

# Rebuilding broken bridges through sports

A case study on the Open Fun Football Schools in  
post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina



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Cover photo: Stari Most in Mostar. This bridge was destroyed during the war, but rebuild afterwards (author's own photo).

## ABSTRACT

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Sports programs are a good means to initiate contact between divided groups. The goal of the present study is to examine how Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) organizations can contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation. To do so, this study explored the case of the Open Fun Football Schools, a SDP program organized in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this program, children from different ethnic backgrounds are brought together during a five-day summer camp, to play football and have fun together. By conducting in-depth interviews with trainers and former participants of the program, I obtained insights into the results of this program. Using this empirical data, I compared the practice of the OFFS with the contact theory, which argues that prejudice towards people from different groups can be reduced by intergroup contact. The results show that the OFFS program offers opportunities for intergroup contact and cooperation, which in turn leads to a positive change in the image of the other. In some cases, the contact between people from different ethnicities is lasting, and even leads to friendship, but only if contact is frequent and long-term. Results are seen on a small scale and at a local level. For SDP programs to have a larger influence on peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, they should therefore include possibilities for lasting contact and they should more actively involve other stakeholders such as authorities, schools, and parents.

**Keywords:** Sport for Development and Peace; contact theory; Bosnia and Herzegovina; peacebuilding; reconciliation.

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## PREFACE

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The process of this thesis, from coming up with this topic, to conducting my research, to writing it up, took me (way too) long. During this process many people supported me. Without them, I would have never been able to finish this project.

First of all, I want to thank everyone who assisted me in Bosnia. I want to thank all the respondents for not only taking the time to tell me their stories, but also for their hospitality, showing me around their towns, helping me find additional respondents, interpreting interviews, and helping me making sense of Bosnian intercity public transport. Special thanks to the staff of CCPA, especially Vildana, for joining me to interviews, and answering all my questions about CCPA, OFFS and Bosnia in general.

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

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Sports is fun. Sports is healthy. Sports is exciting. But sports can also serve a societal purpose. It can bring together people from different backgrounds. It can unite nations, for example during large sporting events such as the Olympic Games. It can help marginalized groups integrate in society. Sports can also play a role in post-conflict situations. An example is the Rugby World Cup organized in 1995 in post-apartheid South Africa, which helped create a new and shared national identity amongst South Africans of different backgrounds. The field that uses sport for societal purposes is called Sport for Development and Peace (SDP).

SDP is an upcoming field in development and peacebuilding. It aims to use sport for a broad range of goals, such as promoting gender equality, improving the inclusion of disabled people, and contributing to peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. Some well-known examples of organizations that use sport for development and peace are Right to Play, War Child, and the Johan Cruyff Foundation. Many SDP programs are sponsored by governments and international (sports) organizations and the UN established a Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group.

In recent years, much research has been conducted on SDP programs. Besides several theoretical studies (Darnell & Black 2011, Kidd 2008, Guilianotti 2011a), many case studies have been conducted. For example, case studies about the reintegration of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone using football (Dyck 2011); about basketball programs in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Israel and the West Bank, and Cyprus (Tuohey & Cognato 2011); about the role of national sports teams in creating a post-apartheid identity in South Africa (Höglund & Sundberg 2008, Keim 2006); and about the question whether or not football helped unify or further separate Cyprus (Kartakoullis & Loizou 2009).

The focus of these studies has usually been very broad, both in terms of geographic diversity and in the different ways in which sport is used in peacebuilding. However, most of the research done in the past has focused on the direct outcomes of the programs, and most was conducted during or shortly after the program. Little research has been done on the longer-term results of SDP programs. In addition, little research has focussed on the mechanisms by which these results come about. The current study aims to fill this gap by studying the longer-term results of a football program in post-war Bosnia as well as by identifying the process through which change is achieved.

This research is thus relevant for SDP organizations working on peacebuilding and reconciliation worldwide. These organizations aim to organize effective programs and

improve the lives of people in post-conflict situations. To achieve this, these organizations need to know whether or not their activities work. Studying the long-term results of a program helps increase knowledge on its effects and can lead to lessons learned on how programs can reach their goals in an effective and sustainable way. This can help SDP organizations, as well as other organizations working on peace and reconciliation, improve their work and increase their impact.

Since peacebuilding programs rely on funding, millions of dollars are spent each year on these programs. Policy makers and donors cannot support every program. It is useful to monitor the results of these programs, so that policy makers can make well informed and deliberate decisions on which organizations to fund.

Understanding long-term results is not only relevant for peacebuilding organizations, donors and policy makers, but also for people living in post-conflict societies, who are the direct beneficiaries of peacebuilding and reconciliation programs. Successful peacebuilding programs help transform a negative peace—the absence of direct violence—into a positive peace—a situation in which the causes of violence are no longer present. Part of this process is transforming a negative image of a different group into a positive image. Such transformations can help reduce the hostilities in society and the risk of a new conflict. Direct beneficiaries indirectly profit from knowledge about long-term results, as these results improve programs.

The objective of this research is to provide a better understanding of the way in which SDP programs can contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation. It is my aim to gather insights into the longer-term results of SDP programs, as well as the process through which such programs lead to the transformation of the image of the other in post-conflict situations. In this research, I aim to answer the following question: How can a Sport for Development and Peace program contribute to peace and reconciliation?

To answer the question, this research is focused on a specific case: the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA). A brief introduction to this program and the organization can be found below. I provide an answer to the research question by comparing practice (the case of the OFFS) and theory (the contact theory). As I will explain in more detail below, peace and reconciliation within a society can only be achieved once conflicting parties have changed their enemy image, that is, their negative image of the other parties. The contact theory is a theory on how enemy images can change. It argues that various conditions are necessary for this change and explains how this change is achieved. I investigate to what extent these

conditions have been met in the OFFS program. Subsequently, I describe the influence, if any, that the OFFS has on the enemy images of those involved in the program. I do so by identifying the different steps through which this is done. My hypothesis is that the OFFS program leads to a reduction in enemy images of those involved in the program. In other words, I expect that the OFFS leads to less prejudice and a more positive attitude towards people of different ethnicities. I expect that this will not only be the case for participants, but also for their parents and the trainers. Finally, I will extend these findings from the specific case of the OFFS to SDP programs in general.

### 1.1 ABOUT BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia) is one of the countries that once formed Yugoslavia. It declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1992. The independence was immediately followed by the Bosnian War, lasting from 1992-1995. After Bosnia declared its independence, the Yugoslav army sent troops to Bosnia. There are various theories on the cause of the outbreak of the Bosnian war. One of these theories states that war was inevitable in the Balkans due to ‘ancient ethnic hatred’. Two important books supporting this theory are Rebecca West’s ‘Black Lamb and Grey Falcon’ and Robert Kaplan’s ‘Balkan Ghosts’, they believe that it was impossible for outsiders to prevent a Balkan conflict (Holbrooke, 1998). Kaplan believes that even though people from different ethnicities seemingly lived together without any problems, ‘mistrust, enmity, even hatred were just below the surface, as had long been true in the Balkans’ (Oberschall 2000, 982). Kaldor (2013) argues that ancient hatred does not explain why people have lived together peacefully for many years. She states that there was a rise in Yugoslavism, a united Yugoslav identity, especially in Bosnia, in the 1980s. There were many mixed marriages, mostly in cities and ethnic divisions were not important. However, during certain periods of history, ethnic hatred and intolerance were mobilized for political purposes. The Bosnian War was one of these periods. Oberschall (2000) agrees with this idea. He states that nationalist leaders manipulated ethnic identities, with the help of propaganda and the media, spreading fear, insecurity and hatred. The nationalist ideas took root because of the insecurity caused by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, not because of ancient ethnic hatred.

The war ended in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Bosnia remained one country, but was divided into two entities: the first was the Croat and Bosniak entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (or Federation); the second was the predominantly Serb entity Republika Srpska (RS). The Federation was further divided into ten cantons, some

of which were predominantly Croat and others predominantly Bosniak. The creation of a new constitution was part of the Dayton Peace Agreement. This constitution perpetuates the ethnic divisions in society (Hunt et al. 2013). An example of this is the presidency. Bosnia has three presidents: one Bosniak, one Croat, and one Serb. Decisions by the presidency have to be taken by consensus, making it hard to reach any agreement.

Immediately after the war, Bosnia was led by the same people that had mobilized ethnic hatred and intolerance in the first place, before and during the war. The actions of international peacekeepers shortly after the end of the war showed that ‘leaders and thugs who preached ethnic division would not be punished or constrained’ (Holbrooke 1998, 337). While there have been many improvements over the past years, Bosnian society is still divided along ethnic lines in many ways, even nowadays, more than twenty years after the end of the war. The concept of ‘two schools under one roof’ is a good example of this division. In many places with a mixed ethnic population, mostly in the Federation, children are separated in different classes, based on their ethnicity (Hunt et al. 2013). While the children share the same building, all their classes are separate. They have their own ‘national’ curriculum, study their own language and learn their own version of history. Some schools even have different entrances for the different ethnicities or different timetables, so that there are no breaks together (Toe, 2016). Even though the Federation Constitutional Court ruled that these types of schools are discriminatory and a form of segregation, there has been no progress in transforming these schools. The court decision is simply ignored by local governments.

Not everyone in Bosnia is happy with the strict ethnic divisions in society. The divisions leave little space for other minority groups, such as Albanians or Roma. Also, people from mixed nationalities do not feel at home in any of the three ethnic groups. This is illustrated by a woman from a mixed background (26 years old), who expressed her frustration about the ethnic divisions when asked about her ethnicity:

That’s actually a tough one for me. My parents are, in Bosnian terms, from mixed nationalities. And technically neither of them was really religious, basically they are even atheists. And in Bosnia we have this stupid idea that religion and nationality are basically the same. It’s completely ridiculous, but it is the way people act here. So basically, if you are choosing a nationality, you are automatically choosing a religion. And as an atheist with parents who come

from different nationalities it is a tough question. So, I don't actually identify myself as either one of the three big ones, I usually say 'the rest'.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 OPEN FUN FOOTBALL SCHOOLS

Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) is a Danish NGO founded in 1998 that specializes in 'using grassroots sport and especially the Open Fun Football School program (OFFS) as tool in humanitarian actions' (The Cross Cultures Concept, 2015). CCPA works in politically uncertain and conflict sensitive areas and was one of the first organizations to use sport as a tool for peacebuilding. It uses the OFFS as a point of entry to local communities, but also organizes day-to-day activities for children living in refugee camps and one-day Football Festivals. It also supports and facilitates the formation of new sports clubs and teams after an OFFS has been organized.

CCPA receives funding from various governments and organizations. The most important ones are the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), the EU, and Spanish football club FC Barcelona (Fact-sheet on Cross Cultures 1998-2015).

