

Original Research

CrossFit Sarajevo: Positioning against dominant ethnonational narratives

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More than 20 years since its bloody war, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to suffer under structurally imposed ethnic divisions. Sustained by the country's leaders who rely on ethnocentric narratives fuelled by "memory politics," they distort historical events for the benefit of their ethnic group. This paper relies on Positioning Theory to explore whether CrossFit Sarajevo, a grassroots initiative, created necessary conditions to challenge these ethnocentric narratives within the club. Relying on interviews with 13 of its members, the paper explores what impact positions, actions/acts, and storylines can have on the creation of a cohesive and respectful multiethnic community. According to its findings, this paper suggests that such organizations indeed have significant potential challenging divisive narratives. Embracing egalitarian and inclusive positions appears to have established a common code of conduct within the club's members, contributing to the creation of a distinct sense of belonging and social trust. These have manifested in humanitarian projects undertaken by the club that seek to help some of the most disadvantaged in the broader community. Ultimately, this project highlights the important role grassroots organizations can play in postviolence settings and suggests further exploration into the influence and permeability of such initiatives in the broader society.

INTRODUCTION

Established as a social enterprise in 2014, CrossFit Sarajevo (hereafter CFS) brought together individuals on a quest for a

healthier lifestyle while seeking to offer a hub for bridging imposed ethnic, but also gender, vocation, age, and ability barriers (CrossFit Sarajevo, 2013). As the first licensed CrossFit venue in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter BiH), it sought to unite those otherwise divided and thereby contribute to community development in a postviolence setting. That BiH is such a society, beset foremost by ethnic divisions exploited by powerful elites for their own ends, has been well documented (Belloni, 2001; Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Leonard, Damjanovic, Simic, & Aldikacti Marshall, 2016; Sekulić, Massey, & Hodson, 2006). This has left the country in a perpetual state of conflict among the various groups, continuing their fight for survival (Woodward, 1997).

A novel approach to understanding the dynamics of prolonged conflicts is through Positioning Theory (hereafter PT), which seeks to broaden our understanding of conflict from one merely confined to the battle between the "good guys" and the "bad guys" (Moghaddam, Harré, & Lee, 2008, pp. 3-4) to explore how conflict is sustained through context-specific rights and responsibilities. PT also acknowledges that conflicts may evolve over generations while being nourished by beliefs, customs, and habits. This article initially explains the present divisions in BiH through PT before exploring whether sport can activate inclusive, egalitarian, and unifying positions, which can result in reduced conflict between belligerents embedded in mutually accepted storylines (Louis, 2008).

In the Sport for Development and Peace sector, many studies have explored how grassroots sporting organizations

Table 1. Ethnic composition of FBiH and RS in 1991 and 2013

Year	FBiH		RS	
	1991 (%)	2013 (%)	1991 (%)	2013 (%)
Bosniak	52.09	70.4	28.77	13.99
Croat	22.13	22.44	9.39	2.41
Serb	17.62	2.55	54.32	81.51
Other ^a	8.16	4.61	7.53	2.09

^a Individual identifying as part of a small national minority or not identifying with one of the three dominant ethnic groups.

can contribute to conflict transformation in postviolence settings (Darnell, 2012; Giulianotti, 2011; Parry, 2012; Svensson & Woods, 2017). However, no other studies seem to have explored the impact of such organizations through the lens of PT. This is almost certainly the case for CrossFit, whose impact in postviolence settings remains, to date, uncharted. This is surprising noting the sport's recognized ability to build cohesive communities (Belger, 2012; Brogan, Benson, & Bruner, 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett, Goldsmith, Damon, & Walker, 2016; Whiteman-Sandland, Hawkins, & Clayton, 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). Seeking to remedy this deficiency, the purpose of this case study is to explore whether inclusive, egalitarian, and unifying positioning within a grassroots project can help build cohesive multiethnic communities and thereby challenge dominant ethnonational narratives in postviolence settings. The paper will draw on PT to explore how individuals contextualize their lived experiences in relation to others and thereby contribute to the perception of conflict or its absence (Louis, 2008). To achieve this, the research relies on insights made apparent through interviews with 13 members of CFS and will be guided by the following central question:

Did CFS create conditions that challenged dominant ethnonational narratives prominent in BiH and, if so, how?

This central question will be supported by the following subquestions:

1. What positions (rights, responsibilities and duties) did CFS assume as a club?
2. How did positions encourage some and discourage other behaviors in CFS?
3. In what way did the CFS storyline shape the interpretation of actions into specific acts?

By answering these questions, this project aims to contribute to an enhanced understanding of PT and how it

may be applied in the recovery process in postviolence contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structural Homogenization

More than two decades have passed since the war between 1992 and 1995 that left more than 100,000 dead (Tabeau & Bijak, 2005) and nearly half the citizens of BiH displaced (Belloni, 2001; Dahlman & Tuathail, 2005). Its cessation was secured through the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA), which declared 51% of the country as the Bosniak- and Croat-dominated Federation of BiH (FBiH), and 49% as the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska (RS). Although initially a result of ethnic cleansing and displacement, the association of entities with a particular ethnic group set the course for ongoing ethnic homogenization in BiH (Sekulić et al., 2006). Table 1 below compares the ethnic composition of FBiH and RS between the 1991 census hypothetically overlapped with post-DPA borders (Marko, 2000, p. 95), and figures from the 2013 census (BHAS, 2016, p. 54). It shows that a formerly diverse and mixed BiH has been progressively reshaped into artificially created monoethnic territories (Eriksen, 2001).

Lederach (1997) points out that reconciliation “is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relation” (p. 26). As a result of the ongoing homogenization, such engagements in BiH are fewer. O’Loughlin (2010), through his 2005 study, shows that 41% of the country’s citizens only have friends from their own ethnic group. A more recent study suggests that approximately 50% of the country’s population seldom or never spend time with people of other ethnicities or a different way of life (UNDP, 2009). The Pew Research Center (2013) showed even more recently that for 93% of BiH Muslims, all or most of their close friends are also Muslim. Even more telling is the finding by United Nations Development Programme and Oxford Research International (2007), suggesting that social trust is “virtually

non-existent” in BiH (p. 14), as only one in fourteen believe that other people can be trusted. Hence, even though 47% want friends from other ethnic groups (O’Loughlin, 2010), when faced with a gross social trust deficit and increasingly homogenous surroundings, cross-ethnic engagements become increasingly less likely.

