a surprise that this national nostalgia often was and still is stronger in the displaced or expatriated communities.

Romanticism and mass culture produced national institutions and monuments of nostalgia in the 19th century. Good examples of this are different types of national and regional museums, heritage foundations, as well as

⁶³ Boym 2001, xiii-xiv; 2007, 8-10.

⁶⁴ Boym 2007, 10-11.

⁶⁵ Boym 2007, 12.

monuments and memorials. Industrialization and modernization further increased longing for the slower pace of life and easily comprehensible reality through imagined tradition and heritage. In recreating memories of tradition and heritage, romantic national nostalgia has also very much to do with forgetting. It is about cherry picking and highlighting aspects from the past while downplaying others, which makes it problematic and creates the need for reflection. Boym brings up Pierre Nora's observation of how memorial sites are institutionalized when actual memories start to fade. She points out that this ritual seems to compete with the irreversibility of time.⁶⁶

Svetlana Boym describes two different types of nostalgia, namely a restorative and a reflective type. She points out that the restorative version concentrates on the *nostos* by attempting to reconstruct an imagined home, while the reflective version stresses the *algia* or longing part of the phenomenon and doing this in a desperate, but wistful, and often also in an ironic manner. She points out that this division is not as clearly dualistic, but rather the different representations of nostalgia can be placed somewhere between these two extremes. By doing this distinction she tries to identify and make sense of the tendencies and narrative structures of the phenomenon. She states that the restorative type in its pure form narrates itself as absolute truth and tradition, while reflective versions question those "truths" and rather inspires considering "the ambivalence of human longing and belonging".⁶⁷ Forms of national and religious revivals are representations of restorative nostalgia. Restorative nostalgia tries to bring back "original", real and universal values for national identity.

Reflective nostalgia on the other hand explores many places and times at once and concentrates on details rather than symbols. Boym brings up Eric Hobsbawm's distinction between the old customs and the traditions invented in the 19th century. Interestingly the invented traditions overly highlight the symbolism and ritualism of the actual grass root patterns which it speaks of. Boym states two paradoxes related to restorative nostalgia. The more influential the present modernization process, the more conservative and set in stone the invented traditions seem to be. Also, the more the historic continuity and traditional values are emphasized, the more forgetting and cherry-picking of

⁶⁶ Boym 2007, 12-13.

⁶⁷ Boym 2007, 12-13.

history is involved.⁶⁸ The invented tradition builds on the sense of loss of community and cohesion and offers a comforting collective script for individual longing.⁶⁹

Boym refers to Benedict Anderson's work titled *Imagined Communities* in explaining the perception that industrialization and secularization of societies in the early 19th century developed a certain social as well as spiritual meaninglessness. Different types of imagined communities can be created to advance a sense of individual belonging, social cohesion and security, as well as obedience to authority. These communities can be developed through political manipulation in the form of nationalism, which may take different forms, i.e. ethno-religious exclusivism or different forms of multi-ethnic and -religious communities.⁷⁰

The restorative forms of nostalgia often use two types of rhetorics, namely on the one hand the restoration of the imagined origins of the community and on the other those with conspiratorial worldviews. Conspiracy theories bare within different types of transcendental cosmologies and premodern ideas of good versus evil. Conspiracy theories often require the mythical enemy and its extreme forms innate the imaginative home being under constant threat. Reflective nostalgia is not concerned with recreating the lost past, but rather with increasing individual flexibility towards historic and individual time. It focuses on a type of meditation of history and the passage of time, rather than restoring an overly simplistic and absolute truth. Restorative nostalgia takes emblems and rituals of homeland dead seriously, while reflective nostalgia acknowledges the fragmented form of memories and it can be ironic. The latter includes critical self-reflection and does not strive to rebuild the mythical homeland. Boym points out Marcel Proust's idea of remembrance being an unpredictable adventure, in which words open up new mental pathways, while the time-space borderlines are blurred. Proust's conception of memory goes well with the reflective type of nostalgia.⁷¹

According to Svetlana Boym the first decade of the 21st century was characterised by cross cultural nostalgic narratives that migrate beyond national attachments and borders, also often opposing one another. Nostalgia can be an individual mechanism for survival or a form of counter culture and be presented

⁶⁸ Boym 2007, 13-14.

⁶⁹ Boym 2007, 14.

⁷⁰ Boym 2007, 14.

⁷¹ Boym 2007, 14-16.

in for example literature, arts, architecture, politics or popular culture. It is always important to acknowledge who is the narrator in each representation of nostalgia. Boym underlines the importance to take responsibility of one's own nostalgia, because often the pre-packaged ideas of the lost imagined homelands should not be the realities of the future.⁷² She emphasises the need for self-reflection by stating that: “[t]he imperative of a contemporary nostalgic is to be homesick and sick of home—occasionally at the same time.”⁷³

Nicole Lindström has analysed different forms of post Yugoslav popular culture, namely cinema, music and online media through Svetlana Boym's theory of Nostalgia and placed other representations into a restorative and other into a reflexive category. According to Lindström Yugonostalgia often emerged as a counter force to neo-fascist and exclusivist nationalist discourses. Restorative versions try to cling to the lost past while reflective representations discuss possible versions for the future.⁷⁴

3.5.3 The Pioneer Movement and the Youth Labor Action

The camp site of Letenka was built by a socialist youth organization called the Youth Labor Action and many of the activities at the camp bared resemblance to those organized for and by the Yugoslav Pioneers. They are also influential parts of the afore-explained phenomenon called Yugonostalgia. This is why we will take a look at these two youth movements. I am interested in the ways in which the government of socialist Yugoslavia systematically tried to influence both mental and physical upbringing and development of its citizens. The ideologies behind the Pioneer and Youth Labor Action organizations had an effect and in some ways still do affect the people who underwent the socialist schooling system. According to Marko Attila Hoare both nostalgics and nationalists have had conflicting claims about the pioneer movement's multinational character or if it was more genuinely an exclusively Serb or Croat movement.⁷⁵

My personal understanding is that the generations who took part in the activities of the aforementioned movements, mostly look back at those times with positive nostalgia. On the other hand, one must point out, in the same breath, that taking part was not optional and that people from different parts of the former

⁷² Boym 2007, 16-18.

⁷³ Boym 2007, 18.

⁷⁴ Lindstrom 2005, 231-249.

⁷⁵ Hoare 2002, 1; 18-19.

Yugoslavia and with different experiences of the aftermath of the Second World War and the formation of the Socialist Yugoslavia, as well as the dissolution wars of the 90's might have very different opinions about this shared past. Already during Yugoslav times, opposition to the government was often treated harshly. No matter how positively idealistic the views officially promoted by Marshal Tito and the SFRY sound, imprisonment and even death penalties were also in their toolkit to silence those who tried to oppose the prevailing power at the time. Yugoslavia was a combination of a planned economy with a system of workers' self-management and a sort of market economy. Most Yugoslavs could also travel and work abroad. The political system -- although it seems like a wonderland from the perspective of the dissolution wars and their aftermath -- was not democratic, did not live by modern standards of human rights, but again it was not completely totalitarian either, even though it shared many resemblances to it, most importantly the cult of personality of its powerful leader and the treatment of the opposition.

The positive nostalgic feeling that people often have about a certain period of time in the past, is commonly related to the fact that they themselves were of certain age during those "golden times" and as the proverb goes, memories grow sweeter with time. These positive feelings for a certain era are also related to the horrid times that many of the former Yugoslavs had to live through in the 90's and the fact that many were not happy with the aggressive switch to a capitalist economy. Both politics and the economy were ruled by very few and among them were the ones who had profited of the war economy on the detriment of others. Nostalgia for the memories from times as a pioneer and later working in the Youth Labor Action is also a big part of another phenomenon called Yugonostalgia.⁷⁶

According to a Croatian professor Igor Duda, the Yugoslav Communist Party was trying to create a "new man" to build the new society during and after the Second World War. First, the Party followed Soviet example, but later developed a model of its own for the ideal self-managed Yugoslav citizen. Characteristics of the new man included good physical and mental health, including moral righteousness, as well as creativity, bravery, patriotism, but also respective of other nations and open for new ideas through rich inner life.

⁷⁶ An interesting example of this Online: Yugoslavia – Virtual Museum, available at <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/>.

Different kinds of educational organizations were put up to develop the new socialist citizen. One of these organizations was the Pioneer Alliance of Yugoslavia, which was supposed to make sure that children were brought up in line with the values of the Communist Party and its leader comrade Tito.⁷⁷

The first regional organization was put up in Montenegro in November 1941 and the last generation took their pioneer oath just months before the Federation started to violently fall apart.⁷⁸ The federation wide organization of the Pioneer Alliance was officially founded in 1942 in the town of Bihac, which is located in what is nowadays northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the border of Croatia. This happened in the first Congress of the United Alliance of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia.⁷⁹

Yugoslav children were admitted in to the Pioneer Alliance when they entered school at the age of six or seven. Throughout their elementary school the pioneers took part in different types of sports, as well as cultural, educational and leisure activities organized by the Alliance. When admitted into the organization, they were given membership booklets with information about the Alliance and its goals, as well as the red scarfs and caps that they wore a few times a year on special occasions such as state holidays with the traditional red, white and blue uniforms. Inspiration for the pioneer symbolism came from the Soviet Union and after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 also voices for dismantling the organization exactly because this emerged. One could state that becoming a pioneer was a sort of political rite of passage for a child to become a full-fledged member of the socialist Yugoslavia's societal community. This ritual was the moment when children became "ideologically decided".⁸⁰ It is of course highly questionable how much decision-making power a six or seven-year-old can have on ideological questions, or even later in life after going through the ideological upbringing.

The pioneer movements stated goals were to: "contribute to the socialist upbringing of children of primary-school age. Born in our socialist revolution, with its current activities the Alliance fosters continuity of the revolution among the youngest generation." The movement was supposed to foster traits of personality such as honesty, sincerity, bravery, and persistency, as well as hard

⁷⁷ Duda 2014.

⁷⁸ Erdei 2004, 158.

⁷⁹ Duda 2014.

⁸⁰ Duda 2014.

working, progressive thinking and aware of their own weaknesses especially when it comes to outside propaganda.⁸¹

The first graders took an oath in which they pledged to live by the ideals of the socialist society. The oath was given in front of a military officer. The Pioneer Alliance was demilitarized in the early 50's, but the ceremonies, uniforms and salutations bare resemblance to those of the military.⁸² This resemblance was not mere symbolism, since it also referred to the actual past of child soldiers in the latter stage of the Second World War. The voluntary child soldiers' bravery was also used for wartime propaganda to motivate adult soldiers.⁸³

The programs and activities organized for the pioneers also changed during times and differed between schools, towns and republics. Examples of the activities: summer camps, theatre shows, sports competitions, libraries, symposiums for natural and technical sciences, different festivities and co-operation with local branches of the Red Cross and similar organizations, as well as international co-operation.⁸⁴ All the activities and programs shared the patriotism and fostering of Yugoslav values, such as the idea of brotherhood and unity, commemoration of the Liberation War and the Anti-Fascist struggle, as well as the cult of Josip Broz Tito. Schools curriculums were designed in accordance to create resonance and avoid dissidence. Both the pioneer activities and school curriculums endorsed the political ideology, its prevailing values, belonging to the brotherhood of Yugoslav nations. Besides the patriotic and political role the pioneer activities had, there was also another level to the goals of the movement. Even though the League of Communists oversaw the activities, they were not mere ideological brainwash of children. The movement allowed children, especially from less developed regions, to take part in modern educational and extracurricular activities that would have otherwise been out of reach. This helped them to incorporate to the particular type of socialist system and society that Yugoslavia was experimenting with. According to Duda, one could also argue that the youth movements laid a basis for different forms of future activism in late and post socialist societies.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Duda 2014.

⁸² Duda 2014.

⁸³ Erdei 2004, 159, 176.

⁸⁴ Ora Sava 80.mpg 2010.

⁸⁵ Duda 2014.

