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Rethinking conflict resolution research in post-war Bosnia and Hercegovina:

A genealogical and ontological exploration

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**Rethinking Conflict Resolution in post-war Bosnia and Hercegovina: a
genealogical and ontological exploration**

Key Words

Conflict Resolution; Research; Post-War Bosnia and Hercegovina; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Fieldwork; Research Methodology; Discourse; Visual Representation; Reflexivity.

Abstract

This thesis explores how research is implicated in the constitution of post-war environments, and gives an account of being and becoming a researcher in post-war Bosnia. My main contention is that when peace and conflict researchers conduct research in post-war contexts, their presence, practices, and the consequential production of knowledge and representations, have political effects. I argue that the implications of this have not been fully explained, acknowledged, or problematised within Conflict Resolution, which tends to rely on research approaches and assumptions taken from 'normal' science. This thesis suggests how reflexivity and alternatives methodologies, including visual research might be used to represent the emotional, sensory, and often intangible elements of post-war realities. It enacts an engagement in the politics of research and uses reflexive writing and visual methods to draw attention to the importance of the relational aspects of research in post-war environments. Visual journeys are also used to argue that visual methods can provide a way of revisiting the epistemological and ontological assumptions about lived experiences and realities in post-war settings. The thesis is based upon one year of ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in Bosnia, and is also informed by eighteen months of volunteer work with a Bosnian Community Centre in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.

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My biggest debt of gratitude is to EJ. Her support, encouragement, and tireless efforts to read my thesis kept me going. She made me believe I was good enough when I didn't think it was possible to finish, and was brilliant at

coping with my frustrations and at redirecting my efforts to procrastinate (of which there were many).

My family have been proud of me, even though they've never been sure about what I've been doing or when I'll be finished. As promised, I now have a 'proper job'.

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It is important to say that the conclusions I draw from this research are shaped by my experiences of being and becoming a researcher in Bosnia, and from many of the conversations I had with people there. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the views expressed in this thesis are my interpretations of research in Bosnia, and any errors, omissions or misinterpretations are mine alone.

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‘MONUMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
GRATEFUL CITIZENS OF SARAJEVO’ⁱ

ⁱ Monument to International Community' by Nebojša Šerić-Šoba. The monument was installed between the National and Historical Museums of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina on April 6th, 2007. Photograph by Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Art. Website- Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art. http://www.scca.ba/deconstruction/e_main.htm Accessed 01.07.08

Chapter One

Two internationals bump into one another by chance in a Sarajevo street. On seeing his friend the first man says: 'I didn't know that you were going to be here! when did you arrive?', his friend answers: 'Yesterday', 'and how long will you be staying?' asks his friend. 'Until tomorrow', he replies. 'And what are you doing here?' he asks, 'I'm writing a book', replies his newly arrived friend. 'That's great, do you have a title yet?', 'Yes, it's called: Bosnia: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'¹.

Introduction

This is a thesis about the way in which Conflict Resolution, as an academic discipline, constitutes research in post-war environments. It looks critically at the ways in which Conflict Resolution knows, interacts, and shapes post-war environments through its various and varied research practices; or in other words, this thesis explores how Conflict Resolution *enacts* post-war environments through research. As John Law argues, researchers produce, perform and help to make social realities and social worlds. Thus our methods 'do not simply describe the world as it is, but also enact it'². In attending to knowledge and enactment practices, I seek to engage more fully with the epistemological, ontological and methodological foundations of Conflict Resolution, and explore the complexities of post-war Bosnia in ways which acknowledge the politics of knowledge and representation, and do not actively 'operate above the everyday realities' of life³.

This thesis is significant as there has been a substantial growth of interest in research in post-war environments over the last 30 years, both among

¹ A popular joke in post-war Bosnia. Brian Philips: <http://jhrp.oxfordjournals.org/content/1/1/156.full>[accessed 12/11/11].

² Law, J. and Urry, J. (2005). 'Enacting the Social', *Economy and Society*, 33: (3), 390-410.

³Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

researchers in Conflict Resolution and in numerous other fields. This stems from a desire to further our understanding about conflict, violence and peace and the contexts in which they develop. Whilst many would agree that this is important and necessary work, there has been relatively little discussion about the relational aspects of research in post-war environments. This includes the relationships between researchers and the people/places taken as subjects of inquiry. The thesis draws on fieldwork in Bosnia that highlights first-hand observations of how ordinary people and NGO activists respond to researchers in post-war Bosnia, and their sense of being observed and researched in their everyday work and lives by 'internationals'. This subject has largely been neglected in the Conflict Resolution literature. By drawing attention to the lived experiences of being researched, I attempt to specifically problematize the rational-scientific research practices used within Conflict Resolution, whilst reconciling some of the obvious shortcomings within the field.

The intent of this thesis is critical rather than problem solving. My aim is to contribute to a re-thinking of Conflict Resolution research practices by engaging with approaches that move beyond the narrowly defined rational-scientific approaches. These approaches, I argue, place limitations on our understanding of post-war environments and often fail to resonate with the experiences of those who live in post-war environments. Although it is clear that research in post-war environments also brings exceptionally difficult

intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges for researchers, these aspects have also received little academic attention⁴.

My central argument is that researchers influence post-war environments through their everyday research interactions and practices, and the production of knowledge and representations, 'interfere' and have political effects on ordinary people living in those environment⁵. This thesis therefore seeks to recognise that research is itself implicated in the constitution of post-war environments, and gives an account of research in post-war Bosnia as a politically situated process, with researchers as politically situated actors. My aim is to show how conflict resolution research has been conceived of as a 'normal science' process of discovery and gathering, and importantly, as a project of beneficent understanding which is believed to have latent emancipatory potential. As such, this thesis makes three distinct contributions to Conflict Resolution theory and practice:

- 1) It provides a critique of institutionalised normal science approaches to understanding war and post-war contexts that dominate the field, and argues that these approaches prioritise (narrowly-defined) hypothesis-testing which ultimately depoliticises research and fails to access the messy, complex lived realities that we seek to transform.
- 2) It argues that researchers should explicitly acknowledge and explore how their knowledge, presence, and varied research practices impact

⁴ A number of notable exceptions include: Smyth, M and Gillian, R. (eds.) (2001). *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*. London: UN University Press and Pluto Press; Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Wood, E, J. (2006) 'The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones' *Qualitative Sociology*, 29: 373-386

⁵ John Law argues: 'social (and natural) science investigations interfere with the world, in one way or another they always make a difference, politically or otherwise'. Law, J. (2005). *After Methods: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p7.

on ordinary people living and working in post-war environments. In other disciplines the interaction between research and context Although already widely recognised in other disciplines such as Anthropology, this has not yet been explicitly acknowledged in the Conflict Resolution literature.

- 3) It builds a case for the use of critical and alternative research methodologies, including reflexive and visual methodologies, to challenge and overcome the limitations of the dominant forms of research practice in Conflict Resolution, and develop more complex and situated understandings of post-war environments.

A number of social science fields, including anthropology, have become increasingly critical of their relationships with the people, cultures and social worlds that they study. Claims of Orientalism by Edward Said⁶, for instance, have been extensively discussed in anthropology in relation to the field's historical tendency to represent researched 'others' as exotic and uncultured, which has led to increasingly self-conscious and critically reflexive approaches to research and fieldwork in anthropology⁷. Moreover, the concept of 'do no harm' in aid and development work further reflects an awareness of the potential for negative consequences when international aid workers work in war and post-war environments⁸. These issues, however, have not formed part of a sustained dialogue in relation to post-war environments in the Conflict Resolution literature.

This thesis explores why there has been so little discussion about these issues, including for example, the reliance on what Jutila, Pehkonen and

⁶ Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

⁷ See for example: Marcus, G, E & Fischer, M, M. (1986). *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

⁸ Anderson, M, B. (1999). *Do no harm: how aid can support peace-or war*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Väyrynen call 'institutionalised normal science' in Conflict Resolution, which is characterized by an increasing focus on problem-solving research approaches to conflict and quantitative methodologies⁹. In this thesis I argue that there are a number of reasons why a reliance on these approaches is problematic. Firstly, 'institutionalised normal science' approaches tend to assume a logico-deductive method of research, which begins with an abstract theory or problem, then logically formulates hypotheses and develops research/tests/experiments to verify or falsify hypotheses¹⁰. In deductive approaches such as these, Clarke argues that these approaches have a tendency to underestimate the importance of context and oversimplify in the search for commonalities and generalizable rules, and are often unable to account for complexity as variations from the general norms are labelled as 'deviant' or 'negative' cases¹¹. Hypotheses and deductive questions can also be quite narrowly focused on interests that are conceived prior to experience in conflict environments, which may have little meaning for those who live in such environments.

Secondly, 'institutionalised normal science' approaches have a tendency to actively work to transform the irrationality and chaos of conflict and war into rational 'scientific' outputs which tend to abstract from the human and lived experiences of conflict. Jabri argues that these are 'de-politicising moves' which move us away from the ontological realities of war and conflict¹².

⁹ Jutila, M. Pehkonen, S. Väyrynen, T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol 36(3), 623-640.

¹⁰ Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative Analysis: Practice and Innovation*. London: Routledge, p8.

¹¹ Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp11-18.

¹² Jabri, V. (2006). *Revisiting Change and Conflict: On Underlying Assumptions and the De-Politicisation of Conflict Resolution* www.berghof-handbook.net [accessed 23.10.08].

Moreover, Carolyn Nordstrom, has compellingly argued that warzones are fraught with difficulties and, as sites for research and data collection, they play havoc with the approaches, analytical tools, and categories that are developed in the peace and quiet of comfortable academic offices¹³. In studies of conflict we also have the means to record and make visible the lives of 'ordinary' people who live in, and have lived through, violence. More than describing those lives, Nordstrom argues that we are entrusted with telling personal experiences, yet more often than not she argues that 'the work of scholars are wor(l)ds apart from the experiences of those living and dying at the centres of war'¹⁴.

Thirdly, there is a tendency to treat researchers as detached and objective observers whose presence in post-war environments has little or no effect on the people and places studied. In this thesis, I argue that this assumption is problematic, not only in terms of the assumption that researchers have little effect on people in post-war environments, but also in the assumption that conversely, people and post-war environments have little or no effect on researchers. As I outline in Chapters 5 and 6, the increasing presence of researchers in post-war Sarajevo has at times overwhelmed the small community of NGOs undertaking peace and conflict work, and the practices of some researchers has been viewed with ambivalence by NGO activists. Stories of researchers being ill-prepared, ill-informed, insensitive, and at times exploitative are widely disseminated amongst activists, and coupled with research fatigue, this has meant that some NGO activists have begun to

¹³Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

¹⁴ Ibid.p8-9.

refuse to participate in research and to avoid research interviews. At the same time, conducting research in post-war environments can pose exceptionally difficult intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges for researchers. Nordstrom argues this is because the 'cultures of violence' developed during conflict and war often remain intact in post-war contexts and form part of the politics and realities of everyday life¹⁵. As such, researchers who undertake research in post-war environments, particularly where large-scale violence has occurred, often face what Nordstrom and Robben describe as 'existential shock' which may trigger 'personal crises' (Nordstrom), depression (Swedenberg) and post-traumatic stress disorder (Warden-Rebours). This is largely unacknowledged in Conflict Resolution literature¹⁶.

Finally, institutionalised normal science approaches to Conflict Resolution pay little attention to the reflexive and linguistic 'turns' in the social sciences¹⁷. Therefore the limits of 'normal science' in the field can sometimes mean that research is oddly abstracted and distanced from the everyday realities of post-war environments, and the visceral, sensory and emotional realities are insufficiently represented in 'normal science' research. My

¹⁵ Nordstrom, C. (1994). *Warzones: Cultures of Violence, Militarisation and Peace*, Working Paper, No 145. Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University.

¹⁶ Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (1995). 'The Anthropology and Ethnography of Violence and Sociopolitical Conflict' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press pp13; Nordstrom, C. (1995). 'War on the Front Lines' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp129- 154; Swedenberg, T. (1995). 'With Genet in the Palestinian Field' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 25-41; Warden-Rebours, T. (2012). 'Feet of Clay: Confronting Stigma Surrounding Emotional Challenges in Ethnographic Experience'. 7th Annual Ethnography Symposium, University of Liverpool. 29 August 2012.

¹⁷ Denzin, N, K. & Lincoln, Y, S. (eds.) (2008). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. (3rd edition). Los Angeles: Sage.

contention here is that without detailed accounts of the sensory, political, and emotional dimensions of research, our knowledge about post-war environments and our understanding of research and the research process are abstracted and depoliticized in ways which belie the everyday realities of post-war environments. Thus, they fail to take 'difference(s), power, contingency, multiplicity...silences in the data, resistance, protections, co-optation and collusion' into account¹⁸. These elements are often obscured in accounts of post-war environments, and are rarely acknowledged in the Conflict Resolution literature. This thesis will show the significance of these issues and problematise them in the context of fieldwork in post-war Bosnia. It will also raise some of the broader issues that follow from this.

On writing a thesis

In graduate school we were taught that our research projects should be designed around a specific problem or hypothesis, and that our theses should map the process of what we had done and found, in a clearly logical and linear format. In Bosnia, however, my research did not magically unfold in a linear fashion, and I struggled to work out how I could produce a 'logical' thesis format when my research was replete with false starts, disjunctures, u-turns, and multiple dislocated ends. Research, I discovered, was not a seamless process with a discrete beginning, middle, and end. Negotiating the translation of conversations, experiences and relationships into written text on a page became almost impossible for me at times. My intention was not to

¹⁸ Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks California: Sage, p11.

write about a discrete, exotic field 'out there', yet the conventions of Conflict Resolution seemed to work to discipline and position researchers in ways which allowed little else than to produce authoritative, objective and largely linear accounts of fieldwork and research, which arguably, served to orientalise and Other those studied¹⁹. An emphasis on researching 'ethnic' violence in the Former Yugoslavia in Conflict Resolution, for example, has perhaps unintentionally characterized and reiterated western stereotype of the Balkans as a place of ethnic and ancient hatreds, which is 'semideveloped, semicolonial, semicivilized, semioriental'²⁰. Maria Todorova draws on the work of Edward Said, and has termed this 'Balkanism', to draw attention to the dangers of essentialising the Balkan as 'Other'²¹.

In an attempt to negotiate my way around some of these issues, I began to explore ways of dealing with, and re-presenting multiplicities and mess and also the recent trends in the use of first person narratives and auto-ethnography in accounts of fieldwork²². In these accounts, research is presented subjectively, and storied, rather than presenting exacting objective observations of the field²³. By taking this approach, I began to renegotiate 'the field', and engaged in attempts to explore the shifting balances between objectivity and subjectivity and the politics of knowledge and representation,

¹⁹ Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

²⁰ Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p3.

²¹ Ibid. p16.

²² On multiplicity and mess see for example: Mol, A. (2002). *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, Durham, and London: Duke University Press; Law, J. (2007). 'Making a Mess with Method', in Outhwaite, W & Turner, S, P. (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Social Science Methodology*. Sage: Beverly Hills and London, pp 595-606.

²³ See, for example: Ellis, C. (2004). *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography*, London: Rowman and Littlefield; Ronai, C, R. (1998). 'Sketching with Derrida: An Ethnography of a Researcher/ Erotic Dancer'. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4 (3), pp 405-420.

in ways that did not actively 'operative above the everyday realities' of life in Bosnia²⁴.

My thesis reflects this journey, and begins as a linear (and 'objective') academic study in conflict resolution, and ends with much more reflexive work, enacted through reflections on fieldwork and visual representations of Bosnia. This path negotiates 'traditional' and 'contemporary' research methodologies within and across the social sciences, and makes space for research (and fieldwork) in conflict resolution that works against the production of knowledge that assume the epistemology and ontology of 'normal science'²⁵.

This thesis is therefore structured in a way that is somewhat unusual in terms of how research is usually presented within Conflict Resolution, although this type of approach is not far less unusual within the wider spectrum of social science²⁶. I have chosen this structure purposefully, and for two key reasons. Firstly, I want to emphasize that structuring the thesis in this way, is, in itself an intellectual engagement with contemporary qualitative research issues. It enacts an engagement with the politics of representation, and displays the complexity of the research process itself, acknowledging that our written accounts of what exists/ of reality/ of the social world are not simple or linear readings or reflections of the world. As such, this thesis represents an engagement in a politically situated place and subject, through politically

²⁴ Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

²⁵ Jutila, M & Pehkonen, S. & Väyrynen, T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 36(3), 623-640.

²⁶ See for example: Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (eds.) (1996). *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing*. California: Altamira Press.

engaged practices of research, and is purposefully constructed by myself as a situated researcher. It shows my attempts to understand the ways that power operates to shape meaning in conflict resolution, and develops insights into becoming a researcher in a post-war environment. Secondly, I want to show how Conflict Resolution benefit from critical research thinking and practices that have been developed in the wider social sciences, many of which are grounded within more critical and reflexive research agendas. In many ways, this is an extension of the critiques of Conflict Resolution by Jabri, Varynyen, Fetherston and Richmond, beginning from their critiques of the field, and following, albeit in a different direction, their concerns about the founding assumptions of the field itself²⁷.

This thesis should therefore be viewed as an attempt to simultaneously interrupt and open up space for a generative dialogue- about how fieldwork and research is conducted and written in conflict resolution, who it is for, and how we re-present and engage with those who become involved in our research. These are essentially questions about the politics of knowledge, representation and reality. In this sense, this thesis contributes to a discourse of resistance, and attempts to disrupt unexamined research and knowledge making practices, which tend to bracket subjectivity out of research accounts of post-war realities²⁸.

²⁷ See: Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; Väyrynen, T. (2001). *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the work of John Burton*, Manchester, Manchester University Press; Fetherston, A. B. (2000). *From Conflict Resolution to Transformative Peacebuilding: Reflections from Croatia*, Working Paper 4 (April), Bradford: University of Bradford; Richmond, O. (2005). *The Transformation of Peace*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

²⁸ Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

At the same time, whilst my thesis is concerned *with* Bosnia, to paraphrase Franke Wilmer, it is not a thesis about '*what happened*' in Bosnia in that it does not make a claim of authority for presenting truths about the 'reality' of war and the post war environment²⁹. Many of the events surrounding the war and its cultures of violence are highly contested. There are of course, many conflicting views about the causes of the war and its dynamics as well as contestations regarding the current position of post war Bosnia, and the 'successes' and 'failures' of the international community's presence and interventions in Bosnia. Given the complexity and vast range of literature on the country, it is unfeasible to try to attempt to give a comprehensive overview of events in Bosnia and the literature in this thesis. I will however, point to some of the most important literature and debates related to the war in Bosnia.

Fieldwork

Conducting research and fieldwork in a post-war environment raises difficult practical, methodological, political and ethical challenges. In part, this is because of the highly politicised nature of post-war environments and deep contestation over explanations for violence; but also as those who become involved in research may have experienced, witnessed or been involved in intense levels of violence, torture, and prolonged periods of suffering, which not only requires sensitivity and ethical awareness, but also a significant amount of practical preparation. Moreover, the challenges of research and

²⁹ Wilmer, F. (2002). *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge, p28.

fieldwork in relation to post-war contexts are rarely discussed in a systematic way.

The data for this study was collected over a year of ethnographic research based in Bosnia, and was also informed by eighteen months of volunteer work with a Bosnian Community Centre, 'Ljiljan' in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire in 2005-2006³⁰. I formally began my fieldwork in September 2006, and lived in Sarajevo for a period of 12 months between September 2006 and September 2007³¹. During this time I volunteered with Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW), an internationally funded and locally run peacebuilding organisation. I also became an informal volunteer with Savez Udruženja Logoraša (The Centre for Torture Camp Survivors), and assisted in activities with a number of other NGOs including Inicijativa Mladih za Ljudska Prava (Youth Initiative for Human Rights), and Centar za nenasilnu akciju (Centre for non-violent action). As part of my voluntary work, I spent significant periods of time with a number of NGO activists, in their offices, and socially. I also spent time attending local and regional NGO meetings, as well as institutional and international donor funding meetings, including those organised by The European Union and The United Nations. Much of this which was made possible by Goran Bubalo, a peace activist at QPSW who

³⁰ Ljiljan was opened in 1994/1995 by a small number of Bosnian refugees, with the aim of supporting other newly arrived Bosnian refugees. The centre ran a Bosnian school for children, established a Bosnian football team, and served as an important community meeting place. The centre received lottery funding and also began offering advice to other refugees and asylum seekers, operating an open door policy for welfare, immigration, education and employment advice. The centre also set up a 'Global Families Group', where families and their children could meet. Lottery funding ceased in 2005, and despite efforts to secure further funding, the centre was forced to close in February 2006.

³¹ In preparation for fieldwork I began taking Bosnian language lessons in 2005, and undertook a short fieldwork visit to Bosnia in June 2006 to meet contacts, find accommodation, and try and work out the feasibility of my research aims.

was incredibly generous with his time and support, and was instrumental to me being able to access many of these meetings.

Synopsis of research methodology/methods

The methodology in this thesis is based on an inductive and constructivist grounded theory approach proposed by Kathy Charmaz and Adele Clarke³². In contrast to deductive research approaches that seek to find answers to pre-determined questions and hypotheses, grounded theory offers an inductive and exploratory way to engage in research. This allows researchers with broad thematic interests to find out what is 'actually going on' on the ground, and enables researchers to explore emergent issues in the field. This approach allows researchers to avoid imposing pre-existing theories, hypotheses, questions and categories onto the area of research, with the overall aim of ensuring that theoretical insights are firmly rooted in the reality of what is happening on the ground. As such, grounded theory is often regarded as a way to find and explore gaps between theory and practice, and to develop theoretical insights from the 'ground up'³³.

Clarke's version of grounded theory supports a multi-method approach to data collection, and encourages researchers to incorporate visual, narrative and historical data into research in order to represent and capture the complexity of the social world. In this thesis, I have made use of interview

³² Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks: Sage; Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

³³ Strauss, A & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd Edition. London: Sage.

transcripts, academic texts, field notes, a fieldwork diary, and visual materials which form a partial, disparate and fragmentary set of 'evidences' which I draw on throughout this thesis, to re-construct an account of my efforts to conduct research in Bosnia³⁴.

Those who are familiar with the work of Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, and particularly John Law, will also notice that the concerns of these writers serve as recurrent touchstones which serve to anchor significant parts of this thesis. Their writings on themes such as the politics of representation, the production of knowledge, experimental writing, and 'mess', have provided me with a sense of the methodological possibilities in research, which challenge the current limits of research within Conflict Resolution. Following the work of John Law, this thesis is structured as a purposeful set of 'assemblages' which sets out in part, to acknowledge and make visible the multiplicity and situated construction of this text³⁵. I do this against a constant argument that many of our research practices within Conflict Resolution are problematic, and limit our understanding about post-war environments.

Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is structured into separate, but interlinked sections. Part 1 consists of chapters 2 and 3, which provide an overview of Conflict Resolution theory and practice, and develop a critique of the discipline. The

³⁴ Throughout the research process, and particularly when data is collected, there is a strong emphasis on the early analysis and coding of data in order to refine the researchers ideas about what seems to be significant, and be responsive to areas which requires further follow up.

³⁵ See for example: Deleuze, G & Guattari, F. (2004). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London, Continuum; Delanda, M. (2006). *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. London: Continuum; Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.

second part consists of chapters 4 to 7. This part provides an overview of post-war Bosnia and engages with visual and reflexive research methodologies. This separation into two distinct parts indicates the process of 'undoing' and reorienting this thesis, which I explain in detail in Chapter 5. This raised challenges in terms of how to represent the complexity of the research process, and as such, this thesis also shows my attempts to negotiate this process, and manoeuvre within and between 'normal science' the use of 'alternative' methods. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are therefore written in a 'traditional' thesis style, whilst Chapters 5, 6, 7a and 7b make use of 'alternative' approaches to research. This structure is a purposeful attempt to enact my critique of normal science approaches, and moreover, underlines the significance of the nuanced, sensory and visceral experiences of the everyday in a post-war society.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I begin by offering a broad overview of Conflict Resolution theory, practice and research. Chapter 2 provides some working definitions of conflict, violence and peace and a brief outline of the theoretical foundations and development of contemporary Conflict Resolution as an academic field. This chapter also considers the work of a number of seminal theorists including Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach, and outlines three significant areas of critique of the field which together suggest that the need for critical thinking within the field. Chapter 3 focuses more specifically on Conflict Resolution research and refers to a broader discussion of research paradigms, epistemology and ontology. I suggest that there is a reliance on what Jutila et al, have termed 'institutionalised normal science' in

Conflict Resolution, which I argue is problematic in post-war environments³⁶. I also outline and discuss two 'alternatives' to 'normal science' research approaches including reflexive research and John Law's methodology of mess³⁷. I argue that in different ways, these approaches offer ways of thinking about research, which take account of complex realities without resorting to attempts to organise and reduce them in simplistic ways. In Chapters 5, 7a and 7b I use these approaches as points of departure into deeper and more critical ways of engaging in research in post-war Bosnia.

In Chapter 4 I provide an overview of the post-war context in Bosnia, and outline the human and material costs of the war, and reflect on how this has helped to shape the post-war environment. I discuss a number of key issues related to the war, including debates surrounding the causes of war, and the significance of constructing the war in terms of ethnic identity and ancient hatreds. I also focus more specifically on the post-war environment, and discuss the Dayton Peace Accords and the emergence of the NGO sector and civil society in Bosnia. This broad, albeit brief, overview of the war and the post-war environment provides context for the fieldwork and analysis that follow later in the thesis.

Some of challenges, dilemmas and 'hidden' struggles of fieldwork in Bosnia are explored in Chapter 5 where, through a series of narrative and reflexive 'moments' I discuss the process of being and 'becoming' a researcher. My

³⁶ Jutila, M & Pehkonen, S. & Väyrynen, T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace. Research' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 36(3), 623-640.

³⁷ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge; Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity and Voice* London. Sage: Thousand Oaks.

contention in this chapter is that these issues are rarely discussed or represented within Conflict Resolution and therefore our understanding of research in contexts where large violence and war has occurred becomes 'sanitised and smoothed over' in ways which belie the realities of research and the realities of post-war contexts³⁸. This, I argue, not only affects the kind of knowledge that is created, but also has implications for those whose lives are incorporated/ represented in Conflict Resolution research.

Chapter 6 follows on from the discussion of my fieldwork experiences in the previous chapter, exploring in much greater detail how the presence and practices of researchers in Bosnia are regarded by NGO activists. In this Chapter I discuss how NGO activists have taken part in conflict and peace related research in the hope that their participation will help to further a collective understanding of conflict and peace. Yet their experiences of researchers has, on occasions, involved breaches of trust and researchers have sometimes been regarded as insensitive and exploitative. Following from this, I argue that researchers have become important, though unacknowledged actors in the post-war environment, and whilst many researchers have good intentions, the stories of NGO activists suggest that the presence and practices of some researchers can be ethically and politically problematic.

In chapter 7a I present four visual 'journeys', which explore representations of post-war Bosnia in a deliberate move to provide alternative ways of 'seeing' the everyday realities of post-war Bosnia. This chapter uses visual

³⁸ Punch, S. (2010). 'Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field diaries' *Emotion, Space and Society*, doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005 [accessed 12/10/11].

images and what might be described as situated reflections from my fieldwork diaries, and shares the same epistemological intention as the reflexive approach in Chapter 6 – that is, an attempt to reveal more of the complex, sensory and visceral experience of everyday realities in post-war Bosnia. Chapter 7b follows on from Chapter 7a, and explores in more detail the significance of visual images in the social sciences and the potential of using visual images in Conflict Resolution. Through a discussion ‘researcher found’ images and analysis, I argue that visual images can be understood as sites of meaning and resistance which narrate powerful stories of injustice in post-war Bosnia, and this further underlines the significance of what I am arguing is lost in ‘normal science’ approaches to Conflict Resolution.

The final chapter sets out the implications of this thesis for other researchers undertaking research in post-war environments. I also clarify the contribution of this thesis to the literature in Conflict Resolution and suggest ideas for further research.

Chapter Two

Contemporary Conflict Resolution: A Brief History

Contemporary Conflict Resolution emerged as a distinct area of academic study in the late 1950s. The field was founded on the idea that if the origins and dynamics of violent conflict could be understood, then it may be possible to anticipate, prevent, minimise and mitigate the worst effects of violent and destructive conflicts. The aim of this chapter is to consider the development of contemporary conflict resolution as an academic field, in order to provide the historical theoretical background and conceptual foundations for the arguments, which are developed in this thesis. I begin by very briefly laying out the historical development of Conflict Resolution, and focus on some of the seminal theorists within the field whose works have helped to define the ways in which conflict resolution is practiced and researched. I argue that there are three significant areas of debate and critique within the field, concerning gender, culture and the crisis of modernity, which together suggest the need for a profound and critical re-visioning of the field. This discussion will lead on to chapter three, which in turn will develop the argument that conflict resolution researchers have largely failed to take account of the critiques outlined, and problematically, approach conflict resolution research as if it were 'normal science'.

This chapter is organized in two parts. In the first part, I trace the development of Conflict Resolution through Ramsbotham's, Woodhouse's and Miall's 'generational' framework, which provides some historical context in terms of how conflict resolution theory and practice have evolved over the

past century as an academic discipline¹. Within this framework, there are five key stages of development within Conflict Resolution, which I use to refer to a number of seminal scholars, and to outline a number of key theories and models of conflict resolution. It is not my intention to provide a detailed chronology or comprehensive overview of conflict resolution here, which has been done successfully elsewhere, but rather to highlight and focus on what I consider to be some of the most important developments within the field which have helped to structure and define the ways in which conflict resolution is practiced and researched². This is important in terms of the argument that is developed in the next chapter, which moves on to the knowledge making and research practices within conflict resolution.

In the second part of the chapter I outline a number of important critiques of conflict resolution by influential academics, who might be viewed within the fifth generation of scholars, and includes Salem, Jabri, Reimann, Varynen and Fetherston. These critiques loosely fall into three thematic areas which suggest that Conflict Resolution as an academic field is: theoretically poor; de-politicised (and de-politicising); and a 'Western' project of modernity. These areas of critique intersect with each other and, taken together, suggest the need for a profound and critical rethinking of the field. This whole thesis is, in some ways, an extension of these critiques, and adds to their concerns

¹ This generational framework represents the field in a chronological, linear way, although Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall suggest that people and ideas move across these generations, and simply use this framework as a heuristic device to show key stages of development within the field. Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p33.

² For a comprehensive overview of the development of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution see, for example: Kriesberg, L. (1997). 'The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field' In Zartman, W. & Rasmussen, J, L. (eds.) *Peacemaking in International Context: Methods and Techniques*. Washington: Institute of Peace Press.

about the discipline itself, albeit in a different direction. These critiques therefore, provide the basis for the discussions of conflict resolution research that are at the heart of this thesis.

Defining Conflict, Violence and Peace

First of all it is important to say something about the terminology used in this chapter. Conflict Resolution is often used as an umbrella term to describe a diverse range of activities and processes by a wide range of actors. The term is sometimes used to encompass, and be interchangeable with conflict transformation, conflict management, conflict provention³, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, reconciliation, mediation, and negotiation, amongst others. The inclusion of so many activities and processes under the remit of conflict resolution, often involving a broad range of actors, has rendered a definition so broad that a number of scholars have raised the issue of 'conceptual confusion' and 'imprecision' within the field⁴. John Paul Lederach and others have also argued that the term conflict resolution, perhaps unintentionally, carries the idealistic suggestion of an ability to end conflict, without seeming to be sufficiently concerned with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict⁵. This has led to a wider shift towards the term 'conflict transformation', although this has also induced a wider series of debates within the field between those who argue that the term conflict

³ John Burton uses the terms 'provention' to refer to the transformation of structural violence.

⁴ See for example: Fast, L. (2002). 'Frayed Edges: Exploring the Boundaries of Conflict Resolution', *Peace & Change*, Vol 27(4). October.

⁵ Lederach J, P. (1995). 'Conflict Transformation in Protracted Internal Conflicts: The Case for a Comprehensive Network.' In Rupesinghe, K. (ed.), *Conflict Transformation*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p201.

transformation should replace conflict resolution, and those who see resolution and transformation as two distinctly different projects⁶. I take the view that Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall advocate, which regards conflict transformation as the deepest level of conflict resolution rather than as a replacement term or as a separate endeavour⁷.

Similarly, 'conflict', 'violence' and 'peace' are highly contested concepts, and carry diverse meanings for those who live, work and study 'in' and 'on' conflict; which is confounded by a notable amount of imprecision when it comes to defining intervention processes in conflict contexts, and where peacebuilding, post-war reconstruction and reconciliation, are often used interchangeably. Within Conflict Resolution, conflict, in its most basic terms, is viewed as 'the pursuit of incompatible goals' by different individuals, parties or groups; and most scholars within conflict resolution make a distinction between 'violent' and 'non-violent' conflict⁸. Violent conflict, for example, is viewed as the pursuit of incompatible goals through violence, force and military means, including the ultimate expressions of violence, that is, war and genocide. In contrast, non-violent conflict is viewed as the pursuit of incompatible goals through non-violent forms of communication and political processes, such as negotiation and mediation⁹. The distinction between violent and non-violent conflict is often misunderstood outside the field, as

⁶ Some scholars also regard conflict transformation as a continuum, which includes conflict settlement, conflict management, and conflict resolution. See, for example: Mitchell, C. (2002). 'Beyond Resolution: What Does Conflict Transformation Actually Transform?' *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 9(1),1-23; Lederach, J, P. (2000). 'Conflict Transformation: A Working Definition'. In Schrock-Shenk, C. (ed.) *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*. Akron: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

⁷ Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p 32.

⁸ Ibid.p27.

⁹ Ibid.p27.

many assume that conflict resolution scholars wish to resolve all conflicts. This is not the case, and there is a broad consensus within conflict resolution that non-violent conflict is crucial and necessary for social, political and economic change, and can be potentially productive and transformatory. As such, conflict is viewed as having capacity to 'create as well as destroy'¹⁰, and as Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall argue: 'conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints'¹¹. Conflict Resolution scholars therefore, aim to prevent and mitigate the violent and destructive elements of conflict, and attempt to transform such conflicts (and those which are potentially violent) into non-violent productive processes of change.

Moreover, violent conflicts tend to be referred to in terms of their 'types' and 'levels'. For instance, conflicts that are 'internal' within States are variously referred to as 'civil conflict', 'ethnic conflict', 'ethno-nationalist conflict' and 'social conflict', or where there is other State involvement or cross-border activity, conflicts are often referred to as 'international social conflict' 'regional conflict' or 'spillover conflict'¹². Many of these conflicts are distinguished by their protracted nature, and also tend to be described in terms of their conflict stages and dynamics as they move in and out of phases of direct violence,

¹⁰ Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, p70.

¹¹ See: Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Second Edition. Cambridge UK: Polity Press, p13.

¹² In the post Cold-War period there has also an emphasis on 'New wars', 'resource conflict', and 'conflict in post-colonial states'. International organisations also refer to 'complex political emergencies' to describe multidimensional conflict crises, which might include state collapse, natural disaster, and wide-spread human rights abuses and human suffering. See, for example: Kaldor, M. (1999). *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

international intervention and negative peace, over prolonged periods of time¹³. Often these types, stages and dynamics of conflict are contested, as are their 'origins' or 'root causes', which has implications for how conflicts are analysed and managed¹⁴. This is an important point, particularly in relation to Bosnia for instance, where the attribution of 'ethnic' and 'nationalist' 'causes' of conflict was decisive in terms of determining the response from the international community. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

Peace is sometimes theorised as a binary opposite to conflict or war, and is often taken to mean the absence of conflict or violence. Conflict Resolution scholars, however, tend to define peace in relation to Johan Galtung's conceptualisation of peace, in 'positive' and 'negative' terms. Negative peace, Galtung suggests, is the absence of direct physical violence and war, although the absence of war and violence may obscure the presence of deep social injustices and structural violence (patriarchy, for instance), and cultural violence, (the legitimization of patriarchy, for example, through certain cultural patterns)¹⁵. Galtung argues that the presence of social injustices in negative peace, if unaddressed, can be transformed into manifest conflict and violence (see figures 1 and 2). Positive peace is alternatively characterised as the absence (or minimisation) of direct, structural and cultural violence. Positive peace in these terms suggests an environment where all forms of direct violence are absent, but where structural

¹³ See for example: Lewer, N. & Ramsbotham, O. (1993). *'Something must be done': towards an ethical framework for humanitarian intervention in international social conflict*, Bradford: University of Bradford.

¹⁴ Conflict Resolution scholars have, for example, developed numerous 'toolkit' approaches to analyse such conflicts, using tools such as conflict analysis, conflict mapping, peace and conflict impact assessments (PCIA), and processes such as mediation, and negotiation.

¹⁵ Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace By Peaceful Means: Peace, Conflict, Development and Civilization*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications pp 31-33.

inequalities, social divisions and potential sources of conflict are also overcome. Galtung suggests that this would include the replacement of repression with freedom, exploitation with equity, marginalization with participation, through, for example inclusive political structures and processes, and highly democratic forms of governance¹⁶. As outlined earlier, conflict resolution scholars aim to prevent and mitigate the violent and destructive elements of conflict (constituting a negative peace), and furthermore, work towards the creation of sustainable conditions for peace and justice through non-violent change processes, and towards positive peace.

