

# Football Fandom And Formation Of Cultural Differences In Bosnia: A Comparative Ethnographic Study On Fk Željezničar And Fk Sarajevo Fans In Sarajevo

Özgür Dırım Özkan

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The Anthropology of European Football

FREE Conference

University of Vienna, October 2013



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Vienna, AUSTRIA

October 25/26, 2013

## **FOOTBALL FANDOM AND FORMATION OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN BOSNIA: A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON *FK ŽELJEZNIČAR* AND *FK SARAJEVO* FANS IN SARAJEVO**

**ÖZGÜR DIRIM ÖZKAN<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND REASON OF THE RESEARCH**

Although 18 years have passed since the bloody war in Bosnia, the social and political situation is still far from stable in the country. Even the former president, Ejup Ganić expresses that he is grateful to the Dayton Peace Agreement which ended the war in Bosnia, whereas the agreement itself is the main obstacle in front of the establishment of a stable state therein. (Ganić, 2008, p.13) Within this social and political atmosphere, most of the social research based in Bosnia focuses on the notion of “ethnic differences”: Schooling and ethnic differences, arts and ethnic differences, cinema and ethnic differences, family structure and ethnic differences and so on. Football is no doubt under scope within this conceptualization as well.

Yet, local rivalries in addition to ethnic differences are also considered as effective in constructing football rivalries. The rivalries between regions, between cities, between the official capital and the finance capital, or between sub-districts in regions or cities are considered as having potential to reflect on the construction of rivalries between football fans’ groups. A similar case is valid also in Bosnia, where a noticeable rivalry exists between Sarajevo, the capital and other cities like Zenica, Tuzla and Mostar. However the rivalry between Zenica and Sarajevo is distinguished due to the fact that the inhabitants of Zenica had expected their city to be the new capital of independent Bosnia

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<sup>1</sup> PhD (Social Anthropology), Virtua Research and Consultancy. dirimozkan@gmail.com

since Zenica was far from the trenches during the Bosnian War hence relatively enjoying peace. It did not turn out as Zenica expected though. Moreover, Zenica is not the only Bosnian city that is disappointed with the post-war status of Sarajevo. Inhabitants of other cities are also frustrated since they assume that Sarajevo gets a favorable share from foreign investments and aids.

This research ignored the effects of neither ethnic differences nor local rivalries on football fandom, however it was focused on two football fans' groups who are ethnically similar (predominantly Bosnian Muslim) and who are from the same city (Sarajevo).

In this sense, the research was not focused on either the "reflection of ethnic differences on football fandom" or the "reflection of local rivalries on football fandom", despite the general tendency. Instead, without denying the significance of ethnic differences and local rivalries, the research was based on a study of various cultural determinants which are effective on constructing different identities and thus, leading to cultural differentiation between two fans' groups.

This presentation relies on the outcomes of the fieldwork conducted in Sarajevo between February 2007 and January 2008 as a part of the PhD dissertation submitted in December 2009. The author has been living in Sarajevo since January 2010 and has been observing football fans by taking part in terracesince then.

## **2. PROBLEMATIQUE: FORMATION OF IDENTITIES**

The basic question of the research relies on the question of formation of identities and cultural differentiation. Therefore a simple definition of the term identity in relation to the general conceptualization of culture is obviously required.

The Latin term *idem*, meaning "the same" is the etymological origin of the term *identitas* (Jenkins, 1996, p.3). According to Richard Jenkins, two distinct meanings are inherent to the term *identitas*: Absolute sameness and differentiation (Jenkins, 1996, p.6). According to this definition, construction of identity signifies both similarities and differences. In this context, the notions of "imagination" and "border" are also crucial. Bayart argues that imagination above all, consists of mutual communication and interaction. (Bayart, 1999, p.127) Mutual communication and interaction have two dimensions: Firstly, that of which the society establishes with priors and successors. Secondly, that of which are established between different societies. (Bayart, 1999, p.145) Within this construction, the spatialization of the construction of identity makes it easier for the identity construction to be "imagined". In this sense, Barth takes attention to the concept of *border*. Barth mentions that *border*

is shaped by a group of people within a certain frame of conceptualization. Thus, while shaping the spaces where cultural identities resemble each other, borders also shape the obstacles between different cultures while limiting the cultural identities (Barth, 2000, p.15). As a matter of fact, construction of imagination and establishment of borders within cultural identities is a political act. Güvenç points out that, the notion of “identity” becomes problematic when it becomes politicized. (Güvenç, 1974, p.251)

Jean-François Bayart mentions a similar argument as well. While describing the reason of writing his book, Bayart gives examples from actual political events. He argues that the reason behind the bloody armed conflicts in Yugoslavia, Caucasus, Algeria and Great Lakes Region in Africa is the pseudo presumption that the “cultural identities” overlap with “political identities”. According to Bayart, instabilization of the notion of “citizenship” by the assaults of postmodernism can be recognized as one of the basic reasons of transformation of identity conflicts into bigger scale bloody, regional warfare. (Bayart, 1999, p.9)

Although the notion of identity points to a problematic area, it was perceived differently within the course of history. Taylor argues that, before modernity, human beings did not have a need of “identities” or “recognition”. (Taylor, 1996, p.49-50) Even if such needs did exist due to the functionality of social roles, those “identities” were more inert, solid and stable. (Kellner, 2000, p.231) Improvements in transportation networks, namely construction of railroads made it possible for different cultures to interact with each other. Consequently, societies and communities began to realize the differences between them and other societies and communities.

The project of transforming cultural identities into political identities implied by nation states, as a product of modernity, is recognized as the main reason behind the “problem of identity”. As modern nation states appeared, due to the change in the nature of the concept of identity, it also became problematic for the individuals to define themselves. (Kastoryano, 2000, p.11–12) Compared with the pre-modernity, an ordinary individual began to identify himself with more belongings in modernity. As Maalouf signifies, since the belongings proliferate, identities become problematic (Maalouf, 2003, p.21). Furthermore, the concept of identity passed through a transition within postmodernity.

Frederick Jameson, a scholar who is recognized as being one of the earlier intellectuals who studied the concept of postmodernism argues that the notion of distance loses its significance within the new spatial construction of identities (Jameson, 1994, p.109). Although a variety of identities was presented to individuals by 21st century, no identity as rehabilitative as “citizenship” could be

constructed. The individual, who was not able to identify himself within time and space, needed “identity” more than ever within this maelstrom. According to Bayart, differences are accentuated more than similarities since human beings and cultures are less differentiated within the sphere of globalization and thus cultural differences are mostly invented. (Bayart, 1999, p.87)

In the course of establishing an identity, how other social groups identify and how we define others gain significance. (Jenkins, 1996, p.5). In fact, existence of other is obvious during the establishment of identities. The self defines the other.

Historical conceptualization is very often referred during the construction of “self” and “other”. While implying the cultural differences, it is often mentioned that those differences would have been shaped within a time period hence have a historical background. It is the process of construction of identities and creating the other, when “past” is most often referred to.

However, it is not a must that all cultural identities should be transformed into political identities. Barth mentions that the compulsory result of cultural identity differentiation is not drawing boundaries. (Barth, 1999, p.17) In this sense, he realizes that it is not obligatory to politicize cultural differences and draw boundaries between them. In fact, politicization of cultural identities hinders the existence of cultural similarities between different societies and communities. Indeed, cultural differences may exist together within the same territory without a need of defining borders between them.