While the head office of CCPA is located in Denmark, most activities are organized by the various regional offices and local volunteers or by the Grassroots Department of National Football Associations (Fact-sheet on Cross Cultures 1998-2015).

The main activity of CCPA is organizing the OFFS program. The OFFS is a five-day summer football camp program for children aged 7-12 living in post-conflict situations. It is a "humanitarian project using games and pedagogical 'fun football' to promote democracy, peace and social cohesion in unstable regions" (Levinsen 2009, 348).

During an OFFS, 200 children come together: 100 children from one side of the conflict and 100 children from the other side. To ensure the participation of children of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, OFFS uses the 'twin-city' concept. This means that in an OFFS, children participate from at least two municipalities from 'hostile population groups' (CCPA's Open Fun Football Schools, n.d.). The children are mixed and divided into smaller groups, so that they play together, instead of against each other. The football schools are led by volunteers and football trainers who also come from both sides of the conflict and who have been trained in the fun football concept. In fun football it is not the result that

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

counts, but the joy and playfulness of the game (Levinsen 2009). During a football school there are not only football activities, but also other sports and games are organized.

While the program itself is aimed at children, CCPA uses the program as a tool to initiate contact between the parents and local volunteers. As the programs are organized locally, local volunteers and trainers are needed to run the program and parents are invited to come and watch. When they come and watch, they can meet their former enemies and see their children work and play together. During some of the football schools, workshops aimed specifically at the parents are organized, to stimulate more involvement of the parents in the program.

CCPA started the OFFS program in 1998, in Bosnia and is now active in 17 countries in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East. In the period 1998-2015 approximately 398,000 children participated in 2,023 Open Fun Football Schools.

OFFS does not aim to initiate dialogue about past or current conflicts. Instead, the focus is on the common interest of the participants: football and fun. Or as CCPA states:

The Open Fun Football Schools are about gathering people who in their everyday life are positioned opposed to each other in order to provide them with new categories for thinking about each other such as coaches, parents and football enthusiasts. (The Cross Cultures Concept, 2015)

OFFS currently aims to (1) stimulate peace and reconciliation, (2) stimulate young people's resilience, (3) promote gender equality, and (4) facilitate cross-sector juvenile crime prevention. Two of these goals, stimulating young people's resilience and facilitating cross-sector juvenile crime prevention, are part of specific programs that are not active in Bosnia. The other two goals, stimulating peace and reconciliation and promoting gender equality are relevant in the case of Bosnia. They stimulate peace and reconciliation by bringing people together across ethnic, social, political, or religious divides (CCPA's Theory of Change, n.d). CCPA promotes gender equality by enrolling at least 40% girls in their programs. They also train girls and women to become trainers and leaders.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

To provide an answer to my research question I conducted a case study in Bosnia on OFFS, using in-depth interviews. Through these interviews, I collected narratives from former participants, trainers, and a former employee of the Croat-Bosnian football association. The

interviews focussed on their opinions on and relationships with people from different ethnic groups and the way in which they felt this was influenced by their participation in the OFFS. The interviews were semi-structured. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer asks open questions and the informant can answer them the way he or she wants to (Clifford, French & Valentine, 2012). Using semi-structured interviews prevented me from overlooking unexpected results, as there was sufficient room for participants to bring up topics that I did not consider beforehand. For the interviews, I made use of an interview guide, so that all relevant topics would be discussed during the interviews. The interview guide also left room for issues addressed by the respondents. I conducted both individual interviews and group interviews. In the individual interviews it was easier to elaborate on specific issues raised by the respondent, while in the group interviews the discussions or (dis)agreements between the respondents provided additional insights.

The interviews were conducted using narrative evaluation methods. Lundby (in Meesenburg, Dolberg & Viffeldt, 2011) distinguishes two categories of truth: ‘historical truth’ and ‘narrated truth’. Historical truth views narratives as ‘what actually happened’. This can be different from the way people experienced it. ‘Narrated truth’, on the other hand, focuses on ‘the construction of a story around events and the emotional reactions to these events and the way these stories give coherence and make sense to the individual’ (Meeseburg, Dolberg & Viffeldt 2011). In other words, the main interest is not the facts that occurred, but how an individual experiences a situation and makes sense of a situation. The basic assumption of the narrative evaluation method is that narratives have the power to shape experiences, influence mind-sets, and construct relationships (Winslade & Monk 2008). An example of a narrative is the enemy image. This is not a factual description of the other, but a description of the feelings and emotions regarding the other. However, narratives are not static. They are constantly reconstructed, as people constantly have new experiences. Enemy images, for example, can change over time. New experiences can impact this image in both positive and negative ways. In my research, I focus on the ‘narrated truth’, and how these narratives change over time. My main interest is not the actual events of the OFFS, but how participants and trainers have experienced these events and how this influenced their opinion on people from different ethnic backgrounds.

One way in which narratives can be collected is through the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, which I used in the interviews with trainers. MSC was developed for evaluating complex, participatory development programs (Dart & Davies 2003). The MSC technique ‘can be very helpful in explaining HOW change comes about (processes and causal

mechanisms) and WHEN (in what situations and contexts)' (Better Evaluation Most Significant Change, n.d.). When using MSC, the starting question of an interview is: 'What, in your opinion, is the most significant change that took place in the program?' The informants are completely free to answer what they want. By using this technique, I wanted to prevent steering respondents into a certain direction.

The collection of narratives, such as the stories of change, provides information on the intended and unintended impact of the program from a range of stakeholders (participants and trainers). Before and after the interviews, I was aware of the importance of small-talk, as it can sensitize the researcher to new and different kinds of information (Driessen & Jansen 2013). Relevant information is not only told during the interviews, the conversations before and after the interview can also provide interesting insights.

The interviews taught me a lot about the OFFS and the way participants look back on it. Former participants shared fond memories and told funny anecdotes about their experiences with the program. Most of all, I learned how the OFFS program influenced both trainers and participants, how in some cases it opened their eyes to their own prejudice, and how the program connects people from different places and backgrounds.

Besides the in-depth interviews, I also had informal talks with various people. One of the favourite pastimes of people in Bosnia is going for a coffee, often spending one or two hours in a café. Spending these hours with various people gave me the opportunity to talk about many different topics, including the OFFS programme, the relations between people of different ethnicities, the process of reconciliation and the political situation in the country. These talks gave me more insight into the general situation of Bosnia.

As I do not speak Bosnian, I had to take into account the language barrier. I conducted some of my interviews in English, when the respondents felt confident in expressing themselves in English. When respondents did not speak English, I worked with an interpreter. In places close to Sarajevo, a staff member from the CCPA office joined me to the interviews to work as my interpreter. In other places, a family member or friend of the interviewee who spoke English would be present to translate the questions and answers.

To get a complete picture of the impact of the OFFS, I attempted to interview a diverse group of people. I aimed to interview as many men as women, people from all ethnic groups, and a mix of participants from recent years and from the early years of the program. Interviewing former respondents who participated in the early years of the OFFS was crucial, as I am interested in the results of the program on the long-term. Also, I tried to interview not only former respondents, but also trainers.

However, in the selection of the respondents, I depended on the contact information the CCPA office in Sarajevo provided me with. In organizing an OFFS, CCPA depends on local volunteers. The national office organizes the OFFS program together with volunteers from local football clubs, local schools and municipalities (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). Equipment and seminars for the trainers are provided by the office, while the local organizers choose the trainers and participants. As a result of this organization structure, the office has the contact information of the local leaders and trainers, but not of (former) participants in the program. To organize the interviews for this research, CCPA gave me the contact information of a local leader or trainer. In case the leader or trainer did not speak English, CCPA provided the contact information of someone in that community that did speak English, through whom I was able to contact the leader or trainer.

In arranging the interviews I used the snowball method, asking respondents if they knew other people who would be willing to participate in the research (Boeije, 't Hart and Hox, 2009). In my research it meant that with the contact information provided by CCPA, I contacted people from different towns in Bosnia, explaining the purpose of my stay in Bosnia and asking for their help in organizing my visit to their town. After I explained that I wanted to interview both trainers and people who participated in the program 10-20 years ago, they arranged for one or more trainers and/or former participants to meet me for an interview. When I visited the town, there were four to six people available and willing to be interviewed. Also, there was at least one person available that spoke English and could translate the interviews.

I interviewed a total of 36 respondents. I got in touch with ten of them via the contact information provided by CCPA. The other 26 respondents I recruited using the snowball method. The ages of the respondents range from 14-80. I interviewed 28 men and 8 women. Eighteen respondents are former participants, fourteen are trainers, three respondents started the program as participants and are now trainer and one respondent worked at the Bosnian-Croat football federation when the program started twenty years ago. Most importantly, I interviewed people from all major ethnic groups as well as people from mixed ethnic backgrounds. Seventeen of my respondents identified themselves as Bosniak, eight of them as Serb, eight of them as Croat and three of them are of mixed ethnic descent. Of the town I visited, four were predominantly Bosniak, three were predominantly Serb, and two were predominantly Croat. All interviews were in small towns, with the exception of one interview in Sarajevo. The interviews took place at schools, with people at home, at sports clubs, or in cafés. At the beginning of each interview I asked permission to record and stressed that I

would not publish their names, so they could speak freely and anonymously. All names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms.

#### 1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

In chapter 2, I present the theories that underlie my research: theories on reconciliation, on the contact theory and on the role of civil society in peacebuilding. Chapter 3 I turn to the practice of the OFFS. In this chapter I address factors that can enhance or limit the positive effects of intergroup contact on the reduction of prejudice towards people of the other group. In chapter 4, I describe the process through which change comes about. I describe this process step by step. In the conclusion I summarize the findings and I compare the practice of the OFFS with the theory. In addition, I extend the findings from the specific case of the OFFS to SDP programs in general and I present ideas for future research.

## CHAPTER 2 – REBUILDING BRIDGES IN THEORY

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The main question of this study is how SDP organizations can contribute to peace and reconciliation. To answer this question, it must be clear what peace and reconciliation are. In this part, I first describe the importance of achieving positive peace and what reconciliation is. Secondly, I discuss two different approaches to reconciliation. The first approach is the more theoretical contact theory and the second approach stresses the important role of civil society in peacebuilding. Finally, I describe the ideas underlying sport and peace programs.

### 2.1 RECONCILIATION

When a peace treaty is signed, this does not mean that feelings of hostility in society are immediately over. People still have the negative enemy images that were present during the conflict. Their image of the enemy is a negative, one-dimensional image. In Bosnia these enemy images still exist among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats, as the war ended only relatively recently. The country is highly segregated and there is little interaction between people of different groups. In order to change these feelings of hostility, this image of the ‘other’ needs to change. A peace treaty only means that the direct violence and fighting will stop. In other words, there is a ‘negative peace’ (Galtung 1996). A negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, while the sources of violence (such as hatred, fear and intolerance) are still present (SDP IWG, 2008). Structural violence (injustice, discrimination, exclusion) is also still present in society. The intention is that, in the long term, the situation will develop into a ‘positive peace’, a situation in which there is an absence of structural violence, or social injustice, as well as an absence of personal, or direct, violence. A positive peace is the ideal situation for a country to develop, as it is a just society and the root causes of conflict are absent. In this situation, the causes of violence no longer exist and enemy images are transformed into positive or at least neutral images of the ‘other’. Peacebuilding and reconciliation can contribute to achieving such a situation.