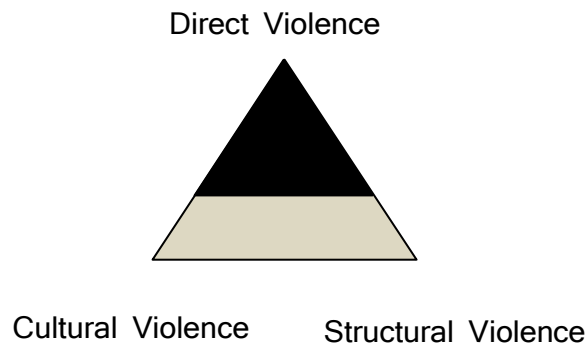


Figure 1. Galtung's model of violence¹⁷.

¹⁶ Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace By Peaceful Means: Peace, Conflict, Development and Civilization*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications pp 32.

¹⁷ Adapted from: Galtung, J, (1969). 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3), 167–191; Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, pp 70-210.

The Development of Conflict Resolution

After the devastation of the First World War, and recognising that a range of peace, socialist and liberal movements had failed to prevent the outbreak and destruction of the war, a group of interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners sought to develop a formal 'science' of peace and conflict¹⁸. In Europe and the United States, scholars including Lewis Richardson, Pitrim Sorokin, and Quincy Wright, pioneered the empirical and quantitative study of conflict, in a concerted attempt to substantiate the destructive outcomes of conflict and war¹⁹. Their aim was to develop a rational and scientific basis for the prevention of future wars, with an explicit peace orientation.

As an area of study, this field became known as Peace Studies, and was the 'precursor' to the formal establishment of Conflict Resolution as an academic discipline in the late 1950's. The first centres for Conflict Resolution and Peace Research were established at the University of Michigan by Kenneth Boulding, at the University of Oslo by Johan Galtung, and the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) was founded in London by John Burton²⁰, who are widely regarded as seminal figures in the development of

¹⁸ This included natural scientists, medical professionals, organisational behaviourists, psychologists, as well as political scientists. See Van Den Dungen, P. (1996). 'Initiatives for the Pursuit and Institutionalisation of Peace Research in Europe During the Inter-War Period (1919-1939)' In Broadhead, L. (ed.). *Issues in Peace Research 1995-96*, Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford. Pp 5-32.

¹⁹ See for example: Richardson, L. (1950). *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*, California, Boxwood Press; Wright, Q. (1983). *A Study of War*, Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁰ The Centre for Research on Conflict Resolution was established at the University of Michigan in 1959, and the Research Unit for Conflict and Peace was established in 1960 at the University of Oslo, along with their respective journals, the 'Journal of Conflict Resolution' in 1957, and the 'Journal of Peace Research' in 1964. John Burton was based at University College London, and IPRA held its first conference in 1965. See: Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition, London: Polity, pp40-44.

Conflict Resolution and Peace Research²¹.

Conflict Resolution sought to distinguish itself from other areas of study concerned with conflict and war through a central focus on the resolution of conflict, a commitment to non-violent conflict transformation, and, following its origins within Peace Studies, a strong emphasis on the promotion of peace²². One of the crucial assumptions of Conflict Resolution as an academic field was that if scholars were able to understand the causes and dynamics of conflict, then it might also be possible to anticipate, prevent, minimise and mitigate the effects of violent and destructive conflict²³. In this sense, the discipline was conceived in explicitly normative terms, or, as Peter Wallensteen explains, peace and conflict scholars 'are not simply interested in empirically understanding the extent of violence in the world but also hope to contribute to the improvement of the human condition'²⁴. Kenneth Boulding and other American scholars, including Hebert Kelman, also focused on the failures of the international state system, and the perceived decline of sovereign States. These approaches signified a marked contrast with conflict management approaches, for example advocated within International

²¹ This occurred alongside the development of the United Nations (founded on the 24th October 1945), which itself was established as a response to the First and Second World Wars.

²² Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p34.

²³ There is some debate about whether Conflict Resolution constitutes a 'field', 'subject', 'discipline', or 'sub-discipline'. I use the term field here in accordance with how Conflict Resolution is broadly described within my own academic environment.

²⁴ Some Conflict Resolution scholars do not refer to this value orientation, although many tend to base their work on the positive values they place on peace and justice, which is often expressed as a desire to create a more 'peaceful' and socially 'just' world. See: Wallensteen, P. (1988). *Peace Research: Achievements and Challenges*. Boulder & London: Westview Press, p9. (Emphasis in the original).

Relations, which were based on 'Realpolitik' and strong State-centric views of conflict and national interests, where elite negotiations formed the basis for negotiated political settlements in conflict and war²⁵.

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall characterise Conflict Resolution through five generations of development²⁶. These generations equate with key stages of development and practice, and also serve as loose strands of intellectual thinking in conflict resolution theorising. These generations include: the first generation of 'Precursors' to the field, from 1925-1945; the second generation of Conflict Resolution 'Founders' from 1945- 1965; the third generation of 'Consolidation' from 1965-1985; the fourth generation of 'Reconstruction' from 1985-2005; and finally, the fifth generation of 'Universalizers', from 2005-present²⁷.

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall characterise the second-generation founders as having 'minimalist' and 'maximalist' agendas according to the different emphases that they placed on the prevention of war and the promotion of peace. Boulding and the 'North American Pragmatist school' are viewed as 'minimalists' due to their focus on the prevention of war and reform of the international sovereign state system. In contrast, Galtung and the 'European Structuralist School' are regarded as 'maximalists', as they go

²⁵ See for example: Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society*, London: Palgrave; Waltz, K, N. (2001). *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, Columbia: Columbia University Press; Wendt, A. (1999). *The Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁶ This generational framework represents the field in a chronological, linear way, although Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall suggest that people and ideas move across these generations, and simply use this framework as a heuristic device to show key stages of development within the field. Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p33.

²⁷ Ibid. p327.

beyond a minimal agenda of preventing war and reforming the state system, to focus on 'positive peace' and the need to address structural violence²⁸.

Johan Galtung's prolific range of ideas and theories have been hugely influential in both Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, and his work spans the second, third, fourth and fifth generations of the field. His work moved beyond the 'minimalist' agenda, and developed a number of seminal theories of conflict, violence and peace²⁹. As outlined above, Galtung introduced the idea of 'positive' and 'negative' peace, and linked this to tripartite models of conflict and violence (see figures 2 and 3). Conflict, according to Galtung, can be understood as particular 'formations' of attitudes, assumptions, and emotions (A), behaviours (B), and contradictions (C). Here actual or perceived differences in attitudes, assumptions and emotions, may lead to a contradiction and 'incompatible goal states' between parties 'in a goal seeking system'. The presence of A+C represents a 'latent' conflict, that is, conflict at a 'theoretical, inferred, subconscious level'; whereas the presence of A+B+C represents a 'manifest' conflict situation, that is, a conflict which is 'empirical, observed and conscious'³⁰.

As a manifest conflict develops, attitudes and assumptions can become entrenched, and conflict parties can become increasingly aggressive and hostile as their interests and goals are pursued vis-à-vis the other parties.

²⁸ Ibid pp32-54.

²⁹ Galtung's prolific range of ideas and theories have been hugely influential in both Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, and his work spans the second, third, fourth and fifth generations of the field.

³⁰ Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, p69-80.

Conflicts may also draw in other parties, escalating and complicating the 'original' conflict formation in ways that can positively transform the relationships and interests between parties, but which equally, may become destructive and violent at the direct, cultural and structural levels. Galtung argues that the transformation of manifest violent conflict at these three levels requires expert 'diagnosis' 'prognosis' and 'therapy', and peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding interventions (see figure 3)³¹.

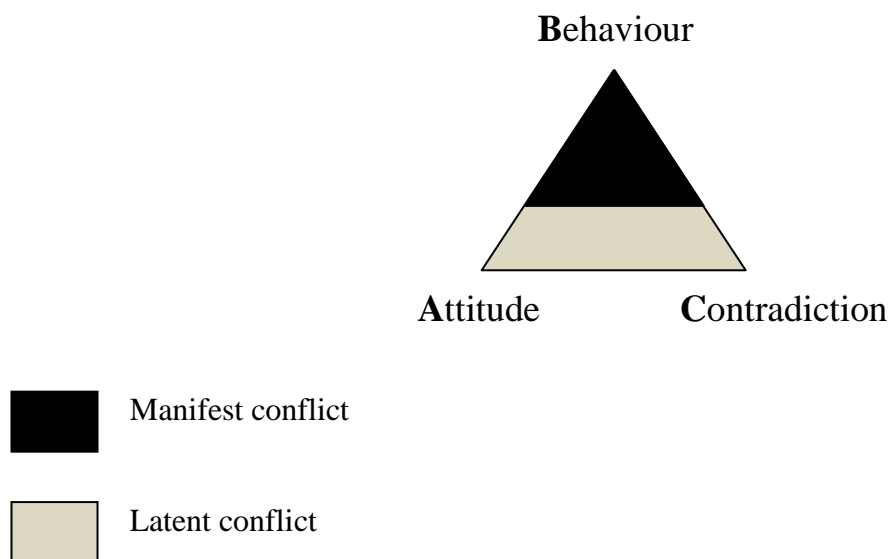


Figure 2. Galtung's model of conflict³².

³¹Ibid. p103.

³² Adapted from: Galtung, J, (1969). 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3), 167–191; Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, pp 70-210.

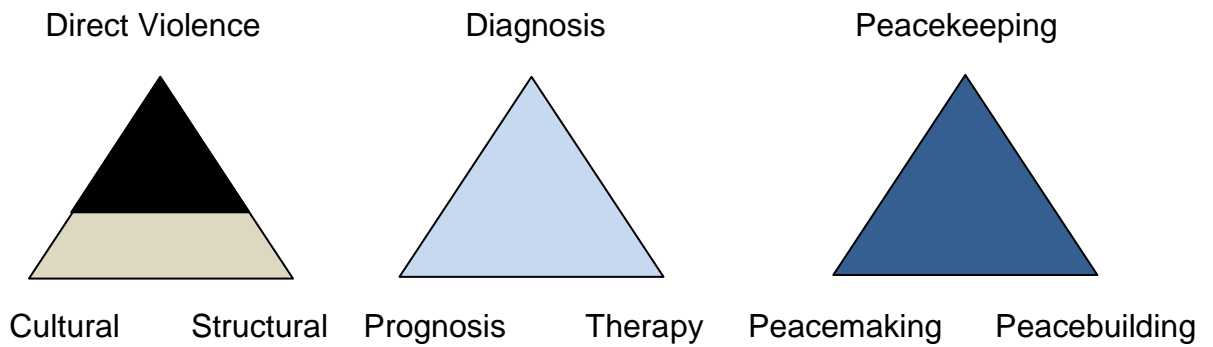


Figure 3. Galtung's intervention models in violent conflict³³.

In the last of the above triangles, Galtung uses the term 'peace-keeping' as to mean control of the actors so that they at least stop destroying things, others, and themselves (behaviour orientated). He also understands 'peace-making': as embedding these actors in a new formation, in addition, transform attitudes and assumptions (attitude orientated); and 'Peacebuilding' as attempts to overcome the contradiction at the root of the conflict formation (contradiction orientated)³⁴.

John Burton is also widely considered to be one of the founding scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution, and his work spans several generations of the field³⁵. His main contributions to conflict resolution include the development of 'Human Needs Theory', the idea of 'Provention', and significantly, the use of facilitated workshops to resolve conflict.

33 Adapted from: Galtung, J. (1969). 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research'. *Journal of Peace of Research*, Vol 6(3),167-191; Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, pp 70-210.

³⁴ Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, p103.

³⁵ See for example a special edition of the International Journal of Peace Studies on the work of John Burton: *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. 2001, Vol 6(1) http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/htm [accessed 25 February 2005].

For Burton, the concept of basic human needs (and the denial of those human needs) offered a convincing explanation as to the root causes of conflict³⁶. In Burton's view, every individual has nine basic human needs: food, shelter, safety, participation, personal development, security, distributive justice, and identity³⁷. The denial or frustration of these needs, he argued, would drive individuals (and groups) to try to satisfy these needs, and if unsuccessful, such denial would lead to conflict. Burton argued that the denial of three particular needs were most likely to lead in destructive and violent social conflicts (which he termed 'deep-rooted conflict'), were the needs for identity, security and distributive justice³⁸.

Burton further insisted that conflicts over human needs must be distinguished from conflicts over 'interests' and 'values'. In Burton's view, ideas, habits, customs and beliefs constitute 'values' and 'interests' which are 'acquired' through socialisation in particular social communities. According to Burton, basic human needs were inherent 'universal' needs that would be pursued in all circumstances and were non-negotiable. Interests and values, he argued, were 'wants', and were negotiable³⁹.

³⁶ Burton's Human Needs Theory was developed from Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954). This was a radical alternative to the prevailing explanations of war at the time, which tended to theorise conflict and war from a Hobbesian perspective. See: Maslow, A. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. Reading: Addison Wesley.

³⁷ Burton, J. W. (ed.) (1990). *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press.

³⁸ According to Burton, deep rooted conflicts can be contained or suppressed in the short term, but if basic human needs are not satisfied this will inevitably lead to overt conflict.

³⁹ See for example: Burton, J. W. (1990). *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*. London: Macmillan; Burton, J. W. (ed.) (1990). *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press; Burton, J. W. & Sandole, D. J. D. (1986). 'Generic Theory: The Basis of Conflict Resolution'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 2(4), 333-344; Burton, J. W. (1969). *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations*. London: Macmillan and New York: Free Press.

Burton's development of facilitated workshops brought together his ideas about human needs, communication and problem solving. These workshops were seen as a radical step forward in conflict resolution practice, and brought together adversaries in intractable and violent conflicts to jointly analyse their disagreements with the aim of developing solutions and 'win-win' outcomes. Burton's view was that 'neutral' third-party facilitators could use communication and 'problem solving' tools to 'filter' out 'false' assumptions, values, and cultural and ideological orientations, to see the roots of the conflict. He argues:

Probably the main task of the third party is to provide this filter. If the participants can use this filter, then they will be able to perceive realities accurately, to assess available theoretical and empirical knowledge and arrive at reliable conclusions⁴⁰.

Many of these workshops were deemed to be successful ways to resolve and manage conflict and led to a widespread proliferation of facilitated workshops to deal with conflict⁴¹, yet Burton's attempts to 'filter' out culture and politics from basic human needs were later criticized as a-historical, essentialist, de-contextualising, and de-politicising. Burton attempted to counter these critiques, and maintained that whilst basic human needs were indeed 'universal', he argued that under conditions of oppression and discrimination, the defence of values and interests, such as culture and politics, did become important to satisfying the basic human needs⁴². But as Rubenstein points

⁴⁰ Burton, J. W. (1990). *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*, London: Macmillan, p208.

⁴¹ These facilitated workshops are now also known as 'interactive conflict resolution', 'analytical problem solving' or 'facilitated dialogues', and usually grouped under 'Track Two' processes. See, for example Fisher, R. Ury, W, L. Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin Books.

⁴² See for example: Burton, J. W. (1990). *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*. London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martins Press; Burton, J. W. (ed.) (1990). *Conflict: Human*

out: 'such a radical separation between needs and satisfiers runs afoul of the fact that concepts like identity and security are not independently existing "universals" rather, they are ideas abstracted from a multiplicity of concrete satisfiers. If the satisfiers are culture-bound, therefore, so, too, are the needs'⁴³. Despite such criticism, Burtons emphasis on the need for transformation change and the structural need is still of real value for the field of conflict resolution.

The third generation of conflict resolution 'consolidators' emerged during the Cold War, from 1965-1985. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall suggest that this generation of scholars (which included some of the initial founders such as Galtung and Burton) attempted to both formulate and develop a deeper theoretical understanding of destructive conflict, and also attempted to apply a theoretical understanding to 'real' conflict at three levels- including international conflict, interstate conflict, and 'domestic' conflict.

Needs Theory London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press; Burton, J. W. & Sandole, D. J. D. (1987). 'Expanding the Debate on Generic Theory of Conflict Resolution: A Response to a Critique'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 3(1) 97-99; Burton, J. W. & Sandole, D. J. D. (1986). 'Generic Theory: The Basis of Conflict Resolution'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 2(4), 333-344; Burton, J. W. (1969). *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations*. London: Macmillan and New York: Free Press.

⁴³ Rubenstein, R. E. (2001). 'Basic Human Needs: the Next Steps in Theory Development' *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol 6(1).
http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Burton2.htm [accessed 12.01.05].

In the United States in particular, a strong focus on 'domestic' policy conflict led to the development and advancement of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and the processes of negotiation and mediation in family, community and, labour conflicts. At the international and interstate levels, a number of scholars also began to focus on the dynamics of a number of conflicts such as Lebanon, Israel, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland, which did not seem to fit the predominant Hobbesian and Clausewitzian views of conflict primarily emerging between states⁴⁴. These 'new' conflicts were variously defined as 'deep-rooted conflicts', 'intractable conflicts' and 'protracted social conflicts', and emphasized the emergence of these conflicts both within and across states⁴⁵.

Edward Azar, for instance, developed the idea of 'protracted social conflicts', and in relation to his own work in Lebanon, emphasized the multi-causal nature of these conflicts and the 'blurred demarcation between internal and external sources and actors'⁴⁶. In particular, Azar emphasised what he called the 'communal content' of conflict, i.e. the importance of identity groups in racial, religious, ethnic and cultural terms, and the significance of the relationships between these identity groups and the state⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Clausewitz, C. V. (1908). *On War*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd; Hobbes, T. (1994). *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1688*, Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

⁴⁵ See for example, Burton on deep-rooted conflicts. Kriesberg et al on 'intractable conflicts', and Azar on 'protracted social conflicts': Burton, J. W. (1987). *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict: A Handbook*. Lanham MD: University Press of America; Azar, E. E. (1990). *Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases*. Aldershot UK: Dartmouth Publishing; Kriesberg, L. (1997). 'The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field' In Zartman, W. & Rasmussen, J. L. (eds.) *Peacemaking in International Context: Methods and Techniques*. Washington: Institute of Peace Press.

⁴⁶ Azar, E. (1990). *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict*. Hampshire: Dartmouth Publishing, p6.

⁴⁷ Azar's work was significant in the development of a multi-levelled analysis of conflict. He coined the term 'protracted social conflict' to describe what appeared to be irresolvable

Azar, like Burton, also insisted upon the importance of basic human needs. Azar argued that the state and the nature of its governance were crucial factors in the satisfaction or deprivation of these needs, particularly the needs for security, the social recognition of identity, i.e. religion, culture, and the ability to self-determine. Azar also emphasised the importance of 'international linkages' between states, in terms of their economic, political and military relationships and interests. He suggested that weak states, which were characterized by fragile, incompetent, corrupt, and authoritarian governments, were likely to be influenced by other states, and reliant on their assistance. Such states, he argued, may also be unable, or unwilling to satisfy basic human needs. The deprivation of such needs would in turn lead to collective grievances, and a failure to address such grievances would (almost inevitably) lead to protracted and often violent conflict⁴⁸.

The work of Azar, and others, such as Adam Curle, Elise Boulding and Kenneth Boulding, developed a much deeper analytical understanding of the sources and patterns of intractable and deep-rooted conflicts, alongside the development of strategies to enable their transformation, such as negotiation, mediation and problem solving⁴⁹. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall suggest that the ideas of this third generation of conflict resolution scholars

conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, Sri Lanka, and Northern Ireland. See: Azar, E. (1985). 'Protracted Social Conflicts: Ten Propositions' *International Interactions* 12, 59-77; Azar, E. (1990). *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict*. Hampshire: Dartmouth Publishing. Azar, E. & Burton, J. W. (Eds.) (1986). *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.

⁴⁸ Azar, E. (1985). 'Protracted Social Conflicts': Ten Propositions' *International Interactions* 12, 59-77; Azar, E. (1990). *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict*. Hampshire: Dartmouth Publishing. Azar, E. & Burton, J. W. (Eds.) (1986). *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf. Curle, A. (1971). *Making Peace*. London: Tavistock Publications; Boulding, E. (ed.) (1992). *New Agendas for Peace Research: Conflict and Security Re-examined*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Boulding, K. E. (1989). *Three Faces of Power*, London: Sage.

have only recently become 'fashionable' in International Relation and Strategic Studies, where there is also now a focus on 'new wars', and 'internal' and 'ethnic' conflicts⁵⁰.

The work of Azar and other third generation scholars also served to establish dialogues with key decision makers during the cold war era, and contributed to the development of thinking around diplomacy, détente and confrontation. During this period there was also a significant international expansion of the field of conflict resolution, with conflict resolution centres and organisations becoming established around the world.

The fourth generation of 'Reconstruction' scholars (from 1985-2005), were influenced by the radically changing geopolitical landscape in the post- cold war period, and simultaneously became more focused on the significance of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes at different societal levels. John Paul Lederach, an influential Mennonite scholar-practitioner in conflict resolution, argued that scholars should expand the focus of conflict resolution work from elite and 'middle' level leaders to the work of 'local' and 'indigenous' community leaders at a 'grassroots' level (see figure 4)⁵¹. Lederach argued that in order to build peace processes, which were both legitimate and sustainable, it was imperative that conflict resolution scholars and practitioners worked across the three levels of society that he had defined. He also argued that conflict resolution approaches should be both appropriate and timely in relation to the different stages of the conflict cycle;

⁵⁰ Kaldor, M. (1999). *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

⁵¹ Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: USIP Press.

an idea which was further developed by Fisher and Keashley, and is often referred to as the 'contingency and complementarity' of conflict resolution⁵².

Lederach's emphasis on the importance of establishing a wide infrastructure for conflict resolution and peace processes constituted a significant shift away from the traditional emphasis on the top-down resolution of conflict the elite and diplomatic levels, towards a 'frame of reference that provides a focus on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships'⁵³. The significance of rebuilding human relationships in dealing with conflict, was heavily influenced by Robert Putnam's work on social capital, and used to develop the ideas of 'peace capital' and 'local capacities for peace' in conflict resolution work⁵⁴. Collectively, these approaches are now widely referred to as 'peacebuilding from below' and 'grassroots peacebuilding' and conflict resolution is also referred to as operating at three levels- at Tracks I, II, and III. In line with Lederach's approach, Track I refers to top level leaders within governments, and international and regional organisation such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank, Track II refers to middle level leaders within International NGOs, private business and charitable organisations; and Track III refers to grassroots leaders and local community organisations⁵⁵.

⁵² Fisher, R. & Keashly, L. (1991). 'The potential complementarity of mediation and consultation within a contingency model of third party intervention', *Journal of Peace Research*, 28 (1), 29-42.

⁵³ Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: USIP Press.

⁵⁴ See: Putnam, R, D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

⁵⁵ Ramsbotham et al argue that to transform violent conflict, efforts must be made simultaneously at all of these levels, horizontally and vertically, to enable conflicts to be de-escalated and transformed.

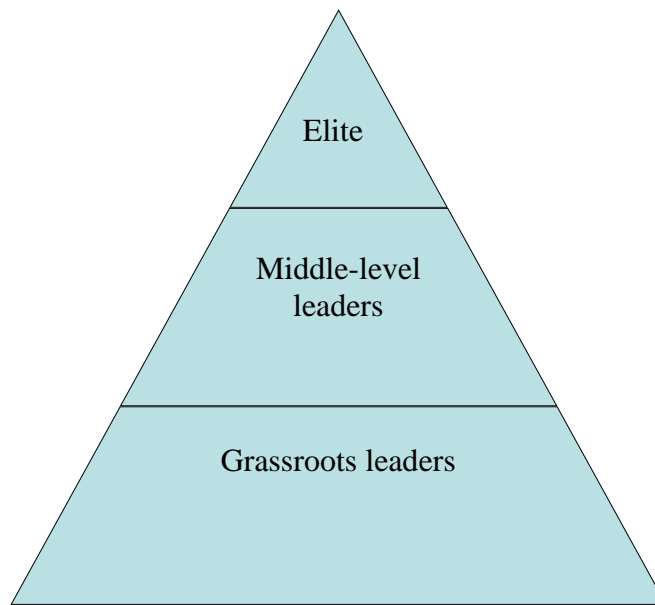


Figure 4. Lederach 1997⁵⁶

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005) also point to a fifth generation of 'universalizing' conflict resolution scholars, who draw on discourse and counter-hegemonic varieties of critical theory to develop the field in the direction of a 'cosmopolitan conflict resolution'. This, they argue will extend the field's knowledge and understanding of global, situated conflict processes from different cultures and experiences, to develop an 'institutionalized global competence'⁵⁷.

They suggest that this will be a challenging time, particularly in the context of an increasingly technological world. They argue that the field of conflict

⁵⁶Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: USIP Press.

⁵⁷ Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p 329.

resolution is already being radically affected by communications technology and the creation of global spaces on the internet, which both contributes to the erosion and diminution of the traditional boundaries between international, national and local environments of engagement and the creation of virtual cosmopolitan peacebuilding environments⁵⁸. At the same time, they warn that new technologies are being used to advance military capabilities which threaten to usher in a new era of 'automated war'⁵⁹. These capabilities, they suggest, are likely to pose significant challenges to the ways in which we understand and respond to conflict.

Each of these generations of conflict resolution have attracted criticisms, particularly in terms of the use of 'universalising' assumptions and the tendency to exclude culture and gender. Below I outline three areas of critiques of Conflict Resolution; which loosely fall into three thematic areas to suggest that Conflict Resolution as an academic field has paid insufficient attention to culture and gender, and has failed to problematise its foundations which rest upon the ideas of Modernity and The Enlightenment⁶⁰. These areas of critique overlap, although taken individually or together, they

⁵⁸Ibid.p330.

⁵⁹Ibid.p330.

⁶⁰ Tom Woodhouse has responded to a number of critics of the field including: David Shearer, who questions whether consensus promoting strategies, based on mediation and negotiation is appropriate in all conflicts, and argues that particular types of conflict are likely to be resistant to conflict consensus type interventions; and Mark Duffield who has criticised conflict resolution as a new form of western imperialist intervention. Woodhouse contends that these critics (who he notes are from 'outside' the field) have not seriously engaged with the literature on the theory and practice of conflict resolution and superficially represent the work within the field. Woodhouse argues that conflict resolution has 'moved beyond reliance on a western model and become a global practice', and suggests that conflict resolution does 'not claim to be universally effective', and 'is more robust and self-questioning than many of its critics recognise'. The critics I refer to in this chapter comprise of scholars from within the field of conflict resolution itself, and as such, their critiques are developed from a deep understanding of the conflict resolution literature. See: Woodhouse, T. (1999). *International Conflict Resolution: Some Critiques and a Response*, Working Paper 1, Bradford: Centre for Conflict Resolution, Department of Peace Studies.

suggest the need for a profound and critical rethinking of the field if Conflict Resolution is to be of relevance for the aims that it sets itself. Whilst some of this critical re-thinking has already begun, particularly in relation to culture and gender, the practice of research remains relatively untouched by the critical thinking that has taken place in theory and practice. A discussion of this will follow in the next chapter.

Culture Critiques

Paul Salem was one of the first scholars to highlight the absence of culture in his persuasive critique of what he calls 'Western Conflict Resolution' (hereafter WCR) and the assumptions underlying 'universal', 'generic' approaches to conflict from a 'Non-Western' Arab perspective⁶¹. Salem's main point of critique is that cultural differences are effectively ignored within WCR, despite significant diversity between different cultures in terms of political, social, and philosophical foundations. Meanings and value judgements, he argues, 'only make sense from within one cultural framework or another', and this poses significant problems for the application of 'universal' Conflict Resolution⁶².

Salem contends that WCR is value laden from a 'Western' cultural perspective and imbued with a Christian theology which at its core privileges

⁶¹ Salem acknowledges the problems of essentialism and reductionism in his critique, but problematically, goes on to draw margins around 'Western' and 'Non-Western' cultures. He also makes distinctions between the 'modernized' 'West' and the 'pre-modern/modernizing' 'Arab world' as if they were homogenous monolithic cultures, existing in isolation. These problematic assumptions are acknowledged here, and will be discussed later in more detail.

⁶² Salem, P. (1993) 'A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol 9 (4), p368.

peace over justice and morality, where peace is deemed to be 'good', and war and violent conflict are 'bad'. Salem argues that this normative perspective is not necessarily reflected in other cultures, including Jewish and Islamic cultures. He illustrates this point with reference to the 'Arab world', which, he argues, sees revolutionary change as necessary in the struggle to secure economic, social and political change, and where violence is seen as an unfortunate, but almost inevitable 'side effect' of change. Understood in these terms he argues: 'war in itself is not shameful, nor is peace necessarily and always good.'⁶³

Salem also criticises what he sees as the peculiar concern with the elimination and avoidance of physical violence during conflict. He argues that WCR often makes crude distinctions between violence and non-violence, and suggests that this is related to the 'comfort culture' of the West, and the assumption that physical pain is 'bad'. He questions whether 'physical pain (is) indeed more painful than non physical pain?' Salem contends that in Non-Western cultures non-physical pain and suffering in the form of the loss of honour and loss of face are regarded as much worse than physical pain and suffering, and in contrast to 'the West', physical pain may often be highly regarded as a 'means for moral or spiritual purification or a necessarily ordained component of life'⁶⁴. As such, he suggests that the emphasis on eliminating and avoiding physical violence, and the privileging of non-violence over justice and morality in WCR demonstrates a profoundly

⁶³ Ibid.p362.

⁶⁴ Ibid.p364.

'Western' centric cultural worldview⁶⁵.

Moreover, the notion of working for peace as an inherent good in itself, Salem argues, may be problematic in different cultural contexts. He suggests that Non-Western 'outsiders' see WCR as a means to preserve a 'pseudo imperialist world order', with conflict resolution techniques regarded as 'stratagems for defusing opposition to and rejection of the status quo'⁶⁶. As such, Salem insists that the promotion and deployment of such strategies in Non-Western cultural contexts becomes highly questionable, particularly, he argues, as the West is 'self-satisfied with its own position in the world'⁶⁷. However, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall refute this suggestion and argue that conflict resolution is not 'an enterprise that simply reinforces the status quo to the advantage of the-haves to the disadvantage of the have-nots'⁶⁸.

Salem goes on to critique what he also sees as Freudian and postmodern influences within WCR. Freud, he suggests, has profoundly influenced WCR, in the formulation of some conflict resolution strategies, which regard conflict as related to 'internal', psychological processes. Salem suggests that some cultures may find it difficult to understand this conceptualisation of conflict, i.e. that conflict is caused by 'perceptions, attitudes and behaviour patterns exhibited by autonomous individuals' rather than legitimate material and

⁶⁵ Ibid p364.

⁶⁶ Ibid.p362.

⁶⁷ Ibid.p364.

⁶⁸ Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Second Edition. London: Polity, p331.

social injustices and grievances⁶⁹. Moreover, the emphasis on 'opening up' and discussing private perceptions and feelings, as advocated in some conflict resolution techniques which focus on the importance of 'internal' processes, may be profoundly counter-productive in some Non-Western cultures, where Salem argues there is an emphasis on formality and the strict preservation of formal roles and public relationships in conflict processes.

Postmodernism, Salem argues, has also had a degree of influence on WCR. This influence has instilled a sense of 'vague relativism' in WCR which he argues underpins the tendency to try to help opposing parties in conflicts to re-perceive their positions, and move from what is known as a zero-sum situation to a non-zero-sum situation, to seek 'win-win' outcomes⁷⁰. Salem contends that in Non-Western cultures this is problematic, as there tends to be strict moral interpretations of what (and who) is 'right' and 'wrong' which are much more likely to result in 'win-lose' outcomes. Salem further points to the problematic notion that all parties to the conflict have 'something to lose, something to preserve, something to gain', which ignores the 'real have-nots', i.e. those who really have nothing to lose. This, he argues, fundamentally undermines the idea that conflict can be negotiated and settled on the understanding that all parties have something to lose⁷¹.

⁶⁹ Salem, P. (1993) 'A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol 9 (4), 366.

⁷⁰ Zero-sum game theory is an important part of traditional theorising within Conflict Resolution. The task of conflict resolution practitioners here is seen as helping parties to move beyond perceptions of interests that are (usually) diametrically opposed. The possible outcomes are seen to be win-lose (one party wins, the other loses), win-win (both parties win), and compromise (both parties split the gains and losses). For more on Conflict Resolution game theory and concepts see: Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Second Edition. Cambridge UK: Polity Press.

⁷¹ Salem, P. (1993) 'A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol 9 (4), 369.

The use of 'neutral' third party mediators in conflicts such as this also becomes problematic here, because, as Salem observes, authority figures such as village elders and community leaders, play an important traditional role in arbitrating what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Thus attempts to find solutions to ensure that all 'win', not only risks undermining traditional cultural conflict management processes, but also simply fails to make sense in Non-Western cultures⁷².

Salem concludes his critique with the suggestion that WCR theories and processes could be 'transported' to the Arab world and other Non-Western cultures if they underwent a process of 'cultural adaptation'⁷³. Yet given the scope of Salem's critique, this suggestion is somewhat surprising. From the perspective of cultural theorists, this also vastly underestimates the complexity and variability of culture to assume a reified notion of culture⁷⁴. Salem's suggestion, for example, seems to assume that knowledge of culture can be simply acquired, and translated into WCR models and approaches. This also assumes that conflict resolution techniques can be somehow disembedded from their existing frameworks of meaning, and transplanted into another by simply adjusting or adding 'cultural' content. Therefore, whilst I would argue that Salem's suggestion is problematic for the reasons outlined

⁷² Salem, P. (1993) 'A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective'. *Negotiation Journal*, Vol 9 (4), 365.

⁷³ Ibid.p369.

⁷⁴ Salem emphasises diversity between cultures, but assumes culture within these fixed notions of 'Western' and 'Non-Western' to be homogenous, and as relatively uniformly distributed among members of cultural groups, with individuals to assumed to only 'have' or 'belong' to one culture. Jenkins instead argues against such reified notions of culture, and regards cultures as: 'complex repertoires which people experience, use, learn and 'do' in their daily lives, within which they construct an ongoing sense of themselves and an understanding of their fellows.' In other words, cultures evolve, change, and are transformed through interactions with other cultures. See, for example: Eagleton. T. (2000) *The Idea of Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, and Jenkins. R (2008). *Rethinking Ethnicity. Arguments and Explorations*, Second Edition. London: Sage. P14.

above, the content of his critique is significant, and showed up 'glaring cultural discontinuities' in the field of conflict resolution⁷⁵. Following a growing number of critiques, the 'culture question' became 'the most important single challenge facing the field' and pushed culture to the top of the conflict resolution agenda in the 1990's⁷⁶.

This prompted a significant amount of work in this area, with some scholars revisiting founding works within the field. Väyrynen, for example, radically critiqued John Burton's Human Needs Theory⁷⁷. She argues that Burton's work, based on the idea of socio-biological based human needs leads to the denial of how culture is constituted and constituting in the social world and reality. Culture, therefore, she insists, is crucial in understanding how identity is created, how reality is perceived, and how language is used in the social construction of human existence, and human conflict. From this position she argues there is no culture-free place from which to view or 'filter' conflict, as Burton suggests⁷⁸.

Lederach's work focused on conflict resolution practices, and advocated 'elicitive' approaches across cultures to conflict, which emphasized the need

⁷⁵ Miall, H, Ramsbotham, O. Woodhouse, T. (1999). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*. Cambridge UK: Polity Press. p62.

⁷⁶ Also see, for example: Abu-Nimer, M. (1996). 'Conflict Resolution in an Islamic Context' *Peace and Change*, 21(1), 35-52.

⁷⁷ Väyrynen, T. (2001). *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the work of John Burton*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

⁷⁸ Burton suggests that culture can be 'filtered' away from our understanding and analysis of conflict. He argues: 'what is required in a problem-solving forum is a 'filter' to screen out false assumptions and implications from existing knowledge, cultural and ideological orientations and personal prejudices. Probably the main task of the third party is to provide this filter. If the participants can use this filter, then they will be able to perceive realities accurately, to assess available theoretical and empirical knowledge and arrive at reliable conclusions' See: Burton, J. (1990) *Conflict: Resolution and Provention*, London: Macmillan, p208; Also see Väyrynen, T. (2001) *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the work of John Burton*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

to use the common-sense cultural knowledge and expertise of parties involved in conflict alongside 'prescriptive' (expert) knowledge⁷⁹. Avruch also underlined the importance of conflict resolution practitioners developing 'cultural sensitivity' and knowledge, and paying attention to locally held cultural meaning about conflict processes (ethnoconflict theory) and locally held practices (ethnopraxis)⁸⁰.