While exemplifying cultural differences, Güvenç mentions the partition of some primitive cultures into traditional “halves”. (Güvenç, 1974, p.266). Similar cultural forms do exist in western culture as well, such as:

- 1) *Religious “Halves”*: Alawite-Sunni, Lutheran-Catholic,
- 2) *Political “Halves”*: Conservative-Liberal, Left-Right, Bourgeoisie-Proletariat,
- 3) *Sportive “Halves”*: Fenerbahçe-Galatasaray, Oxford-Cambridge, and so on... (Güvenç, 1974, p.267)

Referring to Radcliffe-Brown, Güvenç mentions that the main function of those structures is “unity through opposition”. Radcliffe-Brown refers to social cohesion through dichotomies and he mentions the concept of “moiety” which literally means “half” where a society is meant to be separated into two groups. (Hammond, 1971, p.178) According to Hoebel, it is not a coincidence that dichotomies like land-sky, water-soil, winter-summer etc do occupy an important role in the cosmological view of

Native Americans. (Hoebel, 1958, p.374) In this sense, rivalry between football clubs, especially those who are from the same city can be considered within this conceptualization, where more examples will be given in the next section focusing on the field of football fandom.

Fandom identities are easy and effortless to obtain. Fandom identities are also recognized as “otherness” whereas “differences” are exclusively constructed. Giulianotti examines that most of the football clubs do construct their cultural identities by using concepts of rivalry and hostility. (Giulianotti, 2003, p.10) The existence of the other is crucial for the construction of the fan identities since the power and success of the self are very much dependent on the power and success of the “other”. Giulianotti mentions that the existence of rivalries in football dates far back and he underlines that local chauvinisms became particular by football rivalries. (Giulianotti, 2003, p.10) The rivalry between Arsenal and Tottenham in Northern London, the rivalry between West Ham and Millwall in the working class settlements of Eastern London, the rivalry between AS Roma and Lazio in Rome or the rivalry between AC Milan and Internazionale Milan can be shown as examples of the kind of rivalries in question. Keeping in mind that traditional local rivalries do also exist in Turkey, without doubt, the rivalry between Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray is world famous. In case of Balkans, Red Star (Crvena Zvezda) vs. Partizan and Sarajevo vs. Željezničar in Bosnia are regarded as leading rivalries in the region.

### **3. AN INTRODUCTION TO BOSNIAN FOOTBALL**

#### **3.1. Bosnia: Fragmented political and social structure**

Bosnia is a small country in South-East Europe with a surface of 51.000 square kilometers and a population of almost 4 million inhabitants. Almost the whole country is covered with Dinaric Alps except the South Eastern Herzegovina region and northern Pannonia plain. Unsurprisingly, Alpine climate is effective where the season break in football league is about 3 months since the winter conditions are harsh.

The most significant economic asset of the country is mineral resources like coal, lignite, silver, copper, iron and hydroenergy as well. Thus, Bosnian heavy industry was relatively developed during Yugoslav period with the establishment of steel industry, avionics, and auto factory and aluminum industry. However, the destructive war that took place between 1992 and 1995 and the political and economical instability that followed the war still do not allow the industrial complexes to revive. Bosnia faces an unemployment rate over 40 per cent. This results in heavy migration pressure over Bosnia. Brain drain is obvious and any young citizen of Bosnia, who has relatively better education,

seeks to leave the country to have better living standards. It has to be kept in mind that most of the players in Bosnian national team are from diaspora.

Bosnia's fragmented population structure is considered to be the main reason behind the political turmoil which resulted in ethnic slaughter in 1992-95. Currently, almost 48 per cent of the Bosnian society is Bosnian Muslim (or Bosniak) where 37 per cent is Bosnian Serb and 14 per cent is Bosnian Croat. (CIA The World Factbook "Bosnia and Herzegovina" 2006)

Bosnian history can be examined within five different periods:

- 1) Pre-Ottoman Period
- 2) Ottoman Period
- 3) Austria-Hungarian Administration
- 4) Yugoslav Period
- 5) Post-Yugoslav

Generally, Slavs are agreed to have scattered between fifth and seventh centuries from Pripet Marshes located in the south of present-day Belarus towards east, west and south. (Hupchick and Cox, 1996, p.4) Yet 10<sup>th</sup> century is the first time when the name Bosnia is seen in written sources. It is indicated that the name of the region is *Bosona* in the book written by Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos in 958. (Malcolm, 2000, p.41) The region that was seized by the Byzantine Empire in 1160 could be reigned by Byzantines only for a decade. As a result of the wars that lasted for the following century, Ban Kulin, the Bosnian King announced in 1180 that independent state of Bosnia was established. (Malcolm, 2000, p.43) Bosnian Kingdom survived until 1463. Ottoman invasion that started in 1463 ended in 1528 with the fall of Jajce castle. (Lovrenović, 2001, 50)

It is known that no matter what their faith was, Bosnians were identified as "deviant" by both the Orthodox and the Vatican. Bosnians who had a heterodox understanding of Christianity before the Ottoman were maintaining their genuine faith despite the pressures of Catholic and Orthodox churches. It is known that Bosnians had no difficulty in choosing Islam via Bektashi lodges due to this faith of theirs. Besides, Ottoman administration not applying the "timar" system which it applied in other Balkan countries and keeping the existing property relations as they were also led local landowners to choose Islam. (Bora, 1999, 19) Possibility of Serbia who declared war against Ottomans

in 1876, to annex Bosnia threatened hence prompted Austria-Hungary to beat Serbians to draw and annex Bosnia in order not to lose the natural resources it had. (Malcolm, 2000, p.58-59)

Austria-Hungary who annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 started to pursue “carrot and stick” strategy in Bosnia and started to favor Bosnian Muslims who put an end to the conflict they had with Austria-Hungary, despite the Bosnian Serbs. In World War I, Bosnian Muslims and Serbs were joining the war in two different camps.

After World War I, new nation states emerged in the region as a result of the disintegration of three important empires in Eastern Europe; Habsburg (Austria-Hungary), Romanov (Russia) and Ottoman empires. Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that displayed the structure of a multinational state among these states later took the name of Yugoslavia. Bosnian Muslims were not recognized as a nation in this newly established state.

Bosnians who took part in the losing party in the war, started to identify themselves with no different identity but the Muslim identity under the Yugoslav administration, with the influence of South Slav idea on this newly established state. *Jugoslavensko Muslimanske Organizacija* (Yugoslav Muslim Organization) the Muslim party established in 1919 embraced the idea of “Yugoslavhood” in order to relieve the national pressure on Bosnian Muslims. (Babuna, 2005, p.406) The name of the party is also a reflection of this idea in the political arena. (Babuna, 2000, p.191)

Croatian dummy state of *Ustaša* that was established in Yugoslavia during the German invasion started in March 27, 1941 displayed fascistic qualities and a part of Serbia as well as entire Bosnia were included within the borders of this state. Against the Croatian *Ustaša* regime, Serbians were fighting in the ranks of *Četnik* (originally derived from the Turkish word “çete” [meaning “gang”]) that were similarly structured whereas Bosnians who were caught in the crossfire of Croatian and Serbian fascism were rather supporting *Partizan* forces. (Bora, 1999, p.43) *AVNOJ* (*Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije*) Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia established by partisans, who found the support they expected among the Muslims, organized its first congress in November 1942 in Bihać and second congress in November 1943 in Jajce. (Bora, 1999, p.44) Both cities are located in Bosnia.