Enabling this divide is the Constitution of BiH—Annex 4 of the DPA—which proclaimed that the country’s three presidents must come from the three “constituent peoples”—Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats (United Nations General Assembly, 1995)—thereby pronouncing them as the only legitimate identities (Belloni, 2009). To retain their grip on power and unimpeded access to the country’s resources, frequently used for their own gain (Fearon & Laitin, 2000), the country’s leaders exploit ethnicity and use tit-for-tat tactics, historical claims of victimization, and looming security threats posed by opposing groups to instill fear of the other (Belloni, 2001; Fearon & Laitin, 2000; Franović, 2008; Leonard et al., 2016; Moll, 2013; Santander, 2016; Sekulić et al., 2006). Alas, they have securitized ethnicity, resulting in narratives best summed up by Ignatieff (1993): “where you belong is where you are safe, and where you are safe is where you belong” (p. 10). Bassuener (2018) explained the impact of BiH leaders succinctly at a recent U.S. Congressional hearing on the legacy of DPA:

Bluntly put, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s political elite constitutes a political-business-organized crime-media nexus which can currently a) keep what they stole, b) remain positioned to keep stealing, and c) remain unaccountable politically and legally. Nothing that the European Union can offer the country is better—for them and their business model—than that. (p. 2)

Making matters worse is the overt and public bias of the media (Santander, 2016). According to Freedom House (2013), media outlets “behave as rivals and are generally organized along ethnic lines” (p. 95). Such partitioning is sustainable—and perhaps inevitable—when ongoing homogenization constrains contact between different ethnic groups (Clark, 2009). Thus, the structural divisions imposed by the DPA have deepened ethnocentric narratives (Santander, 2016), encouraging each side to continue “fighting for statehood; only their means of securing territory and national survival have changed” (Woodward, 1997, p. 29).

To ensure longevity of these narratives, education is used to strengthen ethnonational belonging and group identity (Santander, 2016). Kovač, Tveit, Cameron, and Jortveit

(2017) showcase this through the “two schools under one roof” concept in which two different systems of education, each with their own teaching and administration staff, cater for two ethnicities but coexist in the same building. They, as well as Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013), show how different curricula, including different history books, often result in competing views of the country’s historical and geopolitical conditions. This absence of objectivity perpetuates ethnic hierarchization and subordination across generations and ensures it permeates lived experience of different groups, where questioning the common narrative fuels a sense of in-group betrayal (Obradović & Howarth, 2016). This is also why many in BiH consider the term “reconciliation” as controversial and inflammatory (Haider, 2011).

Beyond Reconciliation

Reconciliation has become recognized as a key component of peacebuilding and, according to Santander (2016), includes measures such as transitional justice initiatives, accountability processes, and strengthening the rule of law. However, most such initiatives in BiH have failed to achieve their stated objectives, and some have even contributed to further division (Santander, 2016). A well-known example of such failure is the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission launched between 1997 and 2006. According to Dragovic-Soso (2016), although well intentioned, the commission relied on international intervention, lacked local elite support, and, most important, did not resonate with the BiH population. Ultimately, it proved to be another top-down initiative that failed to include the people affected by the conflict, which is a feature ascribed to many failed reconciliation efforts in BiH (Santander, 2016). Conversely, underpinning the bottom-up approach is the belief that those affected by conflict should be considered a valuable resource in peacebuilding, rather than merely recipients of it (Lederach, 1997). Leonardsson and Rudd (2015) suggest that long-term survival of peace can only occur through its local production and reproduction, where “outside actors can lend valuable support but are never more than bystanders in decisions on what type of peace is to be built” (pp. 826-827).

As a result, bottom-up approaches have gained increasing attention, particularly through the successes of small, grassroots initiatives whose overt goals are decoupled from “reconciliation.” One example in BiH is the Association of Mushroom Gatherers and Nature Lovers in Mrkonjić Grad. Frequented by members from FBiH and RS, its focus is the preservation of nature and sharing of knowledge but an invaluable consequence is the creation of knowledge but an

invaluable consequence is the creation of friendships across ethnonational lines (UNDP, 2009). Other examples include a number of agricultural and dairy associations that have established trade across entities, as well as hobby groups bringing together enthusiasts from diverse backgrounds. This creation of collective experiences without the pressure to “reconcile” has led to the development of relationships characterized by reciprocity and trust between members of these communities (Haider, 2011). Such interactions can facilitate an increased knowledge of the other and consequently lead to a positive shift in attitudes by reducing prejudice and stereotyping (Schulz, 2008). Another approach has received broad-based endorsement for having the potential to reduce social tensions and promote reconciliation, notably in postviolent conflict nations. This approach is examined below.

Sport for Development and Peace and CrossFit

In the Sport for Development and Peace sector, sport was recently acknowledged as enabling reconciliation and was included in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). An example of sport’s ability to build cross-ethnic relationships is the Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS), popularized in BiH among other countries. Focused on children, its aim is to have fun and build friendships through football while de-emphasizing competition and contest (Gasser & Levinsen, 2004). Other prominent examples include the work of Streetfootballworld and Football Friends. Both organizations run multiethnic tournaments for children from diverse backgrounds, giving them an opportunity to build diverse ties at a young age (Vest, 2014). While this is only a snapshot of active grassroots sporting initiatives, there is little disagreement about the ability of sport to create spaces where cohesion and a sense of community can be nurtured (Darcy, Maxwell, Edwards, Onyx, & Sherker, 2014; Darnell, 2012; Giulianotti, 2011; Parry, 2012; Svensson & Woods, 2017). Unfortunately, this fact remains largely unnoticed at the policy and institutional level in BiH (UNDP, 2009).

A sport unexplored thus far for its potential in Sport for Development and Peace is CrossFit, widely recognized for its ability to build a strong sense of belonging and community (Belger, 2012; Brogan et al., 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016; Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). According to Dawson (2015), CrossFit has become the fastest growing fitness regimen in the world and is a form of intense exercise consisting of Olympic weightlifting, gymnastics, and cardiovascular exercises. CrossFit gyms are simple in appearance and

comprise large open spaces usually located inside industrial facilities, earning them the apt title of a “box.” Since its inception in 2000, CrossFit has experienced phenomenal growth, with more than 14,000 boxes operating across the globe as of March 2019 (CrossFit, 2019).