Reconciliation is the process to ideally, once and for all, prevent a new conflict caused by past (violent) experiences (Bloomfield et al, 2003). The goal is to strengthen peace, break the cycle of violence, and strengthen or build new institutions. Reconciliation is both about looking back, by personal healing of survivors and the (re)building of relationships between individuals and communities, and about looking forward, by enabling individuals to get on with life and by building institutions for society to function. Reconciliation is a long process, it can take generations. Bosnia is still in the midst of this process, as the war ended only twenty years ago.

In the 'Reconciliation after Violent Conflict handbook' (ibid) three stages of reconciliation are identified. The first stage is replacing fear by non-violent co-existence. The lowest level of co-existence is "the willingness not to kill one another". It is better to agree to disagree than to use violence to settle disputes. To achieve this non-violent co-existence, communication is essential. During a conflict, communication between the different groups has severed. Political leaders, religious organizations, and NGOs can play a crucial role in establishing communication between divided groups. A safe environment is also essential. For example, it is easier to co-exist non-violently if there are fewer weapons available. The second stage of reconciliation is building confidence and trust. In this stage, non-violent co-existence transforms into trust. The former enemy is re-humanized and the enemy is no longer one uniform group, in which every individual in the group is a threat. Instead, it is accepted that an individual cannot be judged based on the group he or she belongs to. Essential in this stage is the existence of a functioning justice system, so that guilt can be individualized. Transitional justice can also help in this process. The third and final stage is the move toward empathy. Empathy is not the same as forgiveness or the absence of new conflict. Conflicts are part of every society, but these conflicts do not have to be violent. Due to communication and trust, conflicts can be solved in non-violent ways. Part of the move toward empathy is listening to the pain caused by the conflict and the reasons behind the hatred. Truth commissions can play a role in this by helping people realize their common identity as human beings. Other common identities, such as religion, gender or age, can also help bring people together, as can economic interests.

## 2.2 CONTACT THEORY

One of the theories on how to achieve reconciliation and the transformation of enemy images is the intergroup contact theory. According to this theory, intergroup contact can help reduce prejudice. In this study I analyze how the results of the OFFS correspond with the contact theory. According to Allport (1979), there are four main conditions for positive effects, that is prejudice reduction, of intergroup contact to occur. Firstly, both groups need to have an equal status within the contact situation. Both groups also have to perceive equal status. Secondly, there need to be common goals. Just being together is not enough, there has to be a common goal to strive for together. Thirdly, intergroup cooperation is required. Contact between groups should have 'friendship potential' (Tuohey and Cognato, 2011). This means that contact has to be frequent or long-term and it has to be more than superficial. Without intergroup cooperation it is harder for meaningful relationships or friendships to form.

Finally, there needs to be support from authorities, law, or custom. With the support from, for example, religious leaders or governments, people accept intergroup contact more readily.

If these four conditions are met, intergroup contact can help transform negative images of the enemy in a positive way. The underlying assumption is that people create perceptions of each other based on experience. During the conflict, most experiences with the 'other' are negative and, as a result, so is their perception of the 'other'. Through intergroup contact, individuals get the opportunity to create new experiences which help transform their perceptions. Pettigrew (1998) adds an element to the contact theory by stating that there are four processes that help change perceptions. The first process is learning about the outgroup. The outgroup is the group with which an individual does not identify. For example, for a Croat, Serbs and Bosniaks are the outgroup. Changing stereotypes is difficult, but not impossible. By learning about the other group, the attitude towards people of the outgroup can change in a positive way. Second comes a change in behavior. When attitude has changed, usually behavior also changes, reflecting the new attitude. The third process is generating affective ties. Intergroup contact has to have friendship potential. Initial contact is difficult and anxiety is common. But with time, positive experiences, and a change in attitude and behavior, friendships have a chance to develop. The final process is ingroup reappraisal. The ingroup is the group with which an individual identifies. For example, for a Croat, other Croats form the ingroup. The contact with the outgroup not only changes one's ideas about the outgroup, but it can also change one's idea about the ingroup. Through the intergroup contact one learns there are more ways to see the world, other people have different ideas and norms. It broadens one's views on the world and with that the views on the ingroup also change.

Figure 1 shows the reformulation of the contact theory by Pettigrew (1998). The most important difference with Allport's theory is that Pettigrew added the time dimension. It is a simplified model, as the stages in time cannot be separated from each other. They will overlap and influence each other. In this reformulated contact theory, Pettigrew starts with basic factors that influence the contact situation: Allport's four main conditions (A) and participants' experiences and characteristics (B). Over time, the intergroup contact can lead to change. The first step of this change is decategorization (C), where people start to realize that not all members of a group are the same. Ideally, this leads to a liking of individuals of that group, but without generalization of this new realization to the entire group. The second step in the change is salient categorization (D), ideally leading to prejudice reduction with

generalization. The final step is recategorization (E), when maximum prejudice reduction ideally leads to a unified group.

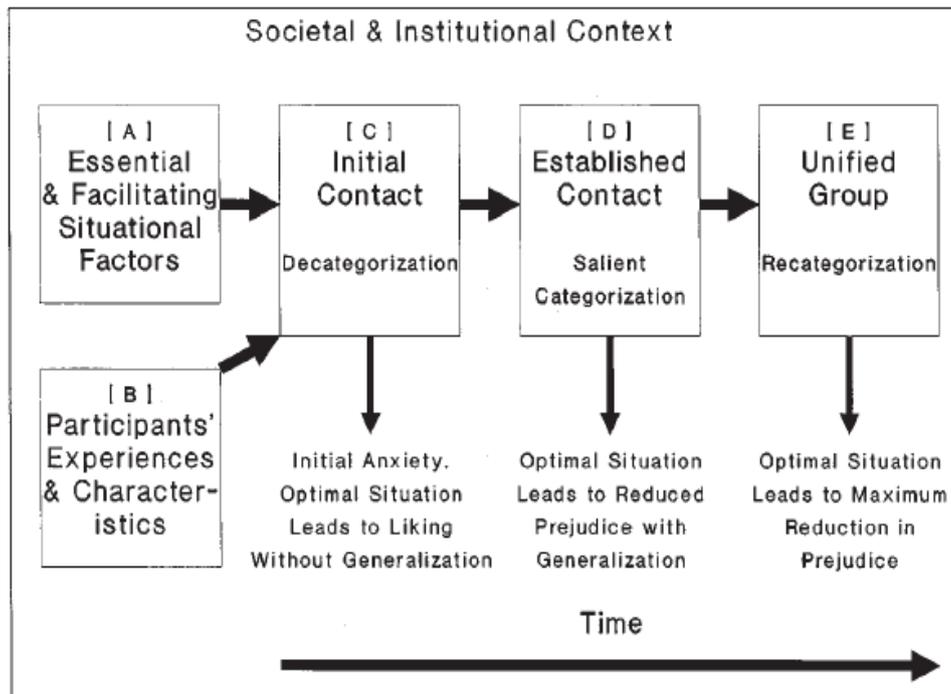


FIGURE 1. PETTIGREW'S REFORMULATED CONTACT THEORY (PETTIGREW, 1998)

### 2.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

As described above, reconciliation is both about looking back, the healing of a society, and about looking forward, the (re)building of a functioning society (Bloomfield et al, 2003). Civil society organizations (CSOs) are vital to the functioning of a society. Civil society exists as a 'third sphere' next to government institutions and the business sector. Civil society can counterbalance the state, by individuals collectively organizing themselves independently from the state, without obstructing the state to carry out its responsibilities (Belloni, 2001). A large variety of organizations are part of civil society, such as NGOs, academia, religious institutions, charities, activist organizations, and sports clubs. In peace processes, the involvement of CSOs is deemed necessary in transforming society (Belloni, 2001). This is also true for the peace process in Bosnia.

Sports clubs are part of civil society. They function as an arena for integration, bonding, and cohesion between individuals and between groups (Seippel, 2007). Sports clubs can serve as a place where people from all walks of life come together. Rich and poor, young and old, male and female: all come together at sports clubs.

CCPA can also be defined as a CSO. It is an NGO that focuses on peacebuilding and reconciliation. It brings together people from different ethnic backgrounds in post-conflict situations. It also promotes other CSOs through the OFFS program, as it supports the establishment of local football clubs.

However, some authors are critical about the role of CSOs in peacebuilding (Giulianotti, 2011b; Belloni, 2001). Many of these organizations are not sustainable, as they only receive short-term funding. As a result, many CSOs do not have a long-term strategy. Donors that fund a CSO for a short period want to see results within this time frame. Moreover, CSOs' objectives are not always in compliance with local needs, as project workers may fail to understand the local situation and needs.

## 2.4 SPORT AND PEACE

Sport and conflict are often seen as connected with each other. Sport is competition, the ultimate goal is winning, defeating the other and being better than the rest. Sometimes the connection between sport and conflict is taken beyond the playing field. For example, in 1969, the so-called 'Soccer War' between Honduras and El Salvador took place. Football was not the direct cause of this war, as the causes were much deeper and dated back several years. However, the violence surrounding a series of qualification matches between the two countries did contribute to the buildup of tension and became the final trigger for the conflict to escalate, thereby giving the war its name (Sack and Suster, 2000). Another example comes from the former Yugoslavia, where hooligan supporter movements of the football clubs Belgrade Red Star and Dinamo Zagreb became para-military units during the civil war in the 90s (Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011). However, in recent years, various organizations have started to use sports in a different, positive way. This is the SDP field, described in the introduction.

Sport for peace can be used on different levels, ranging from high level 'ping pong diplomacy' between China and the United States in 1971 to grassroots sport activities all around the world. These grassroots activities are seen by many organizations as a tool to promote peace and reconciliation. Potential positive effects of SDP are 'hope, tolerance, respect, empowerment, sense of security, normalcy, inclusion, positive relationships and team spirit' (NCDO 2009, 10). Sport for peace can advance the reconciliation process, by helping to build trust and confidence between divided groups. Sport can help because it has the ability to create new identities, which bridge the old divides (SDP IWG, 2008).

There are several reasons why sport can be a good way to initiate contact between divided groups. First of all, sports activities have a low entry point. 'Play together and have fun together' sounds more inviting than 'dialogue with the former enemy'. The second reason is related to the first one: sports can create a safe space for interaction. While people from divided groups normally would not meet each other, a sports field can be a neutral terrain for contact. Thirdly, many sports are team sports. To achieve something people have to communicate with each other and work together.