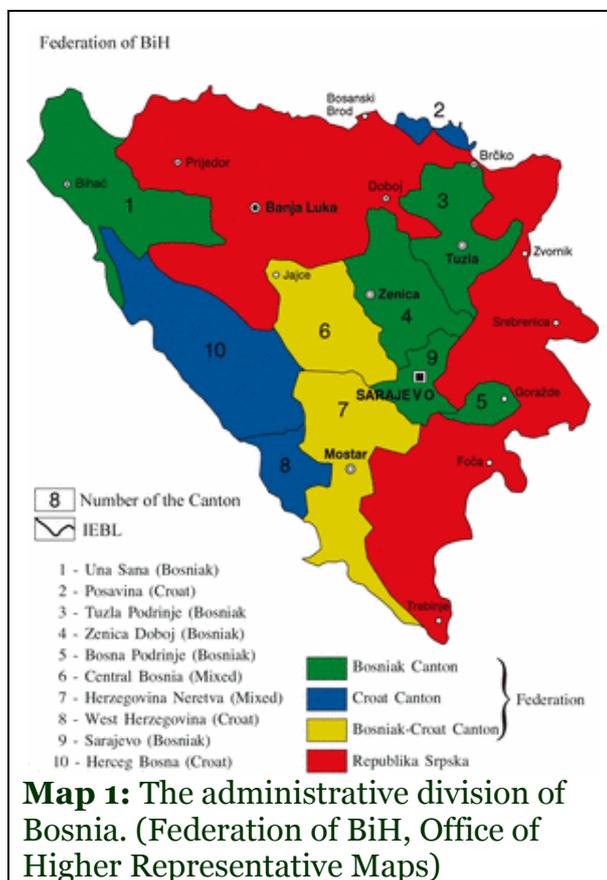
Yugoslavia where not only Slovenians, Croatians and Serbs but almost all the peoples living in Yugoslavia were viewed as “founder country” or “ethnic minority” after the war had a multiethnic structure. Bora asserts that Bosnia and Herzegovina that is among the six founding countries of

Yugoslavia is “a Yugoslavia” pers se. (Bora, 1999, p.12) With the death of Tito in 1980, discourses of separation rose in Yugoslavia who had suffered a serious economic crisis in 1970s.

Yugoslav crisis started with Croatia and Slovenia announcing their independence in 25 June 1991 and European countries like Germany who particularly looked after their benefits in the region hastily recognizing this decision. Until Croatia and Slovenia announced their independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia were in favor of a more loose structure of confederation rather than independence. (Kut, 2005, p.48) In the census carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina right before the crisis, it was determined that 1.905.829 Bosniaks constituted 43.7 per cent of the population whereas Serbians constituted 31.4 per cent and Croatians 17.3 per cent. (Babuna, 2000, p.199) On the other hand, approximately 6 per cent of the population identifies itself as Yugoslav. (Bora, 1999, p.58)

Bosnia and Herzegovina who was threatened by Serbian nationalism with Croatia and Slovenia announcing their independence, announced its independence with the “yes” vote of 62 per cent of participants of the referendum that was carried out in 29 February 1992. Serbian nationalist parties refused to participate in the referendum in order to protest. (Kut, 2005, p.56) In the course following the announcement of independence, Sarajevo started to be shelled from positions deployed in the mountains surrounding Sarajevo and the city was besieged. After the incidents, European Community countries recognized the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 6, 1992. (Malcolm, 2000, p.363)

Successful operations of Croatian and Bosnian troops in 1995 forced the aggressors to make peace. We can assert that Dayton Agreement signed in 12 December 1995 ended up dividing the warring factions by open borders rather than establishing peace.



Today Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two separate states; Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other hand consists of ten cantons of which five are Bosnian Muslim, three Bosnian Croat and two mixed. (Crampton, 2002, p.287) Bosnia where multiculturalism was damaged to a great extent and borders between different cultural-ethnic groups were drawn as sharply as possible, has been able to overcome neither the economic nor the political nor the social crisis although it has been almost two decades since the war ended. This case reveals itself in the football sphere as it does in any other social fact.

### 3.2. History of Bosnian football: Fragmented football leagues

Bosnian football is the heir of a rich tradition. This tradition is based upon Danube and Yugoslav schools. In

advance of World War II, the Danube School that focused on superior technical skills had enhanced Yugoslav football as well as Hungary and Czechoslovakia so they had a say worldwide. Of the four countries that represented Europe in the first World Cup organized in 1930 in Uruguay, two were representatives of Danube School: Yugoslavia and Romania. Socialist system that was established in Eastern European countries after the World War II no doubt affected the football of the countries in the region as well. Socialist economy that is managed with a central planning not only regulated football in economic terms but also succeeded to affect the organization of football as a team game in the field. Danube School based on technical superiority, was merged with tactical richness where team game was favored, with the influence of socialist system. Between 1950 and 1980, football teams who had the support of the state, military and party in Eastern Europe were using these forces to a significant extent in football in which economic conditions were not as determinative as they are today. Yugoslavia who always held a genuine position in Eastern Europe maintained its genuineness in football as well.

Wilson defines Yugoslavia in football sphere as “the Brazil of Europe”. (Wilson, 2006, p.98) The main determinant in this comparison is Yugoslavia being a “football factory” like Brazil. Foer mentions the

fields where each republic excelled in Yugoslav football: Slovenians are competent in defense, Croatians in offence whereas Bosnians and Serbs are competent in midfield. (Foer, 2004, p.12) Sack and Suster point out that one of success criteria of Tito in Yugoslavia project was the support given to Yugoslavia National Team. (Sack and Suster, 2000, p.309) Yet the role that football played in the disintegration in Yugoslavia is also known.

Yugoslav football that went through a crisis with the collapse of socialist system had entered a period harder than that of other Eastern European countries with the rise of ethnic nationalism and under the influence of disintegration process. Vrcan and Laric suggest that Yugoslav case is genuine in this respect. Conflicts between fans' groups in Yugoslavia were precursors of conflicts that were yet to emerge and where no reconciliation was possible. (Vrcan and Laric, 1999, p.178–179) Simon Kuper too supports the view that Yugoslav Civil War actually started with the incidents in the entrance of Maksimir Stadium in Zagreb before Dinamo Zagreb – Red Star game played in May 13, 1990. (Kuper, 2003, p.394) Incidents that went on in the stadium following the mutual fight with stones between fans in the stadium entrance caused the game to be interrupted for an hour. The fact that a military helicopter had to pick the Red Star lot from the stadium indicates how far the incidents went.

The time when relations between football and nationalism begin to structurally exist in Yugoslavia corresponds to the period in which fans' organizations of almost all football teams were established in the late 1980's. Fans' groups similar to *Bad Blue Boys* of Dinamo Zagreb, *Delije* (Madmen) of Red Star, *Grobari* (Gravediggers) of Partizan had emerged in Bosnia as well. Fans' groups *Horde Zla* (Evils Army) of Sarajevo, *Maniaci* (Maniacs) of Željezničar, *Fukare* (Have-nots) of Sloboda Tuzla and *Robijaši* (Prisoners) of Čelik Zenica were also established in the same period. It is known that fans' groups played an active role in paramilitary forces in conflicts in Yugoslavia.