After participating in the activities of the Pioneer Alliance, teenage Yugoslavs were admitted to the Alliance of Socialist Youth in their early teens. The most important and visible form of activity organized by the Alliance of Socialist Youth were the Youth Labor Action (Omladinska radna akcija, in brief ORA) programs. First ORA was set up in 1942 and the last in Banja Luka, what is today the capital of Republika Srpska in 1990. During this 48 year period more than two million teenagers took part in different types of voluntary work brigades. The brigades helped to build important infrastructure especially after the Second World War. SFRY leadership used ORA programs also to continue the work of the Pioneer Alliance in fostering the right type of ideological development of youth in the spirit of brotherhood and unity and the programs were an important tool for post war reconciliation.⁸⁶

One both economically and symbolically very important ORA project was the construction of the Brotherhood and Unity motorway. The motorway became an important transport route through several of the Yugoslav republics and easing the access of European tourists to the country's holiday resorts. It also linked two of the biggest cities of Yugoslavia, Zagreb and Belgrade. The post war reconciliation between Croats and Serbs was indeed crucial for the federation to survive. The importance of the project was emphasized by naming the first day of the construction work as the ORA Celebration Day.⁸⁷

The nature of the projects shifted from physical work, needed in repairing the broken infrastructure in the early post war years, to more recreational activities. Later, as construction machinery and equipment had developed, the work projects became less physical. The emphasis was more on the leisure and fun side. From the late 60's onwards, the camps were an opportunity for the Yugoslav youth to travel and get to know peers from different parts of the federation. This transformation was also done to attract teenagers, who were already fans of Western popular culture, while keeping some ideological components in the activities. SFRY leadership avoided officially admitting how big the transformation in youth motivations and thus camp activities was.⁸⁸

Less need for manual labor also meant that younger kids could take part in the projects. The ORA projects kept their ideological and physical work contexts,

⁸⁶ Popović 2010, 279.

⁸⁷ Popović 2010, 280.

⁸⁸ Popović 2010, 280, 287-290.

but motivations of the participants as well as the promotion of the camps shifted more towards having a good time with peers in the form of sports and leisure. From the 70's onwards, ORA projects were almost solely organized during summer months and more and more by local institutions. The last major federation wide ORA project took place in 1964 when the construction of the Adriatic highway took place.⁸⁹

Besides bringing together youth from different parts of the country and thus fostering the idea of brotherhood and unity among different communities of Yugoslavia, the aim was to erase inequalities in social and regional spheres by educating the brigadiers. Reducing cultural differences, gaps in economic prosperity and the disparities related to the social milieus of rural versus urban was important in bridging the different communities of the multifaceted socialist society. Teenagers joining these voluntary work brigades were taught manufacturing and other useful skills for their future employment while getting work experience.⁹⁰ Many Youth Labor Action projects were intentionally organized near sites of Partisan success stories from the Second World War and idealistic slogans and songs of togetherness were used to bring people from different communities closer.⁹¹

Between the 70's and late 80's, ORA projects were more often organized on a regional level rather than by the federation-wide organization.⁹² More girls and women also participated. Serbian organization for ORA made a rule in 1974 stating that at least 20 percent of all participants must be females. As teenagers mingled together on these occasions, which were more like summer camps, also romantic partners were found. For youth who were from less privileged social economic backgrounds or simply from a more secluded rural area, the ORA camps gave them an opportunity to travel to some of the many holiday destinations of Yugoslavia for free.⁹³

⁸⁹ Popović 2010, 292-302.

⁹⁰ Popović 2010, 281.

⁹¹ Popović 2010, 282.

⁹² Popović 2010, 301: "Large youth brigades are organized at federal level by the People's Youth of Yugoslavia (*Narodna omladina Jugoslavije, NOJ*), known after 1952 as the Alliance of Socialist Yugoslav Youth (*Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije, SSOJ*). These activities are officially referred to as SORA (*Savezne omladinske radne akcije*)."

⁹³ Popović 2010, 290-302.

3.5.4 Yugoslav Basketball

In less than three decades of consistent basketball development, Yugoslavia came to dominate Europe and even challenge the previously invincible team of the United States. Yugoslavia won teams with longer traditions and more capital investment in the game. During the Cold War, USA, USSR and Yugoslavia each represented different cultures, political systems and developed different schools of basketball. These three became the most dominant countries in the game although only two of them were political and economic superpowers. Basketball was invented in the US, so they had the longest tradition for developing the game, but they also had the world's best facilities and resources for that development. USSR on the other hand had almost as many basketball players and coaches as the total population of Yugoslavia. Both the USA and USSR invested way more capital into the development of their basketball programs in comparison to Yugoslavia.

According to Vjekoslav Perica, multiple factors together made the success of Yugoslav basketball possible. He points out that the main factors were: “ethnic diversity, modernization, and Yugoslav socialism, the individual talent of players and coaches, the organization and management of the Yugoslav school of basketball grouped around the national team, (reprezentacija Jugoslavije), and, finally, the pride and patriotic fuel that energized Yugoslav athletes: *brotherhood and unity* at home and non-alignment abroad”.⁹⁴ His key argument is that the multi-ethnic “brotherhood and unity” produced the superb way Yugoslavs played the game of basketball, which culminated in the success of the national team. Yugoslavs from various ethnic and religious backgrounds succeeded in playing the game together from the 60's until the early 90's. The human capital of players and coaches was the source for their success as well as the feeling of togetherness or unity that they were able to foster and which was also boosted by that very success.⁹⁵

The modernization of the Yugoslav socialist system correlates well with the rise of a unique basketball culture in the country. Their game was at its peak during the 60's and 80's golden era of Yugoslav socialism. Rapid modernization from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia through the communism of its own kind brought

⁹⁴ Perica 2001, 274.

⁹⁵ Perica 2001, 274.

industrialization, education, universal free health care, and urbanization with it. Yugoslavs enjoyed a good life in their country and pursued sport as a profession.⁹⁶

The sport system of the non-aligned Republic of Yugoslavia worked within the country's self-managed socialism introduced in the 50's. The self-managed socialist system was closer to the Soviet socialism than to Western capitalism, although it was significantly different from the Soviet system as well. Considerable autonomy was given to the sport clubs and associations. The federal sport authority oversaw the national team, but sport associations in the six federal republics were autonomous and in the case of Slovenia and Croatia had even greater funds than the federal sport authorities. The top athletes and coaches were professionals paid in hard currency and they were free to travel abroad like other citizens, as well as work for foreign employers, although some restrictions were in place for those who played in the national team.⁹⁷

The game of basketball was invented in the US by James Naismith of Canadian origin in the 1890's and very soon it spread to new continents through the work of YMCA and the Red Cross. France was the first country to adopt the game in Europe as early as 1893 and in 1897 Czech Republic followed. The game was also showcased in a 1907 gymnast competition in Venice. In Yugoslavia, basketball was first played in the Grammar School of Maribor, nowadays in Slovenia, during the school year of 1905-06. The first official game was played in the spring of 1906, when the Royal Grammar School of Maribor hosted a team from Graz. In 1923, William Wailland, a Red Cross delegate introduced the game to the gymnastics teachers of elementary schools, Sokols and scout leaders of Belgrade. From Belgrade Wailland took a tour to Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Bitolj, Skopje, Niš, Zagreb, Split and to Ljubljana, with the result that soon basketball was played all around Yugoslavia. The country's first international games in front of spectators were played by student clubs of Zagreb against their Bulgarian and Italian counterparts in 1935. During those days there were Bulgarians studying in the city from whom the locals could learn more about the game. That was when also university students got interested in basketball.⁹⁸

In 1936 the president of the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia received a letter at his headquarters in Belgrade, in which FIBA

⁹⁶ Perica 2001, 275.

⁹⁷ Perica 2001, 274.

⁹⁸ Pavlovic et al. 2010, 95-98.

announced that they had received a membership into the international family of basketball. The first national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was mainly formed from the members of the student clubs and its first games were organized also with the Italians, Czechoslovakians and Bulgarians in the later part of the 1930's.⁹⁹

During the Socialist Federal Republic era there were no sports leagues organized within either the high school or the university systems of Yugoslavia. Professional coaches of sports clubs were the ones who systematically developed the most gifted athletes. Also national and state organizations were in charge of the development of the most talented future basketball professionals. They would form national teams for the 16-year-old "kadets" and for the 19-year-old "juniors". These prospects were taught by the best coaches and they competed in the international tournaments of their respective age groups. At the age of 19, the best juniors were able to become professional athletes. Professionals represented their teams in the domestic national leagues, as well as their national team in international sports. Yugoslav basketball started booming internationally in the 60's and the first big success for the national team was reached during the politically turbulent Olympic year of 1968.¹⁰⁰

The first national championship tournament was held in Belgrade in 1946. The national league was formed only in 1953 and in 1965, the league's games moved into newly build sports halls and as a result also the number of spectators rose to thousands in some matches. In 1953, a professor of physical education of the University of Belgrade, Aleksandar Nikolic was given the task to gather the best players of the country into one team. This new national team was coached by Nikolic and they won silver in the European Championships of 1961 and 65, as well as bronze in 1963. Then came the 1968 Olympic silver medal from Mexico, and finally in 1970 Yugoslavia won the World Championship in Ljubljana under Nikolic.¹⁰¹

In 1970 sport center Tivoli was opened in Ljubljana to host the final games of the World Cup tournament. Before the Tivoli center, there were no sport centers of international caliber in Yugoslavia, nor did universities have campuses or

⁹⁹ Pavlovic et al. 2010, 98-101.

¹⁰⁰ Perica 2001, 268.

¹⁰¹ Perica 2001, 270.

proper sport facilities. Also the first baskets were put up on playgrounds during the same World Cup tournament. Towns and cities started regularly building outdoor playgrounds with hoops in the 80's and by mid-80's all major cities were also building their own sports centers. In 1979, Split hosted the eighth Mediterranean Games for which it acquired top notch sport facilities. Another state-of-the-art sport center was built in Sarajevo.¹⁰²

After the 1970 World Championship title, there were 12 clubs in the national league. A new game development system was also planned and supervised by the sport associations in the federation and the republics. The development of the national team incorporated men, women, and junior teams, and two national leagues were established by 1972. Players were expected to practice like professionals even though most of them were studying in colleges or universities. In the 60's, most teams had only practiced two to three times a week. In the late 70's, US coaches came to Yugoslavia to hold seminars for the Yugoslavian coaches and around the same time both the national team as well as several clubs started doing annual trips to the States to play friendly matches with the college teams overseas.¹⁰³ US coaches and players believed that the strength of Yugoslavian and Soviet teams laid in the fact that they were state-sponsored, and had experienced international players who trained all year round, as well as competed together as a team for several years in a row and were known for playing physical basketball.¹⁰⁴

The Yugoslav men's national basketball team placed second in the 1974 World Cup and the following year they beat the Soviet Union in the European finals. In 1976, the Yugoslavs reached the final game at the Montreal Olympics, but were beaten by the US.¹⁰⁵ In 1977, the national team won the European Championship and the next year they beat the Soviets twice to win the World Championship. In the 1980 Moscow Olympics finals Yugoslavia defeated the host country and became the gold medalists. In the 1981 European Championships, Yugoslavia reached the second place. Bronze medal was brought home from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, and silver from Seoul in 1988. Between 1972 and 1990 Yugoslav junior teams dominated the European tournaments held every

¹⁰² Perica 2001, 270.

¹⁰³ Perica 2001, 270.

¹⁰⁴ Perica 2001, 271.

¹⁰⁵ Perica 2001, 270.

second year and defeated the very talented American team twice in the 1987 tournament. Even though the federation started to collapse, the Yugoslav national team won the World Cup in 1990 and were the European Champions in 1991.¹⁰⁶

As the national team was doing really well in European and World Championships, as well as in the Olympic tournaments, also several Yugoslav clubs began to dominate European international leagues. In 1976, a club called Bosna from Sarajevo became the first European champion from the Balkans and started a two-decade-long dominance of continental leagues by Yugo-clubs from Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia.¹⁰⁷ After the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic in 1992, multiple players and coaches from various parts of the former Yugoslavia started successful careers in European and American basketball leagues and even today the region keeps on developing world class talents.¹⁰⁸ According to Hanno Möttölä, the European player market is nowadays run by a Serbian manager mafia.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, something important was lost after the common reprezentacija was gone.