Gender critiques

In a similar way that critics argued that culture was missing from conflict resolution, it has also been argued that the field has been 'gender blind'⁸¹. Cordula Reimann for example, has suggested that the field is founded upon a 'gendered discourse', despite claims that the foundations of conflict resolution are 'universal'⁸². Drawing on her critique of John Burton's human needs theory, she argues:

The underlying assumption is that while gender is formally excluded from Burton's human needs theory, it is nevertheless (omni)present and inherent in its construction and application. While most conflict resolution scholars like Burton do not make their gender-blindness explicit, all scholars base their work on particular understanding of gender relations in the private and public sphere and notions of masculinity and femininity. This is to say that gender as social relations is already - albeit implicitly -

⁷⁹ Lederach, J, P. (1995). *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

⁸⁰ Avruch, K.. (1998). *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, Washington DC: United States: Institute of Peace Press.

⁸¹ Reimann uses a two-fold definition of gender, which views gender as both a social construction of relations between women and men, and as an analytical category to make 'invisible' gender-blind spots, categories and perspectives 'visible'. See: Reimann, C. (2002). *All you Need is Love- and What about Gender? Engendering Burton's Human Needs Theory*. Working Paper 10. Bradford: Centre for Conflict Resolution University of Bradford.

⁸² Reimann defines androcentrism as 'male-centredness'. See: Reimann, C. (2002). *All you Need is Love- and What about Gender? Engendering Burton's Human Needs Theory*. Working Paper 10. Bradford: Centre for Conflict Resolution University of Bradford.

inherent in malestream theory and practice and constitutes the 'secret glossary' or the 'tacit frames'. This makes gender simultaneously absent and present in human needs theory⁸³.

The simultaneous 'absence and presence' of gender in Conflict Resolution theory which Reimann highlights is significant for two main reasons. Firstly, it recognises the implicit androcentric gender assumptions within conflict resolution theory; and secondly, it recognises that being blind to these problematic assumptions has meant that male norms, behaviours and experiences have been taken to represent the essential reality of conflict environments. In turn, these assumptions have produced what Skelsbaek & Smith argue are 'gross distortions of reality' which significantly disadvantage women in conflict environments⁸⁴.

Reimann and others including Boulding, Elstain, Enloe and Peterson, for example, have argued that women are often targeted in conflict and war in different ways than men, including for sexual violence, rape, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy⁸⁵. Pankhurst has also argued that women can experience 'gender backlashes' which force women 'back' into patriarchal roles if wider gender roles have been created during conflict⁸⁶.

Without recognition of these gender differences, critics have argued that

⁸³ Emphasis in the original. See: Reimann, C. (2002). *All you Need is Love- and What about Gender? Engendering Burton's Human Needs Theory*. Working Paper 10. Bradford, Centre for Conflict Resolution: University of Bradford, p1.

⁸⁴ Skelsbaek, I. Smith, D. (2001). 'Introduction', In Skelsbaek, I. Smith, D. (eds.) *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, London: Sage, p1.

⁸⁵ See for example: Elstain, J. B. (1987). *Women and War*. New York, Littlefield; Enloe, C. (1990). *Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Peterson, V. S. (ed.) (1992). *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)visions of International Relations Theory*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications; Byrne, B. (1996). *Gender, Conflict and Development*. Vol. 1: Overview; *BRIDGE Report No. 34*, Sussex: Institute of Development Studies.

⁸⁶ Pankhurst, D. (2000). *Women, Gender and Peacebuilding*. Working Paper 5. Centre for Conflict Resolution, Department of Peace Studies. University of Bradford, p6.

'universal' or 'neutral' approaches are likely to increase these gender disadvantages.

This has prompted a significant attempt to explicitly 'engender' the field in terms of theory, analysis, and practice⁸⁷. These attempts have often drawn on fields outside conflict resolution, where there is an extensive literature on war, women and gender relationships, particularly in International Relations and Development⁸⁸. This has included efforts to make women 'visible' in conflict and conflict resolution processes, along with an emphasis on understanding the specific gender experiences and needs of women affected by violent conflict⁸⁹. At the same time, there have been attempts to move beyond simplistic and essentialist views of women as passive victims and peacemakers in war, to more complex and nuanced views of women, for example, as agents of change, as supporters of violent activities, and as active perpetrators of violence in conflict areas⁹⁰. There have also been some attempts to increase the participation of women in peace and conflict

⁸⁷ See, for example: Pankhurst, D. & Pearce, J. (1997) 'Engendering the analysis of Conflict: perspectives from the South', In Afshar, H. (ed). *Women and Empowerment*. London: Routledge, P155-63; Reimann, C. (2002). *All you Need is Love- and What about Gender? Engendering Burton's Human Needs Theory*. Working Paper 10. Bradford: Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Bradford.

⁸⁸ See for example: Elsthain, J, B. (1987). *Women and War*, New York, Littlefield; Enloe, C. (1990). *Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley, University of California Press; Peterson, V. S. (ed.) (1992). *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)visions of International Relations Theory*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications; Byrne, B. (1996). *Gender, Conflict and Development*. Vol. 1: Overview; *BRIDGE Report No. 34*, Sussex: Institute of Development Studies.

⁸⁹ See, for example: Pankhurst, D. & Pearce, J. (1997) 'Engendering the analysis of Conflict: perspectives from the South', In Afshar, H. (ed). *Women and Empowerment*. London: Routledge, P155-63.

⁹⁰ See, for example: Moser, C. & Clark, F. (eds.) (2001). *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, London: Zed Books; Jacobs, S. Jacobson, R. Marchbank, J. (eds.) (2000). *States of Conflict. Gender, Violence and Resistance*, London: Zed Books; Kumar, K. (ed.) (2001). *Women and Civil War. Impact, Organizations, and Action*, London: Lynne Rienner; Meintjes, S. Pillay, A. & Turshen, M. (eds.) (2002). *The Aftermath Women in Post-conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books.

decision making processes, in tracks I (government) to III (grassroots)⁹¹, along with concerted efforts to 'mainstream' gender within policy making institutions⁹². There is a danger, however, in assuming that these changes will inevitably reduce disadvantage for women in conflict environments, and at a wider level there is also concern that significant changes within conflict resolution requires change at a much wider societal level. As Skelsbaek & Smith argue:

The point is not to adjust conflict resolution so that '*and gender*' is inserted at appropriate points' but rather to understand that ignoring the gender dimensions of social reality makes it impossible to address crucial elements of conflict resolution⁹³.

Modernity Critiques

Following the emergence of culture and gender critiques, a range of what I have come to call 'modernity critiques', have also emerged within the field of conflict resolution. Modernity critiques, which draw on critical theory, postmodernism and social constructionism, acknowledge that the aims of

⁹¹ Conflict Resolution is often conceptualised as operating at three levels, Track I, II, and III. Track I refers to top level leaders within governments, and international and regional organisation such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank. Track II refers to middle level leaders within International NGOs, private business and charitable organisations. Track III refers to grassroots leaders and local community organisations. Ramsbotham et al argue that to transform violent conflict, efforts must be made simultaneously at all of these levels, horizontally and vertically, to enable conflicts to be de-escalated and transformed. See: Ramsbotham, O, Woodhouse T, Miall H (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts*, Second Edition, London: Polity Press, p26.

⁹² It is important to note that whilst gender is sometimes assumed to refer exclusively to women, the relationships between boys and men, and their socialisation in terms of masculinities is also important in terms of their impact on women. See, for example: El-Bushra, J. (1998). *Gendered Interpretations of Conflict: Research Issues For Cope*, London: ACORD; Longwe, S, H. (1991), 'Gender Awareness: The Missing Element in the Third World Development Project', in Wallace, T. & March, C. (eds.), *Changing Perceptions. Writings on Gender and Development*, Oxford: Oxfam Publications, pp. 149-157.

⁹³ Skelsbaek, I. Smith, D. (2001). 'Introduction', In Skelsbaek, I. Smith, D. (eds.) *Gender, Peace and Conflict*. London: Sage, p2.

conflict resolution are emancipatory, but broadly argue that the field is founded on the problematic assumptions of Modernity, and is therefore unable to tackle the conflicts it seeks to resolve⁹⁴. Jabri has also argued that conflict resolution might even serve to 'reproduce the exclusionist, violent discourses and practice which perpetuate it'⁹⁵.

One of the key problems that modernity critiques raise is that attempts to 'scientifically' analyse, explain and resolve conflict actively reconstitute, reorganise and fix violent and chaotic warzones in ways which re-present conflict as a phenomena which can be predicted, controlled, and (with enough study) eventually eliminated. In this spirit, Fetherston argues:

Conflict resolution as part of the modern project comes with baggage that is made invisible because of its seeming 'rightness'. Set within an unproblematised version of a discourse of modernity, conflict resolution assumes that we can 'know'- objectify, make rational, understand-violent conflict to such an extent that we can have power over it- solve the problem of it. Eventually, á la enlightenment, violent conflict will cease to exist, the implication being that we will all 'come to understand' both the cause and solution of violent conflict and re-arrange practices, institutions, social meaning accordingly. Parties in conflict become aware and are enlightened by the prescribed knowing and rational processes of conflict resolution⁹⁶.

Here the 'invisible baggage' of Conflict Resolution is made (more) visible. This is coupled with the problematisation of the 'rational', 'universal', and 'emancipatory' claims of Conflict Resolution, which arise from its reliance on

⁹⁴ By 'critical', modernity critics tend to refer to Critical theory derived from the Frankfurt School, and the work of theorists including Maz Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse. Max Horkheimer first proposed the distinction between 'critical' and 'traditional' theory. See: Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* trans O'Connell, M, J. New York: Seabury Press.

⁹⁵ Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on Violence*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p180.

⁹⁶ Fetherston, A, B. (2000). 'Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks' In Woodhouse, T. Ramsbotham, O. *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution*. London: Frank Cass, p197.

the assumptions of Modernity. Fetherston goes on to argue that the field will rarely get beyond the 'RE-solution' of problems, which will have to be 'RE-solved' again later⁹⁷.

Vivienne Jabri makes a similar point, although argues that efforts to engage in the analysis and resolution of conflict in ways that are 'neutral', 'consistent' and 'systematic' are also profoundly de-politicising:

The social sciences have, since their inception as systematic fields of inquiry, sought to somehow capture the notion of change, render it not just subject to explanation, but to predictability and ultimately control. These aspirations of explanation and control come to acquire particular salience when placed in the context of social conflict, for here we see an added impetus, one that seeks to predict the directionality of change in relation to conflict so that some intervention might take place either to facilitate movement towards resolution or to perpetuate or promote conflict. Each of these elements – explanation, control, and the directionality of change in relation to conflict – is subject to controversy and is hence steeped in political contestation. It is this distinctly political aspect of conceptualising the relationship between conflict and change that is missing⁹⁸.

This 'de-politicisation', Jabri suggests, occurs in conscious efforts to professionalise and universalise the field, which works to simultaneously 'abstract' and 'extract' the work of conflict resolution from its political and social context so that its language, approaches and 'toolkits' are rendered 'neutral'; ready to be dropped and used in any environment or context where conflict might occur. Jabri also argues that the field further assumes a 'rational actor' model of human agency, which takes for granted that parties (and resolvers) to conflict are 'rational', rather than political, in their engagement in conflict, and in resolution processes:

⁹⁷ Ibid.p196.

⁹⁸ Jabri, V. (2006). Revisiting Change and Conflict: On Underlying Assumptions and the De-Politicisation of Conflict Resolution www.berghof-handbook.net [accessed 23.10.08] .

The extraction of conflict from its socio-political setting constitutes the de-politicising move...the third-party resolutionary is assumed to possess a language that is managerial to the core, aiming to solve the problem at hand, and hence not implicated. However, we know that the language of analysis is not simply a mirror-image of the world “out there”, but actively constructs the world, in its choice of parties to a conflict, its understanding of the issues, the historical trajectory to a conflict...If the Bosnian conflict, for example, was so represented, as it indeed was, then the language of Milosevic, Karadjic, Mladic, and Tudjman was simply taken as given, interpolating the populations involved in the ethnic terms that these leaders, all in one way or another implicated in war crimes, sought in their efforts to create ethnically defined, supremacist political entities. It is in this sense that conflict analysis, even in its most “sanitised” form, is always somehow implicated, always situated politically, even where it seeks to modify taken-for-granted constructions of a conflict⁹⁹.

These ‘de-politicising moves’ are also re-produced ‘through the representations of observers, conflict researchers and third parties attempting mediation’¹⁰⁰ in which case, conflict resolution becomes caught up in the re-production of the very discourses which the field seeks to prevent, resolve or transform¹⁰¹. From different perspectives, Jabri and Fetherston both suggest that conflict resolution is significantly limited in its emancipatory potential. In Jabri’s view ‘while the study of conflict resolution provides valuable insights into the transformation of specific conflicts, it has not challenged the discursive and institutional continuities implicated in the legitimation of violent human interaction’¹⁰². What is needed, they argue, are critical approaches to conflict resolution which open the field up to critical questioning, and a consideration of the taken-for granted assumptions which underpin both the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p181.

¹⁰¹ Also see, for example, Oliver Richmond, who argues that conflict resolution is operationalized in ways that are predicated on the problematic idea of ‘liberal peace’.

¹⁰² Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p146.

practice and study of conflict resolution. The challenge this poses for scholars, is to develop critical and transformatory approaches and practices which are cognisant of the deeply contested political nature of conflict resolution, and the performative nature of the field.

Conclusion

Conflict Resolution as an academic discipline evolved out of Peace Research, and the recognition of an urgent need to develop greater understanding of the causes and dynamics of violent and destructive conflict. Conflict Resolution developed numerous ways to understand and respond to such conflicts, using tools such as conflict analysis, conflict mapping, peace and conflict impact assessments, and processes such as mediation, and negotiation. The field has developed extensively in theoretical and practical terms over the last fifty to sixty years, with thousands of books on conflict resolution issues, a burgeoning number of academic peace and conflict departments around the world, and the increasingly widespread use of conflict resolution language in governmental and international policy circles, and in 'everyday' language.

This Chapter has provided historical context in terms of how conflict resolution theory and practice have evolved over the past century as an academic discipline, in ways which have helped to structure and define how conflict resolution is practiced and researched. This is important in terms of the argument that is developed in the next chapter, which moves on to the

knowledge making and research practices within conflict resolution. I have also argued that there are three significant areas of debate and critique within the field, concerning gender, culture and the crisis of modernity, which suggest that Conflict Resolution as an academic field is: theoretically poor; de-politicised (and de-politicising); and a 'Western' project of modernity. These areas of critique intersect with each other and, taken together, suggest the need for a profound and critical rethinking of the field. This whole thesis is, in some ways, an extension of these critiques, and adds to their concerns about the discipline itself. These critiques have therefore provided the basis for the discussions of conflict resolution research that are at the heart of this thesis.

The next chapter is concerned with conflict and peace research. It will be argued that conflict resolution scholars have been largely preoccupied with developing understanding and knowledge about the processes, dynamics, patterns and mechanisms of managing conflict, and I believe to the detriment of the field, has overlooked how its research and knowledge making practices help to (problematically) constitute the field itself. Moreover, it will be argued that conflict resolution research practices remain firmly fixed in the theoretical assumptions of modernity and 'normal science', and as such, academic attempts to 'know' complex conflicts, wars, and post-war realities tends to use approaches which re-presents them in (relatively) rational, linear, and coherent ways. It will be argued that this not only poses ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically problems, but also has political and ethical implications, which will be explored later in this thesis.

Chapter Three

Research in Conflict and Peace Studies

Understanding conflict is widely thought to be a crucial aspect in the prevention of violent conflict and war, and undertaking research is considered to be one of the most significant means through which such understanding can be achieved. Conflict Resolution scholars have therefore long been interested in researching conflict, and in particular, theorizing the causes and dynamics of conflict. Yet despite the critiques of the field outlined in the last chapter, conflict resolution scholars have largely failed to develop their research approaches informed by critical theory, postmodernism(s) or feminist theorizing, which have had a significant influence on research in other social science disciplines and elsewhere.

The aim of this chapter is to consider conflict resolution and its research practices, and the widespread reliance on what Jutila et al, term 'normal science'¹. It will be argued that despite research 'successes' within conflict resolution, the focus on 'normal science' approaches and a turn towards quantitative mathematical modelling within the field are problematic for two main reasons. Firstly, in the realm of post-war contexts, 'normal science' approaches have a tendency to operate as problem solving devices, where the irrationality and chaos of war is transformed into rational science outputs, which, I argue, rest on default positions of unproblematised deductive positivist science. For this reason, it has become possible to report on the findings and outcomes of research, without acknowledging just how far that

¹ Jutila, M. Pehkonen, S. Väyrynen, T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 36(3), 623- 640.

knowledge is underpinned by largely positivist epistemological and ontological assumptions, and by the subjectivities of researchers themselves. Secondly, such default research approaches have helped to define the limits of what is considered 'acceptable' knowledge within the field; and often excludes the emotional, sensory, and often intangible, aftermaths of war. This is one of my main contentions in this thesis, and in Chapters five and six I develop this argument to explore the legacy of researchers in post-war Bosnia, where logical and reflexive-free research approaches fail to consider how research has affected the lives of those who have been researched; and in chapter seven, where I take sensory journeys into the visual aspects of post-war Bosnia. It is these aspects of research in post-war contexts that I am most interested in pursuing.

Research in Conflict Resolution

An often stated aim of conflict resolution research is to learn from and about conflict, in order to improve the efficacy, timeliness, and success of conflict resolution interventions and strategies, and ultimately, to contribute to building peace and preventing future violence². Research in conflict resolution also exists as a crucial element of the relationship between theory and practice. Larissa Fast, for example, views theory, practice and research, as integral parts of the applied science of conflict resolution (see figure 1). Theory, she points out, describes and explains conflict sources and

² Abigail Fuller identifies two specific ways in which peace and conflict researchers openly contribute to peace. First, through contributions to the body of knowledge of the causes, consequences and dynamics of conflict, so that actors can be supported in the prevention and resolution of conflict; and second, by utilizing methodologies which help those struggling for peace and justice. See: Fuller, A, F. (1992). 'Towards an Emancipatory Methodology for Peace Research' *Peace and Change*, Vol 17(3), 287.

dynamics; practice encompasses the intervention and resolution phases in conflict, and research closes the existing gaps between theory and practice³. Fast's model creates an interdependent relationship of theory, practice and research with 'mutually reinforcing arrows between theory and practice and with research at the bottom as a type of feedback loop influencing the other two'⁴.

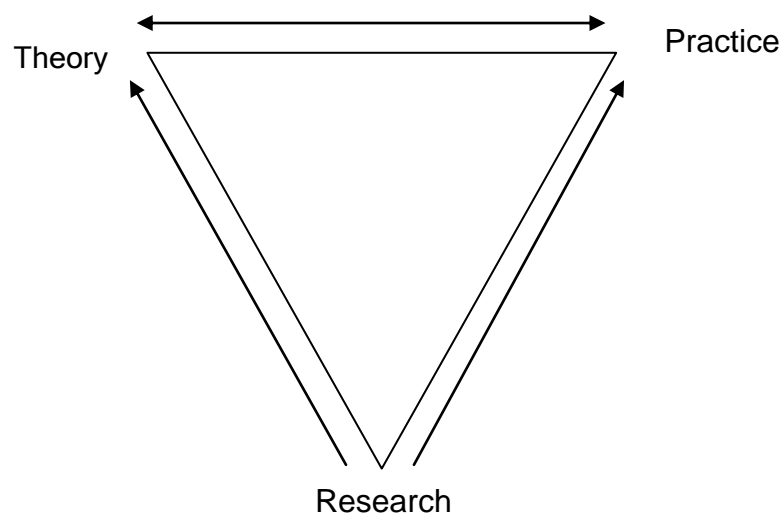


Figure 1⁵.

Research then, feeds into theory and practice; and theory and practice feed into each other, and yet seemingly, in this model at least, there is little or no feedback from theory and practice into research. In essence, this is a hypothetical model of a positive feedback loop, the kind of model that is frequently found in systems theory, including biological systems, electronic and engineering systems, as well as in conflict resolution 'dynamical systems theory'⁶. In simple terms, a positive feedback loop exists when one

³ Fast, L. (2002). 'Frayed Edges: Exploring the Boundaries of Conflict Resolution' In *Peace& Change*, Vol 27(4), 529.

⁴ *Ibid.*p530.

⁵ *Ibid.*p530.

⁶ See for example: Coleman, P, T. Bui-Wrzosinska, L. Vallacher, R, R. Nowak, A. (2006) 'Protracted Conflicts as Dynamical Systems' In Schneider, A, K. & Honeyman, C. (Eds.). *The*

element stimulates another along its current trajectory, to act as an enabling element, with the general effect of accelerating a particular process⁷.

What is interesting about Fast's model is that it reveals an important and problematic assumption, which is helpful to a wider consideration of conflict resolution research. Namely, that research is assumed to exist a-priori to theory and practice. This reflects the wider field, where there is also a tendency to treat research in peace and conflict studies as unproblematic. Galtung for instance, argues:

There is no reason to assume anything in particular about data in peace studies, like data in social sciences in general, they should be validly and reliably collected, processed and analyzed⁸.

The assumption that social science methods can be used unproblematically in peace and conflict research shows the extent to which research approaches have become taken for granted or normal practice, and also underlines how the research is viewed in terms of the positivist concepts of validity and reliability. This requires further explanation, and a brief detour through a discussion of epistemology and ontology and research paradigms.

Epistemology, Ontology and Research Paradigms

Epistemology, defined in simple terms, relates to theories of knowledge, and the study of how we know what we know. Epistemological issues then, relate to questions about the creation and origins of knowledge, and the nature of

Desk Reference for the Experienced Negotiator. Washington DC: American Bar Association, pp61-74.

⁷ Lewin, R. (1992). *Complexity: Life at the Edge of Chaos*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁸ See: Galtung. J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilisation*. London: Sage, p13.

the relationship between the knower and what is (or can be) known. For instance, how are researchers able to produce knowledge that is considered to be of a sufficient standard and justifiable within the realms of particular inquiries? In a similar way, ontology, relates to theories about existence, being, and the nature of reality. That is, ontological questions encompass issues about what it means for something to exist, and the nature of the relationship between researchers and reality. For instance, how are researchers able to gain access to reality? And how is it possible to establish the existence of particular phenomena within the realms of inquiry? These are essentially questions about the ways in which we understand and make sense of the world.

Carried into research, epistemological and ontological questions shape the foundations of research paradigms (i.e. basic sets of beliefs about the world), and strongly influence the actual process of studying the social world in terms of methodology and methods. Indeed, methodology for Harvey is the point at which 'method, theory and epistemology coalesce in an overt way in the process of directly investigating specific instances within the social world'.⁹

Guba and Lincoln outline four overarching research paradigms in qualitative research, which include: Positivism, Postpositivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism (see figure 2)¹⁰. Each of these paradigms diverges in their sense of how knowledge and reality are understood and approximated, shifting from the natural science based assumptions of Positivism and

⁹ Harvey, L. (1990). *Critical Social Research*. London: Routledge, p1.

¹⁰ Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues' In Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Leavy, P. (eds.) *Approaches to Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp105-117.

Postpositivism, to the context and value mediated assumptions of Critical Theory and Constructivism. What is important for Conflict resolution is that these paradigms determine not only the processes of studying the social world, but also provide the foundations on which we are able to know and make claims about peace and conflict, and consequently influences what we are able to say about how to intervene in conflict, and what peace should look like.

	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism- 'real' reality but apprehendable	Critical realism 'real' reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism, virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural economic, ethnic and gender values; crystallized over time	Relativism- local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses	Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses	Dialogical/ dialectical	Hermeneutical/ dialectical

Figure 2: Research Paradigms¹¹

In the relatively short period that conflict and peace studies has established itself as an academic discipline, Jutila, Pehkonen and Väyrynen argue that conflict and peace studies has moved from what they call its 'normative

¹¹ Ibid.pp105-117.

beginnings' to an 'institutionalised normal science'¹². That is, conflict and peace research has diverged from initial intentions that stressed the importance of the radical social and political role of research, towards research which is increasingly focused on problem-solving approaches, quantitative mathematical methodologies, and 'hard' sciences as a means to predict and control conflict. A brief look at the use of mathematical models in conflict resolution in the next section, illustrates these moves. It is important to note here that the example outlined below are not intended to be comprehensive or illustrative of the field as a whole, but to present an example of existing work within conflict resolution which is focused on mathematical and problem-solving approaches as a means to predict and control conflict.

Research in Conflict Resolution and Post-war Contexts

The Journal of Conflict Resolution, one of the founding journals within the discipline, now predominantly contains papers that use quantitative statistical and experimental research approaches which stress the importance of testable, verifiable hypotheses in Conflict Resolution. In a recent paper by Weidman and Ward, for example, an approach to predicting conflict in Bosnia over time and space is developed using a 'spatial regression framework methodology' to 'estimate the strength and extent of spatial diffusion patterns' during the war. In outlining their approach, Weidman and Ward explain:

¹² Jutila, M. Pehkonen, S. Väyrynen T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research' Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Vol 36(3), 626.

Let $Y_t = (Y_{1,t}, \dots, Y_{N,t})$ represent whether there is a conflict on the observed spatial arrangement of N units at time tThe spatial-temporal dynamics is captured by modeling the probability of conflict $Y_{i,t}$ conditional on conflict in the surrounding units N_i and on prior conflict (up to S preceding time steps) at the same location. Since we have a binary, discrete response, a logistic formulation is used to model the conditional probability of conflict at location i at time t , denoted $p_{i,t}$:

$$\text{logit}(p_{i,t}) = \sum_{k=0}^K \theta_k X_{k,i,t} + \theta_{K+1} \sum_{j \in N_i} Y_{j,t} + \sum_{s=1}^S \theta_{K+1+s} Y_{i,t-s}$$

where the θ_K are the coefficients for the covariates, θ_{K+1} is the spatial autoregressive coefficient, and the remaining θ_{K+1+s} correspond to the temporal autoregressive components¹³.

In their writing on the Bosnia, Weidman and Ward use abstract and mathematical formulas in an attempt to predict when conflict might occur, using a 'normal science' approach which actively works to transform the irrationality and chaos of conflict and war into 'rational' scientific outputs. At the same time they are silent about their epistemological and ontological foundations, and as such, they operate, I argue, in a default position of positivist 'normal science'. Whilst this is not particularly unusual within quantitative and statistical research approaches, it is important to recognise that these approaches have clear limitations in terms of what they are able to contribute to our understanding of violent and post-war environments. This is not to argue that there is not a place for these approaches in Conflict Resolution, but to acknowledge that a dependence on these kinds of

¹³ Weidmann, N. B. & Ward, M. D. (2010). 'Predicting Conflict in Space and Time'. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 54(6), 886.

approaches can place us in 'constraining normative blinkers'¹⁴. I develop this further below.

There is also a wider issue that needs to be considered here in terms of what this might mean for conflict resolution. The merger of 'normal science' approaches with Conflict Resolution has, to a certain extent, helped to define the limits of what kinds of knowledge are acceptable within the discipline. Simultaneously, these approaches operate above the devastating human experiences of violence in conflict and war zones in abstract and mathematically rational spaces far removed from conflict. This serves to reduce and marginalize the human and lived experiences of conflict in ways which Nordstrom and Jabri would consider as 'depoliticizing', and which arguably moves us further away from understanding the ontological realities and experiences of violence and suffering in war.

What is also significant about the use of mathematical models in conflict resolution is that not only do these approaches seem to lack connection to the complexity, chaos, and irrationality of violence, war and its aftermath, but they also tend to actively bracket out any acknowledgment of the profound effects that war and violence has in shaping lives and everyday realities. At times, people are left out of such approaches altogether, and from a feminist perspective, such abstractions could be viewed as silencing and sanitising the lives and experiences of women in war and post-war contexts¹⁵. For these reasons, Nordstrom and Martin have been critical of attempts to

¹⁴ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p4.

¹⁵ See for example: Perrons, D. (1999). 'Missing Subjects? Searching for gender in official statistics', In Dorling, D. and Simpson, S. (eds.) *Statistics in Society: The Arithmetic of Politics*. London: Arnold, pp105-114; Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. New York: Routledge; Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

explain violence and war in coherent scientific narratives that attempt to impose order and reason in ways which 'erase the chaos' of war, and allows researchers 'to 'ascribe a reasonableness to warfare that belies the civilian experience'¹⁶.

A number of other researchers have made similar arguments with regard to conducting research in violent and post-war contexts, arguing that there are often significant gaps between actual violence and its representation. Mo Hume, for example, has argued that the research process and representations of violence are often divorced from the grassroots, and this requires ways of writing and methodologies, which acknowledge the gaps and tensions inherent in the process¹⁷. Nancy Scheper-Hughes has similarly called for an 'anthropology with one's feet on the ground', which moves away from researchers in the field 'sitting idly by to write field notes' to the explicit use of anthropological writing as a site of resistance¹⁸. Central to Scheper-Hughes argument, is the notion of anthropology as a both a field of knowledge and as a field of action, which requires the anthropologist to take a reflexive and active role in 'giving voice to those who have been silenced'¹⁹. Methodologically this requires an exploration of issues of researcher identity, subjectivity and constructions of 'other' through:

¹⁶ Nordstom, C. & Martin, J. (eds.) (1992). *The Paths to Domination Resistance and Terror*, California: California University Press. p 13.

¹⁷ Hume, M. (2007). "Unpicking the Threads: Emotion as central to the theory and practice of researching violence." *Women's Studies International Forum* 30: 147-157; Hume, M (2007). "'(Young) Men With Big Guns': Reflexive Encounters with Violence and Youth in El Salvador." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 26(4): 533-549.

¹⁸ Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, London, University of California Press. P18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*p18.

An ethnography that is open-ended and that allows for multiple reading and alternative conclusions, moving back and forth between third-person narrator and first-person participant²⁰.

This incorporates the trope of 'witnessing' into methodology, which has been used to significant effect by anthropologists such as Tone Bringa, who has made documentary films to follow on from her ethnographic fieldwork in Bosnia in the late 1980s²¹. Bringa's films include '*We Are All Neighbours*', and '*Returning Home: Revival of a Bosnian Village*', which emphasised that, in contrast to widespread representations of Bosnia-Herzegovina either as a seething cauldron of ethnic hatreds or an idyllic, harmonious, multi-ethnic society, a number of cultural models for inter-ethnic relations existed, some promoting interaction, others exclusion within Bosnia²².

Bringa and others, including Valentine Daniel; Antonius Robben and Carolyn Nordstrom, make departures from traditional or classic ethnography in a number of ways. Firstly, in the way that the self, other, and scientific objectivity are handled, and secondly, in terms of the explicit values and sympathies of the anthropologist, as many anthropologists had previously 'pretended there was no ethnographer in the field'²³. Whilst it is clear that these anthropologists have conducted important work on violence, conflict and warfare in sub-state and pre-state societies, Hinton continues to argue that there has been a significant amount of 'anthropological reticence' on

²⁰ Ibid.p18.

²¹ Bringa, T. (1995). *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

²² 'We Are All Neighbours' (1993). Directed by Debbie Chrisite and Tone Bringa. First Broadcast 1993 [DVD] London; 'Returning Home: Revival of a Bosnian Village' (2001). Directed by Tone Bringa and Peter Loizos. London, UK.

²³ Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, London, University of California Press. P24.

war and genocide²⁴. He suggests that anthropologists have only recently begun to focus their attention on complex political violence in state societies from the late 1980s as they have felt uncomfortable engaging with anthropological concepts such as race, ethnicity and 'culture', which have contributed to genocidal processes²⁵. Hoffman also argues that anthropologists have struggled to escape their vantage points as uninvolved neutral observers, to incorporate 'witnessing' into their work²⁶. As Scheper-Hughes notes, anthropological relativism has meant that many anthropological analyses are often designed to reveal cultural practices and provide 'functionalist' interpretations, yet they often entirely sidestep the moral, ethical and political issues raised within fieldwork encounters, where 'reason' and 'the ethical' are often collapsed into each other producing an untenable cultural relativism, for which the discipline has often been criticized²⁷. As Scheper-Hughes notes, 'if we cannot begin to think about cultural institutions and practices in moral or ethical terms, then anthropology strikes me as quite weak and useless'²⁸.

This statement by Scheper Hughes illustrates quite clearly the key differences between the fields of Conflict Resolution and Anthropology: Whereas the normative foundations of Conflict Resolution are explicitly political with little historical focus on methodology, Anthropology has a longer history of methodological engagement, but a tendency to distance both the discipline and researcher from the political aspects of fieldwork. Cordula

²⁴ Hinton, A. (ed.) (2002). *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, London, University of California Press, p2.

²⁵ Ibid.p2.

²⁶ Hoffman, D. (2003). 'Frontline Anthropology: Research in a Time of War', *Anthropology Today*, Vol 19, no 3, p9.

²⁷ Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, London, University of California Press. P24.

²⁸ Ibid.p21.

Reimann, for example, has argued that scholars in Conflict Resolution have largely neglected conversations about research methodology. This, she argues, has resulted in a discipline that is 'largely devoid of theorising, especially about ontological and epistemological questions such as the purpose of scientific inquiry, the methodologies applied and the justification of knowledge'²⁹. This is a serious conceptual concern, which becomes increasingly problematic when scholars also become caught up in attempts to discover patterns and develop predictive systems through controlled experiments and simulations. As Reimann continues, this has led to widespread reliance on:

A dominant Anglo-American empiricist methodology, which seeks to combine scientific methods with policy oriented judgements...(and) borrows heavily from conventional scientific theories of causality. Thus, the split between fact and value, so prevalent in social science is accepted as given and somehow inevitable, and most research in conflict management leaves this seemingly irrevocable separation between facts and values unchallenged³⁰.

From this position then, it is believed that there is a direct and unmediated relationship between what we see and what we know. It is also assumed that objective value free knowledge of the real world 'out there' is possible, regardless of whether such knowledge is derived from subjective experience, and without acknowledging just how far the knowledge produced by these approaches is underpinned by largely unacknowledged positivist epistemological and ontological assumptions. Reimann argues that

²⁹ Reimann, C. (2004). 'Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation' Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. p 17, www.berghof-handbook.net [accessed 03/01/06].

³⁰ Ibid.p17.

this is not only problematic, but is also profoundly un-critical, and there is a very real need for Conflict Resolution to:

Open itself up to wider debates of social and political theory, seeking especially to integrate approaches which attempt to bridge dichotomous thinking and theorising by use of insights drawn from feminism, critical theory and social constructivism³¹.

Juttila, Pehkonen and Väyrynen have also argued that because so many scholars have pursued normal science approaches and failed to engage in research issues in critical ways, this has led to the 'terminal decline and stagnation' of conflict resolution as a discipline. They argue that the body of peace and conflict research 'is barely responding to any external stimulus' and 'there is a need to resuscitate peace research and reconstitute it as a critical social theory in order to preserve the initial promise of the discipline'³².

Jabri suggests that there is a need to take the interpretative and critical traditions within social sciences seriously and that conflict resolution scholars must now acknowledge that: 'human action and human society possess their own distinctiveness that cannot be reduced to the terms of the natural sciences'. Scholars should, therefore, engage in critical thinking about knowledge, where knowledge is understood as:

always situated in relation to interests and power, so that its frameworks of understanding are unavoidably located in society and implicated in the constitution of its relations of power. Understood in this way, knowledge about conflict may be judged, not in terms of the criteria of science, but in terms of the interests that constitute particular frameworks of knowledge and in terms that

³¹ Ibid.p17.

³² See: Juttila, M. Pehkonen, S. Väyrynen T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research' Millennium: Journal of International Studies, Vol 36(3), 626.

reveal the complicities of different modes of understanding in relations of power³³.

Jabri's proposal, which in part is derived from the Coxian idea that 'theory is always for somebody and for some purpose', demands a radical shift in both focus and approach for conflict resolution scholars³⁴. The implications of this shift are significant, and requires, amongst other things, a recognition of alternative and critical research paradigms and a reconsideration of the current limits of knowledge within conflict resolution as an academic discipline. In the remainder of this chapter I begin to explore two alternative approaches to research, developed within critical and constructionist epistemologies and ontologies within the wider social sciences qualitative research literature. These approaches will be used to ground my research in the remainder of this thesis.

Alternative research approaches: contributions from critical social theory

So far, this chapter has been concerned with the focus on 'normal science' approaches within conflict resolution, which, I have argued, transform the irrationality, chaos and devastating human experiences of war into rational science outputs, moving us further away from the ontological realities of violence and suffering in war zones. In the remainder of this chapter, I outline two 'alternatives' to 'normal science' research approaches, including reflexive research and John Law's Methodology of Mess. These approaches

³³ Jabri, V. (2006). Revisiting Change and Conflict: On Underlying Assumptions and the De-Politicisation of Conflict Resolution *www.berghof-handbook.net* [accessed 23.10.08].

³⁴ In International Relations theory, Robert Cox argues that theory can be problem-solving or emancipatory, and is related to actors' interests and objectives. See Cox, R. (1981). 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory' *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*. Vol: 10, 126-155.

draw on critical social theory, feminism and social constructionism, and in different ways, offer ways of thinking about research which take account of complex events and situations, without resorting to attempts to organise and reduce these realities in epistemologically and ontologically simple ways.