All of Allport's main conditions for positive effects of intergroup contact can be met with sport for peace activities. On the field, everyone has an equal status. In team sports, there is a lot of intergroup cooperation, especially if people from different groups play together in one team. Common goals are easy to establish, for instance winning a game or simply having fun together. It is impossible to say something about the support from authorities, law or custom in general, as this differs in every situation.

## CHAPTER 3 – WHEN ARE BRIDGES BUILT IN PRACTICE

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In intergroup contact there are several factors that either limit or enhance the positive effects of such contact on the reduction of prejudice towards people of the other group. Allport (1979) names four conditions, which he deems are necessary for intergroup contact to have a positive effect on prejudice reduction. Apart from these four factors, individuals' characteristics and earlier experiences influence the contact situation. Here I examine these limiting and enhancing factors and I describe the way in which they influence the effectiveness of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction.

### 3.1 ESSENTIAL AND FACILITATING FACTORS

The four conditions that Allport (1979) describes for intergroup contact to have a positive effect on prejudice reduction are equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities. I describe if and how each condition is met in the OFFS program.

#### *Equal status*

The first condition that has to be met according to Allport's contact hypothesis is an equal status of people of two groups. Both groups need to expect and perceive equal status in their contact with each other.

In the OFFS program, equal status is seen as important. It is ensured in different ways. Each OFFS is organized in cooperation with local football leaders and trainers. Usually, two or three towns organize an OFFS together. Leaders and trainers come from all participating towns. Every organizing town has an equal share in the number of leaders and trainers: if two towns organize an OFFS, there will be two leaders; if three towns organize an OFFS there will be three. Also, every town sends an equal number of trainers. This ensures equal status in the organization of the program.

A second way in which OFFS ensures an equal status of all groups is by not focusing on the ethnicity of the participants. Several trainers and former participants told me that during the program they were not aware of the ethnicity of other participants. One former participant told me that:

As a kid I didn't really think about it [ethnicity]. I didn't really distinguish who was a Catholic, who was a Serb. They just had different names. That's all that I

really distinguished as a child. You know, when you are 10 or 11, you don't really see people like that.<sup>2</sup>

For many of the participants, everyone is seen as equal. They do not differentiate between other participants based on their ethnicity. However, in some cases it turns out to be more difficult to ensure an equal status. An example is the town of Hadžići, where the main issue of the OFFS is the inclusion of Roma. Hadžići has a Bosniak majority, but also a large Roma minority. Roma children participate in the program, but it is difficult to involve other members of the Roma community in the program. As a result, most of the time the leaders and trainers are only Bosniak, not Roma.

### *Common goals*

Allport's (1979) second condition is having common goals. Team sports are an excellent example of having a common goal. In a team sport, members need each other in order to achieve their goal: winning. Sports activities are therefore a good way for interethnic groups to work together towards a common goal. Nada, who is particularly competitive, told me:

All I cared about was, 'we are on the same team, are you good?'. That is the first question to ask. Are you good or am I gonna lose with you on my team? Those were the important questions. Ethnicity was completely irrelevant.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that, while the OFFS program is a sports program, it differs from many other sport programs, as it makes use of the fun football concept. The competitive aspect of sports is not as important in OFFS as having fun and enjoying playing football and other games. For many of the children, the common goal is having fun together. Nada, who is now a trainer, also said the following about the program: "They can truly appreciate just having fun, just being kids, without any stupid ideas about differences, without focussing on differences."<sup>4</sup> For the children, it is not relevant who belongs to which ethnic group.

The trainers also strive towards a common goal. They want to make sure the program is a success and the participants are having a good time:

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with former participant, #12, Bosniak, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

All of the people I encountered, nevertheless where they came from, nobody ever talked about ‘oh, I’m from here and I come from there.’ The emphasis was not on this. I noticed that every time a child, the children appeared, everyone was engaged around the benefit of the kids on the pitch, so it was kind of out of the picture.<sup>5</sup>

As this trainer describes, ethnicity did not matter on the pitch, as all the trainers were focused on achieving the same goal: a successful OFFS program.

### *Intergroup cooperation*

Intergroup cooperation is the third condition that Allport identifies. If people work or play together instead of against each other, they can create a shared identity. As Serbs, Croats or Bosniaks, children have different identities. But as part of the same sports team, they can create a collective team identity, that transcends the ethnic identities. For OFFS, intergroup contact is the main goal. The program is designed in such a way that intergroup contact is promoted. During the OFFS, children are mixed up in smaller groups, with children from different places and different ethnicities together in one group:

Up to this day people come from different areas and are mixed, so that you don’t have a group of people from the same place who already know each other their whole life. So they try to divide them up, always, as much as possible. At least two-third of the group is people from other areas.<sup>6</sup>

One trainer explained that when the children arrive, they usually huddle up with children they already know, hoping to be in the same group. But the children are mixed as much as possible, as this is the entire point of the program. Or, as she said: “If you stay with the same people the whole time, you might as well stay at home and don’t bother coming”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with trainer #5, Bosniak, Hadzići, 06-02-2017

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

### *Support of authorities*

What is the situation regarding the support of authorities, law, and custom? Is there support for sport and peace programs, such as OFFS, by the government and what is the role of other types of authorities?

During the first years that the OFFS program was organized, CCPA paid for all expenses. This changed in 2006. From that year onwards, municipalities have to contribute to the program as well. CCPA still provides the equipment, but municipalities need to pay for the trainers' seminars. In some places this meant that the program stopped, as the municipality was not willing to support the program. This was for example the case in Srebrenica, where the trainer held negative views about the municipality:

When you do something to improve the situation here, the municipality doesn't support it. The program was first fully financed by CCPA, but now the municipality has to pay part of the program and they don't support it any more. They want to put the money in their own pockets and they don't want to spend it.<sup>8</sup>

A former trainer, active at CCPA from the start of the program, was also critical about the role of the government:

The government doesn't oppose CCPA, but there are no laws or funds to help... CCPA lacks government support, it could be more successful otherwise. But there is no government support to be open to others. OFFS is a start, but they can't achieve everything on their own, they need help.<sup>9</sup>

This trainer stated that CCPA had some impact, as it started building bridges in a divided society. He believed, however, that the program could be much more effective with support from the government.

The lack of support reflects the general attitude in politics on intergroup cooperation, as "encouragement of interaction between different communities has not been promoted by elites in power and has often been actively discouraged by them" (BTI 2016, 5). In many of the informal talks, people expressed their frustration with the political situation in the country.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with trainer, #24, Bosniak, Srebrenica, 06-03-2017

<sup>9</sup> Interview with trainer, #5, Bosniak, Hadzići, 06-02-2017

One respondent told me that in the business world there is little trouble along ethnic lines, as people in a company share the same goal: they want to make profit. But the political situation is different. All politicians care about is themselves and as they often have something to gain by maintaining the existing ethnical divides, they are often very nationalistic. The mother of one of my respondents told me:

We don't think anything negative about other people. It's politics that does that, we don't. We had war because of the politics, not because we wanted to. We were forced to go to war. We don't have private problems with other people, with other nationalities.<sup>10</sup>

However, in some towns, trainers are positive about the role of their local governments. In the town of Maglaj an OFFS is organized almost every year since the start of the program. One of the trainers there told me:

It is very difficult to work with politicians and with politics here. But being a relatively poor society, we need help and the support of the politicians... The project mainly relies on the local politics, the municipality. So far it has been enough. Especially this region is very advanced in that way. The local politicians are good partners of this project, but the higher ups don't really concern themselves with this project. But so far the project hasn't needed any support from the higher ups.<sup>11</sup>

Besides municipalities, other authorities are connected to the OFFS as well. In many places, OFFS is organized in cooperation with local schools. Through these schools, OFFS can reach children who are not (yet) active in football or in sports in general and let them participate in the program. Schools play an important role in the children's lives. Sometimes parents are not willing to let their children participate in the program, for example because of the conviction that girls should not play football. If the school supports the OFFS program, it may convince parents to let their daughters join the program. I spoke with some students of a school in Pale. Their school not only supported the program, but the school also decided that they would join the program with a couple of their school classes. In the town of Hadžići many of the OFFS

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with mother of participant, Serb, Pale, 08-02-2017

<sup>11</sup> Interview with trainer, #16, Bosniak, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

volunteers are also teachers at the local school. The school director told me that his school decided to incorporate the fun football concept in their physical exercise lessons.

A third type of authority that is relevant in the case of OFFS is the national football association of Bosnia. Twenty years ago, when the OFFS program first started, there were three separate football associations in Bosnia: one Bosnian-Croat, one Bosnian-Serb. and one Bosnian. They were each involved in the OFFS program from the start. I spoke with Marko, who at that time was an employee of the Bosnian-Croat association. In order for the program to start, all three associations needed to accept the program, which they did. While the different Bosnian football associations did not unify until 2002, “the OFFS already showed that they can work together.”<sup>12</sup> OFFS connected the football associations by working together with all three of them. Marko is no longer active in the national football association, but he still works for the regional association. He still fights for the financing of the program in this region, because he believes the program is useful and very important. Consequently, Orašje, his municipality, is the only municipality in Bosnia that has been in the program every year since its start.

In this part I examined if the OFFS program meets with the four conditions of the contact theory. For the most part, the conditions are met. During the OFFS, equal status is achieved by working with leaders and trainers from all organizing towns. Trainers and children have a common goal during the program: having fun and enjoying the program. Intergroup cooperation is the central tenet of the OFFS, as children are mixed in interethnic groups. Though the OFFS is supported by authorities such as schools and the national football association, the government support differs from place to place. The government does not oppose the OFFS program, but with more support the program could have been more successful.

### 3.2 PARTICIPANTS’ EXPERIENCES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Besides the conditions of the contact theory, the effectiveness of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction is also dependent on, as Pettigrew (1998) states, the experiences and characteristics of the individuals involved. My interviews revealed a number of aspects that can either limit or enhance the effectiveness of the program, as these aspects influence the way participants look at the OFFS and participants’ attitude towards participants from other ethnicities. These aspects are their previous experiences, their own ethnicity, the stories they

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Marko, #32, Croat, Orašje, 22-03-2017

have heard from others in their surroundings, and the place they live in. Each aspect will be briefly discussed below.

With two former participants I spoke about travelling to other, nearby towns during the OFFS program. The program was held in their own town in the Federation for the first few days and was then continued in a town in Republika Srpska. Some of the children were not comfortable with travelling to Republika Srpska at first, for example because “some kids lost parents in the war, it was a little bit tougher for them”.<sup>13</sup> The personal experiences of these children made it harder for them to travel to towns in Republika Srpska than for others. Despite these difficulties, all children joined in the end.