During politically difficult year of 1968, Tito publicly condemned the Soviet aggression against Czechoslovakia. Also, the republics within the federation argued over economic and cultural policies, and the largest ethnic minority, Albanians, rebelled for the secession of the Kosovo province. To make matters even worse, during the spring of the same year, left-wing student riots broke out in the major university cities, namely Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Vjekoslav Perica argues that there were two efficient forces mitigating these conflicts: the components of Yugoslav civil religion of Tito and that of Yugoslav sports. When Yugo-athletes competed in the Mexico City Olympics that year, cheering for them united the nation. Yugoslav state TV aired almost all Olympic events live. Yugoslav athletes also made their countrymen proud. They won gold and silver in swimming, gold in gymnastics, gold in water polo, and the silver in basketball. Yugoslavs got to watch the national flag being raised and listen to the national anthem, “Hey Slavs”, being played. The Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe

¹⁰⁶ Perica 2001, 271.

¹⁰⁷ Perica 2001, 271.

¹⁰⁸ Perica 2001, 272.

¹⁰⁹ YLE (Finnish National Broadcaster) Radio interview: ”Koripallossa kaiken kokenut Hanno Möttölä” 2019.

envied the fortunate Yugoslavs as the country was entering a decade of relative stability and unprecedented prosperity in the 70's.¹¹⁰

In the 80's, the father of the Yugoslav federation, Marshal Tito, was gone, but the athletes kept on winning international trophies. When Yugoslavia hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, the Yugoslav national team reached the podium 88 times and was ranked third in the total number of medals won in world championships. According to Perica this success, consciously or unconsciously, assured the nation that "Yugoslav ethnic diversity generated a powerful synergy".¹¹¹ Even when 'excrement started hitting the fan' in a very violent manner in the beginning of the 90's, Yugoslav athletes were winning together and sports remained an evidence of the power in unity.¹¹²

Although the national basketball teams of the former Yugoslavia are still among the world's best, Perica argues that they have lost what used to make the former Yugoslav national team special, "which was a nationalism fueled by the spirit of multiethnic brotherhood; diversity and richer human resources; and productive teamwork on the basketball court energized by the same benign nationalism".¹¹³ The imagined Yugoslav basketball dream team that could have been the only one that had a chance in challenging the all-time greatest basketball team, The US Dream Team of 1992 Olympics, became one of the laments of the so-called "Yugonostalgia" cultural movement that started in the 90's.¹¹⁴

Much has been written about the success of the Yugoslav school of basketball and through Yugonostalgia this success story has left many wondering what the national team could have accomplished if the country wouldn't have fallen apart in the 90's.¹¹⁵ After the break-up of Yugoslavia the civil religion of *brotherhood and unity* was broken into the nationalisms of the countries that were formed afterwards.

Perica constructs the Yugoslav civil religion of brotherhood and unity from the following components. They are the myth of the Yugoslav nation's origin in the partisan struggle against the occupying fascist forces during the Second World War and the latter split between Tito and Stalin. Secondly, the Yugoslav spirit of

¹¹⁰ Perica 2001, 269.

¹¹¹ Perica 2001, 269.

¹¹² Perica 2001, 269.

¹¹³ Perica 2001, 273.

¹¹⁴ Perica 2001, 273.

¹¹⁵ Hawking 2016; Trahan 2016.

brotherhood and unity of all the ethnicities. Third, the cult of personality over Tito that was shown for example in different festivities like the Youth Relay. Fourth, Yugoslav socialism of Self-Management at home and the foreign policy of non-alignment abroad. Perica further emphasizes the important role given to Yugoslav sports and the national team in particular.¹¹⁶ He also argues that the Tito cult and national sports were mechanism that managed conflicts within the country.¹¹⁷ It seems that basketball gained from the ideology of brotherhood and unity as well as its success boosted the very ideology. The communist leadership of the country fostered both of these phenomena quite successfully until Tito was around. Balkan basketball keeps on winning even though there was less hope for brotherhood and unity in the 90's.

Basketball has also been used as means of reconciliation after the 90's wars. Hopefully these attempts turn out successful and that little by little there would be more brotherhood and unity between the Balkan peoples and states. Brotherhood and unity would be a good guiding principle universally speaking as well, especially in these times when more than ever we should be concentrated on building bridges instead of walls.

4. Research Material and Methods

4.1 Collected Data

This Master's thesis is a qualitative research done using anthropological ethnographic methods and conducted by participatory observation. The data collection methods included analysis of the latest final report available online of a previous camp of 2009 and a participatory observation at the camps of 2018 and 2019.

I first analyzed the latest available final report of a camp held in 2009. Later I went on two field trips on consecutive years to participate to the daily schedule of the camp and to observe if the preliminary analysis held in reality. The aim was also to collect further data on the themes of the preliminary analysis and to examine the everyday life at the camp through an expert model on SDP programs and to look for manifestations of nostalgia for the shared Yugoslav past. When conducting the participatory observation at the two camps, I took several

¹¹⁶ Perica 2002, 95.

¹¹⁷ Perica 2001, 269.

hundred pictures, around ten video clips, conducted group interviews and wrote down tens of A4 pages of notes. The group interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

The group interviews in 2018 were designed during the camp and conducted during the last day, before the participants left Letenka. I gave instructions to the trainers of the camp to randomly pick a group of around five participants from each nationality. I told the trainers to pick both girls and boys. The group size is a reference to the number of players on the basketball court at a time. In designing the interviews, I spoke with the volunteers and the on of the lecturers to hear their opinion to the possible cultural or age-related sensitivities. Based on these discussions both the set up and questions were designed. Especially because there were also quite young kids involved in the interviews, but also because of community related issues, too direct questions related to history were avoided, and thus Yugonostalgia didn't come up literally, and instead I preferred to ask about their personal histories related to travelling and to the region. Each group was asked to sit down comfortably by the benches under the trees in front of the camp managers building with their coach. I preferred the trainers to be present to create a more relaxed atmosphere for the participants and to help both them and me with possible language barriers. In the beginning of the interview, I explained the reason for the interview and told the participants that their names won't be mentioned in the paper. I also told them to relax and speak freely since the interview wasn't anything too official.

4.2 Ethnographic Research

Ethnography was chosen as the research approach – like Schensul and LeCompte put it – because many of the evaluative and investigative questions related to a community or program setting cannot be answered via analyzing quantifiable data or conducting controlled experiments.¹¹⁸ Schensul and LeCompte also stress the importance of building good relationships and the need for the researcher to enjoy unfamiliar settings. They point out that immersion into the studied culture is the most authentic way of understanding the studied phenomenon. The immersion involves understanding and living the daily schedules, practices, rituals, as well as the rules, beliefs and organizations of the studied setting.¹¹⁹ Best way to go about

¹¹⁸ Schensul & LeCompte 2012, xvi.

¹¹⁹ Schensul & LeCompte 2012, 1.

this task is by pursuing an approach of “empathetic understanding through lived experience”.¹²⁰ Schensul and LeCompte list the most essential skills of a good ethnographers as the following: “relating, listening, explaining, observing, questioning, communicating, recording, discussing and revising”.¹²¹ Some researchers prefer a purely inductive approach by recommending new researchers to go on a field trip without any prior knowledge about the topic. Schensul and LeCompte on the other hand state that all researchers start their work with a set of assumptions, biases, values, hypotheses and questions, and thus it is advisable to reflect upon them in advance and form research questions before field trips. These research questions may arise almost by accident as the researcher comes across a problem while reading the news or through her personal interest into a topic such as a new social phenomenon. The first research question might be broad, but later develop into several more exact ones during the research.¹²²

Ethnographic research can be conducted on the field far away in an exotic location or in the researcher’s own neighborhood, but data can be gathered from an archive as well. Researchers should take into consideration the effects of their presence, ethical questions related to power relations and authority, as well as those related to interpreting the data and the possibilities of the research to evoke public debate and action for future developments and improvements. Ethnography shies away from a clear definition or all-encompassing guidelines. Ethnographic methods are applied when multifaceted cultural phenomena and processes are made visible, and their significance to individuals and communities are studied. Most often ethnographic method is referred to as inductive by nature, and it’s used to conceptualize and theorize everyday realities based on data gathered through observatory field work. Although ethnography etymologically refers to a descriptive research, it is nowadays considered as a method for in-depth analysis of cultural phenomena and their etymological systems. Both describing cultural phenomena and reflexive interpretation of concept work. Ethnography is based on empiric data, but the interaction with the research subjects is as important and actually affects the whole research process itself as well as its results. The dialogic process with the research subjects is important both during the field work and during the reporting of the results.¹²³

¹²⁰ Schensul & LeCompte 2012, 2.

¹²¹ Schensul & LeCompte 2012, 2.

¹²² Schensul & LeCompte 2012, 2 – 3.

¹²³ Hämeenaho & Koskinen-Koivisto 2014, 7-8.

The relationship to the studied field and the dialogic process results in ever changing research problems, questions and their interpretation. This in turn asks for the research to be open to question her beliefs, adjust her approach to the changing situations and to be able to grasp the evolving possibilities for finding new perspectives to the studied topic. Unpredictability and the ongoing changes in the researcher's understanding are part of all ethnographic processes. The interpretations made by the researcher are not the end result of the process, but rather they are just a small part of a forever ongoing and changing research process. The interpretations lead to new perspectives, knowledge and insights, in other words to new cultural interpretations. Researcher formulates questions, defines the field, chooses instruments and makes interpretations. The subjective nature of the process requires continuous reflecting and ethical considerations on behalf of the researcher. The decisions done by the researcher should be made visible for them to be scientifically examined. Ethnographic research is also always action that affects its environment and creates new realities.¹²⁴

4.3 Participatory Observation in an SDP Project

Participatory research seeks for local knowledge that local people could utilise to solve local problems. The production and control of knowledge is seen as a form of power. By avoiding to solely base the conclusions on academic literature, participatory research methods empower those in the periphery. The philosophical roots of the literature on the techniques are based on the works of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. As a philosopher and political economist who was active in the French revolution Marx coined his theory called the commune by interviewing French factory workers.¹²⁵ Italian political activist Gramsci also gained the data for his theory on the rural peasantry's political abilities by participatory research. He saw the peasantry as an ideological political force to be reckoned with if toughed, organized and mobilized correctly. This mentorship was seen by Gramsci as the prerogative for a so called organic intellectual. According to his theory these front runners would rise from the same peasant background. Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire also had an important role in the development of the methodology. His Pedagogy of the Oppressed criticized a form of education in which pupils were solely the receivers of lecturer's knowledge, and offered a

¹²⁴ Hämeenaho & Koskinen-Koivisto 2014, 8-10.

¹²⁵ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 2.

new way of teaching through reflection, interaction and conscientization. Freire explained conscientization as the activities where people together find and analyse the social, economic and political structures of oppression, and seek for change towards more equality. Participatory research methods entail the idea that people have “local, community based, knowledge systems, that researchers from universities, institutes or government departments have not fully tapped”.¹²⁶ Also the method takes respondents as equals rather than solely subjects of enquire and seeks to empower those in the periphery.¹²⁷

Although the conflicts that broke the country known as Yugoslavia took place in the 1990's, they still affect the individuals and communities. Özerdem and Bowd divide the interlinked challenges that researchers face in post conflict settings into three elements: the respondent, the researcher and effectiveness. Gaining access to the physical setting and gaining the acceptance of the locals is key for the quality of the data. For this, the researcher must identify and engage gatekeepers in the community. This is particularly important to gain trust of the locals and minimize the challenges that the researcher's outsider status carries with it. According to Özerdem and Bowd, participatory research methods are more invasive by nature so sensitivity to local realities and post conflict trauma in particularly related to memories should be considered when conducting research in a post conflict setting.¹²⁸ Researcher should focus on building trust and consider the fact that expressing histories also affect the respondents' current realities within their communities. The researcher element brings up challenges that the researcher must consider when building trust with the local communities. The researcher needs to attend a certain level of distance to the respondents as well, to avoid emotional connections that might affect the results of the study. The effectiveness element has to do with the interplay of the two previous elements: the researcher and the respondent. Özerdem and Bowd point out the importance of both official and emotional access. Sufficient level of sensitivity is needed for emotional access which in return will bring about data of better quality.¹²⁹ The researcher has an ethical and moral obligation to make the respondent's contribution as easy as possible and build trust through sensitivity, but also keep a

¹²⁶ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 2-3.