Setting it apart from regular gyms, CrossFit boxes are equipped with equipment such as Olympic bars, kettlebells, pull-up bars, gymnastics rings, climbing ropes, and sand bags. Exercise is done in groups led by a coach who explains the Workout of the Day (WOD) before leading a warm-up and practice of the technical components of the day’s movements. This can range from lifts such as the snatch, clean and jerk, squats, and deadlifts to gymnastic movements like pull-ups and push-ups. Once the technical component is concluded, the class completes the WOD, which differs every session and consists of movements completed in varying repetitions bounded by a set time or number of rounds completed (CrossFit, 2002). What makes CrossFit appealing to all fitness and ability levels is the mantra that the “needs of an Olympic athlete and our grandparents differ by degree not kind” (CrossFit, 2002, p. 10). Hence, every workout can be scaled with lighter weights or modified movements, allowing even complete novices to partake.

This deliberate focus on inclusivity and belonging allows CrossFit to connect individuals from all walks of life (Brogan et al., 2017; Knapp, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016; Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017). Equally, it has allowed for the participation of individuals with disabilities and injuries, many of whom reportedly regained their self-esteem and sense of worth by their involvement in the sport (Cecil, 2002). One recognized factor that sustains this egalitarian approach is the almost expected norm of cheering each other on during WODs (Dawson, 2015). As summed up by Belger (2012), “CrossFit culture is infused with the expectation that you will sweat together and cheer each other on with mutual support . . . you may expend almost as much energy encouraging each other as you will exercising” (p. 213).

This continually affirmed sense of community has shown potential to contribute positively to the creation of social ties and friendships (Pickett et al., 2016). Highlighting its prospective uniqueness, other researchers have concluded that CrossFit, much like the aforementioned grassroots initiative OFFS, relies on shared experiences and a common goal to create an inclusive culture (Brogan et al., 2017). Additionally, CrossFitters usually train at a resident venue, allowing sustained contact with the same individuals from

diverse ethnic, vocational, gender, ability, or age group demographics (Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016). Should a box prove capable of creating an environment void of identity politics, it could “create interdependency between the groups and thereby accelerate the process of reducing prejudice and stereotypes in inter-ethnic group conflicts” (Schulz, 2008, p. 34).

However, while CrossFit has received broad accolades, Dawson (2015) highlighted the potential negative impact of the sport. Due to its apparent ability to build close ties between members, she questioned whether CrossFit should be considered a cult and whether the sense of belonging between members can lead to socially exclusive behavior and homogeneity. Although her findings suggest that this risk can be mitigated, it does raise the question of whether CrossFit can build excessive amounts of bonding between its members, thus creating strong out-group antagonism. This caution is noteworthy for a country like BiH, already beset by excessive and damaging homogenization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

According to Moghaddam et al. (2008), PT allows researchers to shift their focus from conflict to the flow of talking and writing that occurs within a given hostile action. They highlight that patterns of belief, customs, and habits have a significant impact on the way conflict is verbalized. Hence, as explored by Louis (2008), it is through the analysis of talk and text within a conflict that we can determine a community's and an individual's constructed meaning and negotiation of a particular grievance. He elaborates how these beliefs manifest in speech and text is dependent on which narratives or storylines surrounding a conflict are embraced by a particular community. However, Moghaddam et al. (2008) as well as others (Harré, 2012; Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009), are careful to point out that conventions of speech and action are unstable, contestable, and temporary. In other words, they are not entrenched and our experience is not predetermined but is rather “co-created or co-developed by the contributors to the discourse (or conversation)” (Schmidle, 2008, p. 190). This suggests that participants in communicative events not only promote certain explicit beliefs through the talk and text used but continuously rewrite the narratives and storylines underpinning them. To explain this evolving and dynamic process, PT relies on three concepts detailed below: positions, actions/acts, and storylines (Harré, 2012).

Positions

Positions are understood as clusters of disputable and potentially fleeting and short-term “rights, obligations and duties” (Harré, 2012, p. 193). In other words, every position in every context dictates certain freedoms and constrains. Adoption of a position assumes both a discourse repertoire as well as a hierarchy or structure of rights for those using this repertoire (Davies & Harré, 1990). Once an individual assumes a particular position, they inevitably see the world through its lens. This includes all associated “images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46).

According to Louis (2008), behavior safe from retribution or punishment from one's group defines what is socially acceptable. In other words, the group's orientation toward a given issue establishes desirable and suitable clusters of rights, obligations, and duties (or positions) that members of a certain in-group as well as an out-group should assume. In BiH, the dominant narrative gives one's ethnic identity significant importance and through this operationalizes it by making it the foremost position from which individuals negotiate their environment. This ethnicity-based position defines the acceptable cluster of rights, obligations, and duties of those assuming it and may manifest as nonnegotiable actions or as rules and regulations to be adopted by a group (Harré, 2012).

An individual may position themselves, known as *reflexive positioning*, or there can be *interactive positioning*, where an individual is positioned by others (Davies & Harré, 1990). In BiH, even if one rejects the ethnonational narrative as well as the rules and regulations representing it, other individuals or the group will have a “tendency to determine your ethnic category based on your name, dialect or discourse” (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013, p. 18). In other words, due to the structurally imposed importance of ethnicity, an individual in BiH is likely to have an ethnicity-defined position assigned to them, which corresponds to the dominant narrative. This unintentional or forced interactive positioning has a significant impact on those affected by it, as—regardless of their rejection of this position—they live their lives in terms of the continuously produced self, even if they are not responsible for its production (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Actions and Acts

The second set of concepts underpinning PT are actions and acts. The former are specific behaviors performed by individuals. The latter, on the other hand, are how those

behaviors are socially understood (Louis, 2008). Every different setting (or position) involves different conventions and rules on how different acts are to be accomplished (Harré & Slocum, 2003). This is why, for example, we are likely to accept criticism from a friend or a spouse but may interpret it as offensive coming from a stranger. The *action* of providing criticism is a meaningful and intended performance, whereas the *act* is what this action means to the interlocutors based on circumstances and context (Harré, 2012).

However, individuals do not have an infinite amount of possible actions. Rather, they are limited to actions permitted by a given context. These are actions that one *may* do, even though they are drawn from a much broader repertoire of those that are physically and physiologically possible (Harré & Slocum, 2003). These actions include verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as behaviors directed at a single conversational partner or a broader audience (Louis, 2008). In the case of CFS, this includes actions carried out by coaches as well as members and suggests that all of these behaviors are regulated by what an individual *may* do in that context. In other words, the setting and positions of CFS allow for only some actions out of a broad repertoire to be performed and, as such, limit the range of *acts*—interpretations of actions—that exist.