Reflexive Research

Reflexivity is a difficult concept to define, but in research terms it is often broadly referred to as the act of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, often through a process which 'signifies the researcher's part in the social world that is being investigated'³⁵. Reflexivity has evolved, in part, as a response to what is sometimes referred to as the triple crises of representation, legitimation and praxis in the social sciences, and importantly, signifies a shift away from approaches which regard researchers as detached and objective observers³⁶. Reflexivity takes issues of representation, self and authority to be central to the research process and emphasises the importance of 'human as instrument' in research practices

³⁵ It is important to note that the terms reflexivity and reflection are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature, and the differences between them is a matter of some debate. As David Silverman remarks, the tendency towards self questioning in social sciences is often mistakenly referred to as reflexivity (his own understanding derives from Garfinkel) whereby reflexivity refers to how text is constituted through interaction, and not the introspective (and often apolitical) act of self questioning- which Silverman notes should be thought of as reflection. To be reflexive, he argues, is to insist that we should systematically and rigorously reveal our methodology and ourselves as the instrument of data 'generation', developing methodological 'self-consciousness'. See: Hammersely, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Third Edition, London: Routledge, p16; Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, Fourth Edition. London: Sage, p245.

³⁶ The Triple Crisis refers to uncertainty within the social sciences about the means of describing social reality. The crisis arises from the claim that no interpretive account can ever directly or completely capture lived experience. See: Denzin, N, K. & Lincoln, Y, S. (eds.) (2005). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

such as data collection, data analysis and representation³⁷. As Hammersley and Atkinson argue:

The researcher can him/herself can become one of the more refined research tools in the process of data collection whereby subjects responses to the presence of the researcher, and the researcher's response to the context, are as valuable as any other aspect of the study. Such an approach allows a richer and deeper amount of data to be appraised, and is valuable in contexts in which 'natural history' is central and 'bias' and subjectivity are regarded as inevitable (and unavoidable) but the 'joins are made visible'³⁸.

The subjective and interpretive experiences of the researcher are therefore understood as crucial elements of understanding the socio-historical context of knowledge production, which is regarded not only as inevitable, but also desirable in terms of locating our methodologies and representations, and ourselves as the instrument of data collection. The aim, ultimately, is to make the content of our research more explicit in terms of how our research is limited and enabled in relation to our 'internal conversations', identities, positions of power and social differences; and by also acknowledging just how far research is shaped by our own efforts and negotiations of the social contexts in which we undertake research³⁹. Reflexivity, therefore, allows a way to contextualise knowledge production, in a way that Callaway argues, opens research to a mode of self-analysis and political awareness through

³⁷ Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y, S. (1981). *Effective Evaluation*, San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

³⁸ Hammersely, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, Third Edition. London: Routledge, p16

³⁹ Margaret Archer argues that human reflexivity works through 'internal conversations' using language, emotions, sensations and images. Archer, M. (2007). *Making Our Way Through the World: Reflexivity and Social Mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

“a more radical consciousness of self in facing the political dimensions of fieldwork and constructing knowledge”⁴⁰.

As a research strategy, reflexivity can therefore also imply addressing issues of power by acknowledging the relational aspects of research, by urging researchers to recognise their own social locations in the research process and by paying attention to the power embedded in the researcher-researched relationship. This in turn, can suggest a somewhat different relationship with those we study. As Tierney and Lincoln note:

the manner in which “we” study “them” will be different from the individual who thinks of him or herself as a clinician trying to develop understandings akin to a scientist in a laboratory⁴¹.

Reflexivity then, shifts the aim of research away from the overt production of factual knowledge about the subject/object in question, to the formation of critical, self-narrating and often dialogical relationships with those who are the subject of research. This can require different practices from traditional research, including writing practices such as ‘messy texts’, which aim to represent the contradictions of subjective experience and the internal dialogues of researchers, in order to move away from the scientific tendency to write with a voice from nowhere from a ‘god’s-eye-view’⁴². In these terms,

⁴⁰ Callaway, H. (1992). ‘Ethnography and Experience: gender implications in fieldwork and texts’ In Okely, J. & Callaway, H. (Eds.) *Anthropology and Autobiography*. London: Routledge, p33.

⁴¹ Tierney, W, G. Lincoln, Y, S. (1997). ‘Introduction: Explorations and Discoveries’ In Tierney, W, G. Lincoln, Y, S (Eds.) *Representation and the Text: Reframing the Narrative Voice*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pviii.

⁴² See for example, Patti Lather and Chris Smithies work on the issue of women living with HIV/AIDS. Methodologically, their research was based on ethnographic work and interviews with 25 women with HIV /AIDS and in book form was represented as a set of extended interviews, ‘inter-texts’, illustrations which trace visual discourses in AIDS work, alongside a subtext commentary from their personal field notes. See: Lather, P. Smithies, C. (2001). *Troubling the Angels*, Colorado, Westview Press.

the position of 'silent authorship' found in many 'normal science' research texts, are radically destabilized⁴³.

Unsurprisingly, the use of reflexive approaches is not without its critics. Adkins, for instance argues that although the turn to reflexivity in social research allows for the re-configuration of the relationships between subjectivity and knowledge, and between knower and known, there remains a tendency to allow 'only certain subjects to speak'. This, she argues, paradoxically re-privileges the authority of the researcher whilst inscribing 'a hierarchy of speaking positions in social research'⁴⁴. She notes that this is somewhat ironic, given that reflexive research practice aims to redress the balance of power through the process of making the relations between researcher and researched more visible, yet this simultaneously appears to 'privilege a particular relation between knower and known even as it ostensibly appears to challenge, indeed undo, such forms of privileging'⁴⁵.

Pels points to a different problem with reflexivity, which focuses on the self-narrative element of reflexive research. His concern is that self-narration may inadvertently give rise to research accounts that become self-referential in character, and may problematically displace focus away from the subject of the research itself. He argues:

...turning the narrative back upon the narrator may sharpen our critical wits about the 'inescapable perspectivity' of human

⁴³ Charmaz, K & Mitchell, R, G. (1997). 'The Myth of silent authorship' In Hertz, R. (Ed.) *Reflexivity and Voice*. London: Sage, pp193-215.

⁴⁴ Adkins, L. (2002). 'Reflexivity and the Politics of Qualitative Research' In May, T. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. Sage: London, pp332-348.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp332-348.

knowledge; but self-referential accounts may also trigger endless loops of meta-theorizing and lose track of the object itself.⁴⁶

This concern is reiterated by May and Perry, who argue that whilst reflexivity offers significant potential in terms of exploring our relationships as researchers to the social world, there is also a need to guard against excessive accounts of ‘hypodermic realism’ in research. They suggest that care should be taken with reflexive approaches in order to ‘avoid collapses into self-referentiality or relativism’⁴⁷. However, this point is not lost on those who engage in reflexive research. Hertz for instance, writes reflexively about her own negotiation of this issue:

How much of ourselves do we want to commit to print? How do we set the boundary between providing the audience with sufficient information about the self without being accused of self-indulgence? Do we risk appearing foolish to our colleagues (and to a lay audience) when we admit to naiveté, ignorance, and/or uncertainty, that is, when we let slip the cloak of authority that traditionally has set us apart from what we study?⁴⁸

Part of the point of reflexive work, she argues, is to avoid ‘tidying up’ these confusions, negotiations and anxieties, precisely in order to display some of the workings of the research process⁴⁹. As Charmaz argues, if we fail to articulate these important elements of the research process then we also lose the ability to understand something of our imperfect lived realities and social worlds⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ Pels, D. (2003). *Unhastening Science: Autonomy and Reflexivity in the Social Theory of Knowledge*, p 23.

⁴⁷ May, T. Perry, B. (2011). *Social Research and Reflexivity: Content, Consequences and Context*. London: Sage, p 9.

⁴⁸ Hertz, R. (1997). ‘Introduction: Reflexivity and Voice’ In Hertz, R. (Ed.) *Reflexivity and Voice*. London: Sage, p xvi.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pxvi.

⁵⁰ Charmaz, K & Mitchell, R, G. (1997). ‘The myth of silent authorship’ In Hertz, R. (Ed.) *Reflexivity and Voice*. London: Sage, p 213.

For conflict resolution, the shift towards reflexive research practice in qualitative research can be read as a challenge for us to reveal our own part in the research process, by writing ourselves into our research, by making our 'internal conversations' explicit, by developing methodological 'self-consciousness', and by asking critical questions about our existing research practices, and the decisions we make in our research. At the same time it is clear that there is an important and delicate balance to negotiate between revealing self in order to display the relational and experiential elements of fieldwork, whilst at the same time avoiding self-referential accounts of research which displace attention away from the focus of the research itself. This balance seems crucial if reflexivity is to have value for conflict resolution.

Later in this thesis, in Chapters 5 and 7, I show my reflexive attempts to negotiate fieldwork in Bosnia, which required me to recognise my own (problematic) social location as a researcher in the research process. This in turn prompted me to pay much greater attention to the power embedded in the researcher-researched relationship, and encouraged me to look in greater depth at the relationships between researchers and NGO activists in post-war Bosnia, which ultimately became the focus of this thesis.

The next part of this chapter focuses on the work of John Law, whose work develops ideas from Latour, Derrida, and critical social theory to suggest the importance of 'mess' in social research.

John Law's Methodology of Mess

John Law has been critical of sociological attempts to turn complex realities into coherent order, and has raised a series of radical questions about the character and role of research in the social sciences. Law starts from the position that the social world and everyday life is complex, diffuse, messy, disordered, and sometimes ephemeral, and argues that when social science attempts to describe and organise these things, 'it tends to make a mess of it'⁵¹. This is because, he argues, social science research approaches and methods often assume 'common-sense realism', (i.e. a 'normal science' sense of the world as independent, a-priori, definite and singular) which tends to take for granted the idea that the world should be understood as 'a set of fairly specific, determinate, and more or less identifiable processes'⁵².

Law acknowledges that research approaches based on common-sense realism can be useful in studying particular things, such as carbon dioxide emissions, income distribution, and the boundaries of nation states, and other phenomena which he suggests are 'provisionally stable realities'⁵³. The logic, he argues, is that researchers must follow particular research rules to produce valid knowledge:

If you want to understand reality properly then you need to follow the rules. Reality imposes those rules on us. If we fail to follow them then we will end up with substandard knowledge, knowledge that is distorted or does not represent what it purportedly describes⁵⁴.

⁵¹ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p2.

⁵² Note emphasis in the original, see: Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p5.

⁵³ Law draws on the work of Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar to explore how scientific practices within laboratories enact truth claims. Latour, for example, meticulously documents the ways in which practices in the laboratory transform things and realities into scientific (and therefore true) statements about nature. In this process, the social phenomena are disappeared along with almost everything that concerned how the claimed truth was actually produced the natural, life and social sciences contribute towards enacting the realities they describe, with the concept of performativity affording a way to understand the paradox that this statement seems to suggest

⁵⁴ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p5.

As part of this, there is the assumption that there are definite discoverable processes and phenomena out there waiting to be revealed, and that the role of social science researchers is to find these and discover their dynamics and use them for positive societal change. Law contends that these assumptions are not necessarily right, and argues instead that common-sense realism approaches actively 'distort' realities and phenomena, forcing complexity and mess into a semblance of coherence and clarity; while failing to grasp the 'textures' of life⁵⁵. Research methods, for example:

deal poorly with the fleeting – that which is here today and gone tomorrow, only to re-appear again the day after tomorrow. They deal poorly with the distributed – that is to be found here and there but not in between – or that which slips and slides between one place and another. They deal poorly with the multiple – that which takes different shapes in different places. They deal poorly with the non-causal, the chaotic, the complex. And such methods have difficulty dealing with the sensory – that which is subject to vision, sound, taste, smell; with the emotional – time-space compressed outbursts of anger, pain, rage, pleasure, desire, or the spiritual; and the kinaesthetic – the pleasures and pains which follow the movement and displacement of people, objects, information and ideas⁵⁶.

Sometimes, Law argues, the social world is so complex it is also beyond our abilities to know it. Law suggests that if we accept that the social world is complex, then as researchers we also need to learn to think and relate to the world in new ways, and develop new ways of knowing realities that are multiple, sensory, emotional, complex, and messy⁵⁷. Some of the ways he suggests includes knowing through forms of embodiment, such as hunger,

⁵⁵ Ibid.p2.

⁵⁶ Emphasis in the original. Law, J. & Urry, J. (2003). 'Enacting the Social', published by the Department of Sociology and the Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster UK, at: <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Urry-Enacting-the-Social.pdf> [accessed 04/11/07]

⁵⁷ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p2.

pain and taste; or forms of knowing through emotionality such as fear, passion and betrayal. Some of these ways of knowing are not particularly unusual within certain areas of the social sciences such as anthropology, where the sense of knowledge through embodiment, is widespread. Carolyn Ellis for example, has written an auto-ethnographic account of her experience when her brother was killed in an aeroplane crash⁵⁸; and Carol Ronai has explored her experiences of child abuse and working as an erotic dancer⁵⁹. However, within some social science areas such as conflict resolution, these forms of de-centred and subjective knowing are seldom used.

Law's vision of research and suggestions of new ways of knowing unquestionably throws up a wide range of issues for those who have been schooled in common-sense realism. It requires, for instance, that researchers should let go of:

the desire for certainty; the expectation that we can usually arrive at more or less stable conclusions about the way things really are; the belief that as social scientists we have special insights that allow us to see further than others into certain parts of social reality; and the expectations of generality that are wrapped up in what is often called 'universalism'⁶⁰.

Law anticipates that there will be vocal critics of his suggestions, particularly in the sense that if brought into being, then alternative forms of knowing might undermine common-sense research approaches. Yet Law is not

⁵⁸ Ellis, C. (2009). 'Surviving the Loss of My Brother' in Ellis, C. *Revision: Autoethnographic Reflections on Life and Work*. California: Left Coast Press, pp121-140.

⁵⁹ Ronai, C, R. (1995). 'Multiple Reflections of Child Sex Abuse: An Argument for a Layered Account' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol 23(4), 395-426; Ronai, C, R. (1998). 'Sketching with Derrida: An Ethnography of a Researcher/ Erotic Dancer'. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(3), pp405-420.

⁶⁰ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge. P9.

arguing that common-sense approaches should be abandoned, and indeed recognises that these approaches are both important and necessary in a number of spheres including medicine and health education⁶¹. But he is concerned with the limits that are placed on our knowing if these approaches become taken for granted, and in turn, what this means for the ways in which we are expected to undertake research. In other words, he argues that whilst common-sense approaches are often extremely good at what they do, they are also:

badly adapted to the study of the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular... (and) if allowed to claim methodological hegemony or (even worse) monopoly, and I think there are locations where they try to do this...then we are put in a set of constraining normative blinkers. We are being told how we must see and what we must do when we investigate⁶².

The problem then, is not so much that there is a lack of variety in research approaches and methodologies (although he does argue for greater methodological variety), but more that there are hegemonic consequences if certain forms of research are allowed to dominate the way in which research is done. This is one of the cornerstones of my own argument in this thesis, and underlines the concerns outlined in the first part of this chapter about the predominance of 'normal science' approaches and 'Anglo-American empiricist' methodologies in conflict resolution. When viewed from this perspective, the extensive reliance on default positivist research paradigms, coupled with moves towards mathematical modelling, is a concern in terms of how the limits of knowledge are being defined in conflict resolution.

⁶¹ Law outlines a number of examples of success in standard research, including research that identified links between smoking and lung cancer, and studies that established links between social inequality and poverty.

⁶² Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p4.

Another significant part of John Law's argument is that science, social inquiry and their knowledge and research practices are 'performative'. By this, Law means to say that knowledge and research practices do not offer innocent and transparent ways with which to view and discover the world, but rather:

Social (and natural) science investigations interfere with the world, in one way or another they always make a difference, politically or otherwise. Things change as a result.⁶³

For Law then, researchers contribute to the worlds they study, they create and alter the realities and 'truths' they describe, to produce realities. This is not to imply that reality does not exist, but that reality is relational, and that the world we know in social science 'is both real and it is produced'⁶⁴. If we accept Law's view of reality, then where does this leave researchers in terms of how we conduct and think about research? Law suggests that the challenge is to begin to review the methodological legacies of the social sciences, which he argues, remains preoccupied with 'fixing, demarcating and separating' the social world; and also turn our efforts to 'ontological politics' and attempts to produce 'better versions of the real'. These are essentially questions about how we want to engage in the social world, and what kind of realities we are interested in producing (as we inevitably create and alter the world in our engagements with it). We should therefore think about whether or not we want to 'collude in the enactment of dominant realities' or begin to do otherwise, and produce accounts of the world that

⁶³ Ibid.p7.

⁶⁴ For a much more in-depth discussion of this issue see Law, J. & Urry, J. (2003). 'Enacting the Social', published by the Department of Sociology and the Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster UK, at <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Urry-Enacting-the-Social.pdf> [accessed 04/11/07].

resonate more powerfully with the realities 'being enacted outside the ivory tower'⁶⁵. Or as Law and Urry put it, 'which realities do we want to help to make more real, and which less real?'⁶⁶.

Law's work can be read as a series of suggestions that we should actively complicate our accounts of the social world, and attempt to find ways to represent the messy, sensory, emotional complexities of the social world, whilst engaging in a 'disciplined lack of clarity' (similar to Patti Lather's idea of 'rigorous confusion') which provides space for/ and attends to the possibilities of the unknowable, unsayable, vagaries, of social realities⁶⁷. The challenge this poses, in relation to conflict resolution, is to develop research approaches and practices that are sensitive to the mess and complexities of the social world, and the performative qualities of research. The issue then, is about how to engage in research in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and how to produce accounts that resonate with the realities of life in these contexts.

As researchers, Law makes it clear that we have political choices to make about which realities and truths to enact. Later in this thesis, I turn away from 'normal science' approaches and directives about what we should see and do when we investigate conflict. Instead, I turn insights from fieldwork in

⁶⁵ Law, J. & Urry, J. (2003). 'Enacting the Social', published by the Department of Sociology and the Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster UK, at <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Urry-Enacting-the-Social.pdf> [accessed 04/11/07].

⁶⁶ For Law and Urry, the presence of particular realities simultaneously implies particular absences, which are made 'manifestly absent' or 'repressively Othered'. This draws on the work of Derrida and the metaphysics of presence. See: Law, J. & Urry, J. (2003). 'Enacting the Social', published by the Department of Sociology and the Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster UK, at: <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Urry-Enacting-the-Social.pdf> [accessed 04/11/07].

⁶⁷ Law argues that vagueness is not a sign of methodological failure, and calls for a 'disciplined lack of clarity' that more accurately represents the vagueness and messiness of the social world.

post-war Bosnia into a 'better version of the real' that deviates significantly from the 'dominant realities' enacted in conflict resolution. These are my engagements in ontological politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored conflict resolution research, and I have argued that conflict resolution scholars regard research as a crucial element of the relationship between theory and practice; and, as a fundamental aspect of learning about conflict, in order to contribute to building peace and preventing future violence⁶⁸. I have suggested that there is a worrying reliance on what Jutila et al, have termed 'normal science'⁶⁹, and I have illustrated this with examples of quantitative mathematical modelling approaches to conflict, which are silent about their epistemological and ontological foundations, and probably fall into default paradigms of positivism and naive realism. I have argued that these examples tend to operate as problem solving devices, and actively seek to transform the complexity, irrationality, chaos and devastating human experiences of war into rational science outputs, which I have suggested exclude the emotional, sensory, and often intangible, aftermaths of war, and move us further away from the ontological realities of violence and suffering in war zones.

⁶⁸ Abigail Fuller identifies two specific ways in which peace and conflict researchers openly contribute to peace. First, through contributions to the body of knowledge of the causes, consequences and dynamics of conflict, so that actors can be supported in the prevention and resolution of conflict; and second, by utilizing methodologies which help those struggling for peace and justice. See: Fuller, A. F. (1992). 'Towards an Emancipatory Methodology for Peace Research' *Peace and Change*, Vol 17(3), 287.

⁶⁹ Jutila, M. Pehkonen, S. Väyrynen T. (2008). 'Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol 36(3), 626.

In the second part of this chapter, I outlined two 'alternatives' to 'normal science' research approaches, including John Law's Methodology of Mess, and reflexivity. I have argued that in different ways, Law's methodology of mess and the literature on reflexivity offer ways of thinking about research that take account of complex realities and contexts, without resorting to attempts to organise and reduce them in epistemologically and ontologically simple ways. I have also read John Law's work and reflexivity as a series of suggestions that we should actively and reflexively complicate and complexify our research accounts of the social world, and find ways to represent the messy, sensory, emotional complexities of the social world, whilst engaging in a 'disciplined lack of clarity'⁷⁰. The challenge this poses in relation to conflict resolution, as I understand it, is to:

- Be explicit about the epistemological and ontological assumptions that we bring to our work, and the limits of our practices and abilities to know
- Explore the political/power dimensions of our research approaches and practices
- Pay attention to the mess/silences/absences and attempts to 'order' complexity and make things coherent in our research
- Consciously and reflexively examine 'self' in the research process in terms of personal, social and institutional influences
- Link our research approaches and practices to wider questions of power, knowledge and Othering
- Attempt to engage in ontological politics and produce 'better versions of the real'.

These challenges are likely to bear little relation to what the founders of conflict resolution had in mind when they developed the discipline. Yet these challenges stem from engagements in research approaches and practices in

⁷⁰ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p2.

the wider social sciences where it is becoming increasingly clear that researchers themselves, and the research approaches they use, are implicated in the construction of knowledge. It is also no longer certain that our research approaches and practices are sensitive enough to the complexity and 'mess' of the social world. If, as John Law argues, we tend 'to make a mess of it'⁷¹, then it may be time for conflict resolution scholars to try to develop research approaches and practices which resonate more powerfully with the realities of people living in war and post-war contexts.

Later in this thesis I show how I have gone on to use the suggestions made by John Law and reflexivity as points of departure in to deeper and more critical ways of engaging in research in post-war Bosnia. This contrasts with the next chapter, which is much closer to an engagement in 'normal science', and outlines some of the post war literature and key debates about the war in Bosnia. The next chapter therefore provides some context for the fieldwork and analysis that follows later in this thesis, but also shows my attempts to negotiate my way within and between 'normal science' and its alternatives.

⁷¹Ibid.p2.

Chapter Four

Locating Post-War Bosnia and Hercegovina: Debates and Contentions

The war(s) of 1991-1995 in Bosnia and Hercegovina officially ended in November 1995 with a formal peace settlement in the form of The Dayton Agreement. This paved the way for the country's post-war reconstruction and, with the aid of international economic, political and social interventions, the country has acquired a reputation as a 'laboratory for post-Cold war intervention'¹ a 'pilot project for international governance'² and as 'one of the first major peacebuilding experiments of the post-Cold war period'³. This reputation exists alongside the unrelenting status as a country beset by 'ethnic cleansing', 'ethnic violence', 'massacres' and 'genocide'.

This primary purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the post-war context in Bosnia. In the first part of this chapter I briefly outline the war(s)⁴ in Bosnia including the human and material costs of war, and how this has shaped the post-war environment. I also discuss key debates surrounding the war, including issues around the causes of war, and the significance of constructing the war in terms of ethnic identity and ancient hatreds. The second part of the chapter focuses more specifically on the post-war context, including the Dayton Accords and the current political situation, and the emergence of the NGO sector and 'civil society'. It will be

¹ Kaldor, M. (2003). *Global Civil Society: an answer to war*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p32.

² Ehrke, M. (2003). 'Von der Raubökonomie zur Rentenökonomie: Mafia, Bürokratie und international Mandat in Bosnien' In Fischer, M. (ed.) (2006). *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Munich: Lit Verlag.

³ Pugh, M. & Cooper, N. (2004). *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p 143.

⁴ There is debate about the nature and number of war in Bosnia, and in the wider Yugoslav region. I discuss this in the first part of this chapter.

argued that, although the Dayton Peace Accords were ‘successful’ in bringing an official end to war, they have also embedded instability in the region, and have been widely criticised for, ‘exacerbating the problem of internal displacement and raising ethnic tensions’⁵. Despite fifteen years of intensive international intervention, commentators now contend that Bosnia is facing its worst political crisis since the war, with some reporting that ‘Bosnia is starting to fracture’⁶. This crisis poses a substantial challenge to the peace process and the work of peace activists in the region, and for ordinary Bosnians, exacerbates their everyday struggles to survive.

This broad, albeit brief, overview of the war and the post-war environment is intended to provide context for the fieldwork and analysis that follow later in this thesis, rather than to present a detailed and comprehensive history and case study of the war in Bosnia, which can be found elsewhere⁷. It is also important to say that many of the events surrounding the war and its consequences are highly political and contested, and are often caught up in what Donia & Fine suggest are ‘false dichotomies, flawed analogies and gross historical exaggerations’ which have emerged through nationalist interests⁸. There are (and will continue to be) many conflicting views about the causes of the war, its dynamics, its effects, the legitimacy of particular

⁵ Belloni, R. (2005). ‘Peacebuilding at the Local Level: Refugee Return to Prijedor’ *International Peacekeeping* Vol 12(3), 434.

⁶ Latal, S. (2010). ‘Bosnia Faces Critical Challenges in 2010’ *International Crisis Group* <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/bosnia-Hercegovina/bosnia-faces-critical-challenges-in-2010.aspx> [accessed 26/05/10].

⁷ See for example: Allcock, J, B. (2000). *Explaining Yugoslavia*. London: Hurst & Co; Chandler, D. (2000). *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton*. 2nd edition. London: Pluto Press; Malcolm N. (1994). *Bosnia. A Short History*. Kent: Mackays; Donia, R, J. & Fine, J, V, A, Jr. (1994). *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*. New York: Columbia University Press; Wilmer, F. (2002). *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge; Woodward, S,L. (1995). *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

⁸ Donia, R, J. & Fine Jr, J, V, A. (1994). *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*. New York: Columbia University Press, p3.

accounts about the war, as well as contestations about the current political situation in Bosnia. It is important to make clear that my intention is not to present comprehensive 'truths' or make authoritative claims about 'what happened' in Bosnia, but rather to present some of the accounts and evidence about the war, whilst also pointing to the debates and areas of contention which surround them. This chapter should therefore not be read as an attempt to evade questions as to 'who' and 'what' were responsible for the war, as it is not my aim to attribute 'blame' in this thesis. I believe that any attempt to attribute 'responsibility' and 'blame' to a particular (homogenous) 'side' or 'group' fundamentally distorts the complexity of the events and accounts of violence during the war. This is not tantamount to 'equalising' blame between the 'three' ethnic groups in Bosnia, as some might claim, but instead is an attempt to avoid a simplistic and reductionist account which attributes blame and total responsibility to one particular side in ways which belies the complexity of the events in Bosnia⁹.

War in Bosnia and Hercegovina 1992-1995

In March 1992, Bosnia and Hercegovina, one of the six constituent Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia, followed Slovenia and Croatia and declared independence¹⁰. A month later, within the larger context of the break-up of Yugoslavia, Bosnia's independence was officially recognized by the

⁹ I refer in this chapter to evidence upheld by The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the United Nations court of law which was established in 1993 to deal with the war crimes that took place during the conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. See: The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, www.icty.org.

¹⁰ Bosnia was one of the six constituent Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia, including Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. Within Yugoslavia, to the northern and southern areas of Serbia there were also two semi-autonomous regions: Vojvodina and Kosovo. In 1991 Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia declared independence and in 2006, Serbia and Montenegro dissolved the remainder of the federation. Tito's philosophy of 'Bratstvo i jedinstvo' (brotherhood and unity) was central to the formation of Yugoslavia.

European Union¹¹. On the same day, over 50,000 people gathered outside the Bosnian Parliament in Sarajevo to demonstrate for peace in the wake of violence that had followed the initial declaration of independence. Paramilitaries, reportedly under the direction of Radovan Karadžić, the political leader of the Serbian Democratic Party, fired into the crowd, killing and wounding dozens of demonstrators¹². For the duration of the period April 1992 to November 1995 violence spread throughout Bosnia, as military and civilian forces fought in what was left of the Former Yugoslavian territory¹³.

The scale of the killing and devastation was immense. Initial estimates of the number of people killed in Bosnia ranged extensively from 25,000 to

¹¹ The EU recognised the independence of Bosnia and Hercegovina on the 6th April 1992.

¹² Radovan Karadžić had earlier warned the Bosnian Parliament against the secession of Bosnia. In response to the recognition of Bosnia's independence, Karadžić declared the creation of an independent Serbian Republic within Bosnia (later renamed Republika Srpska), with its capital in Pale, a suburb of Sarajevo and appointed himself as head of state. Karadžić was indicted by The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague (ICTY) in 1995 for leading and participating in an enterprise to permanently remove Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats from the territories of Bosnia and Hercegovina. In an amended indictment in 2000, he was charged with one count of genocide; one count of complicity in genocide; five counts of crimes against humanity, including extermination, murder, persecution on political, racial and religious grounds, deportation and other inhumane acts; three counts of violations of the laws or customs of war, including murder, unlawfully inflicting terror upon civilians, taking of hostages; and one count of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, and wilful killing. See: Amended Indictment against Radovan Karadzic Unsealed. ICTY <http://www.icty.org/sid/8066> [accessed 02/04/2007].

¹³ It is important to say that different areas of Bosnia were affected by different levels of violence and destruction. Sarajevo, for example, was under siege for 44 months, the longest siege of a capital city in modern warfare. A minimum of 9,502 people were estimated to have been killed in Sarajevo, including those killed in the Markdale market massacres, where 105 civilians were killed in two separate incidents. In Srebrenica, an enclave in Eastern Bosnia close to the Serbian border, the mass executions of over 7,475 Bosnian Muslim men and boys by Bosnian Serb paramilitaries constituted 'an act of genocide' according to The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats were also found to have been targeted in: Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Bosanski Novi, Bosanski Petrovac, Bratunac, Brčko, Čajniče, Donji Vakuf, Foča, Hadžići, Ilidža, Ilijaš, Kalinovik, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Novi Grad, Pale, Prijedor, Rogatica, Sanski Most, Sokolac, Višegrad, Vlasenica, Vogošća and Zvornik. Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats were also indicted for war crimes, for example commanders and soldiers at the Čelebići prison camp where Bosnian Serb soldiers were held, were found guilty for crimes including murder, torture and inhuman treatment.

See: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/mucic/press/en/PR628e%20Sentencing%20Judgement%20in%20the%20Celebici%20case.pdf> and <http://www.icty.org/case/karadzic/4> [accessed 28/06/2008].

300,000, and were frequently disputed by different actors involved in the conflict. This was further compounded by a lack of accurate data for deaths during the war. However, in January 2010 The Demographic Unit at The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague (ICTY) released its final estimate of the number of people killed in the 1992-95 war in Bosnia¹⁴. Using the 1991 census, The Demographic Unit estimated that a minimum of 104,732 people were killed or ‘disappeared’ during the war out of a total population of 4,377,032 (see figure 1)¹⁵

Category/Ethnicity	Muslims	Serbs	Croats	Others	Total
Total Population 1991	1,898,963	1,365,093	759,906	353,070	4,377,032
Killed Disappeared	68,101	22,779	8,858	4,995	104,732
Percentage	3.6%	1.7%	1.2%	1.4%	2.4%

Figure 1: ‘Victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), 1992-1995’

16 .

¹⁴ For details of the methodology used see: Zwierzchowski, J. Tabeau, E. (2010). *The 1992-1995 War in Bosnia and Hercegovina: Census-Based Multiple System Estimation of Casualties’ Undercount*. Conference Paper for the International Research Workshop on ‘The Global Costs of Conflict’ The Households in Conflict Network (HiCN) and The German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)1-2 February 2010, Berlin. http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/War_Demographics/en/bih_casualty_undercount_conf_paper_100201.pdf [accessed 06/05/2010].

¹⁵ The total population of Bosnia in the pre-war period was estimated to be 4,377,032. When asked to identify their ethnicity, 43 per cent identified as Bošniaks (Bosnian Muslims), 31 per cent identified as Bosnian Serbs, 17 per cent identified as Bosnian Croats, and 9 per cent identified as ‘other’ including those who identified as Yugoslavian, Jewish, and Roma. The census also showed that ethnic communities were intermingled throughout Bosnia. It is important to point out that the 1991 Census in Bosnia was widely believed to have been used as part of the war strategy in determining areas to target in terms of ethnicity. There has been no post-war census because of the political risks associated with producing detailed accounts of the population and population movements. The United Nations urged Bosnia to hold a Census in 2011, alongside those being undertaken in other European Union member states. Bosnia’s parliament failed to adopt a law allowing the census to take place, following a boycott of the law by the ruling Bosnian Serb party, The Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, which argued that the census may harm Serb interests. See: Balkan Insight <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-parliament-fails-to-pass-census-law> [accessed 15.10.10].

¹⁶ The binary of ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ has been used uncritically in relation to the war Bosnia, often with references to homogenous ‘ethnic’ groups who are described as a whole,

In terms of the 'ethnicity' of the 'victims' of the war, evidence from The Demographic Unit suggests that 68,101 of the people killed or disappeared as a direct result of the war were Muslims (locally termed as 'Bošniaks'), 22,779 were 'Serbs', 8,858 were 'Croats', and 4,995 were identified as 'others', including those who identified as Yugoslavian, Jewish, and Roma (see figures 1, 2 and 3). In gender terms, 94,350 of those killed were identified as men, and 10,368 were identified as women (see figure 4). These figures are likely to reflect the specific targeting of men during the war, for example in Srebrenica, where over 7,475 men and boys were reportedly killed in July 1995¹⁷.

Srebrenica, in particular has been the subject of intensive political contestation relating to those killed there during the war. Milorad Dodik, the leader of the Republika Srpska, for example, has denied that acts of genocide took place in Srebrenica, and has repeatedly refuted that over 7,475 Bošniak men and boys were killed by Serb paramilitaries under the command of Ratko Mladić¹⁸. However, the ICTY's estimation of the number of people killed are supported by The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), which has so far formally identified the remains of 6,414 'Bošniak men and boys through DNA based identification processes in

to be 'perpetrators', or 'victims'. The Demographic Unit of the ICTY designates all of those that were killed or disappeared as victims. See: ICTY. <http://www.icty.org/sid/10591> [accessed 06/05/2010].

¹⁷ See: ICTY. <http://www.icty.org/sid/10591> [accessed 06/05/2010].

¹⁸ For a number of years politicians in Serbia and the Republika Srpska have denied that genocide took place in Srebrenica. However, under the leadership of pro-European Boris Tadic, Serbia passed a resolution in March 2010 condemning the massacre and apologizing to the victims. See: Balkan Insight, 12/07/10 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-serb-leader-denies-srebrenica-was-genocide> [accessed 13/08/11].

numerous mass graves close to Srebrenica¹⁹. This supports numerous witness accounts and testimonies related to Srebrenica in the final months of the war.

Furthermore, the figures relating to gender are also likely to show how women were specifically targeted through alternative strategies of 'ethnic cleansing' ('etničko čišćenje') and rape during the war in Bosnia. 'Ethnic cleansing' was a specific war strategy that aimed to create homogenous ethnic territories, and has become synonymous with reports of Bosnia. According to the ICTY this strategy was used systematically by Serb and Croat military forces against the civilian population (primarily the Bošniak population), and resulted in the violent expulsion of civilians from areas of Bosnia through means of murder, torture and rape²⁰.

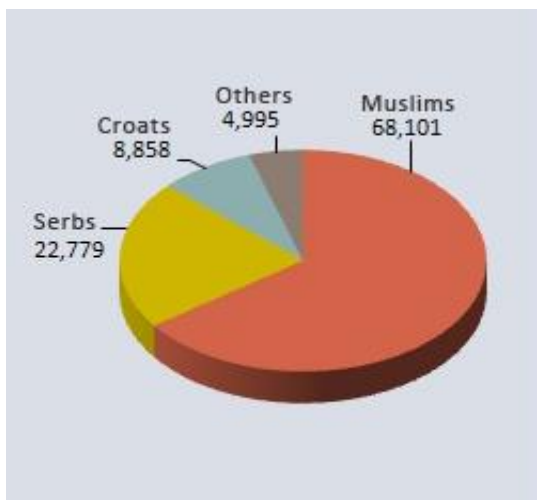


Figure 2: 'Minimum numbers of killed persons, by ethnicity - BiH, 1992-1995'²¹

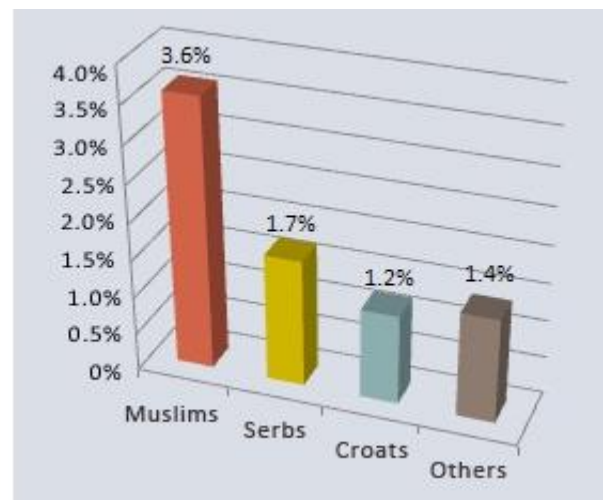


Figure 3: 'Minimum ratios of war-related deaths and missing persons - BiH, 1992-1995'²²

¹⁹ ICMP estimates that 8,100 Bošniak men and boys were killed during the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995. See: ICMP, <http://www.ic-mp.org/icmp-worldwide/southeast-europe/bosnia-and-herzegovina/> [accessed 12/09/10].