¹²⁷ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 3.

¹²⁸ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 107.

¹²⁹ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 108.

certain level of distance to ensure equality between the respondents and to keep up academic standards of analysis.¹³⁰

Problem definition, knowledge generation and knowledge use affect the ways by which research quality and impact can be improved. The attitude of the researcher is what differentiates a participatory research from conventional research methodologies. This attitude determines how, by and for whom the research is conceptualized and conducted. Conventional research itself involves varying degrees of participation, such as gaining access to the field. It is important to build strong relationships with skilled, experienced and informed locals in order to collect accurate and valuable data in unfamiliar locations. On the other hand, these factors only privilege the interests of the researchers and maintain their primary control over problem identification, data collection, analysis and interpretation. The alignment of power and control within the research process is what makes research participatory. It focuses attention on the key issues of power and control, and thus involves more than just simply taking part. Issues that affect all phases of the research process from the development of research questions through to the communication of the results for action. Participatory research thus positions local people, who may be recipients or stakeholders of the projects, as knowledgeable actors. The participants and presumed beneficiaries of the initiatives should be considered as people whose special experiences, skills and knowledge can create new cultural interpretations and develop future projects through an ongoing process.¹³¹

Some conceptualizations of participatory research extend the focus on power relations to prioritize education and political action in order to change structural inequalities. Participatory research is close to and an important part of activist research. This politically and morally active research method tries to challenge inequalities by making those inequalities visible and promoting social changes for equality. From this perspective simply understanding a phenomenon is not enough, but instead there should be a strive for improvements.

Philosophical underpinnings of participatory research, which in contrast to positivist paradigm in SDP research, consider all knowledge as partial, situated, constructed in practice, and tied to power relations. Activist researchers should value the knowledge of those with whom they work and recognize that they have

¹³⁰ Özerdem & Bowd 2010, 109.

¹³¹ Spaaij et al. 2018, 26-27.

capacity to analyze their social context and to develop opportunities and strategies to challenge and transform their circumstances. Researchers should also be actively reflective of their own stereotypes and assumptions. The process should not only be about trying to transform social structures, but also being open to transform ourselves as researchers and our relationships with others. This is to avoid a situation in which researchers receive more from the research process than they provide, even when they use progressive research approaches. Participatory research thus offers an alternative paradigm of knowledge production, which challenges us to reconceptualize, and continuously reflect upon, the questions and the methods used.¹³²

Participatory and activist research in SDP context confronts a number of challenges and tensions, which are an important part of the process. Participatory can be conceptualized along three inter-related dimensions. First, the degree of local participation in all phases of the research process. Second, the degree of power shifting from the researcher to the research subjects. The knowledge of the people on the field is valuable and they are capable of analyzing their own situations and designing their own solutions. Important consideration is related to the question of whose knowledge is counted as valuable, but also who has control, leadership and responsibility during the different stages of the research process. Third, the degree of reflexivity refers to the understanding of the knowledge-making enterprise, including a consideration of the subjective, institutional, social, and political processes whereby research is conducted and knowledge is produced.¹³³

According to Spaaij et al., the first challenge related to participatory research is the institutionalized relationship within the sport and development field. Sports authorities tend to have a hierarchical relationship over the actors and participants of the projects and this might lead the projects to reproduce or reinforce the local power relations. Second challenge relates to the relationships between participatory research and academic institutions. Participatory research, being inherently open-ended, messy, and long-term, often lacks the full appreciation and support of academic institutions that are characterized by a so-called culture of speed. Spaaij et al. conclude that the researchers often have

¹³² Spaaij et al. 2018, 27.

¹³³ Spaaij et al. 2018, 27-28.

difficulties in balancing between the activist research ideals and the academic standards.¹³⁴

5. I Came to Play

5.1 Research Prior to the Field Trips

When researching the topic, I came across several appraisals of SDP projects in the region but had difficulties in contacting the non-governmental organizations that had run these projects. As I was writing preliminary plans for the thesis, I also contacted scholars who had written about the success of Yugoslav basketball or NGO projects in general in the region.

At the time of the preliminary analysis I thought that the Peace Education Program run by the Serbian NGO called PLAY had already finished their yearly I Came to Play basketball and peace education camps, because the latest available information on their website was almost ten years old. Fortunately, I was very wrong and nowadays they have an updated site with the latest information. The NGO uses basketball as a tool to bring together youth from different parts of the former Yugoslavia. The mission of PLAY is: “Raising public awareness and improving the lives of children in the region – Using sport as the common language for peace, friendship, youth education and sportsmanship”.¹³⁵ In 2009 the camp was organized between the 8th and 18th of August, again at Letenka, Fruska Gora National Park that is located in Vojvodina, Serbia’s northernmost autonomic region. The author of the report is Mihajlo Delic, the founder of the NGO called PLAY. The camps studied through participatory observation were organized in the same location between the 16th and the 22nd, as well as between the 6th and 13th of July in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

After I finally got in touch with the organizers of the I Came to Play basketball camp, I received a very positive reply from Mihajlo Delic, the founder of the NGO that runs the project. He is a former basketball player who has a Master’s Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Tromso, Norway. In my email, I explained my interest in SDP projects in the region, especially in ones using the basketball as the tool for intercommunity bridge building. He sent plenty of news articles and video clips of their past camps and invited me to join their next camp to observe and collect data for my thesis. He

¹³⁴ Spaaij et al. 2018, 28-29.

¹³⁵ Delic 2009, 3.

also explained that the camp was taking place in a Yugoslav era location with limited modern conveniences and that he was sick, so he still needed to see his doctor before being able to join the camp. I quickly contacted my thesis instructor and made an application for funding from Aleksanteri Institute to cover part of the travel costs.

Since participatory observation as a research method was new to me, I also went to the library and lent books on ethnographic research and a voice recorder for the interviews. The camp was taking place in only a couple weeks' time, so I needed to hurry with my preparations. Reading the books on ethnographic research, I thought about all the things I would need to reflect upon during my research trip. The plan was to take as many pictures and write as many notes as possible to remember all the situations that might matter later in the writing process. The idea was to keep an open mind towards all the upcoming experiences and not to weight the different aspects too much during the trip. The idea was to write down my reflections on the smallest matters that I would encounter. I was aware of the fact that my presence as a researcher would affect the way people behave around me and that I would need to take into consideration that there were quite small children participating and that the youth participants past experiences or their families experiences during and after the dissolution wars of the 90's might also affect the way they behave towards or think about their peers from different communities.

Before leaving Helsinki, I also met with my former coach who had moved from the region to Finland in the early 90's. He told me more about the different basketball camps in the region and his own experience of the same camp that I was about to go and research. Interestingly I finally also understood where he was from in the region. Later, I also found out about the basketball for peace work done by my former club, the Helsinki YMCA and their 'Night Basket' project, that has been elaborated into a basketball for peace project in Lebanon.¹³⁶ The night basket is something I used to go play in the late VR Makasiinit and Kaisaniemi Park when I was 14-15 years old. The idea was to bring youth together to play basketball on Friday and Saturday nights instead of them hanging around the city. In addition, I heard about a former Finnish peacekeeper who had done NGO work in Bosnia for rebuilding homes and organizing basketball camps there. Clubs in the Finnish basketball league have later made contracts with

¹³⁶ More about Helsinki YMCA's programs – in Finnish – see www.ymca.fi/toiminta/.

foreign players through his Bosnian contacts. Major Heikki Wala went to Bosnia to the CIMIC peacekeeping mission 1999. In Finland, he had coached the mens' basketball team in Uusikaupunki. In Bosnia, he was in charge of supporting the return of refugees. This support was mostly building roads and repairing homes. As a former basketball coach, Wala knew that Yugoslav basketball "was the second best in the world" so he decided to bring together the coaches of the three ethnic groups in Dobož. He sent out an invitation for this gathering and 95 coaches replied. With the help of Finnish funding, this group put up a basketball school for more than 500 children in the region and later 12 towns formed a Bosnian basket league with both girls' and boys' teams. Nowadays Wala has his second home in a former Serb town in a predominantly Muslim area near Tuzla.¹³⁷

In the preliminary analysis, I wanted to find out how the problem that PLAY tries to tackle with their project is constructed and represented in the final report. Second, I looked for technologies used to address the goals of the project. Third, I wanted to see how the final report presented the targets of the project, mainly the youth participants, as a category or categories. Later, I also compared the depictions of youth as subjects to that in the Mostar school project studied by Azra Hromadžić. I also studied how the report confirms to the norms of project life depicted by Steven Sampson in his article. In the analysis I considered the camp as a project since it had a clear starting and ending dates, plus Mihajlo Delić himself refers to it as one on the last page of the final report.¹³⁸

5.2 The Field Trips

5.2.1 The 2018 Camp

I flew from Helsinki to Budapest in the evening of the 15th of July and took a minivan ride from Budapest to Novi Sad. I had travelled with the same company from Budapest to Belgrade a couple of times before. Once again, I got to experience the extraordinary hospitality of the locals.

Mihajlo's wife came to pick me up from the bus stop and took me to a hotel in which they had reserved a room for me in advance. It was already late, but you could still see the lights and hear the sounds of the last night of this year's Exit festival. The hotel was very centrally located, and I had a room in the top floor with a nice view of the city. Looking out of the wall sized window, I saw the

¹³⁷ Virtanen 2011, 204-205.

¹³⁸ Delić 2009, 15.

Reformed Christian church on the Safarikova street on the right and the Synagogue by the Jevrejska street on the left. The panorama reminded me of the multicultural diversity of the second biggest city of Serbia and the autonomous province of Vojvodina. This northern part of Serbia has been ruled by the Roman Empire, Kingdom of Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and the Habsburgs and again by the Kingdom of Hungary before becoming part of the newly found socialist federation of Yugoslavia after the Second World War and later an autonomous province of Serbia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The synagogue reminded me of a particular case of religious tolerance from the past, when Sephardic Jews were welcomed to the Balkans by Ottoman authorities after their expulsion from Spain in 1492¹³⁹ and on the other hand, the Reformed Christian Parish, also known as the Calvinist Church, consists mostly of ethnic Hungarians.

On the 16th of July morning I got a ride to the Letenka camp from Mihajlo's sister Tiana and we picked up two participants on the way. The participants were a girl from Banja Luka and a boy from Kosovska Mitrovica. The girl had already participated three times on the camp, but her friend was coming now for the first time. Tiana was in charge this year, because Mihajlo was sick. She was aided by a Croatian trainer who had participated either as a player or as a trainer from the very first camp.

The road that leads to the Letenka Camp cuts the camp in half. When we arrived, one of the Letenka camp's officials came to welcome us and showed us to our rooms. She also registered my stay to the tourism office. The lady had worked at the site for 36 years and later I got to know that most of the camp staff had worked there for decades.

The Letenka camp consists of a camping site with a wide grass area that people can put up tents to or enjoy food and drinks by the wooden tables and benches that are situated on the side of the grass field. This green area also includes a set of basketball courts, which can alternatively be used sideways as a football court. The housing area is located just on the other side of a nearby road. It consists of the facilities such as the camp office, a separate building for catering the visitors, as well as several lodges with rooms in which the visitors can sleep in, and the main basketball court. There is also a stage in front of the main court for different types of events. This side is more in a hill than the other and when

¹³⁹ Faroqhi 2010, 258.

you enter it, on the right you could see a ticket sales booth that looks like it has last been used in the 1980's. There is also a small kiosk and a steep long stairway downwards to an amphitheater in the middle of the woods. The whole Letenka site is surrounded by thick forestry.

Most of the morning and evening meetings of the trainers took place at a set of wooden tables right in front of the house of the camp office. The place was located so that you could pretty much observe the whole Letenka camp site from there, while it was sheltered by surrounding trees.

In 2018, the houses and lodges seemed like they hadn't been repaired in any way since they were built. According to one of the trainers at the camp, no asbestos was spared in the building process. The ceiling of our room looked like it was wet from inside. The Letenka site is going to be demolished and a new sports and leisure facility is going to be built on the site during the upcoming years.