Storylines

Storylines “give meaning to actions and define them as acts” (Louis, 2008, p. 26). The dominant storyline in BiH is clear—structurally imposed divisions are necessary to keep the peace following the end of hostilities in 1995 (Clark, 2009). As suggested by Moghaddam et al. (2008), in all conflicts, regardless of culture, there persists a storyline of the “good guys and the bad guys” (p. 3). To keep the storyline alive, conflict—perceived or real—between those characterized as “good” against those who are “bad” must be maintained. Harré et al (2009) note, “the moral high ground must be seized and the enemy positioned as morally base” (p. 9).

In BiH, the dominant narrative declares other ethnicities as the “bad guys” and aggressors, while those of one’s own ethnicity are portrayed as the “good guys” and defenders (Clark, 2009). Embracing the dominant storyline or narrative affords rights and obligations to the access of resources (such as employment, social standing, acceptance, inclusion, and welfare) based on one’s ethnicity, thereby promoting a desired position in most public discourse. This emphasis on ethnicity in positioning promotes and reinforces a storyline that frames the unfolding of most public engagement. Perhaps more important, it provides a

broad spectrum of interpretations to actions carried out by groups or individuals, some of which can be understood as inflammatory. Such a volatile environment is far from conducive to the creation of understanding or reconciliation and is the unfortunate reality in BiH today (Bassuener, 2018; Bassuener & Mujanovic, 2017; Moll, 2013; Santander, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

Research Strategy and Design

This study adopted an inductive approach, seeking to align data interpreted qualitatively with theoretical concepts after the collection process (Bryman, 2012). Hence, from an epistemological perspective, the study assumed an interpretivist position as it sought to understand, rather than merely explain, human behavior (Bryman, 2012, p. 28) by shedding light on how members of a particular social group interpreted the world around them. This study is indeed a third interpretation, as the author is “providing an interpretation of others’ interpretations” (Bryman, 2012, p. 31), which is subsequently explained through an appropriate theoretical perspective—PT. This fact, without diminishing the knowledge derived, is a recognized limitation of such qualitative research (Bryman, 2012).

Noting the unstable, contestable, and temporary nature of positions, the ontological position assumed in this study is that of constructivism. Described by Bryman (2012) as a position “that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (p. 33), it becomes a useful vehicle for exploring—through PT—the ongoing creation and development of our reality. The sheer notion of assuming a position, that is its “rights, obligations, and duties,” implies the existence of a specific belief system (Harré & Slocum, 2003). In other words, the way we cognitively construct a position and associated belief systems manifests in corresponding acts and shared expectations between interlocutors. It is this constructed understanding of phenomena and its associated meaning that studies such as this one seek to unravel (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To answer the central and subresearch questions, this project relied on interviews with 13 members of CFS. As the purpose of this study was to interpret a story within its own context and gain insight into the lived experience of the participants, interviews are considered the most appropriate method (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Due to the inductive nature of this study, semistructured interviews were employed to allow fluid exploration of topics. Further, and noting the author’s familiarity with all participants

Table 2. Participant demographic data

Participant	Gender	Age group
A	M	20-29
B	M	20-29
C	M	20-29
D	F	20-29
E	M	20-29
F	F	20-29
G	M	20-29
H	F	20-29
I	M	30-39
J	M	30-39
K	M	30-39
L	M	40-49
M	F	40-49

(discussed below), using a less formalized approach allowed for a natural and conversational interaction to unfold.

Participants

Seeking representativeness, the study's participants covered a broad demographic spectrum relative to the sample size. To explore differences in perceptions between the duration of membership, participants who joined within 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, and 1.5 years of opening were interviewed. To replicate gender representation, which according to the club's owner is 30% female and 70% male, four participants were female (31% of the sample) and nine were male (69% of the sample). Additionally, as the study sought to understand how the leadership team contextualized their role, four participants were coaches, one of whom is also the owner of the box. The mean age of participants at the time of interviews was 32 years, which is assessed by the author as representative of the mean age of the club's members. The participants' alphabetic indicator, gender, and broad age group are captured in Table 2 below, but whether they are a coach or client, duration of membership, and their vocation were intentionally excluded to protect participants' privacy.

Due to the sensitivities surrounding ethnic identity, this data is decoupled to further ensure participants' anonymity and is presented separately in Table 3 below. Additionally, relying on the Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings in BiH (BHAS, 2016, p. 55), the ethnic composition of Canton of Sarajevo has been added for representative comparison.

As evidenced by the figures above, a statistical, cantonal representative sample was not achieved, though given the necessarily small sample size, this would always be difficult. However, in terms of broad patterns such as the biggest ethnic group and inclusion of minorities, it is assessed that the project achieved broad representation. All ethnic identifications represented in the national census were included in this study providing diverse insights and thereby meeting the study's intent.

Positionality

The author founded and managed CFS for the first 18 months of the club's existence and is therefore familiar with the studied environment and participants. Such a relationship helped shed the outsider label allowing for a "natural" exploration of inner workings of the community (Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). However, this familiarity inevitably increased the potential for bias. Seeking maximum transparency, this research relied on eight criteria proposed by Tracy (2010) as necessary for successful qualitative research. They are (a) ethics, (b) rich rigor, (c) credibility, (d) worthy topic, (e) sincerity, (f) resonance, (g) significant contribution, and (h) meaningful coherence. To respond to a criticism by Smith and McGannon (2017), who state that most researchers apply the criteria selectively, all eight were considered during this research. However, due to its scope, only the first three are discussed in this paper, while the latter five remain open to the reader's own judgment.

Table 3. Ethnic composition of CFS participants compared to that of the Canton of Sarajevo

Ethnicity	Participant	Canton of Sarajevo
<u>Bosniak</u>	5 (38.4%)	346,575 (83.8%)
Croat	2 (15.4%)	17,520 (4.2%)
Serb	2 (15.4%)	13,300 (3.2%)
Other	3 (23.1%)	28,075 (6.7%)
Undeclared	1 (7.7%)	7,250 (1.8%)

Ethical Considerations

Tracy (2010) highlights that several practices amount to ethics in qualitative research—procedural, situational, relational, and exiting ethics. Procedural ethics refer to institutional requirements and encompass mandates such as “do no harm, avoid deception, negotiate informed consent, and ensure privacy and confidentiality” (p. 847). The institutional approval for this research was granted by the author’s university prior to research being conducted. During fieldwork, all participants were informed that their involvement is voluntary, confidential, and occurs only with their consent. Due to the author’s familiarity with participants, seeking signed consent was deemed inappropriate but was obtained verbally and captured in the interview recordings, discussed further below.