An individual's own ethnicity is a second characteristic that is relevant when looking at intergroup contact. Especially for people from a mixed ethnic background, the ethnic segregation in society can feel strange, as their family members belong to different ethnic groups and they themselves belong to more than one group. One participant from a mixed ethnic background told me:

With me it is a bit trickier, because I am technically from dual ethnicity. So it is a bit tricky for me to even see differences, because then I would have to see these differences within myself.<sup>14</sup>

When children join an OFFS, they are already influenced by ideas on ethnic diversity from their surroundings, especially from their parents. One of the trainers told me:

Today's kids are much harder to mix up. They come with these ideas from their parents... Because the child sees what the parent does and if a parent has problems with another ethnicity, then, yeah, the kid is gonna have it too... Maybe they can see that what mommy and daddy say isn't really that logical. Maybe a person who is catholic isn't automatically the devil, that I will hate for the rest of my life.<sup>15</sup>

The children are influenced by their parents, if they are prejudiced towards people from other ethnicities, the children are more likely to be prejudiced themselves.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with former participant, #29, Vogosca, 13-03-2017

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Another characteristic that can influence people's prejudice in the contact situation is the place where someone lives. For example, it makes quite a difference if one is growing up in a multi-ethnic city such as Sarajevo or in a small village where everyone has the same ethnicity. Nada, who grew up in Sarajevo, told me:

My friends, none of them have the idea that having a different ethnicity means you can't hang out with this person. That is the kind of belief that mostly comes from the smaller, rural areas in the country.<sup>16</sup>

Nada also gave an example of someone she met who grew up in a small village where everyone shared her ethnicity. During her childhood she had hardly met anyone from other ethnicities. It was only when she moved to Sarajevo to go to university that she met people with a different ethnic or religious background. Nada and several other former participants indicate that children from larger cities are more open minded towards people from different ethnic backgrounds than those from smaller towns. Larger cities often have a mixed population, which leads to more intergroup contact. Smaller towns are more often mono-ethnic, reducing the likelihood of interactions with children from other ethnic groups.

For a more optimal effect of their program, CCPA needs to make sure that people from all different backgrounds, in term of previous experiences and individuals' characteristics, participate in the OFFS program. If, for example, the only children that participate are children that are already open-minded towards people from different ethnic backgrounds, the program misses out on children for whom the OFFS could be a means of getting in touch with other children from an ethnic group that they hold negative feelings towards. To ensure diversity in participants' backgrounds, CCPA could work together more intensively with local schools in promoting and organizing the OFFS. An example of a city where this is already the case is Pale, as mentioned earlier. The school in Pale decided that they would join the program with a large group of their students, ensuring the participating of a diverse group of children, in terms of characteristics and previous experiences.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017.

## CHAPTER 4 – HOW ARE BRIDGES BUILT IN PRACTICE

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In the previous chapter I described how various factors can enhance or limit the positive effects of intergroup cooperation on prejudice reduction. Now I turn from these conditions, previous experiences, and individuals' characteristics to the actual process of change. When the aforementioned conditions are met, how does the actual change take place? I will describe this process step by step.

### *Opportunity for contact*

Trainers who were involved in the establishment of the program twenty years ago explained to me how the program was then received by local communities. They told me that when they visited the local communities where they wished to set up the program, their idea was greeted with enthusiasm. The people were very willing to support the OFFS program:

[The program was] going back to the feeling people had for each other. The problem these people were facing is that everybody asked who you are and where you come from. When we came with the project, these things were erased. And they were taken back to what they were back in the old days, when it [ethnicity] was also not an issue. In the early days, when [my colleague] and I went to the local communities we never heard 'no'. We noticed that people were anxiously waiting for something like this to happen and that someone would give them that opportunity.<sup>17</sup>

In the Yugoslav era, before the war, to many people ethnic divisions were not as important as they were during and after the war. This program gave people the opportunity to re-establish ties that were broken during the war. People were happy with this opportunity. A trainer in Orašje told me about his predominantly Croat town:

Before the war, Orašje was mixed with Croatians, Muslims and Serbs. In the war it changed, all the Serbs left. Only very little people came back after the war. [...] The contacts were lost during the war. Before the war it was all

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with trainer, #5, Bosniak, Hadzići, 06-02-2017

normal, in the war it stopped. And the project helped us get together. It was because of the project we came together again.<sup>18</sup>

The same goes for Maglaj, which nowadays is a predominantly Bosniak town, but which was mixed before the war:

Actually it [ethnicity] wasn't something you would look at a person or find important before the conflict. There were mixed marriages, it was a completely normal community or country. There really wasn't much segregation before the war. We lived together in harmony and peace. Before the war the relations between the different nationalities were completely normal. They cooperated, they had tournaments together, they played in the same league. So it was a completely normal relationship with the different ethnic groups. After the war and before the project those relations were completely cut off, which is understandable. So before the war everything was normal. They functioned like a normal community, like a normal country and afterwards that wasn't.<sup>19</sup>

OFFS aims to build bridges between divided communities. But when reading these quotes, we see that the program does not actually build new bridges, as it does not bring people in contact with others they have never had contact with before. Instead, the program rebuilds existing, but broken bridges. It brings together people that used to live together in peace but were separated by the war. This way, it recreates the pre-war situation – on the football field at least. This was especially the case during the first years of the program, when people in Bosnia still had clear memories of pre-war times. Their old friends, neighbors and acquaintances had become their enemy and the society had become divided: “To this day, the school still tries really hard to make sure kids don't focus on that. For our generation it was a bit easier, we were technically still born in the old country.”<sup>20</sup>

Nowadays, the divides in society have become more institutionalized. For the generation that grew up after the war, intergroup contact is not as common as it was for people growing up in Yugoslavia. The generation that grew up after the war does not have pre-existing ties with people from other ethnicities. They have not experienced the integrated

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with trainer, #31, Croat, Orašje, 22-03-2017

<sup>19</sup> Interview with trainer, #16, Bosniak, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

society and therefore do not know better than that their community is divided along ethnic lines. Many towns that were multi-ethnic before the war have become mono-ethnic, and even if a town currently still is multi-ethnic, in many cases the ‘two schools under one roof’ concept still separates children. For the new generation, the OFFS does not rebuild broken bridges, instead they create new bridges between divided communities. This makes the twin-city concept, where two or three neighboring towns organize an OFFS together, even more important.

In the highly segregated society of Bosnia with many mono-ethnic towns, people need to travel to get in touch with others from different ethnicities. Travelling is part of the OFFS program, due to the twin-city concept. Neighboring towns organize an OFFS together, a couple of days in one town and a couple of days in the other town. Travelling to other places was, especially shortly after the war, quite uncommon for many people in Bosnia. Infrastructure was destroyed during the war, making travelling difficult. On top of that, the country was filled with mines, making travelling dangerous. But even today it is not common for people to see much of the country, especially for people in smaller places, as they lack the financial resources or the time to do so. Some of the trainers I interviewed saw the opportunity for children to travel around the country as the most significant change brought by the program. As one Croat-Bosniak boy responded: “I have more friends from other cities and from other nationalities. If it weren’t for the football schools I wouldn’t have gone to Šamac [a neighboring Serb town], for example.”<sup>21</sup>

Nada participated in the program during the first couple of years that it was organized. The first days of the program were organized in Vogošća, a town in the Federation. During the final days of the program they would travel to a nearby town in Republika Srpska. For many of the children, this was very exciting, as they had never travelled to any other place, let alone to a place in the other entity. Nada described the excitement of other children:

Personally, I had visited Srpska republic, East Sarajevo, but most of the kids from the Federation didn’t go there ever. That was a very big deal. Once, I think I was even in high school, and a kid asked me ‘how do you go there, do you need a passport, is there a customs thing?’ Most kids in Sarajevo for a long time actually believed there was a border. So for most kids when we were in Vogošća for that school, I think 90% of the children in Vogošća had never

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with former participant, #34, Croat-Bosniak, Orašje, 22-03-2017

been half an hour away. They never travelled and this was their first opportunity to see that no one is different, that there aren't any soldiers waiting to kill you when you cross over. It is just literally a street light. And the same football field they have as in Vogošća, nothing is different. So it was an amazing opportunity for them. I had the opportunity to see it before. So for me, it wasn't a big deal. But you kind of get caught off guard if someone else asks you 'do I need a passport?' if it is in the same country.<sup>22</sup>

By traveling to different places, the children get the opportunity to learn more about each other. They get to see the places where they live and this can help them realize there might be fewer differences between ethnicities than they think. Or as Nada said: "They have the same football field [in Republika Srpska] as in Vogošća [Federation], nothing is different".<sup>23</sup> According to many of the trainers I interviewed, the OFFS program is the only chance for children to get in touch with children from different places and different ethnicities: "The program needs to continue. Without it, kids do not have the opportunity to mix up. This is the only way for kids to join and come together with other ethnicities."<sup>24</sup>

### *Cooperation between ethnicities*

Once contact between ethnic groups has been initiated, the next step is cooperation. To make the program a success, trainers and volunteers have to work together, while children play together. Cooperation between trainers is sometimes difficult at the start of the program, as there is still some distrust between different ethnicities. This, however, improves over the years, as the trainers get to know each other and become friends. This will be discussed in more detail later this chapter.

Nowadays, many of the younger trainers and assistants have taken part in the program themselves as a child. They know the program, they have played together with children from other towns and they have therefore experienced first-hand what it is like to work together with children with different ethnic backgrounds. When they start taking part in the program as trainers, they are already open minded towards people from different ethnic backgrounds. One trainer told me that "I know who is from which place, but I don't mind". Another trainer told me that the cooperation between the trainers is very good. For him it is normal that the other

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with trainer #36, Orašje, 22-03-2017

trainers are from different ethnicities, he does not even think about this. He actually enjoys the cooperation with all other (older) trainers, as he can learn a lot from their experiences. So instead of distrust between trainers, there is now a situation where they cooperate and exchange knowledge.

### *Change in image of the other*

After a war has ended, enemy images continue to exist in society. This is also the case in Bosnia. Changing enemy images is an important step towards a positive peace and the OFFS contributes to this. As a result of the cooperation with people from different ethnic backgrounds, people may change the image they have of the other. I asked Nada if and in what way the OFFS changed her and she told me:

It made me a better person for sure. It didn't change me so much, because that's the beauty, they start young. So they don't try to change you, they just steer you in the right direction. So by the time you are old enough to not be able to change anything, or not drastically, you are in the right place, so you shouldn't change anyway. So they definitely influenced who I am today.<sup>25</sup>

Her quote perfectly sums up how the OFFS influences people. It illustrates that the changes that the program achieves might not be big or easy to see, but by setting a good example it shows that people with different ethnicities can work and play together without conflict.

However, in one particular case, trainers from Petrovo and Gračanica, two towns that organize the OFFS together, told me about tensions between the children in the early years of the program.