After everyone had arrived and received their places in the rooms, the trainers received shorts and shirts with the camps logo and had a meeting for planning the first days' activities. After a short meeting, the participants were brought together on the main court for an unofficial opening ceremony. Tiana welcomed everyone to the camp and explained the rules and schedule to the participants. Medications, allergies and considerable eating habits were checked in the opening ceremony. I was among the training squad, which was introduced to them. The participants were divided into practice groups based on age, size and skills, and each group was assigned a trainer. These practice groups were again shuffled several times during the camp. Nationalities and arrival groups were mixed, so that each room had participants from different groups and the same went for the practice groups. The trainers of the practice groups also rotated daily.

The first practise took place straight after the groups had been divided. Each group trained on a different court with their named trainers. After the practise, participants took a shower and we all headed to the canteen for a dinner. Before bed time, the participants were shooting hoops and the training squad played street ball. I took part in the games as well. Then the youth were told to get ready for bedtime. The youth had time to take another shower, brush their teeth and hang around in the corridors before the time of silence when everyone needed to be in their beds and the trainers went to shut the lights. After the youth were sleeping, the trainers gathered to the same wooden benches, where the earlier meeting had taken place, to reflect upon the trainings and further planning the

coming week. The evening gatherings of the trainers, volunteers and other organisers were important events for everyone to get to know each other better and share their experiences, thoughts and ideas about the game, but also about the themes of related to the humanitarian aspects of the camp and life in general.

Each morning, the trainers went around the rooms to make sure that everyone got up. Everybody gathered at the main court at seven am. First everyone jogged around the camp area and then gathered again at the court where one of the trainers led a stretching session. After shower it was time for breakfast. Then during each day the participants usually had two practice session and some type of lecture or workshop on some of the issues and values promoted by the camp. We had three meals a day and each evening there were informal games, mostly streetball at the courts while the participants could play their selection of music from loud speakers located on the main stage. Often the trainers were the last ones to play three on three street ball, while the participants were cheering on the sidelines and on the stage. Between meals and practice there usually was some free time to spend as they wished. Also, during both camps there were a couple of rainy days when the youth were told to clean their rooms, after which they gathered in the hallways to listen to music, play cards and get to know each other better. Each year there is a special promotional media day dedicated for further visibility of the program and the sponsors. The US Embassy brings their own team for a show game and both local celebrities and officials are invited to spend a nice day at the campsite. Before the media day, the site is cleaned up; flags and banners are put up; and tablecloths are placed on the wooden tables. During the media day, grilled food and drinks from the sponsors are offered, while show games are played on the main court. All the participants are also wearing shorts and t-shirts with the camps logos and after the guests have gone, they get to use the rest of the day as they wish, which usually means playing basketball while their own music is blasting on the background.

During the camp, there were two volunteers – Dushan and Nikola – who kept workshops about topics such as activism, taking individual responsibility and initiative, as well as the importance of good teamwork. Dushan had participated the camp from the beginning and his friend Nikola had accompanied him for a couple of years now. The team building exercise was held on the bigger court. The exercise was done in teams of five players who formed a line so that four of them were blindfolded and the fifth player directed the line while dribbling a

basketball. The exercise taught the participants game related skills such as coordination, reaction and movement, but also more general abilities of trust, co-operation and working together as a team.

The participants also got to hear about different study opportunities, such as scholarships for exchange periods in the US in a lecture given by Slavisha. He is an academic scholar specialised in anthropology of linguistics and religious communities of the region. He also co-ordinates US funded academic scholarship programs for youth in the region. Dushan had also gone to an exchange period to Seattle through one of these scholarships and worked with other students before and after their exchange period as an alumnus.

On the basketball training side, the participants got to learn skills from two former professional players who had international careers. Cornelius “Neil” Roberts and Ricardo “Rick” Marsh inspired the youth on and off the court. Finally, we also had a lecture from Stefan Stojacic, a three on three street basket world champion who has also played for the Serbian national team. Besides his sports career, he also has three academic degrees. Stefan stressed the importance of education and spoke about managing schedules of sports with studies.

During the camp, I asked each of the trainers if they had friends from the other states or communities before taking part to their first I Came to Play camp and the answer was the same for all - none had friends before, but nowadays had plenty whom they kept in touch with. All of the trainers and volunteers also shared the same understanding that the youth from different communities have very little chances to make friends over community lines, at least face to face. Some might get to go to basketball tournaments or camps with their home teams, but the emphasis on the majority of these camps is on the development of their skills related to the game and not on building bridges and learning the importance of intercommunity relationships.

On the last day of the camp I did group interviews with participants from all of the nationality groups. I asked the trainers to randomly pick four to six participants from each nationality and come to speak with me one group at a time. There was a group from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia. The participants were between the ages of 11 and 20. Interestingly many had travelled with their family in the region and beyond. Some were on the camp for the first time and some had already been there several times. Almost all had come to the camp through a recommendation by their friend or coach. The most common

aspects mentioned as the best things at the camp were “making new friends” and “having a good time with their friends”, but also improving their game with the good trainers and coaches was a common answer. Like a 14-year old Bosnian kid put it: “through friendship we can improve our game”.

After the camp I spent the last evening in Novi Sad with Rick, Neil and Mihajlo. We went around the city and reflected upon the experiences from the camp at Mihajlo’s office. In this inspiring atmosphere we brainstormed improvement ideas for the upcoming camps.

5.2.2 The Camp of 2019

The following year after the first camp was particularly challenging from the perspective of the thesis process. I suffered a polyradiculitis due to borreliosis during the autumn. I was hospitalized, but eventually recovered fully. Winter and spring passed by working three part time jobs, which on the other hand allowed me to properly start writing in June 2019. The first version of the thesis was written in three weeks. I had been in contact with Mihajlo and the volunteers all throughout the year and two of the volunteers Nikola and Veliko had also visited me and my family in Helsinki early autumn 2018. Mihajlo had invited me to join the camp again this year. As there were already plans to demolish the old camp site and build a brand new one in Letenka, I felt that it would be beneficial both personally and for the thesis process to go back once more. I agreed with Mihajlo that it will be a very positive improvement for future participants, camp staff and the whole Fruska Gora national park to get up to date facilities in Letenka, but at the same time something will be missing. The old Yugoslav era camp site with the children’s drawings of communities working together and participants getting to know each other without screen time or phone connections is a setting that has played an influential role in the whole atmosphere of the camp.

This year the camp was held between the 6th and the 13th of July. This time the way to Fruska Gora was way easier, because of the new direct flight from Helsinki to Belgrade. A friend of mine picked me up from the Nikola Tesla airport and drove me all the way to Letenka. We had not seen each other for a year so it was good to catch up and tell him about the camp as well. When we arrived, the trainers had gathered by the wooden tables with Mihajlo to get to know each other and plan this year’s camp. This time there was a new trainer from Macedonia, Slovenia and Croatia, as well as two trainers from Serbia who had participated several times before, but were not able to come the previous year.

I only knew two trainers from Bosnia and the one trainer from Croatia who had been on all of the 11 past camps either as a player or as trainer. The other trainer from Bosnia still plays professionally and the other one is a full-time coach of several girls' teams.

The lady who had worked at the camp now for 37 years again greeted us as the first of the personnel. This time I shared another room with two local trainers. A group of trainers from the neighboring countries occupied the room in which we stayed the last time. Some refurbishing had been done on the camp site. The small hut in the entrance had been demolished and some of the outer walls of the houses had been repainted, as well as the wooden tables under the trees where the coaching group always gathered had been redone.

The camp started by Mihajlo gathering all the participants together to welcome everyone and go through the rules. This time there was one girl who had the courage to say she was a vegetarian and two other participants who had some type of allergies. Mihajlo told everyone that during free time they can play their own music from the speakers by the court as long as it's not national folk music – apparently this is something he mentions each year, as one of the volunteers told me later. As soon as the opening ceremony was over the trainers divided the youth into groups and the first practice started on all the courts. During the practice the volunteers came back from a swim in a nearby river. There was Dushan, Nikola, Veliko and Marko, whom I now met for the first time. The volunteers were again active in organizing workshops and lectures. Later during the week, also a group of university students kept lectures on different topics related to studying and future employment. They were members of a new Youth Ambassadors' program. One of the expansions rippling from the original I Came to Play idea. Another such new wave was the I Came to Play basketball team, which Mihajlo and his friends are pushing forward in order to later hand it on to the younger generations. Further, we got to hear lectures from two former professional players, who also provided their knowledge in one on one sessions whenever the participants had anything to ask related to opportunities in combining basketball and studies to improve their options towards their future careers and life in general. There was also a lecture provided by a professional physics trainer who had extensive experience from training the players of the Serbian national team and individual professional athletes in sports like martial arts, while also planning recovery and rehabilitation strategies after injuries.

The daily and weekly schedules were similar to the year before, although minor changes were done because of a storm mid-week. The media day was again a success, but this time it evolved into Mihajlo's daughter's birthday celebrations with extended barbeque, bouncy castle and fireworks. Plenty of friends and of course the extended family were invited, and further even other trainers from the year before travelled to Letenka to join the celebrations.

After the camp, I got a ride from Dushan and Nikola to Belgrade where we spent a couple more days seeing sites. Most thought-provoking moments were made by climbing to the rooftops of Novi Beograd apartment blocks and enjoying the amazing views over the Yugoslav era housing district. To me, the Novi Beograd district represents both the forward-looking positive ideas of Non-Alignment and a socialist market economy during the Cold War and at the same time the reality check received in the 1980's economic crises and the results of the bloody civil wars of the 1990's.

5.3 Governing – whom and how?

Vojvodina is traditionally a particularly multi-ethnic region within Serbia, which might have played a role in choosing the location. Although the project was implemented by a local NGO, US Embassy was highly represented and one of the main funders seems to be the USAid. The project used basketball, but also lectures and workshops, as the political technology or tactic to bring together youth from different parts and communities of the former Yugoslavia. The organizers were able to bring in plenty of local sports celebrities and coaches, but also an impressive amount of Ph.D. level lecturers.

The wars which shattered the country known as Yugoslavia into pieces created deep ethno-religious hatreds and divides in the formerly multicultural state. The final report of the project starts with the following sentence: "The camp was designed to bring together a group of young people whose love of sports/basketball transcends the recent histories of the region."¹⁴⁰ The Foucauldian political economy or rationality of the project comes up in the previous reference. The organizers have knowledge of how divided the communities were and how important it was to use basketball as the main technology, with which to also teach the youth about the importance of the values of fair play, teamwork, respect for one another, as well as commitment, compassion and leadership, but also

¹⁴⁰ Delic 2009, 4.

about optimism, joy, integrity and education. Promoting these values especially to the younger generations could then avoid future clashes and bridge the aforementioned divides. The target population, the chosen youth, were seen as the future ambassadors of the values presented in the lectures and practices.

When thinking of the target population, certain questions arose. How were the youth chosen to take part in the program? Although the final report shows plenty of positive statements by both the youth participants, as well as the lecturers, coaches and other promoters, besides their home town and name, very little can be said about the background of the campers. This is very understandable because some of the participants were very young. They shared interest for the common sport, which could play a role in their ability to share the values of the project. Also, it is very hard to say if the ambassadorship of the campers ever played out in their home communities. The final report speaks of even bigger plans for the future, but as the report from 2009 was the latest one, I thought that something had made those plans impossible.

During the field trips, it became evident that the most common way for the participants to come to the camp for the first time was because the camp was promoted to them by a friend and in some cases by their coach. One of the participants told me during the group interviews that he had won a title to join the camp at an event organized at his local court. Also, the trainers had first joined as participants through a friend. One of the trainers had written news articles related to intercommunity co-operation in his local newspaper after getting ideas for the topics from the camps. Both the participants and the trainers kept in touch even with the ones, who did not join later on, and this happened over community lines and national boundaries. The youth played show practices and games during the media day at the camp, after which they had fun activities for the rest of the evening. Representing them playing in mixed groups also for the media and the funders of the program was important for PR reasons, but also for spreading the word of such a basketball camp that values the peace building processes at least as much as the basketball development of the participants.