Situational ethics implore the researcher to question whether any harms of the study are outweighed by its moral goals (Tracy, 2010). The need to discuss ethnicity bears such risk, but the author’s familiarity with participants mitigated misunderstanding sufficiently. Similarly, relational ethics, or the way a researcher engages with participants, implies the need for cultural understanding and mutual respect (Tracy, 2010). Noting the author’s familiarity with the cultural context (CFS as well as participants), this dimension of ethics is considered as appropriately addressed. Last, exiting ethics dictate the need for ethical consideration after collection and publication so as to avoid misrepresentation as well as unjust and unintended consequences (Tracy, 2010). Due to the sensitivities surrounding ethnicity in BiH, focus on exiting ethics remained at the forefront throughout the project. Thus, all ethnic affiliations remain decoupled from participants’ demographic data or citations presented in the study’s findings.

Rich Rigor

Tracy (2010) highlights the need to assess the sample size, interview setting, interview conduct and questions asked, as well as credibility of data analysis. The following

subsections describe each component in detail.

Sample size

It is acknowledged that a sample size of 13 participants may be considered small. Seeking to minimize the impact of this while optimizing the diversity of participants, this study adopted a nonprobabilistic, purposive sampling approach. This allowed the author to subjectively select participants based on their demographics. While not always accurate, this approach resulted in representation across gender, vocation, age, ethnicity, and time in training. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2016) suggest that a sample of this size is sufficient as data saturation in similar research occurs by the time 12 interviews are conducted. This assessment proved accurate during this study as consistent themes became evident early on, which were later confirmed during the coding process.

Interview setting

Eleven interviews were conducted in Sarajevo December 15–20, 2017 in secluded and comfortable environments. Six interviews occurred in quiet cafes, two in private areas at the participants’ place of work, and three at the author’s residence. A further two interviews were conducted via Skype on April 19 and 22, 2018. One of the Skype interviewees was approached as their influence on building cohesion between different ethnicities was mentioned by five previous participants. The second Skype interview was conducted with a young member of the club to explore their perspective of the alleged sense of community in CFS. The interview guidelines for these interviews remained identical to the preceding 11. The average duration of interviews was 46 minutes, with the shortest lasting 27 and the longest 67 minutes.

Interview conduct

Before commencing field work, an interview guide (Appendix 1) was constructed as a memory prompt for areas

of investigation, as suggested by Bryman (2012). While the overall project was inductive, the interview guide categorized the author's phenomena of interest, such as a sense of community, egalitarian values, group belonging, and disregard for ethnicity. Seeking to explore the participants' view of their social world in relation to these categories, questions were intentionally broad and exploratory in nature. Used in a semistructured way, such questions allowed for areas of interest to become apparent for further exploration through follow-up questions.

All interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy of data and subsequent transcriptions. Although conscious of the "observer's paradox," which suggests that a recording device inhibits researchers from observing interviewees in their natural state (Labov, 1972), as the author is not an outsider but rather peerlike, personal stories quickly unfolded, allowing the speakers to "forget" the recording device (Labov, 1972). Further, recording of interviews negated the need for note taking and allowed for a natural flow in conversation. Additionally, as mentioned previously, verbal consent was obtained from all participants with the caveat that recordings will be kept on a standalone hard drive to ensure participants' privacy protection.

To allow for fluid and complete expression of opinions, 12 interviews were conducted in Bosnian and one in English. Due to the author's native fluency in both languages, this was determined as the best approach to allow participants the complete repertoire of expressions commensurate with one's native fluency. Concepts discussed in one language may be understood differently when translated into another. As such, on a few occasions where the direct translation could be misconstrued or have dual meaning, it was adjusted to communicate the participants' intent, as recommended by van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, and Deeg (2010).

Data analysis

To analyze the data, all interviews were first transcribed and subsequently coded. While consideration was given to coding by an additional researcher, Bosnian language and time were significant constraints. Additionally, as suggested by Smith and McGannon (2017), significant doubt exists over the effectiveness of interrater reliability. As a result, all interviews were transcribed and coded by the author using the following sequential and systematic approach, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018):

1. Organization and preparation of data. All interviews were transcribed in Microsoft Word and resulting documents code

named to ensure participant privacy.

2. Reading of the data. All transcriptions were read to generate key themes and concepts present in the data.

3. Coding of data. Two interviews that extensively discussed topics of interest were selected for pilot coding by hand. Emerging categories were compiled and formed the baseline for coding using NVivo software.

4. Categories and themes. The coding process led to the emergence of 31 individual categories (Appendix 2).

5. Choosing categories. An unequal distribution of codes against categories identified dominant themes and, once analyzed for a theoretical link, lead to PT.

Credibility

Credibility for qualitative research is achieved through thick description, triangulation, and multivocality (Tracy, 2010). The first implies in-depth illustrations to provide enough detail so that the reader may come to their own conclusions. Notwithstanding a genuine attempt to uphold these ideals by the author, it is ultimately up to the reader to judge its success. Triangulation urges the researcher to use two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or multiple researchers (Tracy, 2010). The scope and resources of this research limited triangulation to the exploration of multiple theoretical frameworks, ultimately resulting in the reliance on PT to present its findings. While a recognized limitation of this study, its findings should encourage further investigation. Last, multivocality requires a researcher to display emphatic understanding and emerges out of an understanding of the context and actors within a particular setting (Tracy, 2010). It is suggested that multivocality can be achieved through familiarity, friendship, or intense collaboration with participants (Tillmann-Healy, 2003). Noting the author's familiarity with the context and participants, it is assessed that multivocality was achieved.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Positions

In the case of CFS, all 13 participants made apparent the existence of certain positions within the box that encouraged some rights, obligations, and duties, while discouraging others. Some were related to the expectations of the coaches, while others referred to acceptable norms of behavior imposed by members on each other. As outlined

previously, positioning is achieved either interactively, where a person is positioned by another, or reflexively, where a person positions themselves. Noting that the purpose of this project was to assess how positions inside the box shaped behavior of its members, this paper discusses interactive positioning.