²⁰ <http://www.icty.org/sid/10591> [accessed 06/05/2010].

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Status	Gender			Gender	
	Men	Women	Unknown	Total	Percent
Civilian	32,251	9,842	13	42,106	40.2%
Military	62,099	526	1	62,626	59.8%
Total	94,350	10,368	14	104,732	100%
Percentage	90.1%	9.9%	0.0%	100%	

Figure 4: 'Distribution of victims, by civilian-military status and gender' (Estimated complete death toll)²³

The establishment of 'rape camps' and the practice of the war-time rape of the 'ethnic enemy' were also key parts of the war strategy in Bosnia²⁴. Evidence suggests that Bosnian Serbs were the most frequent perpetrators of rape, targeting mostly Bošniak women, but also Croat women. Serb and Croat females were also targeted by Bošniak and Croat forces, and men were also raped and sexually tortured as a strategy of using rape as a weapon of war and 'ethnic cleansing'²⁵. The ICTY ruled that in the majority of cases, Bošniaks were the victims of these acts, although Serb and Croat

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The ICTY was the first international criminal tribunal to enter convictions for rape as a form of torture, and for sexual enslavement as crime against humanity. It was also the first international tribunal based in Europe to pass convictions for rape as a crime against humanity, following a previous case adjudicated by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In a number of trials the ICTY examined charges of sexual assault against men, including for example, that of Dušan Tadić. See: <http://www.icty.org/sid/7250> [accessed 27/10/10].

²⁵ Žarkov, D. (2007). *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia*. London: Duke University Press.

forces and civilians were also subjected to acts of murder, torture and rape, which constituted serious war crimes and crimes against humanity²⁶.

In gender terms, the targeting of female bodies of the 'enemy' for 'conquest' through rape, sexual torture and forced pregnancy, was used to redefine the geographical and physical 'territory' of Bosnia in 'ethnic' terms²⁷. The practice of forced pregnancy, for example, relied upon the idea of a patrilineal tradition, where the ethnicity of the child was seen to be determined by the father, and where the mother was viewed as a 'carrying vessel'²⁸. In these terms, for example, the forced pregnancy of a Bošniak woman by a Serb man would be viewed as resulting in a child of 'Serb' ethnicity, and Hayden has suggested that this practice served as a specific method of severing cross-ethnic social ties, and to make the idea of sharing or returning to 'enemy' areas unthinkable²⁹.

The ethnic cleansing strategies also led to the displacement of more than half of the 4 million population, as people were forced to leave their homes or flee to safety during the war. According to UNHCR the displacement constituted the largest European refugee movement since the Second World War, with approximately 1.2 million people becoming international refugees, and dispersed throughout 25 countries. Germany received the largest number of refugees, taking over 342,000 people, followed by Austria (88,000); Sweden (60,000); and the United Kingdom received 6,000

²⁶ See: Statement to the Press by H.E. Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, 26 February 2007 re Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Hercegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro) <http://www.icj-cij.org/> [accessed 30/02/07].

²⁷ Žarkov, D. (2002). 'Feminism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia: On the Politics of Gender and Ethnicity', *Social Development Issues*, 24(3), 59-68.

²⁸ Mostov, J. (1995). "Our Women" / "Their Women": Symbolic Boundaries, Territorial Markers, and Violence in the Balkans', *Peace and Change* Vol 20(4), 515- 531.

²⁹ Hayden, R. (2000). 'Rape and rape avoidance in ethno-nationalist conflicts: sexual violence in liminalized states', *American Anthropologist*, 102 (1), 27-41.

refugees. Over 1 million people also became internally displaced within Bosnia³⁰.

Prior to the war, Bosnia was so ethnically mixed in around 80% of municipalities, no single ethnic group had an absolute majority (see figure 5). The demographic shifts that occurred during the war strongly reflected the ethno-nationalist frontline divisions that were established, and resulted in large areas of the country becoming ethnically homogenous, such as Banja Luka which was 'cleansed' of most of its non-Serb population (see Figure 6). The city of Mostar was also divided into Bošniak and Croat sectors, reflecting front line positions, whilst Sarajevo and Tuzla were the only cities that maintained some of their ethnic diversity during the war³¹.

In material terms, there was also widespread and devastating destruction to the physical infrastructure and landscape of Bosnia, as essential buildings, roads and rail networks, and water and energy supplies were destroyed. Countless numbers of villages, homes, and cultural and religious buildings were also fire-bombed, shelled and heavily mined to demolish existing dwellings and communities and, to kill, displace and prevent the return of civilians. The term 'urbicide' was coined during the war in Bosnia to refer to the way in which the urban and cultural environment was deliberately targeted and destroyed. Martin Coward, for example, has argued that symbolic buildings and structures, such as the National Library in Sarajevo,

³⁰ See: UNHCR (1997). *Bosnia and Hercegovina Repatriation and Return Operation 1997*. Geneva, p5.

³¹ Bougarel, X. Helms, E. Duijzings, G. (2006). *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p5.

and Stari Most (Old Bridge) in Mostar³², were specifically targeted and destroyed because they were regarded as plural public spaces that were contrary to the political aims of the ethno-nationalist leaders³³.

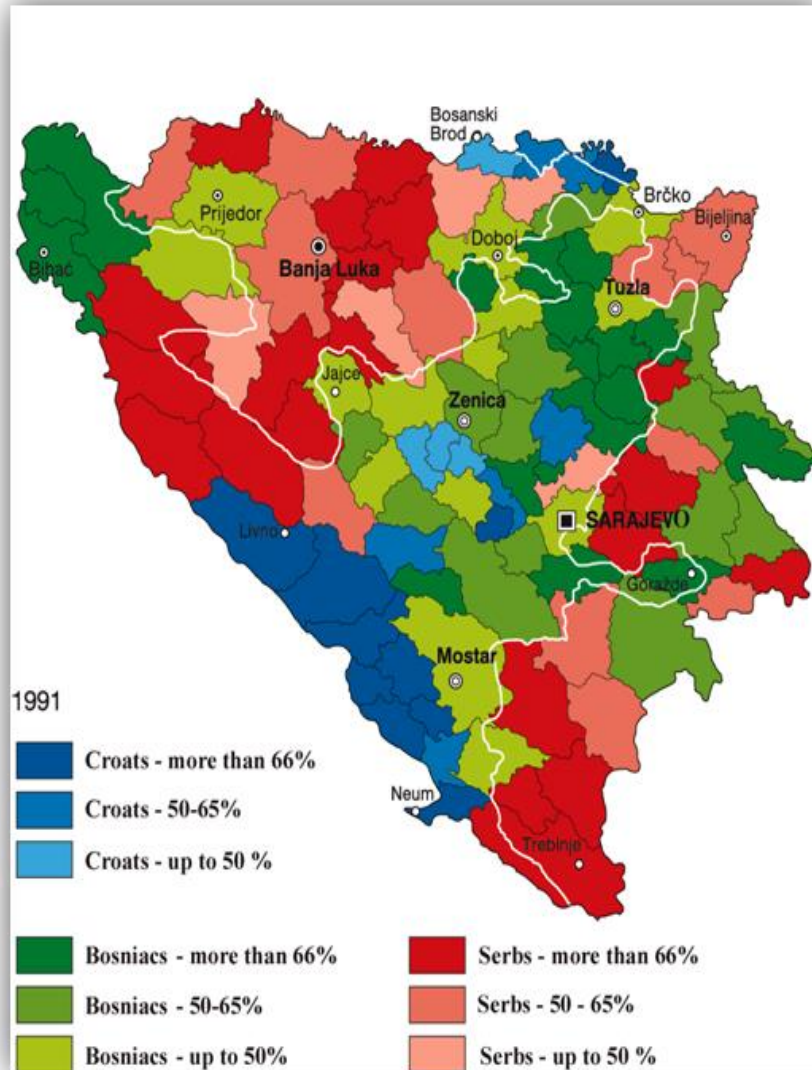


Figure 5: Ethnic Composition before the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991³⁴.

³² The National Library in Sarajevo was severely damaged in 1992 by shelling and fire, whilst surrounding buildings in the built up area were left untouched. The Library held books and manuscripts that were devoted to subjects about Bosnia or published in local alphabets including Latin, Cyrillic and an alphabet that predated Cyrillic, known as Old Bosnian. Many of the handwritten manuscripts were centuries old and irreplaceable. The Library has now been externally reconstructed, although the interior remains in ruins. Stari Most, the Ottoman Bridge in Mostar, was built in 1566, and was completely destroyed in 1993 by relentless shelling. The bridge has now been rebuilt and is the centre of the world heritage site in Mostar. The bridge will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis. See: Unesco <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/946>

³³ Coward, M. (2009). *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, Oxon, NY: Routledge.

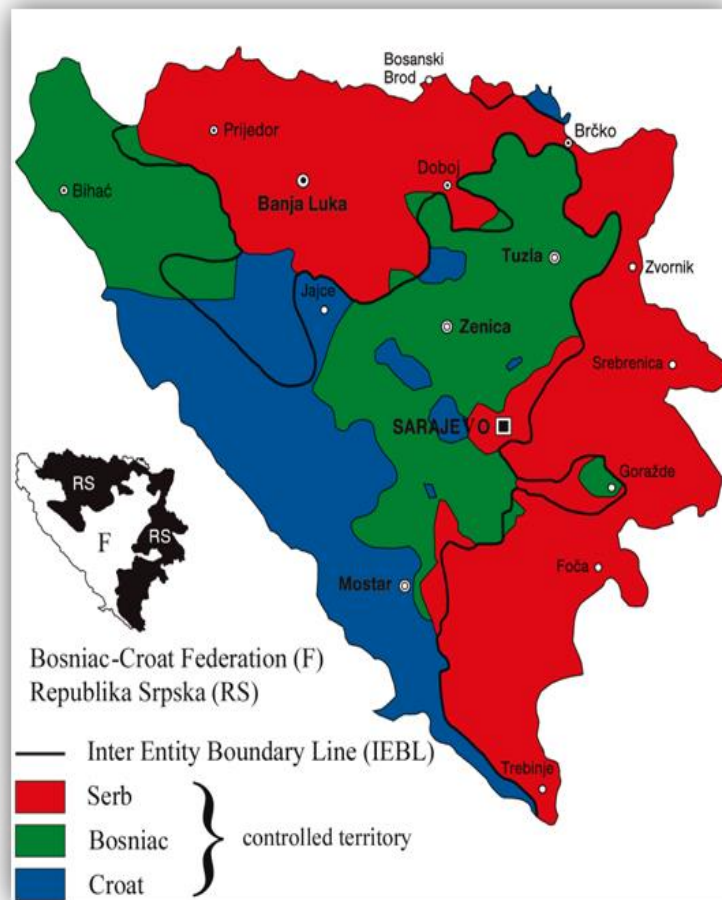


Figure 6: Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton Peace Agreement and the front lines at the end of 1995³⁵.

There are widespread disputes amongst academics, political leaders, and those involved in the war, in terms of how these events have been described and accounted for. Sabrina Ramet suggests there are at least

³⁴ The white line in this image represents the Inter-Entity Boundary Line established by the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995. This will be discussed later in this chapter. See: <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/maps/> [accessed 24.12.09].

³⁵ <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/maps/> [accessed 24.12.09].

four distinct areas of controversy relating to the war in Bosnia³⁶. The first area of controversy concerns when the war 'really' started. Ramet suggests that although the 'common sense' view places the war in Bosnia as starting in 1991, others contend that the war started somewhere between 1986 and 1991, whilst some argue that the 'roots' of the conflict can be traced back to the first world war, and also much further in history. Secondly, Ramet outlines debates concerning 'who' was to 'blame' 'for what' in Bosnia. She argues that whilst most scholars attribute primary culpability to 'the Serbian side', implicating nationalist actors such as Milošević and Karadžić, others point to the Islamic fundamentalist nature of the Bosnian Muslim leader Izetbegović's plans for Bosnia; whilst some argue that the interventions of state actors such as the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom, and the Vance-Owen Peace Plan actively rewarded and fuelled ethnic cleansing³⁷. Thirdly, Ramet outlines controversy about the 'nature' of the war' in Bosnia, and more specifically, whether the war was a 'civil-war', an 'intercivilisational' war, or an 'ethnic' war³⁸, and whether there was a

³⁶ Sabrina Ramet has reviewed and analysed the major debates about Yugoslavia in more than 130 books in four languages, including English, German, Italian, and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian. See Ramet, S, P. (2006). *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁷ David Owen was involved in drawing up The Vance-Owen Peace Plan, and mediated in peace negotiations in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. The Peace Plan proposed to divide Bosnia into ten semi-autonomous 'ethnic' regions, and has been widely criticised for 'rewarding ethnic cleansing' by offering Bosnian Serbs more land than Bosnian Muslims or Croats. The Plan was accepted by Bosnian Muslims and rejected by Bosnian Serb leaders in 1993, with some commentators arguing that the plan motivated Serb leaders to continue the war for another two years, and gain more territory in the hope of an improved settlement. See: Gibbs, D, N. (2009). *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, p144; and Owen, D. (1995). *Balkan Odyssey*, San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace and Co.

³⁸ The use of the term 'civil war' tends to be favoured by some internationals and people in Serb areas of Bosnia, although in Bošniac (Muslim) areas of Bosnia the term 'civil war' is understood as an excuse for the war crimes committed by Serb and Croat forces. This has become code for the argument that 'all sides are equally guilty' in the war. The term favoured by many Bošniacs is 'war of aggression' to refer to the fact that soldiers from other countries (Serbia and Croatia) entered Bosnia after it had been internationally recognized as an independent state, and that the Bosnian Serb and Croat forces were funded and resourced

genocidal dimension to the war³⁹. Ramet also suggests that there is contestation around the actual number of wars fought in Yugoslavia, and also in Bosnia. This controversy primarily relates to whether the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Bosnia should be seen as a single war, or if it should be regarded as a series of different wars, linked within a larger context, for example, to include Kosovo⁴⁰.

Research in Bosnia

Bosnia, and Bosnians themselves, have become the focus of a significant amount of research in the post-war period. The war, as described earlier in this chapter, has attracted a wide range of scholars who have visited the country and made Bosnia the subject of numerous accounts across various academic sub-disciplines in the Social and Political Sciences. The interest of scholars covers a diverse range of subjects, from international governance and transitional economics to international peacekeeping and psychological trauma. The active research scene in Bosnia will be discussed later in Chapters 5 and 6.

by the Serbian and Croatian states. In this thesis I refer to 'the war' following the practice of NGO activists that I spoke to. This is partly out of a tactical desire to avoid assigning 'blame', but also because I find the 'ethnic war' and 'intercivilisational war' theses problematic.

³⁹ The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that the mass executions of Bosnian Muslim men and boys from Srebrenica did constitute 'an act of genocide.' See: Statement to the Press by H.E. Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, 26 February 2007 re Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro) <http://www.icj-cij.org/> [accessed 30/02/07].

⁴⁰ Ramet, S, P. (2006). *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 1-35.

A significant amount of research has explored the causes and 'ethnic' nature of the conflict and, in the post-war period, the majority remains somewhat narrowly focused on the aftermath of 'ethnic' violence and division in Bosnia⁴¹. Franke Wilmer schematically divides this research into nine key categories, suggesting there has been a tendency to focus on: 1) The question of the legitimacy of the Yugoslavian State; 2) The rise of nationalism related to economic and political instability; 3) Political claims to geographical territory related to the breakdown of the Yugoslav state; 4) Power transition and political insecurity related to the end of the Cold War; 5) Historical memories and unresolved grievances of the Yugoslav civil war during World War II; 6) The 'ancient hatreds' thesis; 7) Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis; 8) 'Ethnic Conflict' theories, including primordial/elite mobilization explanations and self-determination rationalizations'; and 9) Individual psychological explanations, including tendencies towards scapegoating, reliance on exclusionary identities, and individual vulnerability to elite manipulation⁴².

With relatively few exceptions, it is apparent that much of this body of research uses 'rational scientific' approaches which rely on largely unacknowledged positivist assumptions. This is signified through a noticeable absence of discussions on epistemology, ontology and methodology. A number of scholars, including Franke Wilmer and David Campbell, have found this absence troubling: not only because the dominant representations

⁴¹ See for example: Olzak, S. (2011). 'Does Globalization Breed Ethnic Discontent?' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 55, 1, pp3-32; Whitt, S. (2014). 'Social Norms in the Aftermath of Ethnic Violence: Ethnicity and Fairness in Non-costly Decision Making', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 58, no 1, pp 92-119.

⁴² Wilmer, F. (2002). *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge pp244-246.

of Bosnia in this body of work, interpret violence as the outcome of the undesirable coexistence of people of different ethnic groups, where 'ethnicity' is treated as an unquestionable and taken-for-granted variable; but also because these dominant representations and narratives have the ability to construct the reality they purport to describe⁴³. This, Campbell argues in his poststructuralist and deconstructivist research, has already had significant implications for the political future of Bosnia⁴⁴. Robert Kaplan, for example, likened Bosnians to savages who were predisposed to violence beyond any outside control:

Bosnia is rural, isolated, and full of suspicions and hatreds to a degree that the sophisticated Croats of Zagreb could barely imagine...Bosnia did have one sophisticated urban centre, however, Sarajevo, where Croats, Serbs, Muslims and Jews had traditionally lived together in reasonable harmony. But the villages all around were full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism. The fact that the most horrifying violence during World War II occurred in Bosnia was no accident⁴⁵.

Kaplan's construction of ethnicity and ancient hatreds in Bosnia influenced, by their own admission, the British Prime Minister John Major, the US president Bill Clinton and EU mediator Lord Owen, which induced an atmosphere of caution amongst external actors who fully accepted the futility of intervention in 'ancient' and 'ethnic' violence⁴⁶. Pugh and Cooper

⁴³ See: Wilmer, F. (2002). *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in the Former Yugoslavia*. London: Routledge pp244-246; Campbell, D. (1998). *National Deconstruction: Violence Identity and Justice in Bosnia*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴⁴ Campbell, D. (1998). *National Deconstruction: Violence Identity and Justice in Bosnia*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴⁵ Kaplan, R. D. (1993). *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*. New York: St Martins Press, p22.

⁴⁶ Hansen, L. (2006). *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. Oxford: Routledge, p150; Ramet, S, P. (2006). *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*. Cambridge: Cambridge

argue that the acceptance of ancient hatreds discourse allowed nationalist extremists in Bosnia to ‘determine the nature of the problem in terms of ethnicity and territory’⁴⁷, and as a consequence international efforts to end the war:

...focused on constitutional arrangements and territorial subdivision that embodied the very nexus between identity and territory on which the protagonists relied⁴⁸.

The emphasis on territorial division further provided nationalist extremists with an incentive to continue fighting to win more ‘ethnic’ territory prior to the peace settlement, in what Pugh and Cooper describe as ‘ethnic cartography’⁴⁹. Reliance on this discourse also marginalized other explanations for the war, including external responsibilities and regional dimensions, and instead ‘pinned responsibility almost exclusively on indigenous agency, particularly that of the Serb nationalists’⁵⁰. Whilst the ‘ancient hatreds’ thesis was later criticised and rejected by many observers, Denich has argued that the ethnic construction of Bosnia contributed to ‘unmaking multiethnicity’ in the country and the wider region, which he argues has now become synonymous with endemic instability⁵¹.

Indeed, much of the post-war research on Bosnia has unintentionally reiterated the western stereotype of the Balkans as a place of ethnic and

University Press, p35; Pugh, M. and Cooper, N. (2004). *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p151.

⁴⁷ Pugh, M. and Cooper, N. (2004). *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p151.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p151.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p151.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p151.

⁵¹ Denich, B. (2000). ‘Unmaking Multiethnicity in Yugoslavia: Media and Metamorphosis’ in Halpern, J, M. Kideckel, D, A. *Neighbours at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity and Culture*. Pennsylvania University Press, p39.

ancient hatreds, which is 'semideveloped, semicolonial, semicivilized, semioriental'⁵², and as Razsa and Lindstrom argue, in many cases:

The Balkans still tend to be characterized, often in a rather unreflective manner, as negative, backward, chaotic, and violent - terms like powder keg and balkanization immediately come to mind.⁵³

Thus, as Campbell argues, there is a need to rethink and critique the array of historical, statistical and cartographic research practices through which Bosnia is represented and understood⁵⁴. Whilst there are indications of change, especially in the anthropological literature as outlined in Chapter 3, critical research approaches that use visual and reflexive methodologies, remain marginalized in terms of the mainstream repertoire of research on Bosnia. Further work is needed, not only to draw attention to the dangers of essentialising the Balkan as 'Other'⁵⁵, but also to help understand the ways in which conflict continues to impact on Bosnians themselves in terms of their lived experiences of post-war environments. This could be advanced through further research that draws on different methodological approaches to explore the complexity of lived experiences in post-war environments. If reflexive and critical methodological approaches are used, this might serve to enhance our understanding of post-war Bosnia in ways that also challenge and counter the unacknowledged positivist assumptions, which underpin existing research on Bosnia.

⁵² Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵³ Razsa, M. and Lindstrom, N. (2004). 'Balkan is Beautiful: Balkanism in the Political Discourse of Tudjman's Croatia', *East European Politics and Societies*, pp 628-650.

⁵⁴ Campbell, D. (1998). *National Deconstruction: Violence Identity and Justice in Bosnia*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

⁵⁵ Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Dayton Peace Agreement

The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed on the 21st November 1995, with the assistance of the international community, and formally ended four years of war in Bosnia⁵⁶. The DPA was intended to support the post war reconstruction of Bosnia and included ambitious goals to create a democratic, unified and self-sustaining state structure, to provide mechanisms to maintain the ceasefire, control arms, protect human rights, and permit the return of refugees and those displaced during the war. Two UN mandated organisations were established to lead and oversee the management of the DPA: The Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)⁵⁷. These organisations were supported by a range of international bodies including the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which provided security with a 60,000 strong implementation force⁵⁸, The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which provided electoral support, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which provided humanitarian assistance and support for the return of refugees and displaced people.

In geographical terms, the DPA recognised and retained Bosnia's international boundaries, but divided Bosnia internally into two semi-autonomous entities: The Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina (FBiH) and

⁵⁶ The DPA is also known as the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Hercegovina (GFAP)

⁵⁷ The PIC and OHR were established under Annex 10 to support the post war transition of Bosnia and oversee the civilian aspects of the DPA. The PIC comprises of 55 countries and agencies that are intended to support the peace process by assisting it financially, providing troops, and directly running operations in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

⁵⁸ The first implementation force was known as I-For, then became S-For, and more recently EU-For.

the Republika Srpska (RS), which were separated by the establishment of an inter-entity boundary line (IEBL) (see figure 6)⁵⁹. This division loosely followed the ethno-nationalist borders established during the war, and a number of observers have argued that this division rewarded the territorial gains that were achieved during the war, and further entrenched the ethno-nationalist separation of people that resulted from displacement and ethnic cleansing (see figure 7)⁶⁰.

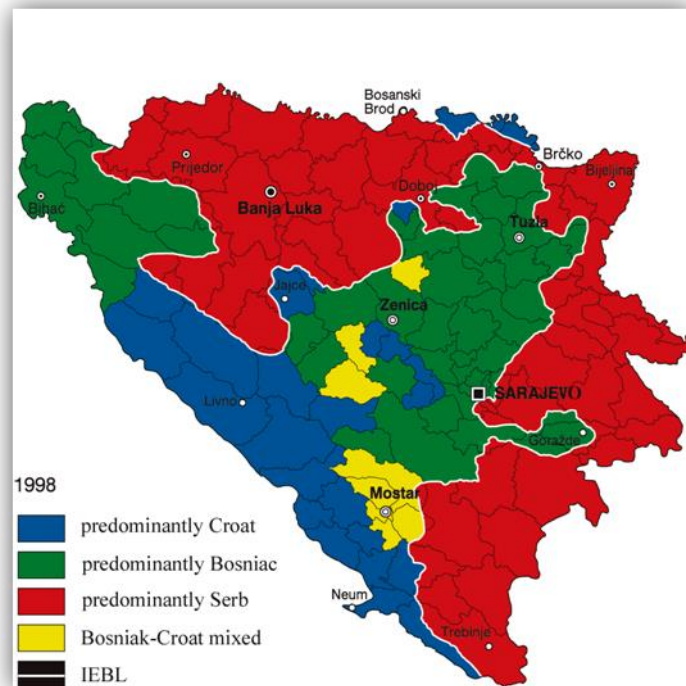


Figure 7: Ethnic composition in 1998⁶¹.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the DPA recognised ‘three constituent peoples’ of Bosnia, which included Serbs, Croats and Bošniacs. A political

⁵⁹ The Federation is further divided into ten Cantons, whilst special status was granted to the Brčko district in 1999, a strategically important area that is located in the Posavina corridor, and connects the Eastern and Western parts of Republika Srpska.

⁶⁰ See: Campbell, D. (1998). *National Deconstruction: Violence Identity and Justice in Bosnia*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press; Chandler, D. (2000). *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton*. 2nd edition. London: Pluto Press; Belloni R (2005). ‘Peacebuilding at the Local Level: Refugee Return to Prijedor’ *International Peacekeeping* Vol 12(3).

⁶¹ <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/maps/> [accessed 24.12.09].

power sharing arrangement at a State level was organised with an eight month rotating presidency between these three constituent groups. The presidency is largely responsible for foreign policy, economic affairs, and representing Bosnia-Herzegovina abroad. At an entity level, the agreement also created separate government structures and a Prime Minister for each of the entities, with each government being responsible for internal entity matters. This constitutional arrangement inadvertently served to establish a politically weak central government and has encouraged strong nationalistic politics to flourish, with each of the entities now functioning as a 'de facto monolithic entity'⁶². This has also led to Bosnia being widely reported as having the most expensive and dysfunctional government system in Europe. The question of the integration or separation of the entities has arguably been the most divisive issue in Bosnia, and has led to a prolonged political deadlock at all levels of government, requiring ongoing political interventions by the OHR⁶³. Despite constitutional mechanisms within the DPA to integrate the two entities through processes of inter-entity arbitration and joint corporations (Annexes 5 and 9)⁶⁴, the prospect of integration has been politically fraught and has led to a state of 'perpetual instability' in Bosnia⁶⁵. This has affected all aspects of the country including employment, economic

⁶² International Crisis Group (2002). The '*Constituent Peoples' Decision in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. *Europe Report*, ICG, No 128. Sarajevo & Brussels.

⁶³ The Federation and Republika Srpska also frequently clash over a range of other issues such as refugee return and war crimes prosecutions.

⁶⁴ Constitutional voting mechanisms were intended to safeguard legitimate territorial interests of the two entities, as perceived by all three constituent peoples. However, the voting mechanism has allowed over 260 proposed laws to be blocked over the last fifteen years.

⁶⁵ Statement by Dr. Haris Silajdžić Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the United Nations Security Council Debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina, New York, 24 May 2010. Website: <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/gov/1/?cid=14742,1,1> [Accessed 12.06.10].

development and refugee returns which have been hindered by political disputes, inefficient governance and corruption⁶⁶.

For some observers, the de-facto partition of Bosnia under the Dayton Peace Accords embedded instability in the region, which has been widely criticised for, 'exacerbating the problem of internal displacement and raising ethnic tensions'⁶⁷. Bob Deacon and Paul Stubbs go further, and have argued that, 'Dayton provides for 'war by other means', within a political framework...(and that) such a division, in the current context, is itself a recipe for chaos'⁶⁸. After fifteen years of intensive international interventions in Bosnia, it is clear that many observers feel that stability is deteriorating and tensions are rising, with some reporting that 'Bosnia is starting to fracture' as nationalist leaders 'play a zero-sum game to upset the Dayton

⁶⁶ The post war economy is one area that represents a significant problem, as Bosnia struggles to transform its economy on three levels: a) from a communist to capitalist economy; b) from an underdeveloped to self-sustaining economy; and c) from a war to peace economy. In demographic terms, The Helsinki Committee states that pre-war Bosnia was so ethnically mixed that in around 80% of municipalities no single ethnic group had an absolute majority (see figure 1). Today Bosnia is much more ethnically homogenous, which strongly reflects the ethno-nationalist frontline divisions that were established during the war. Consequently, the Republika Srpska is predominantly populated by Bosnian Serbs, whilst the Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina is largely populated by Bosniaks and Croats, with a large concentration of Croats in the Herceg-Bosna region (see figure 3). The reality of Bosnia fifteen years after the war is that the majority of cities have one dominant ethnic group making up nearly 90% of the city's population, and Helsinki Committee figures suggest that Tuzla is the only municipality where the majority population does not reach 90% of the total population. The vast majority of displaced people moved to areas where they would be among the ethnic majority and therefore not subject to discrimination. However the discrimination which returnees face as members of a local ethnic minority in return areas has continued to affect their livelihood opportunities and access to services. As a consequence, many Bosnian Muslims are unwilling to even consider the prospect of entering the Republika Srpska, and rumours of a return to war because of this issue have become more prevalent over the last few years. This ethnic monopoly on territorial interests solidifies ethnic division, renders the State dysfunctional and, in turn, perpetuates instability. See: Fischer, M. (2006). 'Bosnia's Challenge: Economic Reform, Political Transformation and War-to-Peace Transition' in Fischer, M. (ed.) *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia and Hercegovina: Ten Years after Dayton*. Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin: Transaction Publishers, p448.

⁶⁷ Belloni, R. (2005). 'Peacebuilding at the Local Level: Refugee Return to Prijedor' *International Peacekeeping* Vol 12(3), 434.

⁶⁸ Deacon B, Stubbs P. (2002). *International Actors and Social Policy Development in Bosnia-Hercegovina: Globalism and the 'New Feudalism'*.
<http://www.gaspp.org/people/pstubbs/paper%206.doc>

settlement'⁶⁹. In Republika Srpska, for example, the Prime Minister Milorad Dodik has openly declared secession as the self-determining right of the Bosnian Serbs and has called for a referendum on whether Republika Srpska will stay within the borders of Bosnia or not. In turn, Haris Silajdžić, the Bošniak Chairman of the rotating Presidency of Bosnia, has called for the dissolution of the Republika Srpska - the creation of which he regards as a reward for ethnic cleansing - openly calling the entity 'the product of genocide'. Zeljko Komsic, the Presidency Member for Bosnian Croats has called for the creation of a new third Bosnian Croat entity in what is known as the Herceg-Bosna region surrounding Mostar and Livno⁷⁰. These political moves have been accompanied by an escalation nationalist rhetoric and the invocation of wartime and post-war injustices, which have revived fears of a return to war in what is widely considered as the most serious challenge yet to the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia⁷¹.

'Peace', of course, consists of more than the simple cessation of violence, and as Bosnia remains in a fragile state of 'negative peace', it is clear that significant obstacles and difficulties remain in what is deceptively called the 'post-war' era. In Bosnia, as in many other areas that have been the focus of large-scale international interventions to bring an end to war, post-war realities are subject to, and in part constituted by, the presence of an international community who aim to work 'in' and 'on' the reconstruction and regeneration of a functioning state, economic and political system. Indeed,

⁶⁹ International Crisis Group (2009). 'Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe' Europe Report N°198 9 Mar 2009 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/bosnia-Hercegovina/198-bosnias-incomplete-transition-between-dayton-and-europe.aspx> [accessed 19/05/10].

⁷⁰ Latal, S. (2010). 'Bosnia Faces Critical Challenges in 2010' *International Crisis Group* <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/bosnia-Hercegovina/bosnia-faces-critical-challenges-in-2010.aspx> [accessed 26/05/10].

⁷¹ Ibid.

the international community's 'prescription' for peace and sustainable economic development in Bosnia has largely consisted of neoliberal market policies, and the often unstated, but 'natural' assumption that: 'democratisation + market economy = peace'⁷². As a result, the scale and extent of economic, political, and social interventions in Bosnia has been extensive and in many ways, unprecedented and has meant that almost 'every aspect of Bosnian society from media content to housing policy is imposed by external regulators'⁷³. Bosnia, in this sense, has become 'one of the first major peacebuilding experiments of the post-Cold war period'⁷⁴; a 'laboratory for post-Cold war intervention'⁷⁵; and a 'pilot project for international governance'⁷⁶. In the next part of this chapter, I discuss the development of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector and 'civil society' in Bosnia, which have been seen as crucial element of reconstruction efforts to build a lasting and durable peace. This also provides some context for the discussion of fieldwork and NGO voluntary work in Bosnia in the following chapter.

⁷² Fischer, M. (2006). 'Bosnia's Challenge: Economic Reform, Political Transformation and War-to-Peace Transition' in Fischer, M. (ed.) *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia and Hercegovina: Ten Years after Dayton*. Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin: Transaction Publishers, p447.

⁷³ Chandler, D. (2000). *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton*. 2nd edition. London: Pluto Press, p 3.

⁷⁴ Pugh, M. & Cooper, N. (2004). *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p 143.

⁷⁵ Kaldor, M. (2003). *Global Civil Society: an answer to war*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p32.

⁷⁶ Ehrke, M. (2003). 'Von der Raubökonomie zur Rentenökonomie: Mafia, Bürokratie und international Mandat in Bosnien' In Fischer, M. (ed.) (2006). *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*, Munich: Lit Verlag.

The emergence of the NGO sector and ‘civil society’ in Bosnia

In the post-Cold War period, the development of the NGO sector and civil society have been widely seen as central to reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in post-war countries. In Bosnia, explicit efforts to develop the NGO sector and rebuild civil society have been regarded as essential to establishing a legitimate and democratic state, and instrumental in terms of weakening the influence of the nationalist political parties, and building a lasting and durable peace. The assumption is that civil society, ‘capacity’ building organisations and NGOs will ‘bring about a new culture of interaction and political engagement based on compromise, tolerance and participation’⁷⁷.

The notion of civil society is widely used to denote the ‘third sphere’ between the state and its public institutions, and citizens; and efforts to promote ‘civil society’ and ‘capacity building’ usually rest on a classic de Tocquevillian view of civil society functioning as a counterbalance to the potential capabilities of the modern State⁷⁸. In developed democratic states, civil society (composed of citizen’s organisations, independent media organisations and the public) functions as an intermediary space in which ‘society’ can interact with the state in order to monitor and control state power, and keep its actions in check. However, in many ways, the term (and concept) of ‘civil society’, has become somewhat ‘slippery’ in recent years, and has also become synonymous with the growth of the international NGO (INGOs) sector and the imposition of a ‘Western’ framework of structural

⁷⁷ Fagan, A. (2005). ‘Civil Society in Bosnia Ten Years after Dayton’ *International Peacekeeping* Vol.12(3), 407.

⁷⁸ Lewis, D. (2001). *The Management of Non-Governmental Organizations*. London: Routledge, p56.

adjustment, reform and regeneration in post-war and developing countries with transitional democracies.

In Bosnia, for example, following the initial NATO interventions, a number of international NGOs including The UN, OSCE, UNHCR, The World Bank and other humanitarian assistance NGOs moved in with the intention of helping to build a functioning state and effective civil society⁷⁹. The emergence of an externally conceived civil society, led by the international NGOs (INGOs), has meant that civil society in Bosnia has developed both rapidly and haphazardly alongside the project of state building. In its most recent report USAID reported that a total of 7,874 INGO, NGO and local NGOs (LNGOs) and 55 foundations were registered in Bosnia in 2004⁸⁰. However, the locally run International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) estimates that there are only around 200 active local NGOs (LNGOs) of which only 60 of these are described as 'strong' i.e. with developed strategies and management structures⁸¹. Many of these NGOs operate in a diverse range of areas including democratization, peace-building, conflict resolution, dealing with the past, micro-credit schemes, and education and support projects for women, vulnerable children and war veterans⁸². Political observers have argued that the emergence of an externally conceived civil society in Bosnia has been problematic both in terms of local ownership and

⁷⁹ These International NGOs are still present in Bosnia, and are all based in Sarajevo.

⁸⁰ Many of these organisations operate in a wide variety of areas, including, 17% in training and education, 14% in civic services, 14% in children/youth work, 10% women's groups, 9% health, 46% other services and training⁸⁰. See: www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_euraisa/dem_gov/ngoindex/2004/bosnia_Hercegovina.pdf [accessed 17/11/2006].