5.4 Segregated Youth Coming Together

I compared the depictions of youth as subjects to that in the Mostar school project studied by Azra Hromadzic. From the perspective of Foucauldian governmentality, the target population of the school project were the ethnically segregated youth of the city, who were both seen as the future of the country, but

also in problematic terms as representatives of their ethnic societies that were unable to co-operate in everyday life. Although the idea was to build bridges between the young members of different communities, the existing problems were physically represented in the way that most of the school's spaces were institutionally also divided. The only place which was out of reach for this type of governance was the unisex bathrooms and the teenagers took these places to themselves to share over the ethnic lines.

In the final report of the basketball camp, the depictions of the youth as representatives of their home communities bears resemblance to the depictions of youth in the Mostar school project, although at the camp this was downplayed in many ways. The participants were not divided into groups based on their ethnic background, but instead they were mixed both in the accommodation and during practice. The basketball campers did not either need to find their own space with their own rules to be able to interact in this case either. The Letenka camp was located in the Fruska Gora natural park and built by Yugoslav Youth Labor Action brigades that also brought together youth from different parts of the region. The fact that it was almost impossible to get a phone signal at the camp – not to mention web access – was to me influential in the way the youth could concentrate on the activities and new friends at the camp. Both the nationalities and the groups in which the youth arrived, were mixed into the rooms that they shared for the duration the camp.

The old pictures on the walls depicting youth from different communities holding hands and working together was in my mind also influential. In 2018 I shared a room with Croat and Slovene trainers. This was the only room that I noticed having more nationalistic symbols on its walls and most likely we were accommodated there intentionally to avoid giving this surrounding to the younger participants from several neighboring countries.

In comparison to the Mostar school project, besides the participants being divided into mixed rooms and mixed training groups, they started mixing very quickly by themselves also during free time. On a few rainy days the participants were told to clean their rooms and then they could have free time. Most of the participants were playing cards around the tables in the corridors of two of the houses. At least one group was playing a game called Remi (as Serbian is close to an ideally phonemic orthography – originally Rummy in English). The other group were playing Uno. The groups were all mixed and some of the trainers

joined the card games. Some of the youth were hanging out on the benches outside the houses and some were doing football tricks around the benches.

In 2019, the volunteers started a bigger team building exercise for everyone, but it was cut short because of a storm that came on top of us surprisingly fast. The storm also cut electricity from the whole camp. We joked with the trainers that only now do we have a proper camp experience for the participants. The participants again hung out in the hallways playing cards or by the stairs outside the houses getting to know each other. One could hear cheerful laughter everywhere. The darkness was cut with candles or with white plastic cups that amplified the light from a cell phone or a flash light. During practices the participants actively helped each other with language difficulties.

In 2019, I saw a potential love story unfold as one of the oldest boys from Serbia started spending more and more time with a Croatian girl. By the end of the camp you could see they were close together all the time possible. In 2018, the last days of the camp were very sad for a couple of younger Slovene boys and Croat girls who had to go their separate ways when the camp was done.

5.5 Regional Actors with International Resources

Before attending the camp myself, I analyzed how the latest final report confirmed to the norms of project life depicted by Steven Sampson in his article. Sampson had a quite critical perspective to the NGO projects in the region. To him most of the humanitarian projects were imposed from abroad with little consideration to the local traditions and norms. He stated that “Western” imposed projects influenced locals through four controls: that over funding, project personnel, knowledge and concepts.¹⁴¹ The NGO called PLAY was put up by a local basketball player who had studied and played in the US, as well as gained a Master’s degree in Peace and Conflict studies from the University of Trömsø, Norway. Indeed also the main funder of the program was the USAid and the US Embassy was thus very visibly represented, especially during the media day. The project used basketball, but also educational and motivational lectures, and workshops as the political technology or tactics to bring the youth together from the different post Yugoslav communities. They were also able to bring together plenty of local sports celebrities and coaches, but also an impressive number of

¹⁴¹ Sampson 2003, 35-38.

Ph.D. level lecturers. The Letenka camp is situated in Vojvodina, which is a particularly multicultural region within Serbia.

Based on the final report, the project has a few similarities with the notions of project life that Sampson wrote about in his article. It confirms to the norms of bringing in funding and expert knowledge, namely the trainers and lecturers, but as I learned during the 2018 camp, the foreign funding came only after Mihajlo had put up the program with the academic and sports knowledge and networks he had obtained during his studies and career. The project seemed to also diverge from the norms in terms of using locally loved tactics or political technologies, such as the game of basketball and shared sports events in general.

During the 2018 camp the expert trainers, Cornelius Roberts and Ricardo Marsh, were from the US, but all of the other volunteers and lecturers were from the region. Ricardo had also played professionally in Serbia before and Cornelius was a former teammate of Mihajlo, and nowadays worked on similar types of SDP projects in Alaska utilizing basketball as the tool.

In 2019, all of the lecturers and mentors were local experts providing their input for the aims of the program. The volunteers, Youth Ambassadors, the physical trainer as well as the former professional players and the basketball trainers were all locals. The expert knowledge was shared in conversations between the trainers and the organizers, as well as through lectures, workshops and motivational speeches during and after practices to the campers. Majority of the funding was again from the US, but there were also several local partners from the region and beyond. Among them were the Olympic Committees of Serbia and Slovenia, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Serbia, the provincial government of the autonomous province of Vojvodina, the cities of Novi Sad, Zagreb, Cuprija and Ljubljana, the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, Embassy of Israel in Belgrade, Universities of Berkley and Trömso, and finally companies from the region such as the Nectar Group, Fructal, Bambi, Imlek and New Moment. Mihajlo also discussed future plans for the program with the trainers. Possible sponsors and internationalizing were among the themes planned for the future.

5.6 Influencing the Pond that You Operate In

John Sugden's Ripple Effect model is composed of the outer circles that represent the context specific moral framework of human rights. The structure, content and goals of the project are supposed to be designed based on these realities. The inner circles represent the practical work and the values spread by the project. Further,

the very center represents the target audience, i.e participants, who should be surrounded by trained adult volunteers, both from the region and from abroad, as well as any other skillful and important adults from the local communities. In between the inner and outer circles is the network of partners who can articulate the ideas created within the project to a wider community and policy makers. The model is in accordance with Lederach's web approach in which the strategy is to first have a local focus, but later build networks of human relationships between individuals, communities and institutions.¹⁴²

The context specific framework was clearly in place and it had been kept in mind while designing the goals, structure and content of the program. Mihajlo is a local with an international degree in a relevant field and professional background in the game of basketball. He also has plenty of connection in the region and beyond because of his international education and experiences gained through basketball. The context specific framework was also supported by the local volunteers; local and international institutions; experienced professional experts and PhD level academic lecturers, but also regional and international sports celebrities and coaches.

The participants spread the word in their home communities and bring their friends to future camps, while staying also in contact with their peers in other parts of the region. The camp is free for all the participants and what makes this camp stand out from the others in the region, is that building bridges between the different communities is at least as important as the game specific development of the participants.

Mihajlo made an interesting point of having noticed that often participants from the different sides of national borders, but from closely situated sub regions start to hang around after a couple of days. To me this is an interesting example of the relatively low importance of the borders of nation states and how the regional networks are formed. Another interesting example of the ripple effects he mentioned was that, in 2011, when Mladic was arrested, they had participants from both the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim communities. That year they also organized a lecture on international criminal law, but no noticeable tensions arose. In fact, the groups mixed well after a couple of days and some of them

¹⁴² Sugden 2013, 92-94.

represented the national team of Bosnia and Herzegovina together a few years later.

In the very beginning of the camp all the participants were gathered at the main court to hear the rules and schedule of the week. Everyone was also told that if these rules were not followed, that would lead to an immediate suspension from the camp. Some years ago, Mihajlo had noticed someone bringing beer to the camp and lying about where he got it. He was automatically told to pack his bags and leave. The rules are there for the safety of the youth. During the 2018 camp, I noticed a couple of conflict situations and how they were dealt with. During the first practice, a trainer overheard some of the players cursing on the other court. He stopped the practice and asked who was cursing. When no one admitted or named someone, the whole group had to run. One of the younger players in the other group was not motivated enough during the practice, so he needed to go to the sidelines and watch the rest of the practice from there. Another day, Tiana and the Croat trainer who had participated on all of the 11 camps asked two participants to the centre of the court. They were told to personally apologise a smaller kid whom they had bullied by putting toothpaste on his face. So, one by one they apologised and hugged the small kid in front of everyone. After this, a couple of other participants who had skipped practice because of table tennis were also asked to come on the court. Both the boys who had picked on the smaller kid and the boys who missed practice were put through a really tough physical training while everyone else had free time. This exertion they went through was done in good spirits though. They were motivated by cheering from the side-lines by both the trainers and their peers so that they would have the strength to last until the end of the exercise. Again, this small-group exercise, or a punishment, ended in a motivational speech by the trainers and a team chant with the trainers. Others got to practice after that. In the evening, everyone gathered to the main court to sing for a boy who had his birthday – he happened to be one of the youngsters who had been punished with the physically hard exercise earlier the same day. He also got a book as a present that was signed by all of the participants. Clearly there was a punishment after disobeying the rules, but afterwards the mistakes were forgotten, and everyone looked forward together.

In my previous business management studies, the importance of building a team of people with different backgrounds and personalities was emphasized again and again to maximize potential for creativity and problem solving. Mihajlo

had done a great job in putting together a group of trainers from different parts of the region who are both from different backgrounds and very different personality-wise as well, but who work together as a team – and further their co-operation looks like that team has a long history. The same goes even though there often are a couple of new trainers on each camp. The same goes for the volunteers and lecturers. One of the trainers had also written about the different forms of cooperation over community lines to his local newspaper. The volunteers had international training in giving inspirational workshops, while they also had experience of taking activist initiative in their home communities.

I asked Tiana about the process of drawing up the rules of the camp. She explained that there are explicit rules that have to be obeyed by the participants so that everyone's safety can be ensured, but also some organizational adjustments need to be done during the camp based on situational changes. She does these adjustments by first consulting everyone involved or affected by the changes. She then plans the arrangements based on those consultations and makes the final decision. Tiana explained to me how they have learned to plan for and deal with different types of problematic situations during the years. The highest participant number has once been 150 players.

Lectures for the participants were motivational and educational, about inspiring personal histories, scholarship and exchange opportunities, as well as possibilities for combining studies and basketball. The workshops were about team work, taking responsibility and initiative, benefits of volunteering and activism, and much more.

One group of participants is usually sent to the camp by a humanitarian organization and the group includes youth from disadvantaged settings or with disabilities. In 2018 it was a group of disadvantaged youth who did not have background in a basketball club. They were organized to the camp by a humanitarian organization. The group was looked after by a teacher who volunteered on these types of camp trips through the same organization every summer. Besides the camp activities, he gave them assignments, such as writing short stories of different subjects. One of the participants in this group was so inspired by Ricardo Marsh's motivational speech related to his personal history that he named a character in one of the stories after Ricardo. The boy felt that if a man with that background growing up could achieve such a career, also he should strive for his own goals no matter how hard times he has had in his childhood.

This group got to form a team of their own for the team building exercise in which they form a row of blindfolded ones guided by one who can see but is dribbling a basketball while giving directions to the ones in the row. They had clear difficulties from the beginning. After their coach told them that they were making fools of themselves if they did not even try, they actually managed to finish the exercise with a good run. What was special about this group, was that after they had commonly decided to improve their performance, they started practicing in between the drills and they even continued together after the exercise had ended.

Another one of the workshops started by a volunteer telling his experience of repairing the local courts of his neighborhood. He had collected money with his friends from the locals and later went over to a few banks to ask for a sponsorship for the project. As they could show due to their initiative and the money collected that this was important for the whole community, they got funding, machinery and manpower for repairing their home street court, with Reiffeisen sponsorship logos. The court was now safer, but also popular as it was in such a good condition. It came to be known as the Reiffeisen court all over the city. The project gained so much publicity that soon other companies wanted their own sponsored outside courts. After the speech, the participants were put in mixed groups and were told to work as groups on similar case studies given to them by the volunteers. Later the groups presented their cases and ideas for overcoming the obstacles within those cases. The whole point was to inspire the youth through a real-life story of activism and to make them think of possibilities of taking initiative in improving their neighborhoods, other surroundings and settings.