The most well known example among these is the old Red Star fans' leader Zeljko Raznatovic nicknamed Arkan, also known as the "Butcher of Bosnia". With the paramilitary group named "Tigers" he is responsible for massacres and rapes where his group killed more than 3000 victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this period, it is known that fans' groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but particularly the fans' groups in Sarajevo play an important role in city defense.

Football has a historical significance in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. *Gjergelez*, one of the first civil society organizations established in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a football club. (Bora, 1999, p. 38) Bosnian football that had a breakout in Yugoslavia period was damaged to a great extent due to conditions of Bosnian war period. Football could not be played in international level in Bosnia and

Herzegovina after the war also due to the attitude of international community. UEFA who prevented Yugoslavia to participate in European Football Championship in 1992, did not legally recognize the Bosnian league until Serbian and Croatian leagues were included. (Giulianotti, 2003, p.27) The first football game between societies in Bosnia was played between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs in Srebrenica right after the ceasefire in July 1995. (Wilson, 2006, p.178) However it was observed that the maturity required for two societies to come together in sports activities was not achieved yet. Despite the existing international pressure, the first Bosnian League to include both Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat teams together could be established in 2000. Bosnian league started to gain international recognition in 2002 with the participation of Serbian Republic teams that had previously played in Serbia and Montenegro league. The fact that Serbian footballer Vladan Grujic took part in the Bosnia and Herzegovian national team in 2002 indicates the extent of integration achieved in football. (Wilson, 2006, p.180)

In the competition between the fans in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are three distinct cultural dynamics:

- Competition based upon ethnic differences,
- Reflection of competition between Sarajevo and other cities,
- Competition that is fed by the cultural dynamics of football alone.

Ethnic disunity in Bosnia is a significant determinant in the differentiation among football fans. Even the logos of teams that play in Bosnian football leagues can tell us if that team is Bosnian Serb or Bosnian Croat. Croatian teams certainly place the red-white check-patterned design somewhere on their emblems since it is the national symbol of Croats. Emblems of Serbian teams are distinguished by the use of Cyrillic alphabet. Football teams of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) on the



**Picture1:** Two exemplar coat of arms of a Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat football teams. (Copied from the official websites of FK Borac Banja Luka ve NK Široki Brijeg)

other hand are teams with emblems that have no red-white check-patterns and where no Cyrillic alphabet is used. In a sense, Bosniak teams whose emblems do not include national-religious symbols like *hilâl* (crescent) and so forth in fact do not exclude other ethnic groups. A significant reason of this is the internalizing rather than externalizing characteristic of Bosnian nationalism. Bosnian nationalism to be more accurate, is constructed through space rather than ethnic-religious dynamics and this construction is seen in football fandom.

Contrary to the general opinion, majority of the acts of violence of football origin in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not take place between fans with different ethnic identities but as a reflection of Sarajevo-Rural conflict. Games where Sarajevo teams play and particularly when they play with Čelik, the team of Zenica city mostly witness acts of violence. In the Bosnian league where Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian Muslim teams are together, Sarajevo fans consider Čelik as their greatest rival, the team of Zenica city and Sloboda, the team of Tuzla city both being Bosnian Muslim-intensive settlements contrary to what is presumed. Especially the games played with Čelik are accepted by the fans of Sarajevo as the most important games. A Željezničar fan being stabbed and killed after a Željezničar-Čelik game played in Zenica in 2006 caused the intensity of competition to rise. Although Željezničar-Zenica competition is not determinative in the struggle for championship, they are the most popular games in Bosnia and Herzegovina league. Competition between football fans that emerge as a reflection of competition between cities emerge not only between the teams of Sarajevo and teams of other big cities of Bosnia but between the teams of each of these cities as well. For the fans of Mostar, Tuzla and Zenica cities' teams, the games they play with each other has always been considered important. On the other hand, the games that the teams of these three cities play with Sarajevo are always the most popular games.

Football fans of Sarajevo agree on the fact that the fans' group they hate the most is that of the football team of Zenica city. The city of Zenica was not damaged much in the war since it was relatively away from the front, compared to Sarajevo that is located in approximately 80 km south of Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities. The city is known as a heavy industrial city and name of the football team of the city "Čelik" comes from the iron and steel plant located here [steel being "čelik" in Turkish]. Name of the fans' group of Čelik team is Robijaši. Robijaši means "prisoners" in Bosnian. It is because the biggest prison of Bosnia is located in Zenica. A conflict is known to exist between the cities of Zenica and Sarajevo. It is an example of a kind of contention that exists in almost every country, that between the biggest city and the second biggest city. Locals of Zenica had expected Zenica that was away from the front to become the capital city after the war, but with Sarajevo not falling, this expectation failed to come true. People of Sarajevo claim that people of Zenica are jealous of them whereas people of Zenica think that Sarajevo collects the whole national income and foreign investments and does not share this wealth with the rest of the country, particularly with Zenica.

This article focuses on identity differentiation between two fans' groups with similar ethnic mosaic and coming from the same city, in other words; that are identical in ethnic and urban-local sense, provided that ethnic and local competitions are not disregarded.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This research that aims to examine cultural differences between two teams was carried out between February 2007 and January 2008 in Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is based on “four season’s ethnographic research” principle. Also, a two weeks long preliminary research was carried out in February-March 2006.

The research mainly depends on participant observation. The researcher dwelled in Sarajevo for “four seasons”. The reason why “four seasons” is considered ideal for research is that societies and communities display different attitudes and behaviors in different seasons. It is possible for football fans to perceive, make sense of and name cultural facts and phenomena differently at the beginning, middle and at the end of seasons.

During the research, all the games Sarajevo and Željezničar played in Sarajevo were attended in order to observe the behaviors of the fans. In cases when games were not played on the same day, away games were also attended with the fans of the team that does not play in Sarajevo that week. Fans were observed also in the games of Bosnia and Herzegovina National Football Team that were usually played in weekdays. During the research, a total of 45 games were attended in which fans were observed.

Apart from that, games played by fans’ groups who were examined in indoor football tournaments organized due to Christmas and Ramadan festivals in December 2007 were, also observed as they were played in indoor sports hall of Skenderija Sport Complex.

Observations about fans were not confined to activities concerning football alone. Although the main field for participant observation is stadium, maximum amount of time possible was spent with fans, both before and after the games as well as when there were no games, so that data acquired from participant observations was not confined to stadium and its environment. Also in everyday life, interviews in “conversation” form were conducted with fans where the topic was not confined to fandom or football but encompassing every aspect of life. Friendly conversations were carried out outside the game atmosphere and without the limitations of survey or in-depth interview forms. In following months of the research, I also “hung out” with fans in public houses like bars and cafes especially after games. Bernard points out that “hanging out” too is a skill for researchers. (Bernard, 1995, p.151) Development of relationships of the sort provides advantage in terms of acceptance of the researcher by the individuals of the research group. On the other hand, observation of individuals of the research group outside the conceptualized space can also provide significant data. Moreover, such

dialogues that are developed with the people in question and are freed from a pragmatic point of view solely aiming to “collect data”, enable researcher to develop empathy in his/her approach to facts and phenomena. This, in turn, contributes to anthropological analysis of the facts and phenomena.

Views and information gathered via participant observation were further elaborated thanks to in-depth interviews where audio records were taken from time to time. It was discerned that focus group meetings with fans' groups were of no use since fans display different attitudes and behaviors when they get together. Due to this, focus group meetings with only three fans' groups were conducted. One of these consisted of members of a fraction of Sarajevo fans' groups. At first, members of this fraction had rejected any kind of contact. Eventually, it was allowed to conduct a meeting with certain limitations with a group of three persons. The other two focus group meetings were conducted with “women's branches” of each team. This was not the demand of the researcher but the women's branches themselves.