It was hard in the beginning, because of the situation between Muslims and Serbs after the war. They were judging each other. In the beginning there were problems between kids from Gračanica and Petrovo. The kids didn't understand, they heard stories about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and they judged the other. They heard these stories and they didn't understand and judged. [...] They provoked other kids, they would push the other and say ugly things.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>26</sup> Interview with trainer, #27, Petrovo, 10-03-2017

When the children first came to the program, they were biased by stories they had heard and still had negative images of people of the other ethnic groups. To change this, the trainers talked with the children and after playing sports together the children had learned about each other and their opinions had changed. Only during the first years of the program, when the memories of the war were still vivid, did these tensions exist. Now that the war lies further behind, these tensions have disappeared.

Some of the participants became aware of their own prejudice as a result of the program. In Orašje, a former participant told me:

I changed my opinion about other people. I looked differently at Serbs and I can definitely say it is positive now. I was told a lot of things about the war in our country. And I had bad thoughts about them. I was prejudiced. And the football schools changed that.<sup>27</sup>

Another respondent told me:

We learned more about other cultures, and stuff. It was different, we were really happy. It opened my mind, that people from Republika Srpska are the same as us, there is no difference. We are all the same people. [Before the OFFS] we weren't in touch [with people from other ethnicities]. At school there were some friends that had a different religion, but they were like us. That was one of the first times we met those kind of people, people from another city. So it was a first step towards our understanding of the situation.<sup>28</sup>

One element that continuously pops up here is the importance of learning about each other. By learning about each other, participants and trainers attending the OFFS come to the realization that perceived differences are not so big after all. As a result of this, they change the image they have of the other. The image they have of others from different ethnic backgrounds is no longer negative, but neutral, and in some cases even positive.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with former participant and trainer, #35, Orašje, 22-03-2017

<sup>28</sup> Interview with former participant, #30, Vogosca, 13-03-2017

### *Lasting contact*

Many trainers are active in the OFFS for several years. Over these years, they become friends with their co-trainers, regardless of their ethnicities. One trainer told me that he now had more contact with people from different ethnicities than before he joined the program, partly because he is older now and partly because of his experience with the OFFS. He said that “it is easier to make new contacts if you had earlier contacts”.<sup>29</sup>

Nowadays, new trainers are usually people who have participated in the program as children and are now too old to participate. First, they become assistants to the trainers and eventually may become trainers themselves. Over the years, they have built a large network, not just in their own region, but in the entire country, because of the yearly seminars organized for trainers. To promote these contacts between trainers, CCPA aims to establish a nationwide network where young trainers can exchange their experiences and share knowledge and new ideas. This network is still in its starting phase, but in the future it could further strengthen the cooperation between trainers from different regions.

Several of the former participants I spoke with told me they now have more contact with people from different ethnicities than before they joined the program. In Žepče, I spoke with three teenagers who had participated in the OFFS in the past three years. Their school is a school with separate shifts for Croats and Bosniaks, but their football club is mixed. Still, they told me that since the OFFS they have had more contact with people from other ethnicities than before, as they have stayed in touch with the children they met at the schools. Also in Orašje, a participant told me that he has more contact with people from other ethnicities nowadays:

I have a lot of contact with other people now, because I am older and I realized they are all kind of the same. That I don't have to hate everybody for what happened in the past. And I was in a lot of organizations where I met new people, Serbs and Croatians. And I love that.<sup>30</sup>

Before he joined the OFFS he was biased against Serbs, but during the program he came to the realization that Serbs are not so different from himself and that he cannot blame all Serbs for crime committed by a small group. For him, this change in attitude towards Serbs

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with former participant and trainee, #35, Orašje, 22-03-2017

<sup>30</sup> Interview with former participant, #33, Orašje, 22-03-2017

eventually led to a change in his behavior. After the OFFS, he started to actively search for opportunities to meet new people, from all different ethnicities.

### *Friendship*

One of the main reasons children participate in the OFFS is to meet other children and have fun together. One respondent told me that: “I don’t like sports, but I like to meet new people, make new friends”.<sup>31</sup> While many of the children do love football and join for a week of playing football and having fun, meeting new people and making new friends is also an important reason for children to participate.

The friendship potential of intergroup contact is an important part of the contact theory (Tuohey and Cognato, 2011). For intergroup contact to have a positive influence on prejudice there must be the possibility for meaningful relationships to form. Pettigrew (1998) states that initial contact is often difficult and anxious. However, if the contact is frequent or long-term and is more than superficial, eventually friendships can develop.

A couple of the trainers I interviewed describe exactly this process in their contact with trainers from the other ethnicities. In Maglaj I interviewed a group of trainers. One of them told me that “when the project was first started, in the beginning there wasn’t much mixing between the nationalities. Because there was still a certain level of distrust.”<sup>32</sup> In Žepče, a town that organizes OFFS together with Maglaj as twin-city, the trainer stated:

In the first few years it was difficult, because there was still a level of distrust between the different nationalities. After a couple of years, after some time, it was completely normal relationships and cooperation.<sup>33</sup>

Shortly after the war, the cooperation between trainers was still difficult. But every year, the cooperation and communication got better, as the trainers got to know each other and even became friends. All the trainers I interviewed said they had more contact with people from other ethnicities than before the start of the program, as they had become friends with trainers from different ethnicities. Not only did they become friends with their direct colleagues, with whom they organized the OFFS, but they also met trainers from other towns during the seminars organized as preparation for the OFFS.

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with former participant, #14, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

<sup>32</sup> Interview with trainer, #15, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

<sup>33</sup> Interview with trainer, #22, Croat, Žepče, 10-02-2017

For the participants in the program the friendship potential is different than for trainers. Trainers are usually active in the program for many years and attend a preparation seminar every year. The children only see each other during the several days that the OFFS is organized. While some children join the program several years in a row, other children only attend once. Even if someone joins the program several years, it is likely that they will not meet friends from previous years again. As a result of this, children are less likely than trainers to develop friendships with other participants.

Children from different places and ethnicities are mixed in smaller teams. This mixing gives the children the chance of meeting a lot of new people and becoming friends with them, at least for that week. While trainers state that they see many children exchanging phone numbers at the end of the week, this is not the experience of the participants that I interviewed. This is for a large extent due to the fact that my respondents participated in the program at least a couple of years ago, some even twenty years ago. As a girl from Maglaj said:

I didn't really [stay in touch]. When I was in those schools, Facebook and social media wasn't really a thing. I barely had a phone then. A phone was like a big thing you could break a man's skull with. So you couldn't really stay in touch or anything... But I did hang out, spent more time with people I knew in town, but I didn't really talk to. Then we would hang out at school again.<sup>34</sup>

Nowadays, many children are on social media and own a mobile phone, making it easier for them to stay in touch after the end of the program. Nada is positive about this:

Now they actually have a chance to stay in touch. We didn't have that experience. We could write to each other, but come on, who does that? But kids today actually have a real opportunity to stay in touch and have a real relationship with someone who is like them, but not exactly like them... So basically they are much more accepting. I know a few kids who were in the schools, when I see them now they are a lot more accepting towards other people. They were raised in a very small village, they never met anyone who

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with former participant #12, Maglaj, 09-02-2017

doesn't have the same belief system. It definitely has a very positive impact on children.<sup>35</sup>

### *Broader influence*

The OFFS does not only influence the people who are directly involved in the program; it has a much broader influence. The aim set for the OFFS program is to have a positive impact on participants and trainers through intergroup contact, but also that these participants and trainers have a positive impact on their own social networks, such as their own friends and family. Several trainers explained to me that when children are young they are more open to other people as they do not have a fixed group of friends yet. They can still be shaped. It is more difficult to shape or change older children or grown-ups. But through these children, you can reach their parents. As mentioned above, children are influenced by their parents' ideas. If their parents are prejudiced, it is likely they will be prejudiced themselves. Sometimes, an OFFS tries to involve parents directly by organizing special parent workshops. However, these workshops are not organized during every OFFS, and even if they are organized, usually only a small number of parents join these workshops. According to one of the trainers, there is never more than one group of parents, while there are at least twelve groups of children. Still, the program appears to influence parents even if they are not directly involved. They join their children to the field to see them play, and at the same time meet other parents there. In Srebrenica, a trainer told me that at the local football club - which was started with help of the equipment provided by CCPA - there is now more communication on the field among people from different ethnicities, who are playing together in one team. The same goes for the parents: "the parents are always with their kids. It influences them as well".<sup>36</sup> Parents come to the club to watch their children play and they too now have more contact with people from different ethnicities (other children's parents).

One of my respondents told me that because of the OFFS, she became more aware of issues regarding ethnicity and religion. Her parents are now more open to talk about these issues, since she is now more aware of these issues. By talking about issues related to ethnicity, people can become more aware of their own prejudice, which is a first step in changing them.

Besides parents, the OFFS can also influence other people in the participants' networks. For example, participants talk about their experience during the OFFS with friends

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Nada, #23, Sarajevo, 02-03-2017

<sup>36</sup> Interview with trainer, #24, Bosniak, Srebrenica, 06-03-2017

that did not participate in the program. One girl told me that she introduced the people she met during the OFFS to the friends that she already had. This way contacts that started during the OFFS expand beyond the program.

### *Football clubs*

A slightly different type of finding is the establishment of (mixed) football clubs as a result of the OFFS. The Bosnian War had a devastating effect on sports clubs. Sports fields and equipment were destroyed. Football was one of the most popular sports in Yugoslavia and football clubs and competitions were of high quality. It was difficult to reestablish the football infrastructure after the war and even currently it is still not on the same level as before the war. CCPA played an important role in rebuilding football clubs. Many of the trainers I interviewed repeatedly stressed their importance. When I asked trainers what, according to them, the most significant change established by the OFFS was, many told me it was the provision of equipment and the education of trainers.

After an OFFS, all equipment used, such as balls, cones and goals, is left behind for the local football clubs to use. A former employee of the Croat-Bosniak football association told me: “In the first year there was no equipment. This was very important that the clubs got the equipment. After the war we didn’t have anything. So the project really helped.”<sup>37</sup> With this equipment, the local clubs can continue to offer football training during the year. A trainer in Srebrenica even believes that the local football club exists only because of CCPA: “If it wasn’t for the program there wouldn’t be a football club at all, as we wouldn’t have the equipment.”<sup>38</sup>

CCPA did not only provide local football clubs with the necessary equipment, they also educated the trainers. Every year, CCPA organizes seminars in preparation for the OFFS, to train the trainers in the fun football concept. Many of these people are also the trainers at the local clubs, and they continue to use their knowledge after the OFFS.

Some clubs established after the OFFS are mixed. In Žepče, a mixed Croat-Bosniak city, where I interviewed three Croat teenagers who had participated in the OFFS in the past three years, the football club is one of the few places where children from different ethnicities play together. While Žepče is a mixed town, the three Croat teenagers mostly meet other Croats in their surroundings. They live in a Croat neighborhood and their school is a typical example of ‘two schools under one roof’, with separate shifts for Croat and Bosniak children.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Marko, #32, Croat, Orašje, 22-03-2017

<sup>38</sup> Interview with trainer, # 24, Bosniak, Srebrenica, 06-03-2017

They have few opportunities for interacting with Bosniak people. The football club is the exception, with both Bosniak and Croat children playing at this club.