Most of the participants as well as the trainers had first come to the camp through a recommendation or invitation by a friend. Content campers and word of mouth seemed to be the best marketing tactic. Most of the trainers have first come to the camp as players and it seemed that everyone had had someone they know, usually either their own trainer or a friend, at the camp before them.

The two skill trainers from the US who provided their expertise in 2018 were Cornelius “Neil” Roberts and Ricardo “Rick” Marsh. Neil is the President of Point Forward Basketball Group and has a background as a professional player in Europe and South America and now he works with local youth in Anchorage, Alaska. He trains and looks for future opportunities for them. He had also played in the same university basketball team with Mihajlo in the US. When he introduced himself to the participants, he told us about his past and how he has

had the chance to change many people's lives through training and finding future paths for them. He spoke about the importance of the right attitude and building relationships. He was an energetic motivator for the participants. He also used to talk to the kids whenever he met them around the camp site. Several times I saw him outside the canteen showing moves to the smaller payers, which they then practiced by themselves between the organized trainings and in the evenings when everyone was shooting hoops at the main court. One of them was a series of dribbling drills with a focus on the stance, rhythm and the way in which to move once center of gravity to get an advantage over the opponent. Later I saw the girls doing these drills in between practices and together with other participants. All trainings ended in gathering the participants together in a circular huddle and stacking their hands on top of each other, saying out loud the most important things related to both the game as well as life in general to be remembered and learned from the practice, after which they would cheer a chant together. This was something done after every practice and by all trainers, but I remember the one's Neil held the best.

Rick has 13 years of professional experience as a player and now runs his own training program in North Carolina. During his international career, he also played for the Cedevita in Zagreb and Crvena Zvezda of Belgrade in 2010-11. Neil and Rick ran a good practice together, after which Rick introduced himself and gave a motivational speech to all the participants. He told about his background growing up in a rural town and training himself all the way to an international professional career and even a stint in the NBA.

They both are mentored by Boo Williams, a big basketball personality in the US who has worked in Nike's international marketing and has his own sponsorship and scholarship programs. Williams has group of more than 200 teams that he sponsors and manages. Mihajlo later went to meet Neil and Rick in the States and signed a contract about future co-operation with Boo Williams.

Time and time again both Rick and Neil pointed out the increase in importance of girls in different scholarship programs and in the eyes of talent scouts. They also agreed that the girls on this camp are at times actually better and show more potential than the boys in some groups. Some of the practices at the camp were organized so that girls and boys were in the same groups, which isn't normally common on training camps or in clubs.

Stefan Stojacic stressed the importance of education, but also promoted three on three street basketball as a good option – for the traditional five on five version of the game – as a future opportunity. The participants were free to ask questions and later take pictures with him.

In 2019, we received a lecture by a physical trainer who had professionally trained several clubs, players in the Serbian national team as well as other athletes in individual sports. The participants had interesting questions related to their physical training and how to best make it support their game. I also got to know Mihajlo's friend who had played in the Bosnian national team and interestingly also several times against Sasu Salin, the shooting guard of the Finnish national team, in club games. Him and his friend introduced themselves later to everyone at the amphitheatre and said that they will be staying at the camp for a couple of days and they were there to help anyone with questions related to basketball or education.

The trainers, organizers and volunteers shared their experiences to the wider audience during motivational lectures, during and after practices, as well as within smaller groups in the evening when the participants had gone to sleep. I was present several times when they shared their experiences of basketball, cultural differences and similarities, as well as opportunities for the future, but also human rights issues and values in the region and beyond.

The media day was also an important event for the visibility of the program. Through the publicity that the Letenka camp has received during the 11 years that the camp has been organized, the site will be rebuilt in the near future with modern facilities. The American Embassy in Belgrade came with their own team and played a show game against the trainers that both the participating youth and the local media representatives got to enjoy. Also, the youth participants played show games in mixed teams. In 2018, an architectural video of a plan for the future Letenka camp was projected on the wall of one of the buildings, while the guests were enjoying a barbeque. After the guests had left, the participating youth had free time, barbeque, music and games.

The partners of the program are versatile. They include the US State Department, Olympic Committees, capital cities in the region, Embassies, and Universities, but also regional corporations with sponsorship deals. Mihajlo has continued his networking internationally, for example with visits to both Rick's and Neil's training facilities. During that trip he also made a contract with their

mentor Boo Williams about future co-operation. Mihajlo and the professional Bosnian player played a division game in a nearby town and one of the Serbian trainers coached them. It is a team called I Came to Play that Mihajlo and his friends had put up in Novi Sad and their idea is to play in the team until they have reached a higher level and then pass it on to the next generation. It could also serve as a stepping stone for some of the youth participants of the camp. Another example of the ways the basketball education program has spread into new fields, other examples being the scholarship and exchange opportunities, as well as the Youth Ambassadorship program that Mihajlo and Slavisha have planned and that brings together more forward-thinking youth from the region students to network and spread important information for the younger generations or in other words to “fight backwardness in youth”. It’s another example of the fact that the program is not just about a camp of peace education and basketball. Mihajlo and his friends clearly have a strive to influence the regional societies on multiple fronts. In 2019, two of the Youth Ambassadors gave presentations about human rights, the UN, activism and different options for influencing politics, while three others gave presentations on future work markets after the emergence of artificial intelligence, media literacy and communication skills.

5.7 Representations of Yugonostalgia

The Letenka camp site was built during Yugoslav era by Youth Labor Action members from different parts of the region. The history that the camp site had stood through was visible on the walls of its rooms and corridors. The facilities themselves reminded of the shared past, although no Yugo-era political ideas, symbols or histories were officially promoted by the PLAY organization or the Letenka staff. All the houses except the canteen had children’s paintings on the walls. These were something that stuck in my head from the first day when I arrived to the camp. I could not stop thinking about the paintings, most of which depicted different groups of people holding hands or working together. One such hand painted picture was located in a hallway right outside the room in which I stayed in with three trainers. This was a picture of a heart shaped flower decoration, inside of which there was a depiction of a hand-shake and a phrase written in Cyrillic saying: “We Shall Stay Together – 9.05.1992”. Someone had later added two different colored anarchy signs on top of this positively idealistic picture. Inside our room, me and my Croat and Slovene roommates were surrounded by different kinds of pictures of the Serbian flag or the heraldic double

headed eagle that were clearly drawn later than the pictures in the hallway, and also by more grown-up hands.

The facilities and the infrastructure of the Letenka camp had been built by a Youth Labor Action group in 1974. One can find a YouTube clip¹⁴³ of the construction of the site as well as of a reunion event¹⁴⁴ that the group organized later in 2013. The camp has since been used by very different types of groups. Besides recreational use by mostly elementary school trips, according to ICTY documents it was briefly also used by Serbian Red Berrets as a training site in the early 1990's¹⁴⁵ and later when Krajina Serbs were evacuated, some of these refugees housed the lodges¹⁴⁶.

As I went through the videos available online of the Pioneer and Youth Labor Action projects, some of them had clips of the daily morning routines that the participants had. Interestingly, often their days began with a very similar jogging, stretching and warm-up exercise routines that we started our days with at the I Came to Play basketball camps. Letenka has a spectacular looking Yugoslav era handmade amphitheater in the middle of the woods. You needed to walk down a steep stairway in to the place surrounded by almost endless looking pine forest. Downstairs there was a wooden stage from which we got to hear about different types of motivational exercises and team work skills, as well as study-abroad opportunities and modes of local activism. These lectures often also included group exercises on team work and activism. A very similar setting and activity to those that the former pioneers organized and participated in, but nowadays without the political emphasis on socialism.

Another interesting event that took place next to us was that organized by the astronomy clubs of the region. Especially in the evenings when it was dark enough to use the tens of different telescopes that were brought in by the astronomy enthusiasts from all over the post Yugoslav space. The participants of the basketball camp also got to experience this unexpected activity. It was particularly interesting to see how eager the astronomers were to explain about their hobby and help with using their equipment. The astronomy camp also had put up the flags of the former Yugoslav states that had participated this year.

¹⁴³ Letenka ne kad i sad 2008.

¹⁴⁴ SUSRET AKCIJASA LETENKA 2013 ORA "Partizanski put" I deo 2015.

¹⁴⁵ The Prosecutor v. Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic 2013, 443-448.

¹⁴⁶ Jankovic 1996.

I Came to Play camp had the Serbian national and Vojvodina municipality flags raised only for the media day as official representatives of the municipality and US Embassy were visiting alongside celebrities and plenty of local media. This was expected for it was an official public event. On the other hand most pictures were taken against the big banner with no other symbols than the I Came to Play logo. Also, slogans such as “Sport is a right, not a privilege!” were visible on other banners.

The trainers shared the same camp outfits. The participants also wore the same camp outfits during the media day. During the camp there were slogans of the camp on emblems that were put up around the main court. Only during the media day, was there a Serbian and a Vojvodina regional flag raised. On the other hand, there was a big emblem canvas also put up with only the camp’s logo on it as a background for promotional photos. Interestingly there was a regional astronomy camp also taking place on the other side of the driveway and they flew most of the post Yugoslav flags outside the camp, representing the regional astronomy organizations taking part in the camp together.

Many of the personnel at Letenka camp had worked at the site for decades, for example the lady who showed everyone their rooms and took care of the reporting formalities to the authorities had worked at the camp for 37 years. They had seen the different groups coming to the site and their very presence made me think of the different realities of the past, but I also got to spend time with them and ask about those histories.

Obviously mixing the nationalities and the groups in which the participants arrived both for practices and into the rooms in which they stayed in was a reminder to all about the importance of building bridges over intercommunity lines besides improving their game. This is not in any way common in the other camps of the region. There is another camp called the Yubac, which my former coach told me about, that at least in their name have some kind of nostalgia for the common former success. According to everyone I spoke with about Yubac and the rest of the more well-known training camps -- and by going through the materials available online – the camp is again more concentrated on the improvement of individual skills.

Mihajlo had made the observation that youth from the same sub-regions often mix over national borders more quickly than many from different parts of the same country and interestingly during one camp Bosnian Muslims and Serbs

got to know each other during the camp and represented the same national team later. To me the first is a positive example of the limits of an exclusive nationalism and the second – again a positive one – an example of basketball building bridges over ethno-religious lines within a deeply segregated country. But again, the aim of the program is not to blur the lines of nation states, but rather create spaces for peaceful co-operation over all possible dividers.

In 2018, one of the trainers was from Macedonia, one from Slovenia, three are from Bosnia and two from Croatia. The Macedonian and Slovenian trainers trained a morning practise together. The trainers joked together about the differences of the languages, but they also agreed that these differences did not cause any major problems in the training sessions. Some of the participants did have problems understanding Macedonian, but the trainer could usually rephrase what he was saying with different words so that everyone could understand him. It was also good to see how the participants helped each other when it came to language differences. During a dinner, we had a funny conversation related to the language differences. There was a disagreement about what we were eating, if it was burek sa sirom, sirlicka or sirenje. Language and cultural differences were openly joked about especially during evenings, but in good faiths.

I once asked my Croat roommate how much I owed him for the snacks and drinks we had at the wooden tables the other night. He replied that as he had brought them, they were offered by our room and thus as roommates we did not owe each other. The thinking was that the nationally mixed roommates were sort of teammates. The shared experiences by the wooden tables and in the canteen made the training team and the rest of the organizers bond and learn from each other. Neil had a conversation with the most experienced coach from Bosnia, translated by a trainer from Croatia. The conversation was especially about coaching girls' teams since this was something the Bosnian trainer had more experience of and something that Neil had an interest in involving into more. Neil also shared his experiences of empowering locals in the poorer areas of South America, when he was playing there.

Both Mihajlo's and Tiana's process of planning the schedules and content for the activities at the camp by consulting all relevant parties before making the decisions reminded me of a type of Yugoslav self-management. Everyone involved got to sound their opinion and these were taken into consideration in the decision process.

Like Youth Labor Action camps allowed Yugoslav youth to meet and befriend face to face with peers from different communities and travel together to some of the vacation destinations of the region and to have a good time together while learning something new through lectures and co-work by offering these camps for free I Came to Play is free for all the participants.