Interviews about football fandom were conducted not only with women who are fans but also with women who are not fans and with those who are not even interested in football. In this sense, “feminist methodology” that started under the leadership of Margaret Mead and that aims to reflect “women's voices” on ethnographic research was used albeit partially. “Gender” was not considered as an independent variable. Instead, “female fans” were considered as “subjects” in the research. Focus group meetings were conducted with women's' branches of the two fans' groups since female fans had rejected one-to-one interviews. Gender was not the only topic of these meetings; different topics concerning fandom and fan identity were also covered.

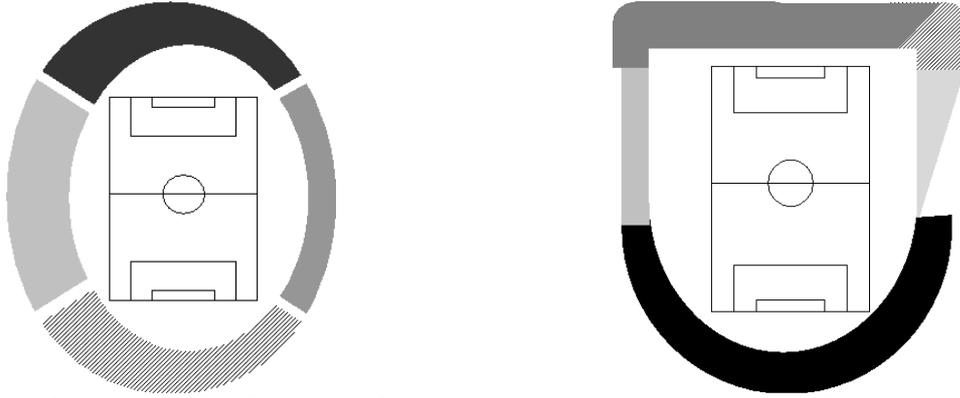
Besides, male fans' views on “gender” were also addressed in in-depth interviews conducted with fans. Fans' views on female fans, female managers and female footballers were taken.

Qualitative data acquired from participant observations, in-depth interviews and focus group meetings was supported by quantitative data acquired from the survey applied. Within the scope of the survey, fifty fans from each team participated in the survey that was conducted with the assistance of five senior students of Faculty of Pedagogy in University of Sarajevo. A certain quota was determined for each team according to tribune position. The quota was determined according to the principle mentioned below:

Type 1: Tribune of fanatics (*Koševo Sjever, Grbavica Jug*),

Type 2: Those who do not want to watch games with fanatics and do not want to pay the highest price for tickets (*Koševo Istok, Grbavica Sjever*),

Type 3: Tribune where the VIP box is also located (*Koševo Zapad, Grbavica Zapad*)



**Picture 2:** Categorized scheme of Grbavica and Kosevo stadiums done due to segmentation of fans.  
(Black painted is Type 1, dark grey painted part is Type 2, light grey painted part is Type 3 and the lined part is for the guest fans.)

In accordance with this classification, it was decided to conduct half the surveys with fanatic groups since they constitute the main core of this research. Thus, 25 surveys of 50 surveys allotted for each fans' group were conducted in tribunes where these fans' groups watched the games. Of the remaining 25 surveys 15 were conducted in Type 2 and ten were conducted in Type 3. The reason for having conducted more surveys in Type 3 is that these are the tribunes where most populated part of the fans' groups is found both in Grbavica and Koševo.

Six fundamental codes of ethics were taken into consideration during research: Protecting the informants, explaining the aims of research, protecting the privacy of informants, not exploiting the informants, making sure that informants can reach research findings. (Spradley 39)

The researcher has been living in Sarajevo since January 2010 and carrying on with his studies about Bosnian football.

## 5. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

### 5.1. Historical perception

Currently, Sarajevo has two important teams: *Sarajevo* and *Željezničar*. Found in 1921 by railroad workers, known by blue-white colors, *Željezničar* means "railway worker". Back then, Sarajevo train station was at Grbavica neighborhood and its team was established in that neighborhood.



**Picture 3:** Coat of arms of Željezničar. ("Zeljeznicar-sarajevo", themaniacs.org)

Grbavica was opened to settlement during the socialist Yugoslavia era and the train station there was moved to another place. The neighborhood, dominated by block apartments, was under the control of aggressors during the invasion, thus it was much damaged much more. During the invasion, not only the Bosnian Muslim, but also the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat population of the neighborhood were living under the same pressure and conditions. Zlatko Topčić describes the conditions in question in his book "Nightmare in Sarajevo". In the post-war era, the neighborhood was relatively able to maintain its mixed ethnical structure. Today, the stadium

is located in the middle of the settlement whereas the club center of Željezničar and its training facilities are right next to it.

Thanks to this, the supporters are able to spatially identify themselves with the stadium. In the book "Tandem", Dževat Kajan discusses the relationship between Željezničar and Grbavica neighborhoods very intensely. The name of the fans' group of the team is *Maniaci* (Maniacs). The name of the women's branch is *Plave Sestrice* (Blue Sisters). Željezničar holds one Yugoslav league title (1971/1972), and five Bosnia and Herzegovina Premier League titles (1997/1998, 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2010/2011, 2012/2013). The rivalry between these two teams started during those times, because during the foundation of Sarajevo, some footballers of Željezničar left the team and joined Sarajevo. The rivalry between Sarajevo teams was overshadowed by the rivalry between Sarajevo teams and other teams. Sarajevo was founded in 1946 by local leaders of the Yugoslav Communist League. The colors of the team are maroon-white. The club has a three storey building in Marshall Tito Avenue at Sarajevo city center and the name of the fans' group is *Horde Zla* and its women's branch is named as *Kraljica Zla* (The Queen of Evils).



**Picture 4:** Coat of arms of FK Sarajevo. ("FK Sarajevo", UEFA Clubs)

Sarajevo plays its games in *Asim Ferhadovic "Hase" Stadium*, which is placed one and half kilometers away from Marshall Tito Avenue, at Koševo Hill. The stadium is shortly called as "Stadion Koševo" (Koševo Stadium) by fans and Sarajevo locals. The long distance of the stadium from city prevents them from identifying themselves with Koševo Hill. Sarajevo fans are known to be putting forward nationalist feelings. Horde Zla fans' group sent volunteer fighters to field during the war. Ismet Bajramović, who was a fans' leader in pre-war era, was involved

in the war as a commander. Kerim Lučarević has cited Bajramović's exploits many times in his book "Sarajevo War". In the post-war era, the old leaders of Horde Zla, who had shown heroism during war, were involved in illegal businesses and formed mafia-like relations. Supporter leader Čelo nicknamed Bajramović was reported to go to the Koševo Stadium on a horse before a Sarajevo game, ride his horse around the stadium greeting the fans and in another game do the first kick of the game. Now he has been wanted by the police as an illegal patron.

Sarajevo was the most successful representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the Yugoslav era. They won the Yugoslav title once in 1966–67 seasons, won Yugoslav cup twice in 1967 and 1983 and represented Yugoslavia several times in European cups. (Interno Izdanje Fudbalskog Kluba "Sarajevo", 1983, 19) However, they were unable to reach the same success in the post-war era. FK Sarajevo was able to win the Bosnia and Herzegovina league title during the season 2006/2007, at the year the study was made.