Overall, CFS members appear to have embraced an open and egalitarian approach toward all individuals, regardless of ethnic identity. When asked to what extent ethnicity plays a role in CFS, all 13 participants expressed that it has no role within the box at all. Their collective response is best summarized by Participant D, who explained that “we are all the same. No one looks at ethnicity . . . we’re all here to train, to learn something new, and to support each other.” When asked why ethnicity was not a feature of discourse in the box unlike in the broader society, the response by Participant A—representative of responses by a further six participants—is telling: “the biggest impact on that were the coaches. They never allowed anything like that to ever become a factor. . . . The coaches were the people who set the pace, who set the environment.” Further, Participant D implied an involuntary influence because the coaches “behaved toward us in that way, and then we somehow learned that that’s how we train here.” In other words, it appears that through their own communication, coaches regulated—and bounded—what was acceptable. This finding is in keeping with the notion put forward by Davies and Harré (1990), who state that positions are not necessarily intentional, as individuals live their “life in terms of one’s ongoingly produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production” (p. 48). The coaches, as representatives of the club’s vision and values, appear to have dictated appropriate positions, which were ultimately adopted by the members. No divergence in responses was observed between participants, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, vocation, or length of time training.

According to PT, although positions are disputable and contestable, they translate to a limited repertoire of behaviors one may do. In CFS, it appears that stepping outside of what is a socially permissible behavior would draw immediate criticism by the coaches as well as the community. This became evident through responses by 11 participants who expressed—in slightly different ways—that any ethnic division was immediately challenged. In other words, as expressed by Participant E, “as soon as there was any, you know, religious talk, it simply wasn’t allowed. [The coaches] simply didn’t allow those types of topics.” This was a common opinion, shared also by ethnic minorities, and highlighted that coaches would intervene if discussion headed in an undesirable direction. Shedding light on how this was done, a participant explained the

reaction of a coach when he referred to a member not part of their dialogue by his ethnicity. According to the participant’s recount, the coach gave the participant a look that clearly showed concern over such ethnicity-based references, causing the participant to immediately apologize and make clear that “I didn’t say that because I hated him or anything, but because I couldn’t remember his name” (Participant A). This example, while highlighting interactive positioning by coaches, also provides an insight into the unconscious interactive positioning in the broader community, where ethnicity, even with all its divisive qualities, still features prominently in everyday discourse.

Another interesting example elaborated on by six participants that demonstrated this active enforcement of permissible behaviors was the occasional presence of ethnicity-based jokes. Although permitted inside the club largely because, as expressed by Participant B, “[such jokes] make mockery of the [country’s] system, and these banal divisions imposed on us,” they would be stopped before getting out of control. As suggested by Participant I, “some individuals may go too far, but not because they mean it, but because they lack the awareness of when to stop.” Mostly, it was the coaches that interrupted such jokes to safeguard against the growth of unwanted seeds of division. However, it appears that members also readily enforced accepted behaviors. A participant explained how she confronted a member (M1) after a training session about the public animosity expressed toward the ethnicity of a coach by M1’s friend, another member (M2). Agreeing that such discourse was inappropriate, M1 subsequently discussed the issue with M2 in an attempt to highlight that ethnicity-based slurs are not conducive to creating a comfortable training environment. Seemingly unable to adapt to what was socially permissible in CFS, M2 “in the end left” (Participant M). Another participant, suggesting the collective community response to any public and divisive ethnonational positions explained that one “would stand out completely. Everyone would look at you and ask what’s wrong with you? [They would ask] ‘Are you crazy?’” (Participant I).

These examples highlight how the coaches, and consequently also the members, interactively imposed certain rights, obligations, and duties on other box members and thereby mutually regulated each other’s behavior. In other words, they adopted positions that discouraged ethnic discrimination of any kind and reinforced these through intervention when necessary.

While previous research suggests that training in a group setting encourages “mutual surveillance” and thereby compliance with the exercise regimen (Dawson, 2015;

Markula & Pringle, 2006; Sassatelli, 2010), based on findings in CFS, it would appear that this mutual regulation can have a similar moderating effect on divisive and ethnonational sentiments. Hence, and echoing comparative findings by Louis (2008), it appears that members of CFS may not have always strategically chosen a position but were rather adjusting to the norms of their environment. In the case of CFS, and to answer the first subquestion of this project, it appears that the positions assumed by the club were consistently inclusive, egalitarian, and uniting in nature, putting the positions in line with the club's vision of seeking to bridge imposed ethnic, but also gender, vocation, age, and ability barriers (CrossFit Sarajevo, 2013). The result is that one either had to adapt to the rules, rights, and obligations accompanying these positions, or they would ultimately leave. A third option was seemingly not on offer.

Actions and Acts

These apparently inclusive, egalitarian and uniting positions encouraged in CFS are in stark contrast to those evident in the broader BiH society. As discussed previously, interethnic relations in BiH are heavily influenced by the country's leaders, who continue to adopt positions that sustain and further embed fragmentation along ethnonational lines. The result is a society that mutually and interactively positions the other as the "bad guy" in the interest of perceived self-preservation. The following section presents findings that outline how such divergent positions impact actions and acts present in a community.

In BiH, everyone, as suggested by participant E, "can feel [the division]. You can cut it with a knife." However, as highlighted by Participant B, "this [division] is imposed on us and we are forced to think like this." The result is that individuals of one ethnicity will "stick to their own. They go to their own cafes, shop in their own shops. They only go to another [ethnicity's] area if they have to" (Participant E). These actions, as explained by Harré (2012), should be viewed as meaningful and intended performances, and, when interpreted by an individual, derive an act with specific social meaning of that action. In BiH, the social meaning of this imposed segregation is clear—you are only safe surrounded by your own kind. This is contrary to CFS, where one's ethnicity does not appear to matter, even though, as described by participant G "you know [one's] ethnicity] just by knowing [their] name." Such a disposition appears to have activated only a limited number of positions, all of which appear to encourage unity and a sense of belonging. Although previous research on CrossFit has shown the sport's ability to achieve this (Belger, 2012; Brogan et al., 2017; Dawson, 2015; Pickett et al., 2016;

Whiteman-Sandland et al., 2016; Woolf & Lawrence, 2017), it is encouraging and significant that a comparable finding exists in BiH, a postviolent conflict nation deeply divided along ethnonational lines. CrossFit appears to have the ability to inspire mutual accountability, perhaps due to the collective nature of training that encourages a commitment to a mutual goal, which can morph into more than merely success on the gym floor, but also into improved interethnic relations.