⁸¹ Personal communication with ICVA, a Sarajevo based INGO and network and support centre that holds a database of Bosnia based NGOs. See: www.icva-bh.org

⁸² Many of these organisations operate in a wide variety of areas, including, 17% in training and education, 14% in civic services, 14% in children/youth work, 10% women's groups, 9% health, 46% other services and training. See: www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_euraisa/dem_gov/ngoindex/2004/bosnia_Hercegovina.pdf [accessed 17/11/2006].

the direction of 'Bosnian' civil society. Max Primorac, for example, argues that NGOs and 'civil society' are often viewed with mistrust by local populations, who describe them as 'foreign plants,' and he questions whether 'such plants can take root locally'⁸³. The OSCE also acknowledges that the Bosnian general public 'still does not fully understand the role or potential of the NGO sector in Bosnia'⁸⁴.

Moreover, there is also concern at the uneven geographical development of the NGO sector in Bosnia, with a heavy concentration of INGO and LNGO activity in urban cities, including Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Zenica; whilst the growth of NGOs has been far less successful in the more 'closed' rural areas of the Federation. A similar pattern has also emerged in the Republika Srpska, with INGOs and NGOs largely concentrating their support in Banja Luka at the expense of other areas. This has meant the development of extensive clusters of NGOs in the urban areas, whereas rural provincial areas have been largely neglected. If the development of the NGO sector and civil society is, as the international community suggest, central to peacebuilding efforts and sustainable peace, then this has significant implications for peacebuilding. As Max Primorac points out:

It is in the provincial areas where tensions run highest, ethno-political divisions are deepest, and where peace and conflict hang in the balance. Historical political inertia and the utter absence of a civic culture, as well as the deep unhealed wounds and suspicions left behind by ethnic cleansing, have made it difficult for those within these communities to translate into action even the most sincere wishes to restore

⁸³ Primorac, M. (2005). 'NGOs Creating a Foundation for Peace and Democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina' *Private Peacemaking USIP-Assisted Peacemaking Projects of Nonprofit Organizations. Part V: Development for Peace* http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/smooch20/chap12_20.html [accessed 20/03/06].

⁸⁴ OSCE Department of Democratization and Prism Research (2003). 'Public Opinion Research'. Responses to the question 'Which of these statements expresses an opinion concerning NGOs closest to your own?'

fragile social bonds. Though the need for supporting civic initiatives in these areas is clear, what is less clear is how to do it⁸⁵.

In this sense, the uneven geographical development of the NGO sector and civil society in Bosnia has definite limits in its ability to transcend inter-entity borders and ethnic divisions, with only a relatively small number of organisations actively working across borders and divisions⁸⁶. While this problem might be overcome with increased funding and local support, over the last five years there has been a dramatic decline in international and donor funding for civil society organisations in Bosnia, with funds being re-directed towards civil society organisations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere⁸⁷. There is also an expectation that many of these organisations should now be attracting private investment to continue their work, although it is clear that many NGOs in Bosnia are struggling to do so⁸⁸. The International Council for Voluntary Agencies reports very low levels of financial support and domestic philanthropy from Bosnian citizens, although with high levels of unemployment, poverty and hardship in Bosnia, this is hardly surprising. As such, most NGOs, both local and international tend to compete for the same limited amount of international donor funds, with each trying to maximise their chances of funding⁸⁹. In Bosnia (and elsewhere) this

⁸⁵ Primorac, M. (2005). 'NGOs Creating a Foundation for Peace and Democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina' Private Peacemaking USIP-Assisted Peacemaking Projects of Nonprofit Organizations. Part V: Development for Peace. http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/smock20/chap12_20.html [accessed 20/03/06].

⁸⁶ In the following chapters I will refer to a number of the peacebuilding organisations which worked across these borders and divisions.

⁸⁷ Personal Interview with JA, OSCE Project Officer, Sarajevo 16 April 2007.

⁸⁸ Personal Interview with JA, OSCE Project Officer, Sarajevo 16 April 2007.

⁸⁹ In 1999, the International Crisis Group published a report entitled 'Why Will No-One Invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina?' The report emphasized the risks to the peace-building process if steps were not taken to stimulate greater private investment in anticipation of the likely withdrawal of international NGOs and donor funding. In 2011 the lack of private investment appears to remain largely unchanged.

has meant that many projects become donor driven and, as Ismet Selfija notes, the term 'projectomania' has become common parlance in NGO circles describing NGOs whose entire programs revolve around the interests of particular donors in the aim of securing project funding⁹⁰. USAID, for instance, found that some international NGOs in Bosnia 'fail to account for local customs and cultural relevance' and in some cases have even failed to translate training materials into local languages⁹¹. This raises the questions of 'who' such training is directed at, and at a wider level, 'who' such a civil society is for. As Adam Fagan argues:

The fear, expressed by many within the sector, is that what is being created in the name of civil society has very little in common with that which exists in Western Europe, or even in other parts of post-communist Europe. This is largely indisputable and is an inevitable consequence of the unique *external* context in which NGOs are developing⁹².

Civil society, in this sense, is reduced to an externally imposed 'Western' intervention, based on a particular set of assumptions about how best to establish peace. Yet despite these issues of legitimacy, a number of locally run grassroots NGOs have managed to gain local and international recognition, with some local legitimacy in leading 'bottom up' approaches to peacebuilding. A number of international NGOs in Bosnia have also sought to employ an increasing number of local staff, whilst reducing their international staff.

⁹⁰ Sejfiija, I. (2006). 'From the "Civil Sector" to Civil Society? Progress and Prospects'. in Fischer, M. (ed.) *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Berghof Institute. p 86.

⁹¹ See: www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_euraisa/dem_gov/ngoindex/2004/bosnia_Herzegovina.pdf

⁹² Fagan, A. (2005). 'Civil Society in Bosnia Ten Years after Dayton' *International Peacekeeping* Vol.12(3), 417. Emphasis in original text.

As donor interests shift, however, NGOs which have become reliant on short-term funding have been expected to comply with funder's priorities for particular projects and aims. This often occurs without a long term view of the practical relevance and viability of the activities proposed, or an appreciation of the need for the long term funding for NGOs⁹³. A number of local NGO activists have argued that these trends are particularly worrying for the long term sustainability of civil society and NGOs in Bosnia; and this, in turn, is likely to pose a substantial risk to peace⁹⁴.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the war in Bosnia, and has outlined the human and material costs of war, and reflected on how this has helped shape the post-war environment. I discussed a number of key debates surrounding the war, including issues around the causes of war, and the significance of constructing the war in terms of ethnic identity and ancient hatreds. In the second part of this chapter I focused more specifically on the post-war context, including the Dayton Accords and the emergence of the NGO sector and 'civil society'. I have argued that, although the Dayton Peace Accords were 'successful' in bringing an official end to war, they have also embedded instability in the region, and have been widely criticised for, 'exacerbating the problem of internal displacement and raising ethnic

⁹³ After initial post-war interest in funding psychosocial and gender related projects, this was followed by an emphasis on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and more recently, has shifted towards projects involved with EU accession, and Bosnia's Roma communities. Personal interview with GK Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Sarajevo 28 March 2007.

⁹⁴ Personal Interviews with TW at the Centre for Nonviolent Action, HG at the Nansen Dialogue Centre, and GK at Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Sarajevo 28 March 2007.

tensions'⁹⁵. Despite over fifteen years of intensive international intervention, political observers contend that Bosnia is now facing its worst political crisis since the end of the war, with some warning of a nationalist backlash and increasing risk of public disorder as Bosnia begins to 'fracture'⁹⁶. This crisis, coupled with a dramatic decrease of donor funding for civil society organisations, poses a substantial challenge to the peace process and the work of peace activists in the region. For ordinary Bosnians, this also further exacerbates their everyday struggles to survive.

In Bosnia, where few things are simple, it is patently clear that political, social, and historical issues are intensely complex and widely contested. In this sense, it becomes easy to understand why some observers argue that 'Bosnia's future stability is not necessarily a given thing'⁹⁷. It is also clear that Bosnia is an extremely challenging 'fieldwork' site. In the next chapter, I outline an ethnographic account of my fieldwork experiences in Bosnia and discuss some of the intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges around conducting research in contexts that have been subject to large-scale conflict, violence and genocide.

⁹⁵ Belloni, R. (2005). 'Peacebuilding at the Local Level: Refugee Return to Prijedor' *International Peacekeeping* Vol 12(3), 434.

⁹⁶ Friedman, F. (2004). *Bosnia and Hercegovina. A polity on the brink*. London: Routledge p110.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*p111.

Chapter Five

'Becoming' a Researcher in Bosnia

Conducting research in contexts that have been subject to large-scale conflict, violence and genocide, poses exceptionally difficult intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges. As Nordstrom argues, this is because the 'cultures of violence' developed during conflict and war often remain intact in 'post-war' contexts, and form part of the politics and realities of everyday life¹. Whilst the challenges of research and fieldwork in post-war contexts are acknowledged in a number of important texts, there are still relatively few accounts, which discuss these issues in a detailed and systematic way². The aim of this chapter is to explore the challenges of research and fieldwork in post-war Bosnia through a series of narrative and reflexive 'moments' of 'becoming' a researcher. In using the idea of 'becoming' I mean to suggest both a process and an identity that is 'fabricated, constructed, in process...fragmented, full of contradictions and ambiguities'³. Becoming a researcher is therefore a negotiation of identity, process, place and self, and by constructing a series of 'moments' in this chapter, I hope to make explicit that 'becoming' a researcher in post-war Bosnia has been replete with a complex array of intellectual, practical and emotional challenges. This includes trying to make sense of 'Bosnia',

¹ Nordstrom, C. (1994). *Warzones: Cultures of Violence, Militarisation and Peace*, Working Paper, No 145. Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University.

² For several excellent examples, see: Smyth, M and Gillian, R. (eds.) (2001). *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*. London: UN University Press and Pluto Press; Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Wood, E, J. (2006) 'The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones' *Qualitative Sociology*, 29: 373-386.

³ Sarup, M. (1996). 'Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World', Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, cited in Dunne, M. Pryor, J. Yates, P. (2005). *Becoming a Researcher: a research companion for the social sciences*. Berkshire: Open University Press, p 5.

attempting to negotiating access to NGOs and activists, along with feelings of failure, inadequacy, and academic guilt. What I also try to demonstrate through these 'moments' is the importance of acknowledging and exploring the 'dilemmas' and 'hidden' struggles of fieldwork, as they are rarely recognised within conflict resolution. My contention here is that if conflict resolution accounts of research and fieldwork fail to acknowledge and represent these dilemmas, or simply read them as a series of 'functional challenges to be faced and overcome'⁴, then our understanding of research in contexts where large violence and war has occurred, becomes 'sanitised and smoothed over' in ways which belie the realities of research and the realities of post-war contexts⁵. This, I argue, not only affects the kind of knowledge that is created, but also has implications for those whose lives are incorporated and represented in conflict resolution research. In the following two chapters I will go on to explore these issues in greater detail.

In the first part of this chapter, I draw on my fieldwork relating to Bosnia, which included a pre-fieldwork period, an initial field visit to Bosnia, and a one year period of fieldwork based in Sarajevo in Bosnia from 2006 to 2007. These disparate elements form a partial and fragmentary set of 'evidences', which I draw on in this chapter (and elsewhere in this thesis) to provide context and to explore some of the familiar elements of engaging in fieldwork. This includes negotiating access, learning language, and dealing with methodological and ethical issues, which arose in the course of my fieldwork.

⁴ Dunne, M. Pryor, J. Yates, P. (2005). *Becoming a Researcher: a research companion for the social sciences*. Berkshire: Open University Press, p 1.

⁵ Punch, S. (2010). 'Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field diaries' *Emotion, Space and Society*, doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005

In the second part of this chapter I draw on my fieldwork notes and diary to outline a number of important 'moments' and a significant 'rupture' during my fieldwork. I also write more explicitly about the difficulties of conducting research in post-war context of Sarajevo and Bosnia, and discuss 'the shadow side' of fieldwork⁶.

In summary, this chapter outlines the need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the particular challenges of research and fieldwork in post-war contexts; and more specifically, argues the need for detailed accounts of fieldwork in conflict resolution, in order to 'achieve a more balanced sense of the field'⁷.

An Overview of Fieldwork in Bosnia

My research began with the intention of exploring the relationships and spaces between academic discourses of conflict resolution and the everyday realities of conflict resolution practices in NGOs in post-war Bosnia. My initial methodological plan was to use an inductive grounded theory approach to my research⁸. Grounded theory appeared to offer an exploratory way to approach research and, rather than posing fixed questions and testing hypotheses, it allowed me, a researcher with broader thematic interests, to 'ground' theory in the data instead of imposing pre-existing questions and

⁶ McLean, A. & Leibing, A. (eds). (2007). *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁷ Linkogle, S. (2000). 'Relajo: Danger in a crowd' In Lee-Treweek, G. Linkogle, S. (Eds). *Danger in the Field: Risk and Ethics in Social Research*. Routledge: London, p 142.

⁸ For a more detailed account of my approach to grounded theory see: Muir, R. (2005). *Grounded Theory: A Critical Review*, Unpublished Masters thesis. University of Bradford.

theories onto the research⁹. As I was interested in the everyday realities of conflict resolution practices in NGOs, I planned to conduct a series of interviews with NGO workers and activists, and others involved in conflict resolution activities. The intention was to use these interviews as the main method of data collection with varying degrees of ethnographic observation and participant observation (if I was able to take part in conflict resolution workshops and training) to supplement them. During the course of my fieldwork, however, it became apparent that my plan to conduct interviews was much more problematic than I had reasonably anticipated (the reasons for this will be explored in greater detail below). Together these issues forced a rethink of my research and approaches in the field, as well as profoundly shaping my fieldwork experience in ways that challenged me to ‘undo’ my research aims. This constituted a crisis (of confidence, methodology and other things), yet at the same time I realised that there was something sociologically important about the difficulties I was having. These ‘problems’ became, in part, the focus of my research, and in the following ‘Discourses on Research’ Chapter, I develop this argument further to suggest their importance to the practice of contemporary conflict resolution research itself.

In the next section I outline the details of my preparation for fieldwork and some of the ‘nuts and bolts’, including an overview of a pre-fieldwork period of fourteen months with a Bosnian Community Centre, ‘Ljiljan’, in West Yorkshire, an initial one month field visit to Bosnia where I stayed in Zenica, a

⁹ Grounded theory explicitly rejected the logico-deductive method which relied on the formulation of a hypothesis, and the process of verifying or falsifying the hypothesis. See for example: Strauss, A. Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, p50.

town in central Bosnia, and a one year period of fieldwork based in Sarajevo in Bosnia.

Preparations for fieldwork

In February 2005 I began a period of preparations for my intended fieldwork in Bosnia, which included making contact with a Bosnian Community Centre in West Yorkshire. Along with a fellow PhD student who was also undertaking research on - and in - Bosnia, we contacted the centre in the hope that we might be able to find someone who could begin to teach us 'local language'¹⁰. The 'Ljiljan' Centre, as it was known, opened in 1994 with the support of local doctors and a number of Bosnian refugees, with the explicit aim of providing welfare and advice services to newly arrived Bosnian refugees¹¹. The Centre also served as an important formal community meeting place which was significant in helping to maintain ties and relationships in the wider Bosnian community. In addition to the welfare and advice services, there was also a women's and family group, a Bosnian school for children over the weekends, and a Bosnian football team who played in the local league. Ljiljan also provided an informal meeting place for anyone who wanted to drop in and chat and have a coffee or cigarette¹². On

¹⁰ 'Local language' or 'lokalni jezik' was widely used at the centre and in Bosnia to refer to Bosnian/ Serbian and Croatian language, rather than 'Serbo-Croatian', as it had formerly been known. For more on the politics of language in Bosnia see: Greenberg, R, D. (2008). *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croat and its Disintegration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹¹ 'Ljiljan' translates as 'golden lily', which is considered to be the national symbol of Bosnian Muslims.

¹² Meeting for coffee is an important part of everyday social interactions in Bosnia, where coffee is traditionally drunk out of small cups without handles (fildžani). See for example: Bringa, T. (1995). *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wednesdays in particular (the local market day) the Centre bustled with elderly people from the Bosnian community who met regularly to catch up, reminisce, and compare bargains from the market.

The Centre, funded by a National Lottery grant, was also financially supplemented by the local council. This encouraged them to broaden their services and offer welfare, immigration, education and employment advice to refugees and asylum seekers from countries other than Bosnia¹³. On our first visit to the Centre, one of the coordinators Emir told us that they were short of regular volunteers and asked if we might want to help to run the weekly women's and family group¹⁴. Although volunteering at the Centre was not part of our initial plan, we both chose to become involved because of the opportunity it offered us in terms of being able to learn local language and to speak about Bosnia and our research¹⁵.

Over the next fourteen months we volunteered at Ljiljan, took Bosnian language lessons with a retired Bosnian professor once a week, and learned

¹³ Lottery funding ceased in 2005, and despite efforts to secure further funding, the Centre was forced to close in February 2006.

¹⁴ All names used here are pseudonyms, to protect confidentiality.

¹⁵ At times I will refer to 'we' in this section to refer to myself and Michaelina Jakala. Michaelina's research, focused on the post-war situation for women who had been physically and sexually tortured during the war. We both volunteered at the Centre, took Bosnian lessons together, and we also shared a flat in Sarajevo. Preparing for fieldwork together, and sharing a flat in Bosnia made sense in practical and financial terms (there were financial constraints for both of us), although we also quickly realised that being together had its benefits, as we found that as a pair we were more widely accepted than each of us might have been alone. For example, our Bosnian lessons with a retired Bosnian professor took place at his house, often when his wife was out. We sensed that spending regular time alone with him (or with any man) might have compromised his (and our) reputation within the wider community. Yet together, we were seen to be legitimately taking Bosnian lessons. The friendship and support that Michaelina and I gave each other also proved to have invaluable benefits. Sharing a flat in Sarajevo allowed us to have extended discussions about practical, ethical, and methodological dilemmas, 'on the ground'. Undoubtedly, this sharing of experiences and dilemmas also influenced our thinking about our individual research projects, but also jointly extended our understanding of what was happening within different NGOs in Sarajevo.

to cook 'burek' with his wife¹⁶. Our initial commitment to help to run the weekly women's and family group began to slowly extend and we became involved with helping out with other meetings and services. Due to the time we spent at the Centre, we also began to spend more time with the families and friends connected to Ljiljan.

We were invited to attend parties, birthdays, family days out, and picnics¹⁷, and began to regularly spend time with a number of people from Zenica, Dobož, Mostar and Ključ¹⁸. This informal 'deep hanging out' allowed us to enter into the everyday conversations and stories of 'ordinary' Bosnians, which were often rich with details of their lives and experiences¹⁹. Over months of hanging out I heard about their difficulties in adjusting to life in the UK, of missing 'home' in Bosnia, and of the constant physical and emotional efforts to cope with the things that had happened to them²⁰. In return, I seemed to be a welcome source of amusement as I tried to speak in local language. This was never more so than when I tried to repeat the less salubrious phrases I had learned from the football team. Speaking English

¹⁶ Burek is a traditional savoury pastry, typically filled with meat and onion, cheese and spinach, or marrow

¹⁷ Family and friends were invited to the 'Bosnian picnic', which included spit roasting two whole lambs over burning wood. Spit roasted lambs are a speciality in Bosnian cooking, and it is common to see metal spits outside Bosnian restaurants.

¹⁸ Dobož, Ključ and Mostar in particular experienced extremely high levels of fighting during the war. A number of the people I knew from these areas had been shot or held in detention camps before being evacuated by the Red Cross during the war.

¹⁹ 'Deep hanging out' is a term coined by Renato Rosaldo, an anthropologist at Stanford University to describe being profoundly immersed in a culture whilst being actively engaged with a research agenda and methods. See: Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. London: Redwood Press.

²⁰ One retired man told me that he had not slept properly for years and, every night he had nightmares about being held in a detention camp.

with some of the retired people was also an important aspect of my acceptance²¹.

We slowly became trusted and respected members and, within a year, we were given our own set of keys and invited to planning meetings. As news of our 'access' spread I was approached by a Professor and received a number of emails from other academics asking if they could interview the people I knew. I/we had inadvertently become 'gatekeepers' to the Ljiljan Centre and the 'Bosnian community'.

It was clear that our level of 'access to Bosnian Diaspora' was considered to be unusual and valuable by other academics²². On one level this indicated that I/we were doing well (in academic terms of access at least); but on another it indicated that by actively participating in the everyday life of the Centre, we were no longer perceived solely in terms of our vaguely defined roles as volunteers and members, but also as unofficial gatekeepers with privileged access to the Bosnian community²³.

As we tried to negotiate this newly ascribed (and uncomfortable) role, we realised that we had become protective about the people we knew. Although our volunteering at Ljiljan was clearly research focused, i.e. 'hanging out' with Bosnians, improving language skills, and learning more about Bosnia and

²¹ A number of the retired people I knew told me with disappointment that they had never been invited into an 'English' home, and had few opportunities to speak to 'native' English people except for when they went shopping. On their arrival in Yorkshire, many of them had been dispersed to housing with high levels of immigrants, and their friendships tended to be with Bosnian and with other refugees that they had met through English language courses.

²² A number of the emails referred to my 'access to Bosnian Diaspora', although the people I knew referred to themselves simply as 'Bosnian' as most did not wish to be regarded as somehow separate or exiled from Bosnia.

²³ For more on gatekeepers see: Feldman, M, S. Bell, J. Berger, M, T. (2003). *Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

'Bosnians' for the benefit of our research, we did not feel that we needed (or wanted) to interview the people we had come to know. Our 'deep sited hanging out' and informal conversations at the Ljiljan centre were often rich with stories and details that 'naturally' occurred in conversations. Whilst we knew and trusted one of the senior academics who had contacted us, and felt a strong sense of obligation that we should try to negotiate access for him, we did not feel we could fully 'vouch' for him. We were also hesitant about how the people we knew might receive the requests for interviews, and how this might affect the relationships we had already established. The trust we had developed had grown slowly and gradually in small, but significant ways, and we were concerned that this might be viewed, retrospectively, as an attempt to manipulate access to the centre for our own needs²⁴.

We decided to openly discuss these requests with Emir and a number of other people we knew through the Ljiljan centre, whilst also being clear about our own ambivalence in the situation. The people we spoke to were overwhelmingly dis-interested in meeting the academics and their requests for interviews were rejected. Hasan, for instance, was mildly sceptical about their intentions and thought it strange that someone would want to interview him about his experiences. He told us that 'English' people had never been interested in him before and he didn't want to talk to somebody about his life that he didn't know²⁵. A number of the retired and more elderly people also

²⁴ It was clear that our commitment to the centre was highly valued, and small things such as turning up regularly and on time, and helping out when needed, meant that we were seen as trustworthy, reliable and 'respectable'.

²⁵ Personal Field notes 10/02/06.

told me that they did not want to be interviewed or have to tell their stories to strangers²⁶.

Their responses were somewhat surprising, particularly as they had always seemed eager to talk to me, although admittedly I had not asked directly about their experiences, or about the war. My not asking was purposeful. I was aware that focusing on 'their story' and memories might affect the dynamics of the relationships and undermine the trust we had built. I was also aware from my reading of a number of ethnographies on Bosnia that formal interviews and direct questions about the war had been interpreted as 'taking stories'. Alongside this were accusations that researchers questions and questioning resulted in the 're-traumatisation' of a number of people (particularly women) who had been interviewed in the period immediately after the war had ended²⁷. As Olujić asks in relation to her own experience of war in Croatia:

Are individuals who are affected by war only important inasmuch as their "story" or "case" is concerned? By "observing" and "recording" as if in a panopticon, researchers and reporters become a one-way mirror through which the power and domination are visible, yet unverifiable²⁸.

²⁶ Most told me, with disappointment, that I was the first 'English' person they had 'really' spoken to. They said they didn't have any other 'English' friends, and had never been to an 'English' home, despite having lived in the UK for over 10 years. For them 'English' meant someone whose family had been in the UK for a considerable length of time, and who they thought of as 'native' (and usually 'white'). Personal Field notes 24/08/05.

²⁷ I am not suggesting that the intention of the academics mentioned was to 'take stories' or 're-traumatise' the people they spoke to, but I was aware of wanting to avoid any sense that the reason I had become a volunteer at the Centre was because I was just interested in their stories.

²⁸ Olujić, M. B. (1995). 'The Croatian War Experience' In Nordstrom, C. & Martin, J. (eds). *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, p200.

I was aware of wanting to avoid any sense that the reason I had become a volunteer at the Centre was because I was only interested in Bosnians as a source of stories and information (even though this had initially been my intention). The people from Ljiljan had become much more than merely a source of information; they had taken me under their wing, fed me, taught me how to speak (and swear) in local language, and had given me detailed and useful advice as I planned my research in Bosnia. They had invited me into the Centre and their homes as a friend might, and often went out of their way to make sure that I felt included and welcome - as if I were part of their community. Retrospectively, I realised that my 'pre-fieldwork' preparations had unwittingly become part of the 'field' as the geographical boundaries of my proposed fieldwork site in Bosnia (as a physical place), also existed symbolically in West Yorkshire. Ljiljan had been more important than I realised.

Fieldwork in Bosnia

In September 2006 I arrived in Sarajevo, almost eleven years after the official end of the war²⁹. I selected Sarajevo as the base for my fieldwork in Bosnia because the majority of the international and local NGOs were located there. In addition, the city had also been seriously affected by a forty-four month siege during the war.

Haris and Jasna, my Bosnian teacher and his wife, helped me to find an apartment in Sarajevo through their network of friends and family who still

²⁹ I formally began my fieldwork period for this research in September 2006, and lived in Sarajevo for a period of 12 months between September 2006 and September 2007.

lived in Bosnia. It was clear to me that they were trying to look after me, and wanted to make sure that I (and Michaelina) had people to call on if we wanted, or needed to. The apartment we were offered was in Hrasno, an area of Sarajevo that had been part of the shifting front line during the war. Evidence of the war was still clear to see, with heavy shelling damage and bullet holes visible in the buildings opposite, and weathered United Nations plastic sheeting covering a few of the windows that had still not been repaired. The pavements outside were littered with shell marks, which had left crevices in the concrete, some of which had been hastily repaired. The seventh floor apartment was a ten minute tram ride from the centre of Sarajevo, and was typical of many of the high-rise communist style developments in Bosnia. The apartment had been fully renovated after the war (complete with a bullet proof door), although it had stood empty following renovation, as the memories of living there had become too much for our landlady, Jasmina, to cope with. Each time she visited the flat she chain smoked with visible anxiety and reminisced about her time there during the war³⁰.

A few weeks after arriving, Michaelina and I ended up at the 'Ghatto Klub', one of the many lively bars and drinking places typical of Sarajevo. We had planned to meet Emma there, someone we had been introduced to who was setting up a healing centre for women who had been held in detention camps and experienced sexual violence during the war. The bar was loud and as always, thick with cigarette smoke, playing the latest American and European

³⁰ Jasmina had moved to live in a friend's apartment, and occasionally visited the flat to find out how things were going, or to collect rent. My offers to meet elsewhere were sometimes accepted, but her son said that her insistence on visiting the flat were part of her attempts to deal with her memories about the war and to reduce her anxiety about the apartment.

pop tracks to a group of young and painfully stylish Sarajevans. The bars in Sarajevo were often busy, both day and night, and almost seemed to exist as counter-worlds to the hopelessness of the everyday realities of life³¹. Emma arrived with her fiancée Meho and a few of his friends, and we sat down to drink a few beers and chat. One of Meho's friends seemed intrigued about why we were in Bosnia (we didn't look the type to be working for the UN), and so Michaelina began to tell him that we were researchers starting work on our PhD's. Midway through this explanation, the friendly look on his face hardened; he shifted uncomfortably in his chair and began to stare at us with barely disguised fury. He said: *So you think we are animals? Rats to be looked at under the microscope?* Researchers not Bosnians, he said, were animals. With visible disgust he described how researchers had come to Bosnia 'with their notebooks and tape-recorders', often ignorant of Bosnian politics and history and unable to speak the language, yet 'searching for evidence of violence and hatred' so they could report it back to other researchers who would come and do the same. He said: *You are the ones who are animals.* Without waiting for a response, he angrily pulled his chair in the opposite direction and turned his back to us. I sat there speechless and ashamed³².

Even though I had only been in Bosnia for a matter of weeks, I became acutely aware that my presence as a researcher was viewed as deeply problematic (by some at least), and I seriously considered leaving. I found it

³¹ Many people I spoke to referred to the hopelessness of living in Bosnia, and fear for the future of their country and their own lives. Many of the young people I spoke to had also attempted, or were planning to leave Bosnia with the help of educational visas or sponsorship from relatives in other countries.

³² Personal Field notes 06/10/06.

hard to reconcile my experiences at the Ljiljan Centre with the one at the Ghatto Klub, and was at odds to understand or explain this confrontation. Even though I had read extensively about research in conflict resolution and in war zones, I had been entirely unprepared for this incident. Outright fury at the very idea of research did not appear on the pages of any of the books I had read, which had tended to paint vibrant pictures of willing participants and welcoming communities (aside from brief moments of suspicion and gatekeeper strategising, which could be manoeuvred around with experience and skill). It made little sense to me why the fieldwork reports that I had read did not match up with this fieldwork reality; even though at the same time I was aware that when you travel to a place that you believe you 'know' through reading and speaking to people, there are always points when the imagined sense of place breaks with 'reality'.

The 'field' was not the field I had anticipated, and my first impressions of Bosnia jarred uncomfortably against the 'imagined' sense of Bosnia I had constructed for myself. I became deeply unsettled by this incident, and I was unsure how to continue my fieldwork and research. It became impossible to think about continuing my research as I had before, as I could not somehow pretend that this incident had not happened. This constituted a 'rupture' in the course of my research, which Denzin and Lincoln suggest are precise or fuzzy points:

At which we are irrevocably changed. A sentence, a luminous argument, a compelling paper, a personal incident- any of these can create a breach between what we practiced before and what we can no longer practice, what we believed about the world and

what we can no longer hold onto, who we are as field-workers as distinct from who we have been in earlier research³³.

My position as a researcher, regardless of my subject, background, and intentions had been read as totalizing and damaging. I had been viewed with pessimism and suspicion, and as holding the power to observe and 'gaze' at others from a privileged and powerful position. I had been exposed, not as I had feared, as an inexperienced researcher, but as an individual who was seen to be part of a much larger project that observes and records the lives of others through a one-way mirror 'as if in a panopticon'³⁴. I wondered about how I could have ever thought I was able to do research in Bosnia, and simultaneously tried to justify (to myself) my being there. Over the ensuing weeks this sense of 'rupture' was reinforced as my expectations about my ability to undertake fieldwork in Bosnia, and who I might be able to speak to, were also unsettled.

Despite my best efforts to establish contact with NGOs in Sarajevo, my attempts were proving unsuccessful. After repeated refusals and 'silences' to my emails (I was told this was the best way to contact busy activists on the move), I began to worry at my lack of progress. At first, I put this down to my approach or a lack of research experience, but after speaking to other researchers in Sarajevo, I began to realise that I was not the only one having difficulty. David, an anthropology student from an American Ivy League

³³ Denzin, N, K.. Lincoln, Y, S. (2005). 'The Eighth and Ninth Moments - Qualitative Research in/ and the Fractured Future' In: Denzin, N, K.. Lincoln, Y, S. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third Edition. London: Sage. pp 1116.

³⁴ Olujic, M, B. (1995). 'The Croatian War Experience' In Nordstrom, C. & Martin, J. (eds). *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, p200.

university, told me about what he described as a 'cat-and-mouse game' of trying to meet NGO activists. His attempts had also proved largely unsuccessful, and even though he had managed to secure what he thought were interviews with several activists, he had turned up to their offices only to be told they were unwilling to give interviews or were unavailable³⁵. Michaelina was experiencing similar difficulties, and on one occasion she had been openly told that no-one was prepared to speak to her. She was told the reason for this was because researchers could not be trusted as they repeatedly 'betrayed' the people they spoke to. These 'betrayals' she learned, included researchers actively misrepresenting things that had been said in interviews, and 're-traumatising' people (particularly women who had been raped) with intrusive questioning and a lack of follow-up support³⁶.

Elissa Helms's anthropological account of fieldwork in Bosnia also pointed to similar difficulties as she tried to access a women's organisation which she learned 'had already experienced a major sense of betrayal when another foreign researcher, one who had not even understood their language, had written about personal details of the women's lives'³⁷. In contemplating these issues, it was apparent that gaining access to NGOs and speaking to activists in Sarajevo was far more complex and difficult than I had anticipated. The accounts of researcher 'betrayals' also resonated with the confrontation at the Ghatta Klub, and despite my best efforts I began to feel as though I was failing as a researcher. Yet I also realised that this was not

³⁵ One NGO activist later explained to me that some activists had developed 'avoidance' strategies and purposefully gave researchers the run around in the hope that they would become tired of chasing interviews and eventually give up. Personal fieldnotes 18/11/06.

³⁶ Personal fieldnotes 22/11/06.

³⁷ Helms, E, L. (2003). *Gendered Visions of the Bosnian Future: Women's Activism and Representation in Post-War Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Pittsburgh University: Unpublished thesis.

an uncommon experience of novice researchers, and that fieldwork could often be characterised by periods of doubt, frustration, disappointment, guilt, and a sense of inadequacy and failure, particularly when researching violently divided societies in post-conflict periods³⁸. So, despite the incident in the Ghatto Klub and the repeated refusals and ‘silences’ from NGOs, I continued to try and secure meetings with activists in Sarajevo.

Negotiating Access: NGOs in Sarajevo

The stories of betrayal and the cat and mouse games that I had heard about from other researchers prompted me to rethink how I approached NGOs in Sarajevo. My previous (and unsuccessful) approach ‘strategy’ had involved detailing information about myself and my research in emails, and asking to meet (and potentially interview) conflict resolution activists. In my new approach I changed the emphasis of my emails, detailing less of my research, and more about the betrayals I had been told about. I also asked for advice on how I might try to avoid misrepresentations and unintended consequences as a result of my research, without asking to meet and interview them. I subsequently contacted Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW), a locally run branch of the International Quakers, and in response to my email, Goran the director of QPSW, invited me to meet him at his

³⁸ See for example: Rabinow, P. (1977). *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, Berkeley, University of California Press; Goodhand, J. (2000). ‘Research in Conflict zones: ethics and accountability’ *Forced Migration review* 8 p 14; and more recently, Punch, S. (2010). ‘Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field diaries’ *Emotion, Space and Society*, doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005

office³⁹. As I sat waiting to see him, a young British woman and Goran became visible as his office door opened. She seemed to be in the middle of asking him for a favour, and I overheard her explaining how she had become lost in the centre of Sarajevo, and wondered if he might be able to take her to a place she was meeting somebody. He shook his head, saying he was sorry, he had work to do, and catching sight of me gestured that he also had 'another researcher' to see. This was the first of many occasions where I realised that I was one of *many* researchers in Bosnia, and part of a continual and steady flow through the NGOs of Sarajevo.

After seeing the other researcher to the door, Goran invited me into his office whilst joking (with some seriousness) that maybe we should set up a social club for researchers in Bosnia as 'there are so many of you here'. My status as one of many researchers appeared indisputable. I responded by saying that I hadn't realised there were so many researchers in Bosnia, and that I was surprised at the stories of betrayal I had heard about. Goran in turn, told me that researchers had let him down on countless occasions, and most 'failed to keep their promises' of sending their papers back to him. Researchers, he explained, often had good intentions, but didn't realise the demands they placed on the NGOs, and rarely stayed around long enough to be able to know that their research could sometimes harm people and organisations. Goran was interested that I had raised the issue of betrayals, and liked the fact that I had previously volunteered at Ljiljan. We discussed becoming a volunteer with his organisation, which he suggested, might help

³⁹ The International Quakers also funded a number of locally run conflict resolution organisations across the region, including Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo and Montenegro, all of which worked together to organise regional conflict resolution related workshops.

me to realise what 'is really happening', and would also 'give something back' to the organisation and might be able to help him with proofreading funding bids and others things that he might need help with. From that point on, I became a vaguely defined 'volunteer' with QPSW.

My research plan in Bosnia had been to conduct interviews, rather than engage in participant observation, yet it had seemed increasingly unlikely that I would be able to conduct the interviews I had planned. Goran's suggestion made practical sense in that it might allow access to the wider NGO community, and with Goran's insight and guidance, I might also be able to negotiate some of the issues of researcher betrayal.

QPSW was instrumental in my research, particularly as a way to meet some of the NGO activists that has been (thus far) elusive, and more generally, to develop a sense of what was happening in Sarajevo in conflict resolution terms. I initially went to the office almost every day and Goran kept me up to date with what was happening at QPSW and with other NGOs in Bosnia. Goran also suggested events that I might want to attend and offered me his own invitations when he was unable to go, which allowed me to enter a scene of events in Sarajevo which usually involved announcements of the opening of new NGO premises or the presentation of project outcomes. Through these events and meetings I became more acquainted with the wider network of activists and NGOs in Sarajevo, and I began to meet up with activists from other organisations, including Inicijativa Mladih za Ljudska Prava (Youth Initiative for Human Rights), Savez Udruženja Logoraša (The Centre for Torture Camp Survivors), and Centar za nenasilnu akciju (The Centre for Nonviolent Action). Over time I made myself available to these

NGOs as an ad hoc volunteer, and assisted in proofreading for funding bids and a book on peacebuilding, and also helped to run a number of English classes for women and their children at The Centre for Torture Camp Survivors. My volunteering was a genuine attempt to try and foster more reciprocal relationships with NGOs in the way that I had done at the Ljiljan centre, as well as an active attempt to not be (and not become) one of the researchers who the NGOs felt let down by.