The establishment of football clubs as a result of the OFFS is also relevant from a civil society perspective. Civil society organizations play an important role in peace processes by supporting interaction and cohesion between individuals and between groups. The football clubs established with the help of the OFFS take this role: the clubs contribute to the post-conflict society by building networks between different football clubs and trainers and increasing the cohesion within towns.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

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Focusing on the case of the Open Fun Football Schools in Bosnia, this study aimed to explore the role of Sport for Development and Peace in post-conflict situations. In this research, I tried to understand how a Sport for Development and Peace program can contribute to peace and reconciliation. To answer this question, I focused on the specific case of the OFFS in post-conflict Bosnia. The OFFS is a five-day football program for children from different ethnic backgrounds aged seven to twelve. The aim of this program is to bring people from different ethnic backgrounds together through sports and thereby promoting peace and reconciliation and gender equality. The program was started in 1998, directly after the war in Bosnia ended. It has now been active for twenty years. Using the OFFS as a case in this research, provided me the opportunity not only to interview children who participated in the program in recent years, but also to interview people who have been active in the program since its start. This is relevant for my research, as peace and reconciliation cannot be achieved in a short timeframe. On the contrary, it is a process that takes many years.

To recap, reconciliation is the process of transforming a society from a negative peace to a positive peace. The ultimate goal of reconciliation is a just society, where root causes of conflicts are absent (Bloomfield et al, 2003). Post-conflict societies are often characterized by the existence of enemy images. The members of ethnic or religious groups that are different than one's own are seen in a negative way. To transform a society towards a positive peace, changing these enemy images is an important first step.

### 5.1 OFFS IN RELATION TO THE CONTACT THEORY

The contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998) is a theory on how reconciliation can be achieved. According to this theory, intergroup contact can help reduce prejudice. For the intergroup contact to be successful, there are four basic conditions that need to be met. These conditions are an equal status within the contact situation, working towards common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities. Besides these four basic conditions, the time dimension is another important factor that determines the successful reduction of prejudice, as it takes time to develop meaningful relationships. Taking this dimension into account, intergroup contact should be frequent and long-term to be able to truly reduce prejudice.

This reduction in prejudice is achieved through four processes (Pettigrew, 1998). First of all, as a result of the intergroup contact, people learn about the outgroup, which lead to a change in attitudes towards the outgroup. This change in attitude can then lead to a change in behavior, the second process. The third process is generating affective ties or, in other words,

developing friendships. Finally, intergroup contact can also lead to ingroup reappraisal: the intergroup contact does not only change one's attitudes and opinions about the outgroup, but also about the ingroup. All four processes together lead to a prejudice reduction towards other groups, for instance other ethnic or religious groups.

In my research I focused on the OFFS, which uses football as a means to initiate contact between people from different ethnic groups. I studied the influence the program has on the people that are involved in the program. For this, I held in-depth interviews with both former participants and trainers. Furthermore, I spoke with parents of participants and with a former employee of the Croat-Bosnian football association. The interviews provided a great deal of insight into how the contact theory is applicable in the case of this program and into the importance of the program in establishing new football clubs.

I examined the extent to which the contact theory is applicable to the case of the OFFS. For any program to be successful, the first step is that people are willing to participate in the program. The reason children join the OFFS is not because they want to overcome the divides between different ethnic groups, but for their own entertainment and for their love for football. Therefore, whilst 'reconciliation and co-existence' is one of the main goals of the program, it is not how the program is presented. The emphasis of the OFFS is on playing football and having fun together, resulting in a low entry-point for the program and a high willingness of children to participate.

In the chapters above, I have explained the different ways in which the OFFS program influences participants, parents, trainers, and society as a whole. In the following section, I compare these results to Pettigrew's (1998) reformulated contact theory (see figure 1, page 17). Intergroup contact is influenced by both essential and facilitating situational factors (A) (Allport's conditions) and participants characteristics and former experiences(B). Over time, the intergroup contact can lead to a reduction in prejudice, starting with initial contact (C) leading ideally to liking individuals of the outgroup without generalization of this liking to the entire outgroup. Then established contact (D) ideally leads to prejudice reduction with generalization. Finally, intergroup contact can lead to a unified group (E) where prejudice reduction is maximized. This figure is a simplification of reality, as in reality it is impossible to make a strict separation between the three categories (C, D, and E). Effects are intertwined and not as chronological as shown in the figure.

Figure 2 shows a similar model, but with the results of the OFFS. The model is based on the results of this study. Note that this model too is a simplified representation of reality. The reality is not as linear and chronological as shown. Just like Pettigrew’s model, the model starts with the basic conditions: the essential and facilitating situational factors (A) and the participants characteristics and former experiences (B). All four essential and facilitating situational factors are, at least partially, met. The different groups taking part in the OFFS have an equal status within the contact situation, they work together towards common goals and intergroup cooperation is central to the OFFS program. The program thus meets the first

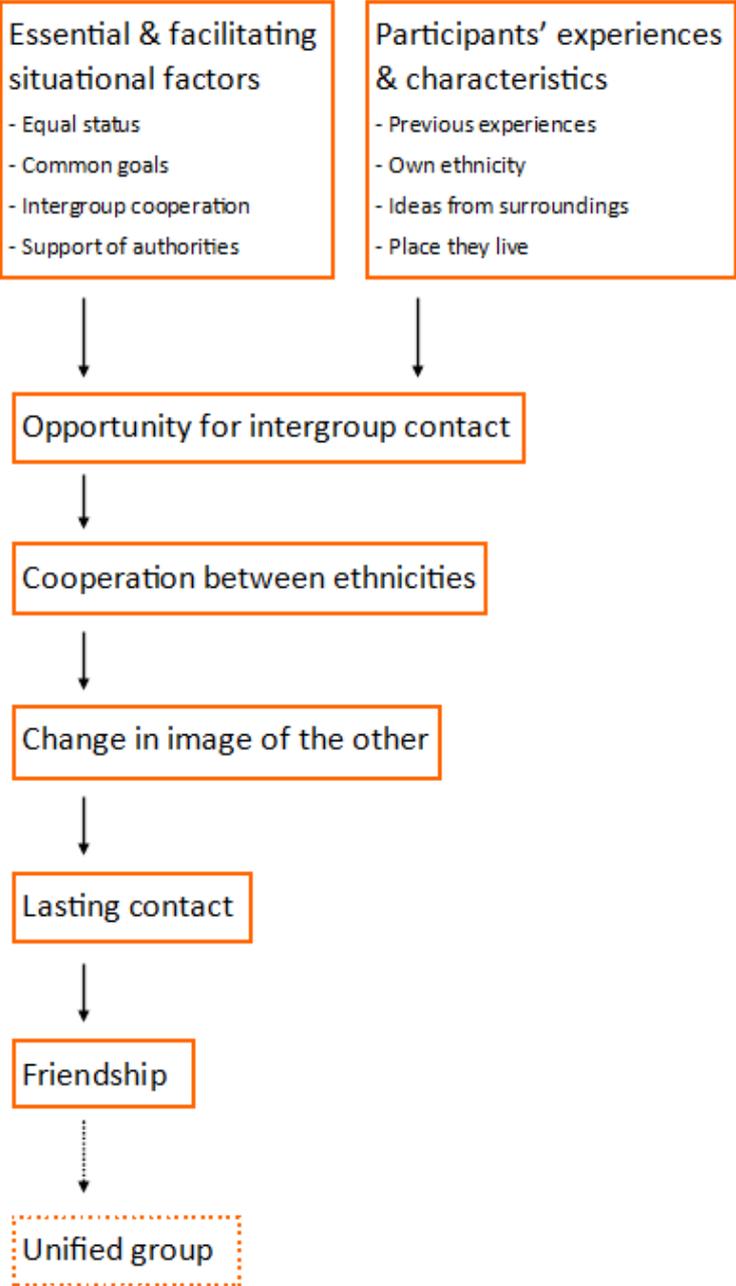


FIGURE 2. PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE PEACE WITHIN OFFS (AUTHOR’S OWN CREATION)

three conditions. When it comes to the fourth condition, support from authorities, we see differences between towns. In most cases, the program is supported by different types of authorities, such as local governments, local schools and the national football association. However, in some cities the local government does not fully support the program. The government sometimes withdraws the (financial) support, for example because they have other priorities. This results in the OFFS ceasing to exist in these towns, as continuation of the program relies on funding by the local government. Financial support from local governments is an essential condition for the continuation of the OFFS.

Participants' characteristics and their former experiences influence the contact situation, they can either limit or enhance the effectiveness of the OFFS program. As every individual has different experiences and characteristics, the results of the intergroup contact will be different for each person. The most relevant characteristics and experiences in the case of OFFS are the participants' own experiences with people from other ethnicities, their own ethnicity, the place they grew up in and their parents' experiences and attitudes towards people from different ethnic backgrounds.

The essential and facilitating situational factors and the previous experiences of participants and their characteristics are factors that influence the effectiveness of the program. They shed light on when change can be achieved. The next question is how change can be achieved.

As can be seen in figure 2, the first step in the process of change achieved by the OFFS program is that it gives people the opportunity to get in touch with people from other ethnic groups. After the war, ties between ethnic groups were broken and the OFFS offered the opportunity to start repairing these ties and they still do so today. It brings children and trainers together, who normally would not have had contact with each other, as they come from different towns or from different ethnic backgrounds. In other words, the OFFS facilitates initial contact (C) between divided groups. The next step is cooperation, both between trainers and between participants. On the field, trainers and participants from different ethnic backgrounds all come together and interact with one another in various ways. By working together, they get to know each other and can begin to realize that differences between ethnicities may not be as large as once thought.

In a situation of established contact (D), the image people have of the other starts to change and in some cases the OFFS leads to lasting contact between people from different ethnic groups, even after the OFFS has ended. As a result of the intergroup contact and cooperation, the participants realize that the enemy image they had of the other does not

match the reality and therefore the image of the other changes. The change in image is not something that happens overnight. The first step is to become aware of existing prejudice; only then can it slowly change. This change can not only be seen in trainers and participants; the impact of the OFFS is broader as trainers and participants also influence family members and friends.