For many youth, especially from the rural areas, these trips were the only way to get to experience such a vacation. Although the group interviews showed that many of the participants had traveled in the region with their parents, the I Came to Play is still a special occasion for the youth to truly mix without their parents and in a setting where they won't be able to spend their free time on their mobile apps, but instead spend time together in person and improve their game at the same time. One must bear in mind that although a teenager would travel to a neighboring country, getting to know, let alone befriending a peer from a different community is not common when you are travelling with your parents in contrast to a camp setting in which you spend all the hours of the day with your peers and especially when you are not able to spend the time online.

On a rainy morning in 2019, the first practice was cancelled. I had a coffee with two of the trainers and another camp staff member whom I asked more about the camps history. He said that the camp was built in 1974 by a Youth Labor Action brigade and was also used mainly by them for the first years. Later it was school groups who came to the camp during summer. Interestingly there were more than 400 students at the camp at its peak. He also explained that both Krajina refugees escaping Croat offensive and Novi Sad television broadcast workers running from NATO bombardment of the TV station were housed at the camp with their families in the 90's.

On one of the evenings in 2019, all of the trainers and volunteers gathered by the wooden tables to sing and dance to Yugoslav era songs and video clips – quite a surreal scene to say the least. The trainers took turns to pick songs from different parts of the region that they liked and to my surprise most were enjoyed by others no matter the national or ethnic background.

On another rainy day the practice was cancelled, but I was invited to the camp manager's house by the oldest camp staff member to have a rakija and coffee. He told me about his work history at the camp and his participation in different Youth Labor Action brigades. I also took a picture of a small ORA

sticker below one of the windows in the management house's kitchen, which was yet another reminder of the history and politics related to the camp site.

The peace education program promotes the following values: integrity, teamwork, respect, education, commitment, compassion, leadership, fair play and optimism. These universally positive and forward-looking ideals bare resemblance to those promoted by the Yugoslav pioneer movement, but without the political connotations. Below, a translated example of the oath from the 1950's.

“Today when I'm becoming a Pioneer, I give my honorable Pioneer word, That I will, diligently learn and work, Respect parents and teachers, And be a faithful and honest friend, Who keeps his word of honor; That I will follow the path of the best Pioneers, Appreciate the glorious deeds of Partisans, And all progressive people of the world, Who stand for liberty and peace; That I will love my Homeland, Self-managing socialist Yugoslavia, And its brotherly nations and nationalities, And that I will build a new life, Full of happiness and joy.”¹⁴⁷

6. Conclusion

Why do we have such a tendency to team up against each other and do whatever for our own group to succeed on the expense of others? Often these groupings are formed on trivial and imagined basis. From my youth, I remember how fights broke out between fan groups of sport clubs, city districts and schools. When such fights were discussed in the parental meetings of the school, there were often vocal parents present who pointed out that several generations of Helsinki youth have had gang fights between city districts and that this was only normal. For these groupings to be formed, we need to share an idea of us in contrast to those others. We are the good or better ones, while the others are seen as evil or at least representing some type of threat to us. This dichotomy is also the basis for armed conflicts. Mobilizing for military actions often happens by boosting the feeling of being threatened, but it can also happen through a perceived victimhood or opportunistic thinking over territory, resources or other factors leading to gained power over others. Dehumanizing the others is another component in the process of mobilization.

¹⁴⁷ Marjanovic-Shane 2018, 71.

As so often happens, also in the Yugoslav context religious institutions were used to feed the nationalistic narrative of survival against the dangerous “others”. Bosniak identity is closely linked to the Muslim faith and populist politicians encouraged a nationalism based on religion through a narrative of Bosniaks as a Muslim community under threat.¹⁴⁸ Orthodox Serbian nationalism on the other hand was a community fighting yet again for their survival as a nation under perceived threat from both the invading “Turks” – a derogatory term used for Muslims – and the fascist Ustasha movement backed by the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁹ Croatian nationalists felt that they had wrongfully endured the younger brother status in the Socialist Republic and needed to make a move before the Greater Serbia would overtake them. Thus, populist sentiments saw the opportunity to revive the old fascist Ustasha movement with a strong Catholic identity.¹⁵⁰ Again, of course this is yet another over simplification of the breakup of the country known as Yugoslavia – and not only because it leaves out the myriad of other intrastate and international factors, as well as all the other influential minority communities of the former republic. More importantly, these imagined communities were far more mixed than the overly simplified narratives make us believe and people tend to have several intertwined identities at the same time. Marriages over ethnic and religious lines had been common since the Ottoman era and communities had mixed and co-operated with each other at least for centuries. The wars of the 1990’s also divided many families. How easily are we manipulated into warfare?

In 1918, Finland was divided into two rival groups fighting a bloody civil class war. Brothers were killing each other, just like later in the breakup of Yugoslavia. One of the most notorious concentration camps in Finland was put up on the island that is nowadays one of the biggest tourist attractions of the country, Suomenlinna. Sadly, it was only the common enemy in the Second World War that united this imagined community. Nowadays humankind is facing such challenges that necessitates us to unify and co-operate over national, religious and ethnic divides in the fight over climate change and the political and economic systems that divide us and create inequalities between us – if we are to survive these challenges and not to become extinct.

¹⁴⁸ Perica 2002, 74-88.

¹⁴⁹ Perica 2002, 43-55; 123-132.

¹⁵⁰ Perica 2002, 17-42; 109-122.

Fortunately, there are people and organizations working towards the capabilities for co-operation over different types of imagined divides. This work is done in various ways in various contexts. The organization called PLAY designed its yearly I Came to Play basketball peace education camps: “to bring together a group of young people whose love of sports/ basketball transcends the recent histories of the region.”¹⁵¹ The organization’s mission is: “Raising public awareness and improving the lives of children in the region – Using sport as the common language for peace, friendship, youth education and sportsmanship”.¹⁵² The values of the program as stated on the website of PLAY are: fair play, teamwork, respect for one another, commitment, compassion, leadership, optimism, joy, integrity and education.

The research questions that guided the process of the study were the following: 1) How are the targets of the project, mainly the youth participants, presented as a category or categories? 2) What type of technologies are used to address the goals of the project?

The target population, the participating youth, were seen as representatives of their ethno-religious communities, but also as the future ambassadors of the program’s values in those home communities. The participants were not divided into groups based on their ethnic background, as was the case in the Mostar school project. Instead they were mixed for the accommodation and for practices. Because of this the participants did not need to find and occupy their own space with their own rules to be able to interact with each other over the divides. It was also interesting to hear how little, in some cases, the physical borders of states or ethno-religious communities mattered in befriending at the camp and how cultural similarities within geographic sub-regions sometimes had more of an effect in the process. There was a funny incident on the last camp as prior to the media day Mihajlo received an enquiry from the US Embassy about the number of Muslim participants. This resulted in an awkward situation as the trainers needed to go through the rooms and count the number of Muslim participants. The case underlined the general atmosphere at the camp of downplaying all types differences that might create divides. Later the incident was joked among both the organizers, trainers and the participants. The reason for the enquiry must have been some type of yearly reporting on the multiculturalism of the program.

¹⁵¹ Delic 2009, 4.

¹⁵² Delic 2009, 3.

The game of basketball was used as the main political technology and local tactic in bringing youth together from different communities in the region. The main mode of promotion was a guerilla type of marketing of the past participants and trainers spreading their experiences from the camp in their home communities, as well as the publicity gained through the activities on the media day. Lectures, workshops and extracurricular activities were in place to teach the values promoted by the program. The fact that the camp took place in the surroundings of a Yugoslav era campsite located in a national park, that is also used for other post Yugoslav gatherings, can itself be seen as a technology for further enabling the bridging of imagined divides between the communities. The old paintings on the walls further enhanced the atmosphere of the segregated youth coming together, as they were drawn by similar groups of youth from different parts of the former Yugoslavia. The fact that the program was designed and implemented as a multilayer network of volunteers and partners from different walks of life is a technology for involving and promoting the values in a wider context of the region. By involving activists, scholars, universities, people working with youth, sports managers, municipalities, think tanks and different types of international organizations PLAY has the ability to raise public awareness and transcend the recent histories of the region. Further, the program itself has created new partnerships that both connect the program itself and the participants to a wider network of people and opportunities in the region and beyond. Examples of such partnerships that have born from the influence of the program are the basketball club in Novi Sad that is supposed to become a stepping stone for the participants and the trainers in the near future, as well as the Youth Ambassadorship program, which brings together forward thinking youth from universities in the region and whom spread their knowledge to their peers and the basketball campers. The topics of the lectures help the participants in figuring out issues they might need to consider when deciding on their future study and career paths.

The program bares only minor similarities with the notions of project life depicted by Steven Sampson in his study on the international interventions into the former Yugoslavia. The “for us by us” – the term “us” here represents the inclusion within the region that has often been seen in Orientalist terms from the outside, as a mix of communities with ancient hatreds towards each other – mentality that I observed at the camps can also be seen as a technology in itself, as

the only outside influence it utilizes are the international funding and experts with local knowledge in engaging locals from all over the region in the project that strives to bridge divided communities in the region and beyond.

The nostalgia for the shared past can also be seen as a technology for reaching the set goals. None of the participants and only a few of the trainers were born during the Yugoslav era. There were clear signs of a certain level of reminiscing of the shared past, but none of it is officially promoted during the camp or in its communications. The most notable sign of the nostalgia is the fact that the participants from different parts of the former Yugoslavia spend a week in a Yugo-era campsite. Most of the staff at the camp have been working there for decades and have seen the political changes during the times. Some of the staff have also been active members in the Youth Action Brigades that also built the campsite.

When you bring together a group of basketball enthusiasts, they will at some point start to talk about memorable teams, players and games. If the group is international, Yugoslavia and its former players will most likely come up at some point. If the people are from the region, the topic will come up very soon. At the 2019 camp, this reminiscing moved on to joking about Yugo-era films and other popular culture of the time. For one evening Yugoslav songs were played and sang along by all the trainers and volunteers. Each one picked a song they remembered, and everyone joined by signing.

The morning warmups reminded me of the videos I had seen of the activities the Pioneers and ORA members did during their camps, but this most likely has more to do with the traditions of sports education around the region. The paintings on the walls of the campsite were also a lively reminder of the shared past. Even the values promoted by the program were similar to the ones in the Pioneer oath. But at the same time, they were so universal that one can find similarities all over the world.

Different types of representations of Yugonostalgia were visible at the camp: the very facilities, location, personnel, history, the similarities with the activities to those of the past era and the mixing of the communities, as well as the reminiscing in private settings by the trainers and organizers of the past basketball success. On the other hand, all of these were of the reflective type. No longing for the actual republic or official promotion of the Yugoslav history or its symbols was done. Rather the nostalgic signs were there for those who intentionally looked

for them. The activities of the program aimed for a forward-thinking youth ambassadorship that would spread positive values within different communities.

As I left for the first field trip, I had for several times been a traveler in the region as well as I had done a six-month internship in Ljubljana in 2011. I had also studied the local language in a night school in Helsinki for one semester. Having a better knowledge of the language would have definitely helped me in the observation part of the research, but then again, my limited exposure to the cultures of the region helped me to maintain an academic perspective towards all the faced events.

The participatory observation on the field trips happened naturally as I was taken into the coaching group, living in the same room as the trainers, in the buildings where the also the youth participants also lived in. I lived according to the schedule of the participants to see the everyday encounters at the camp. I also took part in all the planning meetings of the trainers and their extracurricular gatherings. Data was gathered by conducting group interviews, taking photographs, writing down field notes and filming video clips. Before going on the first field trip, I studied ethnographic methods of participatory observation. That in mind, I also felt that it was important not to make too strict rules for the research process itself and rather keep an open mind towards the encounters I was about to face. I was also eager to conduct the research together with the participants and organizers of the camp, so that I wouldn't just be an outsider examining their peculiar project. I have kept in touch with both Mihajlo and his family, the trainers and the volunteers involved in the lectures and workshops. Two of the volunteers also visited me and my family on their trip to Helsinki in the autumn of 2018.

In the near future, it would be interesting to research the later effects of participation at the camps. How has the participation, either as a camper or trainer, influenced the youth and their surroundings? I would like to see if the experiences and connections gained at the camps have influenced their decisions in later life. For the purpose of understanding the effects of different cultural factors in the design of an SDP program, a comparative study of PLAY and another SDP program in a different geo-cultural context would be beneficial.

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