## **5.2. Demography**

Mean age of the fans who participated in the survey was 27.9. The youngest fan contacted was 14 years old whereas the oldest fan was 70 years old. 57 percent of the fans were under the age 25. It is possible to state that grand majority of the fans consist of young people, as also suggested by the general opinion.

If we make a comparison between the two fans' groups, we can see that Željezničar fans with the mean age of 29.1 are relatively older than Sarajevo fans with the mean age of 26.6. When we take age groups of fans into consideration, we see that Željezničar fans are more densely populated in the 26-30 age groups than Sarajevo fans. On the other hand, Sarajevo fans are most densely populated in the 19-25 age groups.

Between the years of 1995 and 1998, that is to say when fans of now 26-30 age group were 12-20, Željezničar was champion three years in a row. As is known, team's success at the time and in those years as well as its popularity constitutes a significant factor in fan belonging and particularly in choosing the team to be supported in early adolescence. On the other hand, Sarajevo whose success rate was relatively higher at the time this research was conducted rather attracted fans from young population.

The most significant age-based difference between the fans ensues in the tribune position independently from the team supported. As also mentioned above, not surprisingly, mean age of Type 1 fans is 25.6, 28 of Type 2 and 33.4 of Type 3.

The fact that fans are young affects their marital status as well. 76 percent of the fans who participated in the survey are single. This ratio does not differ either for Željezničar fans or Sarajevo fans. But, similar to age group dynamics, marital status is correlated more with the tribune position and is independent from the team supported. 78 percent of Sarajevo fans and 62 percent of Željezničar fans who participated in the survey are Sarajevo-born. It is a natural process that children of the immigrants, who settled in Sarajevo as a result of the peace agreement signed in 1995, support Željezničar that was champion consecutively in those years. Connecting with the successful and popular football team in a city and creating a belonging in respect to this team facilitate the immigrants' adaptation to the city (where they recently arrived). This is the most significant reason why those who are not Sarajevo-born are more populated among Željezničar fans.

### **5.3. Education and Socio Economic Status**

We may suggest that Željezničar, the working class team of the past has lost this feature and is rather preferred by middle class people now; on the other hand, Sarajevo, historically representing city elite, is estranged with this representation and hence, the education level of Željezničar fans is higher than Sarajevo fans. However, the Sarajevo fans do not agree with this idea. They think that Sarajevo fans are superior to the Željezničar fans in terms of not only level of income but also level of education. The survey results, observations and impressions taken from detailed interviews show that neither of the fan groups differs in their education levels.

According to the data acquired from survey results, as higher and lower classes among Željezničar fans are polarized, Sarajevo fans rather display middle class characteristics.

Historical construction on the other hand is different. Sarajevo fans are called *pitar* which means the ones selling pastry. *Pitari* is the plural of *pitar*. *Pitari* describes the wealthy people running a bakery, owning a good house and a car. Nickname of Željezničar fans is *Košpicari*. *Košpicari* literally means the ones selling sunflower seeds. *Košpicari* refers to people who wander around in cheap sport clothes, strive to “get around” by small scale illegal works and constantly eat sunflower seed just because it is cheap. Although the term *pitari* is still used for Sarajevo fans today, *Košpicari* is not much sought after due to its negative meaning concerning Željezničar fans. On the other hand, the term “*pitari*” too has a cynic meaning inherent to it. The first bakers in Sarajevo are Albanians from

Kosovo. It is known that, this group is considered an inferior group by *Sarajlija* locals in terms of culture and level of education. However, profession of bakery has enabled this group to get rich. Pitars (pitari) have become the fans of Sarajevo team, which is the symbol of the city in order to integrate in the local community and the city. However, the concept of “pitari” eluded its pejorative (derogative) meaning in the course of time. Another interesting output that we acquired during the research is that among a hundred fans who participated in the survey, only one fan was a baker and he was a *Željezničar* fan.

Most of the Sarajevo locals who are not football fans and who observe *Željezničar*-Sarajevo rivalry from a certain distance think that *Željezničar* fans are wealthier. The fact that Grbavica neighborhood that is perceived as the stronghold of *Željezničar*, was the neighborhood with the highest rate of increase in rent values in the past decade might have triggered this opinion. On the other hand, each and every transfer of the star footballers, notably Edin Dzeko, having *Željezničar* origin sustains financial gains to *Željezničar* and especially during the last three years, *Zeljo* has accomplished superiority over Sarajevo not only in economic terms but in terms of sports as well.

#### **5.4. Gender**

History of Sarajevo women’s group *Kraljice Zla* (The Queen of Evil) is traced back to 1989 by the group member women. The group that consisted of around ten persons has dispersed after the war and around ten female Sarajevo fans who got together in 26 July 2007 reestablished this group. *Željezničar* female fans’ group *Plave Sestrice* (Blue Sisters) was established almost around the same period as *Kraljice Zla* in summer 2007, by around six or seven female *Željezničar* fans. It is striking that both groups were reestablished around the same time. In the meetings conducted, both *Kraljice Zla* members and *Plave Sestrice* members pointed out that this was a coincidence.

Although the formation process of women’s branches was supported by male fans, the latter revealed their doubts concerning the presence of female fans, during the interviews. Within the scope of the research, not only women’s relationship with football but also men’s positioning of women in football was analyzed. There are three different levels in which men make sense of the relationship between “woman and football”:

Woman as fan,  
Woman as club manager,  
Woman who plays football.

Football fans are not content with women's presence in the tribune yet they do accept it. Fandom is perceived as a man's thing and women are considered as a "drag" in incidents that are likely to happen in tribunes. The interesting point is that women have a similar point of view.

Numerous fans that came to football games with their spouses and female friends were observed. These fans prefer more decent –or "away from trouble" in their own words- tribunes which are Type 2 and Type 3 tribunes. As is known, entrance fee for these tribunes are more expensive than Type 1 and this might be a factor that prevents fans from going to games together with their spouses and female friends more often.

When asked about the relationship between club management and women, almost all the fans stated that they would not object to a female manager as long as she was successful. Moreover, some fans asserted that women were more disciplined in business hence having a female manager would provide a great advantage for the club.

"Woman as player" however is a problematical area. All of the fans rejected the possibility of having female players in the team. Perugia club who is first known for including Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's son in the squad, had wanted to include a female player in the squad in 2005/2006 season, yet it was prevented by the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations). Fans who participated in the research expressed that a situation of the kind is unacceptable in their clubs. Plus, they stated that it would be a shame for them. A fan summarized the fans' view on the relationship between football and women as follows: "I like to see women in tribina. But as player in male team? Impossible. They can be wonderful manager."

Another dimension of the relationship between women and football fandom is the view of women who are not interested in football, concerning their fellows who are interested in football. It is clearly seen that the segment who excludes female football fans the most is the women themselves.

### **5.5. Perception of Fandom and Violence**

As a result of observations carried out during the research, it is seen that Sarajevo fans consider themselves as Horde Zla members although they have no institutional link whereas for Željezničar fans, definition of "membership" has more definite and clear boundaries. As one of the fans expresses: "As a matter of fact, Horde Zla is not a group but a name". It may be suggested that Maniaci where definition of membership is clearer, is more active in "tribune activities". For instance, Željezničar fans were observed to have participated in greater numbers and in a more active fashion

in “Slavija” away games to which Željezničar fans and Sarajevo fans went together. Similarly, Željezničar fans were observed to have participated more in the city derby.