Becoming Involved

Goran involved me in the day-to-day life of the organisation, and as part of the activities of QPSW I began to attend local NGO Council meetings at the United Nations headquarters and donor-funding meetings organised by the European Union. It had become customary to speak in English at many of these meetings, as they were often attended by people from international organisations and funders who were generally unable to speak any local language. As such, my relative novelty as a researcher who could speak some (limited) local language was welcomed by some of the activists within the close-knit circle of NGOs. This novelty was further cultivated by Goran, who encouraged me to try and speak at meetings in local language if I was the only non-Bosnian there. Goran told me that talking in local language made it clear to everyone that I had spent time with 'real Bosnians' (and was therefore committed and 'genuine') and that this was important in helping to distinguish me from 'summertime researchers' and other researchers and

internationals who did not speak local language⁴⁰.

Being distinguished from other researchers in this way, without doubt, helped me to become more involved in the activities of the NGOs. For example, I was invited to participate in two residential workshops organized by a regional collective of NGOs, including QPSW, from Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo and Montenegro, which were held in Brčko and Vojvodina (the semi-autonomous regions of Bosnia and Serbia). The first workshop was a five-day residential event for NGO activists, and was held in the conference room of a newly restored hotel in Brčko. Participants included activists from a wide range of NGOs that dealt with issues ranging from conflict resolution and peacebuilding, to human rights, veteran and minority issues. Activists were typically divided into cross-regional 'working groups' to go through activities or discussions before the whole group reconvened to decide on a tangible list of 'conclusions' and whether consensus had been reached. This workshop presented me with opportunities to access discourses on conflict resolution, local politics, and regional issues and contrasts that I would otherwise not have gained access to. The workshop, I was told, was typical of regional activist meetings, and significantly, also seemed to function as an opportunity for NGO activists to break from the relentlessness, exhaustion (and sometimes bleakness) of their local work, to meet up with other likeminded

⁴⁰ Only three or four of the researchers I knew spoke local language beyond the absolute basics, whilst many of the short term researchers I met in Sarajevo struggled to even say hello or thank you. During my research I was also invited to attend a 'Wives Social' event arranged by the British Embassy, where I met a number of 'wives' (as they referred to themselves) of senior international policymakers and administrators who had been stationed in Bosnia for long periods of time. Only two of the women I met had made any attempt to learn local language, whilst another told me with some exasperation that her husband was being 'forced' to take Bosnian classes by the UN High Commissioners Office, even though he had managed to work in Bosnia for over ten years 'without needing to learn a word'. Personal fieldnotes 28/5/07.

activists in (sometimes futile) attempts to revive their deteriorating motivation. It was clearly apparent at this workshop that working in conflict and peace related work at in local NGOs was both physically and mentally punishing. A number of activists explained to me that their work had become much more, rather than less difficult over the last few years, both in Bosnia and the wider region. A decline both in funding and support for NGOs, a worsening political context, and an increasingly widespread perception of failures to progress peaceful social change, had led to a number of 'die-hard' activists leaving Bosnia in an attempt to try and preserve 'their sanity'⁴¹.

The second workshop I attended was a residential event for young people from across the region who were interested in non-violence, some of whom wanted to become involved in NGO peace activism. The event was held in a small hotel on the outskirts of Vojvodina, and run by experienced activists from NGOs in Sarajevo (Bosnia), Belgrade (Serbia), Osijek (Croatia), and Priština (Kosovo). The workshop consisted of a series of short lectures by respected speakers, interspersed with activities, role-plays and discussions, with participants divided into cross-regional groups to discuss sensitive issues and questions. Some of these activities seemed to be loosely based on the idea of 'contact hypothesis', whereby individuals are encouraged to interact and work together with people from 'other' groups in order to reduce prejudice and develop better relationships⁴². However, both of these workshops contradicted the 'divided ethnic Bosnia' stereotypes that Goran and other activists had told me that researchers always seemed most

⁴¹ Personal fieldnotes 12/6/07.

⁴² For more on contact hypothesis see: Forbes, H, D. (1997). *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture and the Contact Hypothesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

interested in, with both activists and young people resolute (and broadly unified) about the need for peaceful social change despite their supposed 'ethnic', religious, and personal differences. However, some tensions were apparent, more specifically, a small number of activists, appeared notably irritated by the presence of 'internationals'⁴³. Over one coffee and cigarette break, for instance, I overheard a small group of activists talking openly about 'jebeni stranci' (fucking foreigners) whilst gesturing angrily in the direction of the table where the observer from the European Union and the representative from an international donor sat⁴⁴.

In isolation, I might have ordinarily tried to explain this incident in terms of criticisms of international organisations, as many of the ongoing interventions by these organisations were widely criticized by Bosnians. Yet this incident was also reminiscent of the confrontation at the Ghatto Klub, and despite my ability to speak some local language, it also became clear that I very much remained an 'international'. This was underlined when a young activist I knew quite well appeared to be reluctant to talk to me in the presence of other activists. She later explained to me that this was because she didn't really want to be seen to be 'mixing with internationals'⁴⁵. 'Mixing' I later learned, was a term more commonly used by young people in the divided interface areas of Bosnia to describe practices of relating to people from different

⁴³ The term 'internationals' was widely used by Bosnians to describe the array of people working in Bosnia. Both of the workshops I attended included a small group of invited 'internationals', including myself, an academic from Oxford University, an interested observer from the European Union, and a representative from an international donor.

⁴⁴ I hesitated at including this incident in this chapter, with a particular concern that it may be misread as a generally hostile portrait of Bosnia. However, I felt it was important to include this example in order to represent more fully my experiences of research in Bosnia. I hope I have also made it clear that my research in Bosnia was only possible through the kindness and help of a large number of people in Bosnia.

⁴⁵ Personal fieldnotes Brcko.

ethnic groups. As Azra Hromadžić argues from her fieldwork in the ethnically divided city of Mostar, young people are labelled as ‘mixers’ if they speak to or hang out with people from different ethnic backgrounds to their own. Such ‘mixing’, even in the form of standing and having a cigarette together, is often heavily frowned upon, and young people risk being marginalised as a result⁴⁶. Understood in these terms, ‘mixing with internationals’ becomes an awkward practice for some activists, and can be viewed as problematic. This issue will be discussed in further detail in the ‘Discourses on Research’ chapter.

When I returned to Sarajevo after these workshops I began to spend more time with the small number of activists who had welcomed my presence, and who seemed to have differentiated me enough (from other internationals) to be able to justify ‘mixing’ with me. At times I was also invited to spend time socially with some of the activists, which enabled me to follow and engage in the informal everyday conversations and activities of some of the activists. Whilst it was apparent that my status as a researcher was never forgotten, I was told that I was different from the ‘summertime researchers’ who they said were only interested in doing research in Bosnia during the warm summer months when they could finish off their research trip with a nice holiday in Croatia⁴⁷. As I became more familiar (and trusted), a number of the activists agreed for me to interview them, whilst making it clear that

⁴⁶ Hromadžić, A. (2009). ‘Smoking doesn’t kill, it unites!’ Cultural meanings and Practices of ‘Mixing’ in Post-conflict Bosnia and Hercegovina’ In McGlynn, C. Zembylas, M. Bekerman, Z, Gallagher, T. (eds). *Peace Education in Conflict and Post Conflict Societies: Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁴⁷ These assertions were supported by postings on the Balkan Academic News network, where numerous researchers and academics posted requests during the summer months, asking for accommodation in Bosnia for short periods of time (usually from five days to a few weeks), often with additional requests for advice on getting to the Croatian coast afterwards.

they expected me to speak to other researchers and academics about the 'problems' they had had with researchers. These issues, they told me, were the things that were important to them, and yet no other researchers had been interested in these problems.

Some of the interviews took place in the 'activists' offices, although on several occasions I carried out impromptu interviews in cafes and bars as a number of the activists with very busy schedules dismissed the idea of a structured interview, and instead showed a clear preference for an informal (and spontaneous) discussion. A number of the activists were also reluctant to have their interviews recorded, and asked me to write things down during or after the interview. I went along with these requests, and although this inevitably affected the quality of my notes and ability to recall particular things that had been said, it was also clear to me by now that it was crucially important for the interviews to meet the needs of the activists, over and above my own requirements as a researcher. At the start of each interview I explained the purpose of my interviews by saying that I was interested in talking about peacebuilding issues and the experiences of NGOs activists undertaking peacebuilding work in Bosnia, and that I wanted to write about this in relation to the conflict resolution (and peacebuilding) literature and theory. I also made it clear that I was interested in the issues that were important to peace and conflict activists working in Bosnia, whatever they might be.

The interviews proved to be far more difficult to make sense of than I thought they would, and despite the time that I had already spent with activists, I was offered a range of accounts of 'conflict resolution' and 'peacebuilding' that

were so varied that I found it hard to relate it back to my own (academic) understanding of conflict resolution. In one interview, for example, I was told about a 'visual peacebuilding project', which aimed (in part) to 'confront and provoke genocide deniers in Serbia'⁴⁸. This example, along with others, were so far removed from the peacebuilding and conflict resolution projects that I had read about in the academic literature, that it raised questions of what even counted as 'peacebuilding'. At times the topic of discussion also 'slipped' to areas such as 'dealing with the past' and 'confronting the past', so that at times it became difficult to keep track of what we were actually speaking about⁴⁹. My attempts to try and loosely define terms and work out areas of divergence (to at least be able to keep a sense of what we were talking about) also proved to be difficult, and tended to result in vaguely frustrated responses from the people I was interviewing. I wondered whether my relatively unstructured interview strategy was causing these problems (or whether I was too inexperienced to be even conducting these interviews). Yet despite these issues, the most candid parts of the conversation took place in the spaces before or after the 'actual' interview. In these spaces a number of the activists spoke more openly and frankly about their concerns with what a number of them referred to as the 'the peace and justice industry', and the 'circus' that surrounded international attempts to undertake peace and conflict work in Bosnia. Researchers were unambiguously identified as part of the 'peace and justice industry', and again (with a few very definite exceptions) spoken about in terms of how they had 'taken advantage' or 'exploited' local

⁴⁸ The 'visual' peacebuilding project will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁹ My 'reading' and analysis of these interviews will be discussed in the 'Discourses on Research' chapter later in this thesis.

NGOs⁵⁰.

As the interviews went on I tried to analyse the transcripts alongside my field-notes and other 'ethnographic materials' I had collected, including academic journal articles, local newspaper and media content, and political cartoons. Like Charmaz and Mitchell, I found myself surrounded by growing 'mountains of unconnected data' which seemed to be replete with ambiguities, contradictions, and uncertainties⁵¹. Indeed, the only thing I could say with some certainty was that the presence of researchers in Bosnia was viewed by a significant number of activists as problematic.

As my fieldwork progressed, I also became increasingly concerned about my ability to write something based upon the ambiguities within my data and my fieldwork. Part of my difficulty was that things in Bosnia, even supposedly 'simple' things were *not* simple or straightforward. Even a walk down the street was a complex experience which left me bombarded with multiple competing images and information about what was 'really' happening, and I felt a constant sense of intellectual and political vagueness about what was going on around me⁵². On a much wider level I was also beginning to feel more (rather than less) disorientated as time went on, and the 'reality' of living in Bosnia seemed to constantly jar with the imagined sense of Bosnia I held. I struggled to understand how to make sense of this relatively constant complexity and ambiguity, and wondered how I was supposed to try and 'fit' (or force) this into a written text, to (somehow) render conflict resolution in

⁵⁰ Interview with NGO activist, Sarajevo, 17/11/06. This interview will be discussed at length in chapter seven.

⁵¹ Charmaz, K. & Mitchell, A. (2001). 'Grounded Theory in Ethnography' In Coffey, A. Delamont, S. Lofland, J. Lofland, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage, p161.

⁵² Chapter seven explores this complex environment and landscapes through a series of 'visual journeys'.

Bosnia as being (relatively) clear and explicable. Yet it was also clear to me that I wanted to be able to fix things in place and write about something for certain, and make the interviews 'fit' my own assumptions about conflict resolution in Bosnia. This, I later realised, was about my own intellectual need to produce something tangible from the 'shape-shifting' interviews and ambiguous results of fieldwork⁵³. I also became aware that the linear accounts of Bosnia that I had read (and had begun to try and write myself) did not really seem to make much sense anymore; and it began to feel disingenuous to attempt to write about Bosnia in a traditionally linear and academic mode which suggested that Bosnia could be comprehensively understood. Despite the fact that I had some 'knowledge' about Bosnia and the post-war context, and could even get by in terms of speaking 'localni jezik' (local language), I had serious doubts about my ability to say something meaningful about the realities of the NGO world in Bosnia.

It was also becoming increasingly difficult for me to reconcile the tensions between being a researcher in Bosnia, and hearing critical stories about how researchers had exploited NGOs. It felt at times, that although I was attempting to negotiate an ethical way through my fieldwork, I was also (inadvertently) trying to play down the critiques I had heard. I was concerned how these critiques might be received by other academics and researchers (particularly those who did research in Bosnia) and in turn, how that might affect me. I was told by a respected and well published academic, for example, to 'keep it straightforward' and discount the critiques I had heard about researchers. I was also cautioned that I might find it difficult to get an

⁵³ See John Law for more on 'shape-shifting': Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.

academic post if I were to raise criticisms of other researchers and academics⁵⁴. Whilst I initially tried to pursue this course of action (it seemed sensible in career terms at the very least), I struggled with the idea of ignoring the critiques from NGO activists, and how I could justify this as ethical research practice. This was an issue I had not anticipated, although as Carolyn Nordstrom argues, it is almost impossible to calculate the ethical issues that are likely to be encountered when spending extended periods of time in places that have been subject to war⁵⁵.

During a short visit back to the UK and a long discussion with my supervisor, I decided that rather than ignoring these issues or rendering them absent, I would actually begin to write about them at length. The further I progressed into my research, the more certain I became that it was important to make the critiques of NGO activists visible in my account of Bosnia. My intention was not to construct 'reality' as objective truth in a comprehensive and polished account, but rather to present 'reality' as 'a located and limited story'⁵⁶. This was a significant moment of re-thinking, undoing and re-making in my research, and in the writing of this thesis.

The 'Shadow Side' of Fieldwork

During my visit home, and on my return to Sarajevo, I became aware that I was becoming profoundly unsettled by being and living in a post-war city. It

⁵⁴ Personal field notes of conversation with NR, Sarajevo, 16.02.07

⁵⁵ Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind Of War Story* University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, p4.

⁵⁶ Daly, K. (1997). 'Re-placing theory ethnography: a postmodern view' *Qualitative Inquiry* vol 3(3), 360.

was clear that throughout the course of the war in Bosnia, many Bosnians had experienced what mental health professionals might call 'traumatic events' including rape, physical and sexual torture, forced pregnancy, maltreatment during detainment in detention camps, the death of family and friends, and the loss of homes, property and livelihoods. Moreover, the residents of Sarajevo had also endured three years of almost constant shelling and shooting, as snipers who were strategically positioned on the hills surrounding the city, indiscriminately targeted civilians. Although the long-term effects of these traumatic events were, and still are, largely unknown, there is widespread recognition that a significant proportion of the population in Bosnia had experienced post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other trauma related psychiatric conditions⁵⁷.

As I spent most of my time with 'ordinary' Bosnians, it had become relatively commonplace to hear accounts of extreme hardship, torture, rape and shootings, as well as stories about ongoing and sometimes desperate struggles to financially and emotionally survive in the difficult post-war context. Many of these accounts unfolded within everyday conversations about mundane things, and yet often led to existential discussions about shattered lives which were often underpinned with a profound sense of anger, despair, and pain. On one occasion, for example, a conversation in a cafe with the son of my landlady, began with a light-hearted chat about the

⁵⁷ The UNDP reports that 'neuro-psychiatric conditions' represent the second highest cause of death (20%) in Bosnia (after cardiovascular diseases). The UNDP attributes this to 'the legacy of the conflict, including stress and impoverishment, and the impact of transition on the socialized health sector' (UNDP 2007: 111). War veterans have also been reported at a high risk of suicide. Panjeta (2007) for example, reports that 1,260 veterans committed suicide between 2005 and 2007. See also Richters, A. (1998). 'Sexual Violence in Wartime. Psycho-Sociocultural Wounds and Healing Processes: the Example of the Former Yugoslavia' In Bracken, P, J. Petty, C. (eds.) *Rethinking the Trauma of War*. London: Free Association Books, pp112-127.

film 'Borat', and turned to a conversation about the last film he had seen (Hotel Rwanda). Then, almost imperceptibly, the conversation shifted to a personal account of the violence and trauma he had witnessed and encountered during the war. As I listened, I became aware of the bizarre incongruousness of listening to his account filled with grief and war time atrocities whilst surrounded by people eating cake and ice cream⁵⁸. These discussions, although often short lived, tended to stay with me and occasionally provoked unwanted (imagined) replays of the things I had been told. Over time, listening repeatedly to situated 'live' accounts of violence and being surrounded by normalised discussions related to violence, began to profoundly unsettle my sense of wellbeing, and at times, exceeded my emotional (and intellectual) ability to cope

Two incidents near the end of my fieldwork are also important here. The first incident happened on a weekday afternoon when I left my apartment building to do some photocopying. When I returned half an hour later I found the entrance to my building had been cordoned off by police, with a large pool of blood visible on the floor. I later learned that a man had been shot dead in the doorway of my apartment, which was thought to be related to a drug deal. The second incident occurred on a weekday evening at around 10pm, as I walked down one of the main pedestrian streets in Sarajevo, Ferhadija, to catch a tram back to my apartment. As I walked I noticed a man standing by the eternal flame on the corner of Ferhadija, and as I got closer, I realised that he was pointing a gun directly at me. In a surreal moment I instinctively waved at him, and continued to walk to my tram stop. He waved back at me

⁵⁸ Personal fieldnotes 15/02/07.

and smiled, whilst still pointing the gun. This incident at Ferhadija was the first and only time I had ever seen a gun, and I struggled to explain my reaction to this incident. The most plausible explanation was that I had been normalized to the possibility of the existence of guns in Bosnia, as I had heard of stories of the stockpiling of guns (and other supplies) after the war, as well as the installation of a bullet-proof door on my own apartment, and the offers that could afford it. My local supermarket also had a metal detector and an armed guard, with a large poster by the door with pictures that indicated that no dogs, cigarettes, or guns were allowed in the supermarket. These incidents made it clear to me that my perception of risk in Bosnia had shifted dramatically over time, from being hyper-vigilant and aware of the physical environment and people around me when I first arrived in Bosnia, to a position where I might have seriously underestimated the risks and been unaware of some of the dangers around me. Following these incidents I was advised to end my fieldwork by my supervisor, even though I was reluctant to leave and generally felt much safer in Bosnia than my hometown of Bradford⁵⁹.

Towards the end of my fieldwork I had also begun to reach a point where I simply didn't want to hear about any more violence, and I began to find ways to avoid conversations with particular people, and divert discussions if I felt they might lead to 'live' accounts of violence. This avoidance strategy invoked a deep sense of guilt and a feeling that I was letting people down, particularly as a number of the people I began to avoid conversations with

⁵⁹ Personal fieldnotes 20/09/07

had been instrumental in my fieldwork. This subsequently led to more feelings of guilt after my fieldwork had ended.

I spoke to other researchers in Sarajevo about this issue, and it was clear that I was not the only one facing this problem. One PhD student I knew told me that she had decided to finish her fieldwork a few months early as she was finding it difficult to deal with being there. She told me that her family were worried about how Bosnia was affecting her, and had persuaded her to leave and limit her writing up to the data she had already collected. Another PhD student I had grown to know quite well also confided in me that he had begun to drink and smoke in excessive quantities, in an attempt to cope with the nightmares he was having. He even joked that he must be a better anthropologist than he had initially thought, as he was even starting to self-medicate and look 'as strung out as some of the locals'⁶⁰.

Coffey, Holland, and others have argued that fieldwork can be an intense, isolating, and emotionally draining experience, although the effects of undertaking research in violent contexts can be even more profound⁶¹. Nordstrom for example, has written in some detail about how she has struggled with seeing violence and listening to accounts of violence during her fieldwork in war zones, which provoked a series of crises during her research. She writes:

For a moment, I couldn't conceive of living in the world with such horror perpetrated by humans, nor did I want to. This wasn't a

⁶⁰ Personal fieldnotes 12/05/07.

⁶¹ See for example, Coffey, A. (1999). *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*, London, Sage; Holland, J. (2009). 'Emotions and Research: Some general and personal thoughts', In Weller, S. Caballero, C. (eds). *Up Close and Personal: Relationships and Emotions within and through Research. Working Paper No 25*, London, Southbank University.

fleeting feeling, it was profoundly existential- the world was simply too ugly to be in, and I felt it in the core of my being...I felt that shadow of fear: *what if this happens to me, to people I know and love, to the place I call home?*...As a medical anthropologist, I have worked in hospitals from America to Asia, and have seen bodies severely deformed by accidents, illness, and microbes. And in these cases I feel compassion, sympathy, and sadness that people have to suffer. But I don't feel the world tilt on its axis. I don't want to escape from a world too ugly to contemplate living in. I don't suffer a crisis of existential proportions. It is the violence one individual does to another that causes this powerful reaction. *This is the emotional content of violence*⁶².

Similarly, Ted Swedenberg has argued that his experiences of doing extended periods of research in Palestine triggered depression and mental instability. This he argues, was made more difficult by the impossibility of being able to talk to people at home and convey the 'everyday normality of the violence' as most responded 'with shocked looks of disbelief and exaggerated compassion'⁶³. His experiences also affected his ability to write:

The first time I sat down to write about the personal effects of experiencing such violence and horror- albeit at second hand- I was paralysed with pain, nausea and depression. Whenever I think of this issue, a troubling jumble of images assaults me⁶⁴.

These experiences constitute what McLean and Leibing have called the 'shadow side' of fieldwork, where 'the sensory, imaginary, emotional, moral, and intellectual dimensions of actual experience provide knowledge that is incompatible with public knowledge'⁶⁵. This incompatibility, they argue, is

⁶² Emphasis in the original. See: Nordstrom, C. (2004). *Shadows of War: Violence, Power and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkley, LA and London: University of California Press, p62.

⁶³ Swedenberg, T. (1995). 'With Genet in the Palestinian Field' In Nordstrom, C. Robben, A. *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p34.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p34.

⁶⁵ McLean, A. Leibing, A. (eds). (2007). *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life*. Oxford: Blackwell, p xii.

often manifested through a separation of fieldwork and life, where there is a disciplined Othering of the privatized (sensory and emotional) experiences of fieldwork. This disciplined Othering is evident in the conflict resolution literature, and in other literatures on post-war environments, where there are surprisingly few accounts (other than those above) of undertaking research in contexts where there has been large-scale violence. Whilst it is apparent that there are tensions between the demand for methodological rigour and 'objectivity' and the need to acknowledge the 'emotional connectedness to the processes and practices of fieldwork'; it is my contention that without detailed accounts of the sensory, emotional, moral, and intellectual dimensions to fieldwork, then our knowledge about post war contexts, and also our understanding of research and the research process are simultaneously abstracted and depoliticised⁶⁶.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that conducting research in contexts that have been subject to large-scale conflict, violence and genocide, poses exceptionally difficult intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges. In part, this is because the 'cultures of violence' developed during the war remain intact in the post-war period, as part of the politics and realities of everyday life⁶⁷. These 'cultures of violence' become taken-for-

⁶⁶ Coffey argues that the 'emotional connectedness' of researchers in fieldwork should not be denied, but acknowledged, reflected upon, and seen as fundamental to the research process. Coffey, A. (1999). *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London: Sage.

⁶⁷ Nordstrom, C. (1994). *Warzones: Cultures of Violence, Militarisation and Peace*, Working Paper, No 145. Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University.

granted, and permeate every aspect of the lives of 'ordinary' people who often struggle to survive in the aftermath of war. Moreover, as Nordstrom notes, as researchers we have the means to record and make visible the lives of these 'ordinary' people who have lived in and through violence, through observations, interviews and discussions. More than describing those lives, Nordstrom argues that we are entrusted with telling someone's personal experiences, which demands far more than the simple application of research approaches, yet more often than not, 'the work of scholars are wor(l)ds apart from the experiences of those living and dying at the centres of war'⁶⁸.

What I have tried to show in this chapter, through a series of 'moments', is the importance of acknowledging and exploring the dilemmas, hidden struggles and shadows of fieldwork. My contention has been that much of the conflict resolution literature fails to acknowledge and represent these issues, or simply reads them as a series of 'functional challenges to be faced and overcome'⁶⁹. It is a significant comment on the current state of conflict resolution that much of our understanding of research, in contexts where large violence and war has occurred, appears to be 'sanitised and smoothed over' in ways which seem to belie both the realities of conducting research and the realities of post-war contexts⁷⁰. This, I argue, not only affects the kind of knowledge that is created, but also has implications not only for novice researchers who undertake research in such environments but, more

⁶⁸ Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp8-9.

⁶⁹ Dunne, M. Pryor, J. Yates, P. (2005). *Becoming a Researcher: a research companion for the social sciences*. Berkshire: Open University Press, p1.

⁷⁰ Punch, S. (2010). 'Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field diaries' *Emotion, Space and Society*, doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005.

importantly, for those whose lives are represented and re-presented in conflict resolution research. With this in mind, the remaining chapters in this thesis seek to explore more of the 'hidden issues' in peace building and conflict resolution research using alternative forms of analysis, representation and re-presentation. These non-traditional academic accounts sit alongside more traditional academic forms of writing including a number of visual journeys and photo-essays of life as a conflict resolution researcher in Bosnia.

Chapter Six

Discourses on Researchers in Post-War Bosnia

Social (and natural) science investigations interfere with the world, in one way or another they always make a difference, politically or otherwise. Things change as a result. The issue then, is not to seek disengagement but rather with how to engage. It is about how to make good differences in circumstances where reality is both unknowable and generative¹.

Many of the preceding chapters in this thesis have discussed and developed the idea that fieldwork in Bosnia poses difficult intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges, and at the same time I have suggested that some accounts of Bosnia seem to be profoundly disconnected from the everyday realities of post-war Bosnia. This chapter follows on from these themes and also picks up an issue introduced in chapter five- that of researcher 'betrayals'- to explore in greater detail the issues of the presence of researchers for NGO activists in Bosnia. I argue that peace and conflict researchers have become important, though unacknowledged actors in post-war Bosnia, and that whilst peace and conflict researchers often have good intentions, the stories of NGO activists suggest that the presence and practices of researchers can sometimes be ethically and politically problematic.

As I will outline below, a number of activists who have taken part in conflict and peace related research in Bosnia, have done so in the hope that their participation in research will help to further a collective understanding of 'conflict' and 'peace', and the contexts in which they develop. Their

¹ Law, J. (2005). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p7.

experiences of researchers, however, have sometimes involved breaches of trust, and at times the practices of researchers have been regarded as insensitive and exploitative. In other cases the accuracy (and value) of the published outcomes of research have been questioned. These experiences are widely recounted and disseminated at a local level and to a certain extent, has led to a reluctance to cooperate with researchers. However, these stories appear to be largely absent from accounts of research in post-war Bosnia, and also from discussions about conflict resolution research. By hearing these accounts in Bosnia, I came to realise that the disconnections between academic and local accounts of research was a cause for concern, which, as pointed out in chapter three, also raises questions about the limits of knowledge in Conflict Resolution.

The suggestion I want to make in this chapter is that there is a need to think more widely and more critically about the presence and practices of researchers in contexts that have experienced devastating wars and violence. As pointed out to me in Bosnia, this is of particular concern in areas where the interventions of the 'international community' may also be regarded as problematic. I also want to suggest that we should pay closer attention to the presence and absence of researchers in conflict resolution texts, and that there is a need to engage with contemporary debates about reflexivity and power within the wider field of qualitative research. This is in order to encourage a more critical re-thinking about the effects we have as researchers in the contexts that we undertake our research. Of course, it is not my intention to purposely undermine existing research practices within conflict resolution, and nor is it an attempt to criticize other academics who have

conducted their research in particular ways, and who have clearly contributed a significant amount to the field of conflict resolution. Instead this should be viewed as an attempt to open up space for a reflexive and critical dialogue - about how research is conducted, who it is for, and how we interact with and represent those who become involved in our research. Stories from NGO activists in Bosnia, suggest that if we ignore these questions we do so at our own detriment.

Contextualising the Local NGO Sector²

Civil society in Bosnia is relatively small, largely donor-driven, and somewhat fragmented with divisions within and between sections of the NGO community. The International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) estimates that there are around 200 active local NGOs (LNGOs) of which only 60 of these are described as 'strong' i.e. with developed strategies and management structures³. My research on NGOs in Bosnia draws on a data set of interviews with 17 of these local civil society organisations, 10 international organisations with local staff, and 2 regional organisations from Croatia and Serbia. This data set was supported by extensive fieldnotes from participant observation during volunteer work and activities with four NGOs in Sarajevo. My volunteer work included: 10 months of informal volunteering with Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW); 6 months of volunteering with Savez Udruženja

² See Appendix 1 which provides an overview of the main LNGOs working in Bosnia, as well as details of the kind of work they undertake and my involvement with them over the course of my fieldwork.

³ Personal communication with ICVA, a Sarajevo based INGO and network and support centre that holds a database of Bosnia based NGOs. See: www.icva-bh.org

Logoraša (The Association of Concentration Camp Torture Camp Survivors), and ad hoc support work with Centar za nenasilnu akciju (Centre for non-violent action); and Inicijativa Mladih za Ljudska Prava (Youth Initiative for Human Rights). I also attended regional NGO-led peacebuilding workshops in Brčko (5 days) and Vojvodina (3 days), attended by prominent activists from across the former Yugoslavia⁴.

The organisations in Sarajevo operated in a diverse range of areas including peace-building, peace education, human rights, transitional justice, and advocacy initiatives for victims and war veterans. There were sharply defined partnerships and divisions between some of these organisations, in terms of the scope of their activities, and their attempts to cooperate and establish links with other organisations across the region.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness, The Centre for non-violent action, and Youth Initiative for Human Rights, for example, often worked in partnership with several other key international organisations, including Mennonite Central Committee, The Nansen Dialogue Network, and with regional organisations such as Miramida (Croatia) and Žene u crnom (Serbia). These organisations actively collaborated across the region to provide conflict resolution skills training and ‘train the trainer’ projects, creating important cross-regional networks and partnerships with other emergent peacebuilding organisations and activists. They also collaborated on a number of joint peacebuilding projects, including residential peace education workshops in rural areas, which aimed to bring together young people from divided communities and ethnically

⁴ My fieldwork in Bosnia took place between September 2006 and September 2007.

segregated school systems. This group of organisations also collaborated with other NGOs to establish Mirovna Akademija (The Peace Academy), to run an annual intensive summer school with formal teaching in peacebuilding for young people from across the former Yugoslavia. Their efforts to create dialogue and build trust across ethno-religious divides, and their commitment to work at both an entity and regional level with organisations from Serbia and Croatia was significant in building peacebuilding networks across the region.

Some activists used novel and controversial approaches to peacebuilding, which have been regarded as politicized and divisive in some communities. Youth Initiative for Human Rights, in particular, have used public approaches to peacebuilding and dealing with the past, such as a billboard campaign in Belgrade to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide, which was variously regarded as intentionally confrontational and also bravely radical in Serbia and Bosnia. I have documented some of these images and the public response in Chapter 7a. The Centre for non-violent action, has also increasingly focused on activities of dealing with the past, and organized a series of public forums with war veterans of Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian origin. These forums were initially regarded as highly contentious and potentially dangerous in local communities, as war veterans discussed their roles and personal experiences during the war in open public forums.

A number of activists explained that they had attempted to develop creative and radical peacebuilding methods as they felt that conventional conflict resolution approaches were sometimes too slow and cautious, and simply did not work in some divided communities.

These more 'radical' and intense peacebuilding efforts not only challenged the theoretical and practical foundations of conflict resolution, but also failed to conform to the expectations of some international funders. As a result, some NGOs found it difficult to secure funding, or were castigated for deviating from agreed funded projects. Goran Božičević, for example, describes being 'punished' by a UN official after responding to requests to change the agenda of a peacebuilding workshop in a divided community:

'We had been told that we were a pioneering peacebuilding project and that the UN was very proud of us. The organisation was contracted by a United Nations (UN) agency to conduct a series of peacebuilding trainings for municipality leaders in Bosnia. Problems (with the UN agency) started during the first three-day training. After a day and a half of training, the participants themselves asked us: "Is it okay if we all go to visit town today after lunch? We realised that many people haven't been there since the war. They were still afraid, but we invited them to show it is safe for them to come. (they told us) "If we are late for the afternoon session, we could always finish later this evening..." (The topic of the session was 'Nonviolent Conflict Resolution'!) We – all participants and trainers, some 23 people in five cars – made the visit to the nearby town. In my opinion, it was the best part of the whole training. People were entering shops and cafes, we all had a drink together on the terrace of one cafe. It was an important visit, not only to break down fear, but to put the hosts in the active role of prejudice and fear-breakers. We all felt excited, fulfilled and proud. We returned to the hotel and continued the training with a new group spirit. The 'punishment' came after dinner: a senior UN official confronted us trainers for changing the agenda and schedule of the training. We were not supposed to go for that trip and just have a good time there. Our common task, as he put it, was to work on agreed workshop topics. We argued with him: "don't you see the value of this single trip to the whole group? What is the point of having a session on conflict transformation in the hotel, while avoiding any group initiative and a real test of trust?" He was not prepared to accept our arguments. In the end, participants from the group got involved, defending the trainers' decision passionately. "Don't you see the training is a big success already?" participants asked. But he could not. This UN official had been under great pressure for months, and now he could not cope with the fact that not all was going exactly as planned'.⁵

⁵ Božičević, G. (2012). *Collusion and Disobedience, Positive Peacebuilding Practices in Croatia in 1990 and later*, Available at:

Božičević describes this as an example of ‘technical vs. transformative’ peacebuilding approaches which are often indicative of the incompatible approaches of international agencies and local NGO, and their resulting tensions. The radical transformative efforts of local NGOs, therefore, were often in conflict and incompatible with the ‘technical’ approaches required by international funding organisations, and a number of NGOs found that the pursuit of even mildly radical agendas led to rejection and funding exclusions from some international NGOs (see Chapter 4 ‘projectomania’).

Financial assistance from the European Union and United Nations to Bosnia has dramatically declined since 2001, with the expectation that civil society organisations should now be in a position to sustain themselves and attract international and domestic funding and support to continue their work. However, the International Council for Voluntary Agencies reports very low levels of domestic financial support from the Bosnian state and citizens, and it is clear that many NGOs in Bosnia are also struggling to secure international funding. In 2009, for example, Quaker Peace and Social Witness withdrew funding for their locally embedded organisations in Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia after almost 10 years, which signaled the end of secure funding and salaries for a group of key activists who worked to develop regional links across divided communities in the post-war period.

A lack of funding is all but too familiar to local NGOs, and this has at times created competition between some NGOs competing for the same limited

http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/upload/File/hr/izdavastvo/digitalna_zbirka/u_dosluhu_i_neposlu_hu.pdf [accessed 14.04.2015].

amount of international donor funds. In Bosnia this has meant that NGOs have often tried to maximise their chances of funding by tailoring their activities and aims to align with the shifting funding criteria and objectives of particular donors. Ismet Selfija points out that the term 'projectomania' has now become common parlance in NGO circles, to describe the NGOs whose entire programs and aims are donor driven, with the intention of securing funding⁶, yet this practice is often viewed as an unfortunate but necessary endeavour to ensure the survival of their organisations and the retention of key staff. However, as donor funding has become even scarcer over the last 5 years, there are fewer and fewer opportunities to secure funding regardless of alignment with donor aims. It is significant that the NGOs that built partnerships, have found creative ways to share funds, and support each other; whilst other NGOs have become increasingly antagonistic towards each other in the pursuit of ever decreasing pots of funding, and this particularly applies to victims organisations. A number of local NGO activists have argued that these funding trends are particularly worrying for the long-term sustainability of civil society and NGOs in Bosnia, and is likely to pose a substantial risk to peace⁷.

It is into this highly challenging environment that researchers set foot in Bosnia to undertake research. The next sections detail the results from my fieldwork focused on the local impact of researchers researching in and on Bosnia.

⁶ Sejfija, I. (2006). 'From the "Civil Sector" to Civil Society? Progress and Prospects'. in Fischer, M. (ed.) *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*. Berghof Institute. p 86.