Some of my respondents described how they now have more contact with people from other ethnicities than before the OFFS. Over time, occasionally even friendships can develop between trainers and/or participants. These findings support Pettigrew's (1998) addition to the contact theory, the importance of the time dimension. Pettigrew states that intergroup contact has more impact on reducing prejudice when contact is frequent and long-lasting. He calls this the friendship potential. In the OFFS, trainers have the most frequent and long-lasting contact, as they attend seminars in preparation of the program and as they are usually active in the program for many successive years. This gives them the opportunity to develop lasting friendships. Children, on the other hand, often participate only once and have limited opportunities to stay in touch with other participants after the program, for instance due to living in different towns. Children, especially the children who join the program only once, are less likely than trainers to develop lasting friendships, as their contact stays limited to only a couple of days. Because of the lack of opportunities to stay in touch, the program often does not lead to lasting contact with people from a different ethnic background for participating children. Nowadays, children have more opportunities to stay in touch after the OFFS, because of internet and social media. This gives children more chances of staying in touch and developing friendships with other participants.

The last step needed for positive peace to take place, is establishing a unified group (E). Twenty years after the end of the war, Bosnian society is still segregated in many ways. It is very difficult for one organization to overcome this segregation, when it is so prominent in all aspects of everyday life. An example of this segregation is the 'two schools under one roof'. Also, segregation is maintained by politicians, as the political system of the country is entirely based on ethnic divisions, most clearly seen in the three-member presidency of Bosnia. Because of this, politicians do not have an incentive to overcome the divisions in society. To directly contribute to a unified group on a national level, the OFFS program is too small in scale and too short in time. However, the OFFS does contribute to the process of Bosnians becoming a unified group. One example of this is the unification of the national football association in 2002. Before that time, the three former associations already worked together on the OFFS program. The OFFS also has an impact on the local level, by

establishing networks of trainers and football clubs. While the society as a whole is still largely divided, the OFFS does make small steps towards more unity in Bosnia.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE OFFS

To improve the effectiveness of the OFFS program, I have several recommendations. These recommendations are not only relevant for the OFFS, but also for other SDP organizations. My findings support Pettigrew's idea that for maximum reduction of prejudice and for friendships to develop, intergroup contact needs to be frequent and long-term. Only if SDP programs take place over a longer time period can participants really change their opinion about others. To do so programs need to be sustainable and embedded in the local community.

There are various ways to achieve this. First of all, SDP programs can work together with local sports clubs. This is something CCPA does well. CCPA does not only organize the OFFS with help from local football clubs, it also helps local communities further develop their football clubs or build new football clubs. Local trainers are educated in the fun football concept during preparation seminars. Additionally, the equipment used is left behind to be used by the local football once the OFFS program has ended. With the knowledge and equipment, new football clubs are established and existing football clubs are able to build new teams. As all football infrastructure was destroyed during the war, the OFFS plays an important role in rebuilding Bosnia's football infrastructure. The existence of football clubs in the reconciliation process is important, as sport organizations are an important part of civil society. Civil society organizations play a role in the peace and reconciliation process, as they support interaction and cohesion between individuals and between groups (Belloni, 2001). People from all walks of life meet each other and connect with each other.

Yet many children in Bosnia do not join a sport club, therefore it is not enough to focus solely on football clubs, in stimulating children to maintain contact after the OFFS. A second way to stimulate lasting contact is through cooperation with schools. Schools are the perfect place to reach all children in society, not only the ones active at sports clubs. To reach these children, CCPA could work together with local schools. Through schools they can reach all children, not only the ones that continue to play football.

Another advantage of working together with local schools, is that schools can help overcome a biased selection of participants. The children that are most likely to sign up for the program are children who like football. But if children are free to choose whether to sign up, it is also likely that those who are already open-minded towards others from a different ethnic background will be more likely to join the program. Working together with schools

will ensure that not only children who are already open-minded join the program, but that also children who are less open-minded or hold negative feelings towards other groups will join the program. The same goes for children who do not play football (yet). Children from all backgrounds, in terms of individuals' characteristics and previous experiences, go to school together, so a school is an ideal place to promote the program to all children.

Thirdly, the involvement of parents in the program can be increased. In the case of the OFFS program, there are workshops organized specifically for parents, yet parents are not obliged to participate in these workshops. A more active involvement of parents in the program is a way to further embed SDP programs in the local community.

Another way to do so, is by ensuring support by the local government. The OFFS program is a good example of this, as the OFFS program is only organized if it is (financially) supported by the local government. This not only ensures local support for the program, it also forces organizations to make clear the relevance of a program for the local community. If they cannot explain the benefit of the program for the local community, it will not receive support from the local government. In these ways, SDP programs can be embedded within local communities, where these programs can serve as a starting point for further changes in society.

### 5.3 SDP PROGRAMS IN PEACEBUILDING AND RECONCILIATION

The focus so far has been on the case of the OFFS. How do the results of this study relate to the general role that SDP programs can play in peace and reconciliation? According to Bloomfield et al (2003), reconciliation is made up of three stages: (1) non-violent co-existence, (2) the building of confidence and trust, and (3) empathy. How do SDP programs contribute to these stages of reconciliation?

To achieve non-violent co-existence, the first stage, communication is essential. Instead of solving disputes with violence, they have to be solved via non-violent means. Communicating with each other is the basis of this. Communication is also a central element in (team)sports. As a result of the conflict, different groups often cease to communicate with each other and ties between different groups are broken. It is a large step to start communicating and re-establishing the broken ties, but sport programs can play a role in this. SDP programs can form the first step in renewed communication, as they are easily accessible and form a neutral meeting place. SDP programs can also contribute to the second stage of reconciliation, the building of confidence and trust. In team sports people have to cooperate and for this they have to have confidence in each other. The initial distrust in each other as a

result of the conflict can be reduced as the SDP program continues over time. The final stage of reconciliation is empathy. One way to get to this stage is by either creating common identities or by letting people recognize their common identities. These common identities can be very diverse, ranging from gender or age to a shared love for sports. Here too, SDP programs can contribute to reconciliation, bringing together people with a common interest in sports.

However, it should be noted that this is all focused on the individual and local level. To really change a society and achieve a positive peace, there needs to be change on more levels than just the individual level. Reconciliation is more than letting people play sports together. Sports programs have to be embedded in a broader process of changing society. We cannot expect miracles from SDP programs, especially in a society that is deeply segregated, such as Bosnian society. The Bosnian war ended more than twenty years ago, but the segregation in society has remained deeply rooted in society and it has become part of the mindset of most Bosnians; they internalized the conflict. Neighborhoods and even towns are segregated and it is very difficult, if not impossible, for one single organization to have an impact on society as a whole, beyond their own network of trainers, volunteers and participants. Yet on this local level, SDP programs can make a change and be the start of a larger process of transformation.

Sports is not a silver bullet in the reconciliation process. However, sports programs can make an important contribution. Sports activities have a low entry point and are a safe space to meet people from different groups. While playing sports, ethnicity is not relevant. Sports programs, especially team sports, can initiate contact between different groups, which can be a starting point in the reconciliation process. In short, it can be stated that SDP programs can be a first step towards peace and reconciliation on a local and individual level.

#### 5.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While the study has shed light on the role that SDP can play in peace and reconciliation, it has several limitations. Firstly, the respondents for this study could not be randomly selected. CCPA provided me with contact details of people active in the program. These people would then ask others in their network if they wanted to be interviewed. As a result of this method, I mostly interviewed people that are known by CCPA and are very active in the program, either as long-time trainer or as participant that has been active in the program for many years. This selection bias could have positively skewed the responses given by the respondents. People who are less positive about the program, on the other hand, are less likely to remain active in

the program for many years. Had I interviewed more participants that were less active in the program, the responses might have been more neutral or less positive in nature about the OFFS.

Secondly, I had to deal with the language barrier. I do not speak Bosnian and many people in Bosnia do not speak English. While some respondents had no trouble expressing themselves in English, there were other cases in which I had to work with an interpreter. I did not have one person who joined me to all interviews to interpret them, but in every town a local would interpret these interviews. As some of the interpreters had only basic knowledge of English, the level of depth that could be reached in some of the interviews was limited.

Thirdly, there are many processes at work in society, and each of these processes influences the peace and reconciliation process. These processes range from transitional justice and political reforms to grassroots programs such as the OFFS. I merely focused on the OFFS program. Yet, the effect of sports programs like the OFFS cannot be determined separately from the rest of society, making it difficult to say something about its separate influence. Societies are complex and SDP programs are a part of this.

Fourthly, as mentioned, government support is of high importance for the continuation of the OFFS program. In this study I did not speak with any government official about their perspective on the OFFS. Exploring their viewpoint could be a good starting point for future research. What is their opinion on the OFFS? What is their take on the financial support their municipality has to give to the OFFS? What is the policy of governments with regard to peace and reconciliation initiatives and how do the OFFS or SDP programs in general fit this policy?

Finally, this study was conducted in a relatively short time period, compared to the duration of the program itself. The fieldwork lasted only ten weeks. This research focused solely on perceived changes. However, it is very difficult for individuals to judge their own prejudices and the changes in their prejudices over time. Also, many of the respondents were still quite young at the time of their participation in the program, making it challenging for them to recollect their thoughts and feelings from that period of time. A longitudinal effect study could overcome this memory barrier by following trainers and participants before, during and after the program. Reviewing the actual changes in real time, instead of the perceived changes after a period of time, would provide more accurate insights in the actual changes achieved by an SDP program.

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## APPENDIX - OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONDENTS

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	<b>City</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Role</b>
#1	Hadzići	Male	Bosniak	Participant
#2	Hadzići	Female	Bosniak	Participant
#3	Hadzići	Female	Bosniak	Participant
#4	Hadzići	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#5	Hadzići	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#6	Pale	Female	Serb	Participant
#7	Pale	Male	Serb	Participant
#8	Pale	Male	Serb	Participant
#9	Pale	Male	Serb	Participant
#10	Pale	Male	Serb	Participant
#11	Pale	Male	Serb	Trainer
#12	Maglaj	Female	Bosniak	Participant
#13	Maglaj	Female	Bosniak	Participant
#14	Maglaj	Female	Bosniak	Participant
#15	Maglaj	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#16	Maglaj	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#17	Maglaj	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#18	Maglaj	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#19	Žepče	Male	Croat	Participant
#20	Žepče	Male	Croat	Participant
#21	Žepče	Male	Croat	Participant
#22	Žepče	Male	Croat	Trainer

#23	Sarajevo	Female	Mixed	Participant/trainer
#24	Srebrenica	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#25	Petrovo	Male	Serb	Trainer
#26	Petrovo	Male	Serb	Trainer
#27	Petrovo	Male	Bosniak	Trainer
#28	Petrovo	Female	Bosniak	Participant/trainer
#29	Vogošća	Male	Bosniak	Participant
#30	Vogošća	Male	Bosniak	Participant
#31	Orašje	Male	Croat	Trainer
#32	Orašje	Male	Croat	Employee Croat- Bosniak FA
#33	Orašje	Male	Croat	Participant
#34	Orašje	Male	Croat/Bosniak	Participant
#35	Orašje	Male	Croat/Bosniak	Participant/trainer
#36	Orašje	Male	Bosniak	Trainer