Both Horde Zla, the fans’ group of Sarajevo and Maniaci, the fans’ group of Željezničar have subgroups. Among Željezničar fans, there is a tendency to imitate Italian fans specifically due to the colors of the team. Italian names are seen in the subgroups of Maniaci. Banners with rods in stadium, fireworks as well as “choreographies” are items used by groups that adopt the understanding of Ultras in Italy, used by some groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Maniaci particularly.

Names of subgroups of Željezničar fans are as follows:

F30 (The code number of “mania” (obsession) disorder in the discipline of psychiatry)

Capital City Boys,

ULFE (Short for Ultras Ferroviere– “Ultras” is a new tribune understanding adopted by fans in Italy. “Ferroviere” means railway in Italian),

Urban Corps,

AP Gang (Ali Pašino Gang – Ali Pašino is one of Sarajevo’s suburbs. It is known to be unsafe).

Curva Sud (The name Italian fanatics who are seated behind the back-goal call themselves. “Curva” is of Latin origin, meaning arch and it is used for “back-goal tribune” in the stadiums of Italy. Sud is the “South” section where especially Lazio fanatics are seated. Sympathy for Lazio with blue-white colors is widespread among Željezničar fans. Members of this group were inspired by the similarity hence named themselves after it.)

Vendetta (Means “blood feud” in Italian.)

Joint Union (Originally meaning union or unity, the word “joint” also means “dope” in slang. Dope use is a common habit among fans.)



**Picture 5:** The banners of Željezničar fan groups during a match. (April 7, 2007)

Differently than Željezničar fans, Sarajevo fans imitate English fans' groups. There is a similar subgroup organizational structure among Sarajevo fans. But what is more important is the separation that took place in Horde Zla in autumn 2007. Towards the end of 2006/2007 season, there was a separation within the Horde Zla fans' group. A group of fans moved from north back-goal tribune of Koševo Stadium, Koševo-Sjever to the west tribune (Koševo-Zapad).

The fans that moved to the west side call themselves Horde Zla Zapad. As the most important reason of leaving their old tribune, they point out their claim that their old tribune leader had a too close relationship with the club and he exploited this relationship. Sanchez notes that Horde Zla leaders got money from the club for choreography and away game costs yet spent this money on their own private needs.



**Picture 6:** Horde Zla Zapad. (September 15, 2007)

Another characteristic of Horde Zla Zapad is the distance it keeps with the management in accordance with the purpose of its establishment. It is observed that Horde Zla Zapad that contains its subgroups within itself is more dynamic than fans that call themselves Horde Zla Sjever and are located in the south tribune. Plus, they carry out more organized “choreographies” and give a more active image with torches and banners.

All the subgroups that Horde Zla includes are also included in Horde Zla Zapad.

These are: Guinness Boys (Guinness is the famous black beer of Ireland. This beer is admired by fans in the Great Britain. The name “Guinness Boys” refers to this beer.)

FGR (“Fina Gradska Raja” literally means “good friends of the city”), Downtown Crew,

Evil Crew,

Fighters.

These groups too are similar to the subgroups of Željezničar and are established by groups of friends.

During the research, it was observed that Željezničar fans have a more hostile attitude towards rival teams compared to the attitude of Sarajevo fans. Željezničar fans ground this hatred on Željezničar having “stolen” their footballers during the establishment era of Sarajevo and always having been supported by urban elites. Anti-Sarajevo discourse developed by Željezničar fans caused anti-Željezničar discourse to come forth among Sarajevo fans in time.

Although this hatred is emphasized among the fans and concepts of violence and hooliganism are accordingly encouraged, it is de facto seen that acts of violence of football origin do not correspond to

the discursive level. Whether fan or not, people of Sarajevo claim that life stops in Sarajevo in times of derby games and even trolleys do not work. Yet within the seven and half years of period since the researcher has started his observations, no such situation was observed. On the other hand, acts of violence of ethnic hatred origin have been observed in away games of Široki Brijeg, Mostar, Lukavica and especially Zenica.

We may suggest that “violence discourse” stands out more than violence itself among football fans in Bosnia. The joking relationship that Radcliffe-Brown mentions above might explain the reason behind this discourse. Joking relationship is experienced very intensely among Bosnians.

## **5.6. National identity and politics**

The extensive use of Turkish flags and sportswear is the main distinguishing factor between the Sarajevo fans and Željezničar fans. One of the mottos of Sarajevo is "boja fesa boja dresa" (the color of the fez, the color of the jersey/dress). The fez represents the traditionalism and the Bosnian Islam. Bosnians report that the Sarajevo fans are more conservative and traditionalist, whereas Željezničar receives more support from Bosnian Croatians and Serbians. However, the definition of national belonging of both fans' groups in national games, such as their support of the national team, exhibits similarities. Contrary to popular belief, survey data, interviews and observations show that there is no difference between Željezničar and Sarajevo fans in terms of the definition of national identity, national belonging and the intensity of their national feelings. On the other hand, it should not be ignored that the notion of inclusive national identity is more favored by the Željezničar fans.

The perception of political differences between Sarajevo and Željezničar fans is not independent from what is inherent in historical construct, traditionalism and national identity attributed to both fans' groups. The common opinion is that the Sarajevo fans favor parties with conservative tendencies whereas Željezničar fans support leftist political formations. The rightist pro-government identity attributed to Sarajevo fans and the leftist-opponent identity attributed to Željezničar fans are not supported by research findings. Observational and interview data also show that there is no political difference between the Sarajevo and Željezničar fans.