As suggested by Harré and Slocum (2003), activation of certain positions limits the resulting range of possible actions individuals have a right, obligation, and duty to perform. In the case of CFS, it appears that members were positioned in such a way, initially by coaches and later mutually, that they were denied actions that could be interpreted as ethnically biased and divisive. As explained by Participant C when asked how individuals of minority ethnicities felt in CFS, "when they see what the atmosphere is like, what's important [in the box], then they don't even need to pay attention to those things." Participant D surmised that "we are all the same. No one looks at ethnicity . . . we're all here to train, to learn something new, and to support each other." Indicative of a collective sentiment, another participant, who identifies as a member of an ethnic minority, expressed that "I have never felt that someone treats me differently because of my ethnicity."¹ This is an encouraging finding and suggests that CFS may have indeed avoided ethnonational sentiments present in the broader society.

A component of CrossFit that appears to have contributed toward this sense of unity was the mutual cheering on of each other during WODs. Echoing findings by Dawson (2015), all 13 participants highlighted the expectation of athletes who had completed the designated workout to cheer-on and support those still working. Participant G expressed that "training is not finished until all are finished," while Participant I described this action as an "unwritten rule, that the one who finished a workout last gets the greatest amount of cheering." What appears to be ultimately expressed through this seemingly simple action, as summed up by Participant M, is "that sense of belonging. It's not the case that you finish your work and then go shower. You are simply shaped into behaving like that." What becomes particularly relevant for the BiH context is the mutuality of this action regardless of any ethnic or other identifiers. Members appear to interpret the action as exclusively positive as well as an essential part of training, which corresponds to the findings by Dawson (2015). As aptly summed up by Participant D, "I would not finish half of those workouts without that support. And I know it is the

same for others. They wouldn't be able to finish either without us cheering on from the side." In other words, the fact that members cheer on other members appears to continuously reaffirm that everyone is equal, regardless of their ethnic denomination. "That is that community. That's what we mean when we say we'd help each other out" (Participant E). Through these actions, CFS reinforced its position of inclusiveness during every workout, which appears to have allowed for only correspondingly inclusive interpretations to exist.

A further interesting and significant finding, potentially indicative of CFS uniqueness as compared to the broader community, was the evidence of mutual trust between members. When asked whether they expected to have a lost wallet returned first in their neighborhood and second in CFS, a stark contrast emerged. Ten participants expressed very little or no chance of having a wallet lost in their neighborhood returned. Indicative of the diminished social trust discussed previously, Participant J stated that "I'm not even sure whether my closest relatives would return it any more." Overall, the most common response is well-captured by Participant F, who explained that "if I lost my wallet somewhere in Sarajevo, I don't think I would see it again. I am 90% certain of that." When answering the same question in relation to CFS, all 13 participants explained that they expect their wallet to be returned. One response, representative of the collective sentiments, highlighted that "in the box people leave all sorts of things behind and nothing has ever gone missing. Everybody looks after each other. A wallet would be 100% returned and not a mark2 would be missing" (Participant K). Although, according to the owner and coaches, nothing has ever been reported stolen in the box, what is more significant is that members perceive the box as overwhelmingly trustworthy. It is possible that this overwhelming perception of trust may be a further consequence of inclusive, egalitarian, and uniting positions and the resulting repertoire of actions deemed acceptable within CFS. Further, actions of cooperation and mutuality such as cheering each other on consequently allow for only a limited number of inclusive interpretations to exist thus limiting the way any theft is conceived within CFS. The alleged absence of items going missing implies that no action exists that could be interpreted as an act of theft. Based on the unanimous nature of responses to the prospect of a lost wallet being returned in CFS, it appears that such an act is simply inconceivable.

To answer the second subresearch question of this project, it would appear that it was the coaches—and as a result also the members—who actively encouraged certain behaviors. Their influence in dictating behavior is perhaps a result of

the way CrossFit classes are held. A coach leads the class by first introducing the workout and later the warmup, technique work, and finally the WOD. They ultimately have a captive audience that, as a result, appears to be influenced by interactive positioning, which dictates acceptable and discouraged behaviors, giving the community what appears to be a clear code of conduct. Anything that may undermine the cohesiveness of the community was actively discouraged, while actions that promoted unity and mutuality, such as cheering each other on as well as trust, were actively endorsed and promoted.

Storylines

Unlike the ethnicity-dominated "good guy" and "bad guy" storyline prevalent in BiH discussed previously, the storyline of CFS appears to be different. The club, from its founding, actively pursued a narrative void of divisive rhetoric or identity politics. When asked what made CFS unique when compared to the broader society, a theme consistently expressed by all participants was an overwhelming sense of belonging. Although a recognized product of CrossFit (Pickett et al., 2016), it is a seemingly unique feature in the BiH society. All participants expressed that CFS not only accepted everyone but also made everyone welcome, regardless of their ethnic denominations. The venue was perceived as immune of ethnic divisions and, as described by Participant L, "a sterile place in which daily politics could simply not enter."

In a country defined by identity politics and ethnicity-based structural divisions, this sense of belonging was a feature readily embraced by all participants. It anchored CFS, as echoed by seven participants, as a place where everyone is perceived as equal: "You are all there together in one space training with someone you don't know, and you simply do not care whether they are Serb, whether they are Croat, or whether they are Spanish" (Participant F). Participant C surmised that "there is no division there, everyone works together, everyone is united. People do not see these imposed differences." In the minds of the participants, this notion of unity and belonging and absence of ethnic divisions appears to have created a distinct storyline that represents a key aspect of CFS. Once it was constructed and attached to CFS, this storyline became a defining feature of the box and shaped how members interacted and perceived each other. It also shaped how members of CFS perceive CrossFitters from Banja Luka, the capital of RS. Participant K explained that there is no difference between CrossFitters from FBiH or RS, and that when they visit regional competitions in Croatia and Serbia, other CrossFitters do not refer to them "as athletes from Sarajevo or Banja Luka."

They say, here come the [athletes from BiH].” This inclusive feature of CFS was also identified as aspirational for the wider BiH community by Participant L, who said that

CFS and that whole story up there is a metaphor for the kind of life . . . the kind of life people want to have in BiH. A community free of ethnic, religious, or nationalistic principles, where there is still no loss of identity. You are still the same you, an individual, but you are part of a community with kind and honest principles.

Echoing this distinct difference between CFS and the structural homogenization discussed previously, one participant, identifying as a Bosniak, explained how the dominant narrative outside the box not only restricts his access to other ethnicities but also actively undermines the development of relationships with them, especially Serbs. As an example of such pressure, he recalled a situation when he and a friend, also identifying as a Bosniak, saw a CFS member, who identifies as a Serb, while shopping in town. After greeting, chatting, and saying goodbye to his Serb friend with as much goodwill as he would inside the box, his Bosniak friend queried why he was friends with the Serb. According to this respondent and echoed by the other 12 respondents as well as reflected in the literature reviewed above, this is the stereotypical narrative dominating everyday life in BiH.