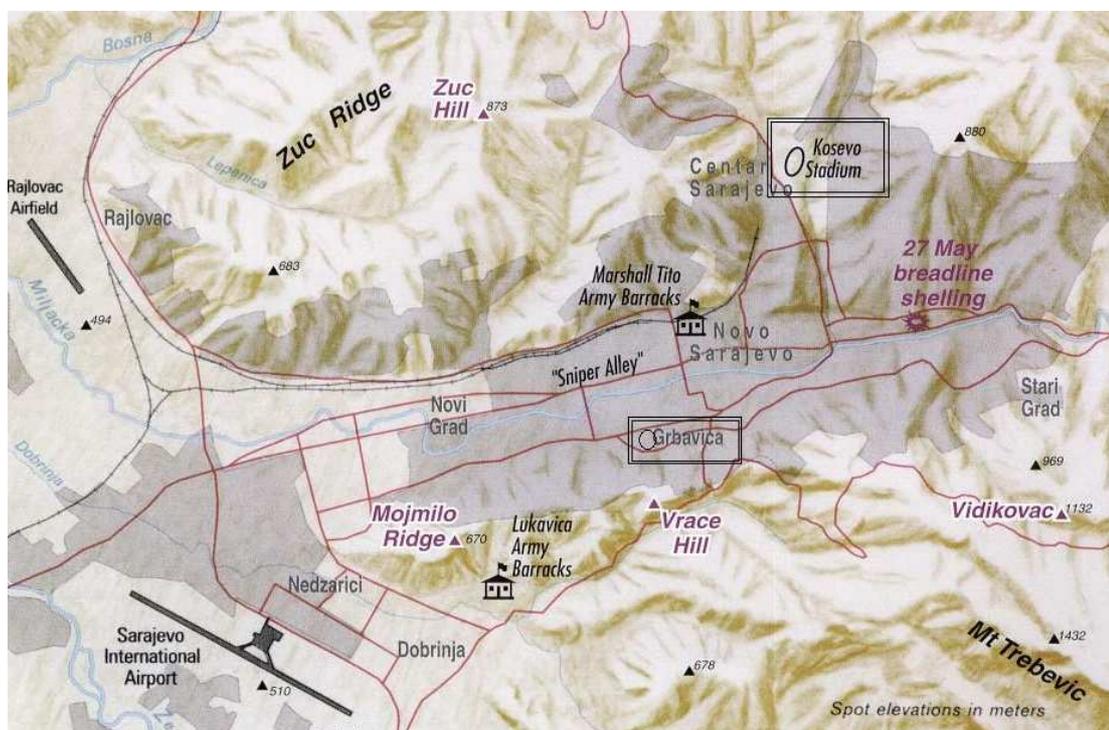
## 5.7. Urban Identity



**Picture 7:** Location of Grbavica Stadium inside the Grbavice settlement. (March 10, 2007)

Grbavica Stadium, Željezničar FC Board and training facilities are located in the Grbavica district. The stadium, located on the main street of the district, is intertwined with the residential buildings whereas the stadium and the club are intertwined with the daily life via the shops on the ground floor of the stadium. On the other hand, Koševo Stadium is disconnected with the daily life as it is far away from the city center, making it a place visited only during sports activities, concerts, and celebrations held in that stadium, for Sarajevans. Thus, while the district of Grbavica

is identified with Željezničar, there is no similar relationship between Koševo district and Sarajevo. On the other hand, Bascarsi neighborhood, wherein Ottoman architecture is strongly experienced, is also identified with Sarajevo fans through its emphasis on traditional values.



**Map 2:** Grbavica ve Kosevo stadiums in Sarajevo. (Sarajevo, Christopher Long)

Stari Grad is losing its identity of being the best neighborhood of Sarajevo where wealthy, small traders live, except Bascarsi which is still a touristic place. Since there is not much demand for the houses located here, house prices and rents have declined. Bosnians who moved to Sarajevo after the war chose to settle in Stari Grad because of its central location and low costs. This movement caused

major changes in the demography of Stari Grad. In spite of these major demographic changes taken place in neighborhoods of Sarajevo, Grbavica neighborhood is identified with Željezničar, and Bascarsi with Sarajevo in the eyes of the fans.

We can assume that this prejudice holds true for the old fans, but not for the new generation. As the results of the survey indicate, there is no difference between the fans in terms of their places of residence. On the other side, emphasis on the Grbavica locality is still strong among Željeznicar fans in constructing their identity. Sarajevo fans on the other hand define themselves not by referring to a specific province but by referring to the whole city. This is a result of the historical construct to a large extent.

### **5.8. Life style, family, friendship**

In Bosnia where industrial football is not yet advanced, signifiers of fan belonging are not confined to licensed products that can be purchased from the club. Fans show great interest in accessories sold by personal entrepreneurs on mobile counters in the vicinity of stadium before the games. Sometimes fans' groups themselves manufacture and sell these products. The two fans' groups are not distinguished in this respect.

However it is observed that Horde Zla Zapad that left the Sarajevo fans' group Horde Zla and formed a new group in the west (Zapad) tribune of Koševo Stadium considers the symbolic meaning of dressing practice very important. In this context, if we are to mention a difference among fans in terms of dressing practice, it is necessary to point out that difference in question is not between Željezničar and Sarajevo fans but between Horde Zla Zapad and rest of the fans. Horde Zla Zapad members manifest that they go to games in casual clothes and do not use accessories like scarves or sports gears as British fans do. The casual clothes in question take on a uniformized look: White sneakers, a pair of jeans, black sweater with cap and baseball hat. Fans prefer "Fred Bery" brand of sweaters, shoes and hats in particular.



**Picture 8:** Fred Bery sports shoes and hat. (January 5, 2008)

Fans indicated that they wear stripe scarves called *Bar-šal*, a term used in Bosnian alone. *Bar-šal* is a product of fans; it has no writing or figures on it regarding the team but only the team's colors. Horde Zla Zapad members call those people *Šabani* who wear all kinds of cloth and accessories definitely with team symbol or name on them. Fans include in the *Šabani* profile also those people who have a snack from mobile *Ćevap* (Bosnian meatball) salesmen around stadium in times of game. No fan "confessed" to have eaten *ćevap*. However the sight of crowds gathering around the *ćevap* counters before the games are striking.

It is not only Horde Zla Zapad but no fans ever wear or use accessories regarding the team they support in their everyday life outside games. The most significant reason behind this is that football fandom is considered a banal cultural fact by the society.

During the research, it has been discerned that the most important factor in formation of the fan identity and specification of the team preference is family, particularly father. Family tradition is the most important factor for individuals specifying the team they are to support. Family factor is followed by group of friends, neighborhood and seasonal successes of teams.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Basically, when looking through the dynamics of identity formation and cultural differentiation, the above mentioned aspects can be categorized into four different labels:

- 1) The aspects where fans do show absolute similarities,
- 2) The aspects where fans do show absolute differentiation,

- 3) Those aspects where fans show similarities, but are perceived as showing differences,
- 4) Those aspects which can be identified as a field of rivalry between two groups where one does not believe that the other one has them.

Due to the findings of the research, we can assume that Sarajevo and Željezničar fans show absolute similarities in their perception of gender, life style and family values whereas they also have similar dynamics in organizing sub-groups.

The place of residence is one of the main differences between two fans' groups. Another aspect which falls into the second category is the dispersion of income levels. As mentioned above, Sarajevo can be regarded as more of a middle class team, while the supporters of Željezničar are likely to be upper or lower class.

For the second category, we can mention political stand point, perception of nationality and urban identity, which are considered to be the main differences between two fans' groups. However the evidence does not indicate that two fans' groups differ from each other in these respects on the contrary to the general belief which is mostly shaped through historical construction of identities.

Good education, having urban identity or being more Sarajlija are the fields of rivalry where each group argues that "they are better educated from the other" or "they are more Sarajlija than the other group".

According to the findings of the research, it has been seen that the cultural differences between Sarajevo and Željezničar fans are not that dense, while they play very important roles in not constructing the cultural identities and as a result, constructing cultural differences. In fact, during the research it has been seen that some fans and/or some inhabitants of Sarajevo are aware that there are no more cultural, political or economic differences between two fans' groups. In this sense, historical construction does exist as an imagined construction which functions at optimum level in postmodernity, since the real existence of time and space is not of importance in postmodernity. In this sense collective memory and collective imagination play an important role. Therefore, where even similar groups tend to differentiate themselves via historical construction and collective imagination, the "ethnic" label which is adapted to every single social and cultural issue has to be questioned.

On the other hand, although cultural, political and economic differences are not of importance between two fans' groups, socio-cultural differences do exist among the fans' groups themselves and they are reflected on the tribune locations of the fans' groups. This is very much due to ticket prices. Majority of the fans allocate money from their budget to pay for their tickets and the budgets in question are determined by the amount of the wages they earn. Luckily enough, the definition of wage has not gone through a considerable change since Marx and it still comes to mean the payment which the owner of the capital shares with the laborer after manipulating the surplus-value. Hence, we come back to the good old discourse of class conflict, despite the fact that it is often undermined by identity politics. A spectre is haunting the football field- the spectre of class conflict.

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