An interesting extension, and potentially a by product of the mutually supportive, ethnicity void and egalitarian storyline that appears to have been adopted by the CFS community, is the overwhelming patronage of the club’s humanitarian activities. Since its founding, members of CFS have consistently organized charity events to collect funds, clothing, and toys for the most socially disadvantaged children in BiH, never bringing their ethnicity into the equation. Twelve participants discussed this charity work and interpreted it as representative of what the CFS community stands for and its core value of helping those in need. Participant F explained it as “combining something that feels good with something that does good. You are helping your society. You feel better when you make a few, or even a single, child happy.” What is potentially more significant, as highlighted by five participants, is the apparent influence of such a storyline on those who otherwise do not support charities in their everyday life. Indicative of the claim made by Moghaddam et al. (2008) who suggest that rights and duties associated with certain storylines “are passed on one to another informally” (p. 12), all five participants highlighted that even though one may not support such activities, doing so was considered part-

and-parcel of belonging to the CFS community. As summarized by Participant L, “this is what it means to belong to that community. To belong to that idea.” Hence, and to answer the third subquestion of this project, it would appear that the storyline within CFS was one of community, belonging and sharing one’s good fortune with those most disadvantaged in the broader society. Such a storyline seems to be actively supported and corresponds to inclusive positions and actions adopted by the club.

Returning to the central question of this paper that sought to explore whether CFS created conditions that challenged the dominant ethnonational narratives in BiH, it would appear that it in fact has. To achieve this, the community relied on inclusive and egalitarian positions and actions/acts, reinforced by a storyline grounded in unity, sense of belonging, and equality. Based on the responses by these 13 participants, CFS appears to have united diverse individuals, regardless of their ethnicity, but also gender, vocation, age, or whether they are coaches or clients. It has also succeeded in creating conditions that challenged the dominant ethnonational narrative present in BiH. Further, the absence of a gap between the perceptions of coaches and members suggests that a common narrative or storyline exists within members of CFS. Positions encouraged by the coaches, and consequently by the members, giving life to actions that could only be interpreted as reinforcing the storyline, may be a useful lens to describe these consistencies. As neatly surmised by one of the participants, “Division, segregation, discrimination, none of that exists in CFS” (Participant L). Ultimately, a project such as CFS, albeit small in scale, gives hope that a structured and deliberate approach can indeed lead to a reduction of structurally imposed divisions in postviolent conflict contexts.

Conclusion

More than two decades since the cessation of hostilities, BiH remains a nation divided. Facing a continuing homogenization of its two entities, the opportunities for the country’s citizens to build multiethnic relationships are decreasing. Sustaining this ongoing divergence are the country’s leaders who rely on ethnocentric rhetoric to retain their power and influence. Making matters worse, the ongoing division has permeated into schools, spanning the division across generations and ensuring it becomes an enduring feature of life in BiH. Grassroots organizations, sporting in particular, have proven capable of combating some of **these** challenges. This project sought to investigate whether a CrossFit club, heretofore unexplored in this context, has helped challenge dominant ethnocentric narratives in a postviolence context. Relying on PT as a lens

to evaluate its impact, and the CFS community as a case study, this project showed that such grassroots ventures indeed can serve to counter divisive narratives. To achieve this, CFS appears to have relied on inclusive and egalitarian positions within the club, which defined acceptable rights, obligations, and duties to be adopted by its members. Enforced first by the club's coaches, these translated into a specific set of actions that, due to their limited repertoire, could only be interpreted in line with the positions they represented. Behavior deviating from the accepted code of conduct was challenged and discouraged. This sentiment translated into an overwhelming level of social trust between the club's members, which was continuously reinforced by mutually beneficial behavior such as cheering each other on during workouts. This in turn facilitated the creation and adoption of a storyline that matched the unifying and egalitarian positions and actions/acts, which ultimately enabled the club to undertake humanitarian work that positively affected the broader BiH community. As a result, CFS indeed appears to have created a community that actively—although perhaps unconsciously—challenges the dominant ethnonational narratives prominent in BiH.

NOTES

¹Alphabetical identifier withheld to ensure participant's identity remains disguised.

²Mark refers to the Bosnian currency Bosnian Convertible Mark (BAM).

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Category	Question
Ice-breaker/rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When did you start training at CFS? ➤ What made you come back to CFS after the first training session?
CrossFit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What type of people train CrossFit? ➤ Why do you train CrossFit? ➤ What is the effect of CrossFit on you and on others?
CFS community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do individuals treat each other in CFS? ➤ What, if anything, makes CFS different to other sport clubs in Sarajevo?
Values, trust, and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the values of CFS? ➤ If you lost your wallet in your neighborhood, would you expect it to be returned and why? ➤ If you lost your wallet in CFS, would you expect it to be returned and why?
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What difference is there, if any, in the way people communicate in CFS compared to the broader community? ➤ What channels are used for communication between members of CFS? ➤ What channels are used for communication between CFS and the broader community?
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To what extent is ethnicity important in CFS? What about in the broader community?
CFS as part of a broader Sarajevan community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does the broader community think about the CFS community? ➤ What role does CFS play in the broader society?
Overall perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In five or ten sentences, describe your overall experience of CFS. What does this experience mean to you?

Appendix 2: Coding Categories, Sources, and References

Name	Sources	References
1. CFS values	13	14
2. Sense of belonging	13	42
3. Cooperation	13	26
4. Trust	13	22
5. Equality	6	20
6. Self-confidence	6	16
7. Motivation	7	13
8. Discipline	7	9
9. Dedication	5	8
10. Merit-based	5	6
11. Tolerance	4	4
12. Honesty	1	2
13. Enthusiasm	5	13
14. CF in general	13	82
15. Lasting change	11	45
16. Gender related	8	32
17. BiH situation in general	10	29
18. Sport in general	2	7
19. Effects of CrossFit	13	104
20. CFS uniqueness	11	92
21. Expectation of coaches	13	61
22. Expectation of members	13	48
23. Ethnicity related	13	54
24. Community self-preservation	9	31
25. Humanitarian work	12	32
26. CFS vs broader community	7	25
27. Ethnicity jokes	5	23
28. Communication	6	23
29. Role of CFS in broader community	6	18
30. Recruitment of new members	7	10
31. Becoming/being a coach	5	12