⁷ Personal Interviews with TW at the Centre for Nonviolent Action, HG at the Nansen Dialogue Centre, and GK at Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Sarajevo 28 March 2007.

The Realities of Research: Different Stories

As I have discussed in earlier chapters, Bosnia has acquired the reputation of a country beset by 'ethnic cleansing', 'ethnic violence', 'massacres' and 'genocide'; and over a decade of international interventions has also led to the country being described as a 'laboratory for post-Cold war intervention'⁸, and as 'one of the first major peacebuilding experiments of the post-Cold war period'⁹. This 'experiment' has attracted a wide range of scholars interested in subjects such as international governance, transitional economics, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, civil society and trauma, and there is a thriving research scene in Bosnia, which will be discussed later.

From the perspective of academic researchers within conflict resolution, fieldwork and research in such a violently divided society functions as an opportunity to study and to collect data in an attempt to understand and explain the war(s) and post-war realities at first hand. Research in this context is conventionally represented as beneficent, and the work of peace and conflict scholars is often assumed to have the ostensible purpose of helping to develop and support peace initiatives and prevent future violence¹⁰.

When researchers write about their experiences of conducting research in conflict areas, there is sometimes a tendency to represent 'self' as ethical by attempting to 'do good' in places where there are cultures of violence¹¹. At the

⁸ Kaldor, M. (2003). *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p32.

⁹ Pugh, M. & Cooper, N. (2004). *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p 143.

¹⁰ These assumptions are likely to follow from the foundations of the field as Johan Galtung, for example, described peace and conflict research as an 'emancipatory' project. See: Galtung, J. (1977). *Methodology and Ideology*. Copenhagen: Ejlers, pp90-95.

¹¹ Paula Pickering, for example, describes the ethical strategies she used to access minority groups in Bosnia. I am also aware that I have tried to construct an ethical sense of myself as a researcher in this thesis, although this is set within a wider understanding of the problematic

same time, there can be a tendency to represent individuals in the field as problematic, sometimes exhibiting what might be thought as undesirable or inappropriate behaviour, and creating uncomfortable situations for researchers, which can pose problems for their research. Henry, Higate and Sanghera, for instance, give a rare account of fieldwork in peacekeeping research, and 'set the scene' in their paper by describing an encounter at the beginning of their fieldwork in Liberia with an excerpt from their fieldwork diary:

On our first evening in Monrovia, we are greeted by a young man as we leave the hotel compound. Michael is wearing a Manchester United football jersey and looks to be in his late teens. He asks us why we are in Liberia and we tell him that we are doing research on security in peacekeeping missions. He is friendly and offers to walk with us. While walking, he tells us that he is an ex-soldier and that he has had trouble finding work. He informs us that he is studying and is due to take an important exam the following morning for which he has to pay a fee. He asks us for money and we tell him we cannot give him any. The next morning we notice that Michael is waiting outside of the gates. He is agitated and tells us that he could not take the exam because we did not give him the money we 'promised' him. The security guard chastises Michael for stepping over the hotel boundary and warns him not to enter the compound again. Later that evening we witness Michael approaching another guest from the hotel and overhear him telling them the same account¹².

Later in their paper they outline another encounter taken from notes in their fieldwork diary:

Gurchathen stayed on to conduct further interviews. One evening he was telephoned in his hotel room by the front desk to say that he has a visitor waiting for him in the lobby. Lisa was a young female researchee whom Gurchathen has interviewed in a focus group of university students two weeks prior. As was standard practice, we had distributed our business cards after the interview and encouraged participants to contact us by email should they have

presence of researchers in Bosnia. See Pickering, P. (2003). 'Gaining Access: Courting Minorities in Postwar Bosnia' In Bell, M, J. & Berger, M. (eds.) *Gaining Access: The Inside Story*. Lanham, MD: Altimira Press.

¹² Henry, M. Higate, P, Sanghera, G. (2009). 'Positionality and Power: The Politics of Peacekeeping Research' *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 16(4), p 467.

any questions. As there were very few hotels in Monrovia, it was common knowledge that researchers would most likely stay at the Royal Hotel and this is how Lisa tracked down Gurchathen's whereabouts. When Gurchathen went to talk with her in the lobby, he felt there was a 'strong sexual undercurrent' to her visit. She said that she'd 'come all this way to see him' and asked him 'what would you like to do with me?' She further queried 'why haven't you come to see me?' Lisa then asked Gurchathen if he could pay for her university fees, seeing as she had given up time for the interview in the recent past. Feeling uncomfortable, Gurchathen made it clear that their relationship was to stay purely professional. Lisa decided to leave and before doing so asked Gurchathen if his driver could take her home or if he could pay for her taxi fare. He declined both requests¹³.

In both of these accounts of fieldwork, the idea of the 'ethical' researcher is implied vis-à-vis the attempts of those in the field to manipulate and 'extort' money from them¹⁴. Whilst acknowledging the difficult conditions in Liberia, and wanting to 'sympathize with women living in post-conflict situations and under patriarchal conditions which means that they must be creative in finding solutions to economic security', Henry, Higate and Sanghera go on to describe how these encounters 'disempowered' them as researchers and ultimately 'foreclosed some of the rich data that could potentially be evoked from different and alternative standpoints originally envisaged in the research'¹⁵. People in the field (in this account) therefore act in undesirable or inappropriate ways, creating ethical dilemmas for researchers, and in turn, undermining research¹⁶. In this account it becomes taken-for-granted that researchers act ethically and sensitively in the field (as their institutions,

¹³ Ibid.pp474-475.

¹⁴ Ibid.p474.

¹⁵ Ibid.p474.

¹⁶ In their longer paper, they discuss the complexity of identity, positionality, insider/outsider status and power in these relationships, although maintain the suggestion that researchers are ethical, whilst the behaviours of locals can be problematic. See: Henry, M. Higate, P. Sanghera, G. (2009). 'Positionality and Power: The Politics of Peacekeeping Research' *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 16(4), pp 467-482.

supervisors and funders might also assume), which is explicitly marked out by their handling of people in the field who pose problems to them. Moreover, deeply embedded in this construction of the (ethical) researcher and (ethically questionable) 'local', are systems of classification and representation which lend themselves easily to binary oppositions, dualisms, and a hierarchical ordering of the world- setting up the classic subject/object dichotomy of 'us' and 'them'. In this context it is clear that 'we' (the researchers) are ethical, and that 'they' (the locals) are not. Such assumptions sometimes unwittingly frame accounts of research in post-war environments, often with little critical engagement about the ability of researchers and authors to define what (and who) is ethical and what is not. Perhaps it might be ethical from the perspective of the researched, for researchers to pay for their time and knowledge as an act of reciprocity which acknowledges the value of the knowledge that has been shared? Yet few scholars within conflict resolution discuss the relationships, collaborations and negotiations inherent in the research process in any detail, even though these relationships are often central to the research knowledge that is produced in post-war environments.

In Bosnia, people have different stories to tell about research. It is no longer taken for granted that researchers act in ways that are ethical, and it is researchers, rather than 'locals' who are considered to act in ways that are ethically questionable. From the perspective of NGO activists in Bosnia, the presence of researchers who conduct fieldwork and research is often viewed with ambivalence and frustration. Stories of people giving their time to speak to researchers who then fail to keep their 'promises' to send papers back are relatively commonplace, as are stories of researchers who have 'taken

advantage', or 'exploited' individuals and organizations in some way or another¹⁷.

One activist publicly expressed her antipathy towards researchers when speaking at the Genocide Conference in Sarajevo:

I do not expect anything from researchers anymore, it is four years since we have registered (as an NGO), we have people visit us every day, they always want to speak to women who were raped, they come and make films and books, write PhDs and MAs but they don't send us anything to tell us what they have done¹⁸.

The failure of researchers to disseminate their papers was a common criticism amongst those who had given their time to be interviewed, and was often viewed as a failure to share knowledge. Several of the activists I spoke to expressed concern that in failing to send their papers back to those who had been interviewed, researchers were able to misinterpret or misrepresent the interviews they had undertaken:

What is most important, is authorization, I don't want to be, especially if my name is used, misinterpreted, or used in negative context in terms of papers if this is not my position or my opinion, but I know for example, another guy, a Professor of Law here, he has spoken many times to people, even I sent some people to him, because they were sent to me by somebody who guarantees that they were correct people, so I make calls, and I use my credibility to certain people, to ask them to do me a favour, to give all their time, and at the end, you know for example the Professor was complaining to me that the papers were not delivered to him, that he didn't have any clear picture about what they actually wanted from him, what they were doing, what they were writing about, what is also very significant here, is, you must have realized, people can be suspicious here, so you know, who are

¹⁷ These were some of the terms used by NGO activists to describe their encounters with international researchers. Personal fieldnotes, Sarajevo 03/11/06 – 19/07/07.

¹⁸ Personal notes from public address HB speaking at the Genocide conference Sarajevo, 18/05/07.

these internationals? What are they looking for? What kind of information do they collect? Who do they work for?¹⁹

Another activist, whom I call Emir, spoke to me at length about his experiences of researchers who had failed to honour their commitments to send papers back and misinterpreted/ misrepresented the things he had said²⁰. On one occasion, for example, Emir had given an interview based on the understanding that a copy of the paper would be sent to him for approval, prior to any publication:

There was also a women from the United States who was doing some kind of research on victims of war, with the youth in Sarajevo, before and after the war, Bosnia aftermath, something like that, and she interviewed a few young people from Sarajevo, including me, and what I told her, she didn't publish it the way I told her, you know she changed small bits but then it changed the emphasis, the point that I wanted to say actually became something else, and then I wrote her an email about that, complaining, and she said 'well its already published, you could have contacted me before' (pause). That's my general problem because if those things are going to be published, and some people are going to read that, and especially if my name is mentioned there then I really wanted to get it right, and I wanted to read it before, you know, I want to advise somebody to change it, or not to publish it, because I am doing a job that also, as a consequence has contact with different NGOs from abroad, and then, you know some people might have read that, they google my name, and you have to take into consideration that, after you finish your research those people will be still there, and you cannot damage their reputation, so after that I stopped giving interviews, and stopped helping people with research. There are some that were okay, but what I'm trying to say, but I'm probably repeating myself, I don't expect to get something from an interview, as I said it is my goodwill I am here to help somebody, if he or she is asking for an interview, but people should be really prepared before you even think of doing an interview, or if you don't know, or have the skill, then you ask. My general experience of researchers is not that good, my experiences are not positive²¹.

¹⁹ Interview with RA, Sarajevo, 28/07/07.

²⁰ Emir told me that he no longer gave interviews to researchers, but after I had spent almost a year in Bosnia he agreed to speak to me specifically about his experiences of researchers. Note all names are pseudonyms to protect identities.

²¹ Interview with ES, Sarajevo 06/07/07.

Stories involving breaches of trust by researchers, Emir told me, were commonplace in Bosnia. They were also regularly shared between networks of activists, with the effect that some activists simply would not give interviews or reply to researchers any longer²². Some activists, it seemed, no longer held any expectations that researchers were trustworthy, and this was exacerbated by stories about the practices of some researchers who were regarded as inexperienced, insensitive and at times exploitative²³. Emir, for example, recounted his experience of acting as a translator for one particular researcher, which I quote at length here:

There was another guy who was very aggressive in his approach and he put me in a very difficult situation. He came here for PhD research and he was doing research on Srebrenica, he was supposed to go to Srebrenica to interview some people, and he needed an interpreter, so on our way to Srebrenica I ask him okay what's the target group we will be interviewing, so, he said 'well I don't know', I said 'you don't have a target group?' he said 'no we'll just go round and ask people'. (Pause).

That wouldn't be a problem if you were going to ask about, you know climate change, or something not very sensitive in our area, but he was going to ask people how was it during the war, what did you do? Did you kill somebody? You know, so I said who would you like to interview, and he said you know, well I would like to interview some Serbian women, and then I imagine myself, okay, there I go as somebody from Sarajevo, who by the chance has a Muslim name going round and asking 'excuse me, is there a Serbian woman here? We would like to interview her'. (Pause).

So when we got there I found some women with the help of a friend of mine, and then he had *very* provocative questions, provocative in terms of, you know you cannot ask a lady who lost her child during the war 'how was it to lose a child', 'what do you feel about the other side', I just feel he was *very* inconsiderate, he didn't care if he was

²² Some activists gave selective interviews in the hope that their participation in research might help to further a collective understanding of 'conflict' and 'peace', although it was clear that an underlying sense of scepticism about researchers remained.

²³ I was told by a number of activists that there were several 'trusted' researchers and academics who had proven their commitment to Bosnia/peace activism over time, and had gone to significant lengths to work in partnership with NGOs, and had also encouraged activists to write about their own work and experiences.

going to hurt somebody's feelings, he didn't care if he was damaging my safety. (Pause).

The next day he told me he wanted to go into Srebrenica and ask for interviews with soldiers, you know I didn't feel very comfortable doing that back, in 2001, but he was very aggressive he said 'you are my interpreter and you will just do what I tell you to do because you are being paid for that', you know and after two days of translating for eight hours a day I got ten Euros for the fee, you know if he asks me at the beginning and said I'm going to do this, I don't have much funds, would you help me, I would help him, it is not a problem to help somebody, but the treatment along the way, that was just a demonstration of the relationship, and he comes from a very well known university, doing a PhD, but it is not about the money, he asks for help, for a favour, if he wanted me to find the people to interview, he should have told me that at the beginning, he should have said 'I don't know anyone in Srebrenica, and this is my target group, what do you think, who should we contact', well I could prepare for that. (Pause).

So he tells me I have to find him a Serbian soldier, so eventually I found this guy in a bar, and he was very calm, very nice, easy going guy, there was a lot of good in him and he was in the Serbian army, and you know he agreed to an interview, although it was dangerous to do it, especially at that time, and the first question this researcher asks 'did you kill anyone during the war' (pause) and then the Serbian guy was like shocked, and said 'no I was in logistics providing food', and that was the first question, that's a very direct question, that's something you don't ask on a first interview, you don't know the person, you don't know the context, you don't know anything about it, and you ask somebody if he killed somebody. (Pause).

I didn't want to translate the question, at first, and he said, 'you're my translator, just translate the question', so I told the guy, I asked him, I mean the researcher was probably looking for the typical representations of the three nations, typical for him, and he would have liked to have found somebody who killed somebody so he could write it down (pause). well that was that guy, I wanted to write an article about him, change the names, I just wanted to write down that, the entire trip, he got his PhD at the end, he never sent me a paper or anything, of course²⁴.

²⁴ Emir later told me that the researcher had initially agreed to pay 50 Euros for two days of translation, and his bus fares and expenses would also be paid for. After the interviews had taken place in Srebrenica, however, the researcher told Emir that he had run out of money and asked Emir to pay for his own bus fare back to Sarajevo, and gave him an envelope which contained 10 Euros. Interview with ES, Sarajevo 06/07/07.

As Emir recounted his experience with this particular researcher, over six years after he had acted as his translator, it was clear to see that he was remained upset and disappointed with the way in which this research encounter had developed and unfolded. It was also clear to me, however, that Emir's experience was not simply an isolated incident of one poorly prepared researcher, as stories of researchers 'not knowing what they are doing', 'taking advantage' 'exploiting', and behaving in ways which were regarded as insincere or dishonest, were regularly cited in conversations about researchers²⁵. This was made worse by a number of factors. Firstly, the number of researchers arriving in Bosnia to conduct research related to peace and conflict issues (and often NGO activities) have become a drain on the time and resources of NGO activists, and there is a clear sense of research fatigue and of being 'over-researched' amongst activists²⁶. One activist, whom I call Jasmina, described how the organisation she worked for had been 'overwhelmed' and 'inundated' by the amount of emails and requests for interviews that they received from researchers, particularly from June to August when the 'summertime researchers' were in Bosnia²⁷. Jasmina told me that 'summertime researchers', in particular, tended to email the organisation at short notice with the expectation that they would be able to interview someone from the organisation or observe the work of the NGO; and some researchers had even turned up at the organisation unannounced and had

²⁵ Personal fieldnotes, Sarajevo, 03/11/06 – 19/07/07.

²⁶ Although there are a number of references to research fatigue and over researched populations in the literature, Tom Clark has argued there has been little exploration of this concept within qualitative research. He suggests that claims of over-researching are most likely to be reported in contexts where repeated engagements with researchers do not lead to any experience of change, or where researchers come into conflict with the aims and interests of those who are researched. See: Clark, T. (2008). "'We're over-researched here!': Exploring accounts of research fatigue within qualitative research engagements' *Sociology*, Vol 42(5), pp953-970.

²⁷ Informal Interview with JK, Sarajevo, 19/04/07.

expected to be able to interview NGO staff²⁸. Jasmina's frustration at the demands this placed on the organisation and herself was clear:

They think they are the only one, but there are so many of them, I have to decide what is most important, and of course peacebuilding is the most important²⁹.

It also takes little time on the ground to realise that most NGOs in Bosnia operate with limited staff, time and resources, and as Jasmina went on to explain, many NGOs had lost funding and staff over the last four years, and the political situation in Bosnia had also deteriorated³⁰. At times researchers were unaware of this, and meant that some activists had become frustrated that researchers appeared intensely focused on their own questions, and seemed largely uninterested in the issues, concerns and questions that were important to NGO activists. This had become an enduring challenge, and as one activist told me:

We have a situation where we are exhausted by this work, we have been doing it for over ten years, researchers do not think or know about the work that we are doing, but they tell us what questions are important and what we need to find out³¹.

This also raised questions amongst activists about the purpose of such research:

²⁸ I was told that 'summertime researchers' tended to be inexperienced researchers working on Bachelors, Masters dissertation's and PhD theses, although this also included more experienced academics.

²⁹ Informal Interview with JK, Sarajevo 19/07/07.

³⁰ I was told on several times that a lack of funding and the worsening political situation had significantly increased the pressure on NGOs, and that burn-out had become a serious problem amongst peace activists. Also see Nenad Vukosavljevic on this issue: Vukosavljevic, N. (2011). 'Preparing for Nonviolence- Experiences in the Western Balkans', In Austin, B. Fischer, M. Giessmann, H, J. (eds.) *Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II*, available at www.berghof-handbook.net [accessed 30/10/11].

³¹ Informal Interview with JK, Sarajevo 19/07/07.

They say this research is for us, but they never show us what they have written or what they have found, they speak to each other and write to each other, but not to us, so how can it be for us? We don't benefit, it is their careers that benefit³².

Another activist also questioned how research knowledge was used:

I want to believe that the interviews are important but I have never received one paper that was written, what happened to the things I said? I don't know, that knowledge is not stored here, people do not have access to it here³³.

Secondly, there was an overwhelming sense amongst activists, that researchers were largely unaccountable to those in Bosnia. The issue of authorization for interview data being published, in particular, came up a number of times. As one activist explained:

If you write a serious paper that can be quoted from, that will be available to a large number of people, then I think the least that you can do is ask for authorization, because finally once you have finished it, and put it all together, you never know how someone can interpret your words. Once you are back to your own country you practically don't have any formal obligation towards the people you interview, you know, who cares? In many cases I don't see any bad intentions, to produce some negative reaction, researchers are people I know, and sometimes they don't care, they forget, they don't consider that as important, but it matters to people here, it matters...(our) relationship with academics and researchers is important, but researchers are accountable to their academic community, not to us, not to those who are being researched³⁴.

Moreover, whilst activists have become largely accustomed to 'internationals' attending meetings, evaluating projects, taking photographs, and asking questions, one activist pointed out that the constant presence of researchers had created a sense of being almost continually watched and observed:

³² Personal notes from conversation with AH, Sarajevo, 07/04/07.

³³ Informal Interview with JK, Sarajevo 19/07/07.

³⁴ Interview with AR, Sarajevo 28/07/07.

When it comes to researchers here we are treated like lab rats...during the war the entire world was silent, and watched as though we were being used to find out how much we could suffer, and now we are still being watched, many of those researchers are looking at how we act, how we behave, sometimes I feel like a rat under a microscope³⁵.

These examples make it clear that researchers are part of activist's everyday lives and experiences, and underline how researchers occupy privileged positions with the ability to observe, record, and represent those lives. The privileged position of researchers as observers and writers has long been acknowledged and challenged in the wider social sciences by feminist and indigenous theorists, amongst others³⁶. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, for example, writing from an indigenous Maori perspective, locates research within a colonial hegemonic framework:

From the vantage point of the colonized...the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful³⁷.

The critical attention that has been given to research and the consequences of academic writing and representation by theorists including Tuhiwai Smith, has led to a more self-conscious, self-critical and reflexive approach to research

³⁵ Personal notes from conversation with EP Sarajevo, 11/07/07.

³⁶ See for example: Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books; Rose, G. (1997). 'Situating Knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics', *Human Geographies*, Vol 2(3), pp305-320; Nagar, R. & Barnes, T. (2007). 'Reflexivity and Positionality in Feminist Fieldwork Revisited', In Tickell, A. Sheppard, E. Peck, J. Barnes, T. *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*. London: Sage, pp267-278.

³⁷ Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, New York, Zed Books, p1.

and fieldwork in some areas of the social sciences³⁸. This issue, however, has not formed part of a sustained dialogue in relation to post-war contexts, or in the Conflict Resolution literature, even though the relationships between researchers and the 'researched' has become a matter of concern for some academics who conduct research in post-war and development contexts³⁹.

Farhana Sultana, for example, describes her attempts to develop relationships with women in rural Bangladesh whilst undertaking her PhD research on the gendered aspects of access to water:

They often laughed that an urban, educated female would ever want to develop relationships or maintain contact, give their prior knowledge or experience with development researchers who were detached, arrogant or fleetingly present in the field...as one woman scoffed, while she walked away from my attempts to speak with her 'not another one of you people with more questions again'⁴⁰.

Academic and researcher Chris Blattman, has also created an advice blog to respond to the numerous emails that he receives from students who want to conduct research in post-war contexts. His blog site 'So you want to go to a (post) war zone?' outlines a number of issues that he suggests 'your human

³⁸ See for example: Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity and Voice* London. Thousand Oaks: Sage; Berry, K. (2011). 'Reflecting on the Call to Ethnographic Reflexivity: A Collage of Responses to Questions of Contestation' *Cultural Studies and Critical Methodologies*, Vol 11(2), pp199-209; Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Second Edition. London: Sage.

³⁹ See for example the summary report of a workshop held at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, which discussed the specific ethical dilemmas and fieldwork concerns of researchers who had conducted research in post-conflict environments. See States and Security: http://statesandsecurity.org/_pdfs/FRE.Report.pdf [accessed 16/10/11].

⁴⁰ Sultana, F. (2007). 'Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), pp374-385.

subjects (ethics) committee doesn't care about, but you should'⁴¹. He begins by addressing an audience of potential researchers:

'First, I think it's terrific that you want to do field work and somehow help out. That much is easy. Even so, what you might not realize just yet is that right now hundreds of students are currently making plans to go to Gulu, Monrovia, and other post-conflict destinations for their dissertations. To be honest, these towns increasingly feel like circuses, and I think you have to ask yourself whether you want to really help out or become part of the sideshow. Most choose the latter, and resentment is rising among government, the community, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)⁴².

In order to avoid joining what he calls the 'circuses' and 'sideshows' of post-war contexts, Blattman suggests that potential researchers should ask themselves two main questions:

Who are you doing this research for? If it's you and you alone, please think twice. Most of the research that is done in these communities feels extractive and self-serving. The number one complaint I hear from governments, communities, and NGOs: "This guy came around, asked a bunch of questions, used our vehicles, and we never heard from him again." Too few researchers take the time to find out what has been done before, what is needed, and how they can feed back their findings into the government or NGOs. In northern Uganda, I'm beginning to see a backlash. People are tired of giving time and opinions and not getting anything back.

What can you give back?

The number two complaint: "Her study is pointless. I (already answered/ don't care about / already have someone working on) the answer." So how can you do better? First, seek out partners. This is hard to do, but find researchers, NGOs, organizations, or government offices and find out what you can do for them. An awful lot of organizations will take you up on that offer, but you'll have to contact five dozen before you get two or three good options. Second, be prepared to spend some serious time. Two to four

⁴¹ Chris Blattman is an assistant Professor of Political Science & Economics at Yale University, and a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Global Development. Website: <http://chrisblattman.blogspot.com/2008/03/so-you-want-to-go-to-post-war-zone.html> [accessed 10/3/08].

⁴² Ibid.

months is the minimum just to develop a clue what is going on and tell someone there something they don't already know. More is better. If you're going for less than two months, you need to think about whether you're taking away more than you are giving to an already desperate place. Third, recognize that it is a lot of work for a researcher, organization, or government office to help you out. Maybe more time and effort than it's worth. The longer you are willing to commit, and the more you can give them in return, the more likely they are to help you. Make it clear from the beginning that you are willing to give back somehow. Fourth, disseminate the result. Post a web page. E-mail your report to NGOs and government offices⁴³.

The existence of Blattman's advice blog illustrates the extent to which the presence of researchers has 'interfered' in post-war contexts; affecting not only the lives of those whose realities have been shaped by violence and conflict, but by creating a research 'backlash' against those who have an academic interest in studying and observing post-war contexts⁴⁴. This is a serious problem for peace and conflict researchers as the research 'backlash' which Blattman refers to is evident not only in Uganda, but in Bosnia as I have outlined above. As Hammersley writes:

Research has material effects...people's lives may be affected by being researched, and by being in a context that is affected by research findings. And these effects may be for good or for ill, and can run through the whole gamut of more complex combinations and possibilities that lies between those two extremes⁴⁵.

In Bosnia and the wider Balkan region it is clear that critical conversations are taking place about the realities of research, and not only are researchers

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ John Law argues that social science interferes with the world, and makes differences, politically and otherwise. See: Law, J. (2005). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p7.

⁴⁵ Hammersley, M. (1995). *The Politics of Social Research*. London: Sage, p112.

studying their 'informants' and their environment, but in turn, 'informants' are studying and researching them back⁴⁶. Writing about his peace work in the Balkan region, Goran Božičević, a well-respected Croatian peace activist writes:

Five years ago, one participant on the Peace Studies programme in Zagreb asked me what has been the most difficult in my work at the Volunteer Project Pakrac, in the destroyed and divided town of Pakrac Croatia between 1993 and 1995. My answer was: 'peace activists/workers coming from the West and telling me/us what we should do and what local people need. Coming with brilliant instant solutions and ideas, ready to be recorded with their cameras...(these people are) naïve idealists who are sometimes a danger with their lack of cultural sensitivity, but mostly lack the resources or influence to do real harm'. Still, these people were able to suck away energy while visiting others like us, who were living and working on the ceasefire line, fixing ruins while actually using that as an entry point to a wounded community and for trust-building⁴⁷.

Reflecting on the motivations of 'peacebuilding professionals' who choose to work in post-war environments, Božičević writes:

These days, we encounter many more 'peacebuilding professionals' than we used to...many of them enter the field with great dedication and willingness to learn. At the same time, we hear the term 'peacebuilding industry' referring to those for whom it is 'just a job'. I am asking myself why it is so attractive for 'internationals' (meaning: those who do not come from post-war areas, but usually from developed countries) to work in the peacebuilding field. I have come up with a list of potential features:

- a. Peacebuilding is a new field, not many people are even aware of its existence- so activists can consider themselves as pioneers, even as making history.

⁴⁶ In Bosnia some NGO activists argued that they 'studied' researchers as a way to selectively filter and resist researchers. In effect, this constituted a doubling of anti-hegemonic practice (as conflict resolution scholars have argued that critical conflict resolution is anti-hegemonic). Also see Nordstrom and Weinstein on 'studying back': Nordstrom, C. & Weinstein, J. M. (2007). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁷ Božičević G. (2009). 'Reflections on Peacebuilding from Croatia', *Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Management Website*: www.berghof-hanbook.net [accessed 26.02.09].

- b. Peacebuilders are supposed to bring about change, or at least manage it, which gives a powerful feeling.
- c. We can earn quite a good income from working in 'peacebuilding'. Plus, if we count more than money, we earn huge benefits: experience, exposure to different cultures, contacts.
- d. Peace work takes place in situations at the edge of danger, which means that it is emotionally demanding (so we have the rewarding feeling that we are doing a hard job).
- e. We have the privilege of being part of big, powerful, dominant structures, but we are also distant from them. What I mean is that our passport is often protecting us; established, efficient health and social care systems are backing us up. If the situation should worsen, evacuation will be organized for us. Our kids will have access to all the resources 'those kids in the field' do not have. We are/feel like 'normal' people – but in the 'field' reality we are not.
- f. We consider ourselves as 'good guys', even though we never say so. As we are fixing what 'bad guys' have done, we must be the good ones. This feeling creates individual and collective 'identity'.
- g. Wherever you work, whatever conflict you are managing (they are 'all the same' or – well – 'similar') you always find someone you know from some other crisis- an old friend. The more you work and travel, the more people you know. In the end, we are one (relatively small) community⁴⁸.

Božičević and Blattman both recognise the extent to which the presence of researchers (and others) has affected a number of post-war contexts, and question the motivations of researchers interested in post-war contexts. What is most clear from their writing, however, is that the presence of researchers has overwhelmed NGOs and small communities in post-war countries, who are already under strain in difficult post-war environments. As Blattman describes, this has provoked a research 'backlash', and in turn raises serious questions about the cumulative effects of researchers who seek to study and observe peace and conflict issues in post-war environments.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Following from Blattman, my contention here is that peace and conflict researchers have become important, though unacknowledged 'actors' in post-war contexts such as Bosnia. This is not a new phenomenon, however, as the subject of the political presence of researchers has been extensively discussed and addressed in ethnography and development literature over the last thirty years or so⁴⁹. More recently writers have situated discussions about fieldwork and the position of researchers within debates about reflexivity, post-colonialism and feminism, although unfortunately, this does not seem to have generated a sustained dialogue in relation to post-war contexts, or in the Conflict Resolution literature⁵⁰. For a discipline that explicitly expresses an interest in promoting peace and building relationships, it seems incongruous that so little discussion has been given to this matter. This suggests / hints at a much deeper problem- that as conflict resolution researchers largely fail to write in any detail about their research experiences and research relationships, they may also fail to consider the implications of their presence. Indeed, such a lack of discussion has allowed tacit assumptions to be made of a dualism between (ethical) researchers and (ethically questionable) 'locals'; for assumptions about the beneficence of research to remain unproblematised; and for questions about the presence of researchers to go unheard. Here it becomes easier to see how conflict resolution becomes defined by what is silenced as much as though what is acknowledged and studied. It is also sometimes easy to assume that researchers act ethically and sensitively (as their institutions, supervisors and funders might assume), and

⁴⁹ Paul Rabinow, for example, has written extensively on this issue since his fieldwork in Morocco as an anthropology student in the late 1970's. See: Rabinow, P. (1977). *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵⁰ See for example: Faubion, J. D. & Marcus, G. E. (eds.) (2009). *Fieldwork is Not What it Used to be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition*. New York: Cornell University Press.

conversely, that those in the field pose problems: building obstacles to restrict access to particular groups of people, telling 'lies', and posing dangers to researchers⁵¹. Yet the stories of NGO activists in Bosnia taught me that those who become involved in research do not necessarily experience research in terms of the perceived 'benefits' that researchers might tend to assume. Instead, they experience, remember and recount research through their own (and others) often disappointing, frustrating and sometimes extractive encounters with researchers.

Moreover, the stories and experiences of NGO activists in Bosnia are often shared and discussed critically and at length, to create and reinforce a sense that researchers (and also 'internationals') cannot be trusted; and that researchers practice in ways that 'subject' people to academic observations and representations (often with a lack of understanding of the work being done or the complex histories and realities of Bosnia). In this context, the idea that researchers are 'beneficent' 'well meaning' with 'good intentions' is gradually diminished, and instead, researchers are increasingly viewed as self-serving, self-interested, extractive and at times, unethical. Meanwhile, the academic Conflict Resolution literature creates a discourse around the importance and beneficence of research, and the idea of the ethical researcher, to maintain the external appearance of a beneficent project. In this vein, research papers suggest the need for future research, and the need to continue, expand, and develop our understanding of conflict and peace, whilst at the same time there are only marginal discussions around how research might be conducted, and

⁵¹ Fujii L, A. (2010). 'Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence' *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2) pp 231-241.

how researchers might work more collaboratively with NGOs and individuals in post-war contexts.

This sets a scene in which NGOs activists widely criticise researchers amongst themselves, and researchers continue their research, focusing on what can be produced, and what can be published. NGO activists and Conflict Resolution researchers begin to talk past each other, and a game of resistance is constructed in which NGO activists 'try' and 'test' researchers, to work out who might misrepresent them, who might undermine their work and their resources, and who might support their work⁵². Inexperienced researchers (like myself) are sometimes unaware of this and fall at the first hurdle, and are faced with unanswered emails and phone calls which go unreturned. Often the content of these emails or calls, unknowingly displays that their interest in meeting, or conducting an interview is linked to their own needs and their own research interests, with little if any awareness that this may be problematic for a small NGO community that has been inundated by researchers over the last 15 years with similar requests. Yet these disconnections far exceed simple semantic differences, or differences of opinion, and suggest far deeper ontological, methodological, and epistemological questions about the nature of research itself. In Conflict Resolution terms, these disconnections construct research as a site of asymmetrical conflict and contestation, which is only acknowledged by one side⁵³.

⁵² Several activists told me of the need to informally 'try' and 'test' researchers. Personal fieldnotes, Sarajevo, 17/01/07 – 16/07/07.

⁵³ For more on asymmetrical conflict see: Franics, D. (2004). 'Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation', Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management Website:

It is not difficult to see that there is already some avoidance and resistance to the presence and practices of researchers in Bosnia and elsewhere, as I have described above. In Sarajevo, some NGO activists are choosing not to engage with researchers, and this avoidance has made it increasingly difficult to conduct research within the NGO community, where some activists have reached a virtual stalemate in terms of 'untested' researchers⁵⁴. This presents a serious issue for researchers who are interested in post-war contexts, with the implication that if researchers continue to conduct research in ways that are regarded as problematic, it may no longer become possible for researchers to conduct research in post-war contexts. The discussions in Bosnia illustrate that the discipline cannot afford to take the positive benefits of research on trust, or take the ability to conduct research for granted.

I should be clear here that it is not my intention to purposely undermine currently existing research practices within conflict resolution, and nor to criticize researchers who have conducted their research in particular ways, and have clearly contributed a significant amount to the field of Conflict Resolution. Instead I would like this argument to be considered as an attempt to open up space for a dialogue- about how research is conducted- who it is for- and how we interact with and represent those who become involved in our research. I also want to suggest that there is a need to encourage more critical thinking about the effects we have as researchers in the environments that we undertake our research, particularly in areas that have experienced devastating wars and violence, and in areas where the presence and

http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/francis_handbook.pdf [accessed 3/11/11].

⁵⁴ As outlined in chapter 5, researchers were at times subjected to 'trust' tests, in order to gauge their commitment and reliability.

interventions of the 'international community' is already regarded as problematic. In addition, closer attention should be paid to the manifest presence and absence of researchers in Conflict Resolution texts, and there should be a much wider engagement with contemporary debates about fieldwork, the positionality of researchers, and reflexivity within the wider field of social sciences and qualitative. There is a case to be made that researchers who attempt to engage in more self-conscious and reflexive research approaches might be more cognisant of the ways in which research and fieldwork might affect people's lives; although approaching research in ethical ways and being regarded as ethical from the point of view of those who are being researched are clearly not always the same thing.

Conclusion

The impetus for this chapter came from a series of conversations I had whilst in Bosnia, and from a growing sense of unease at the dissonance between these conversations and academic claims about the overwhelming need for (and benefits of) research in post-conflict environments. In conflict resolution, and from a common sense point of view, research is essential for furthering our understanding of conflict and peace and the contexts in which they develop. Whilst it seems clear that research can help to explore, understand and explain the complex range of factors and issues which enable violence and promote peace, it is also apparent that we have yet to develop a critical understanding of the effects of research and the presence of researchers in post-war contexts, even though the politics and ethics of fieldwork are being

increasingly recognised in the social sciences as crucial elements of undertaking research.

I have explored how NGO activists have regarded the presence and practices of researchers in Bosnia, and I have argued that researchers have become important, though unacknowledged actors in the post-context. NGO activists who take part in conflict and peace related research, have often done so in the hope that their participation will help to further a collective understanding of conflict and peace, although their experiences of researchers have sometimes involved breaches of trust, and at times the practices of researchers have been regarded as insensitive and exploitative. These experiences are widely recounted and disseminated at a local level, creating an increasing mistrust of researchers, and a reluctance to cooperate with researchers. Although many peace and conflict researchers have good intentions, the stories of NGO activists suggest that the presence and practices of some researchers can be ethically and politically problematic. These issues are largely absent from accounts of research in post-war Bosnia, and also from discussions about conflict resolution research.

Given the stories that I have outlined, and the discourses that activists have developed around research and the presence of researchers, I have suggested that there is a need to think more critically about Conflict Resolution research in post-war contexts. This might suggest a re-thinking of conflict resolution research, and a move towards the development of critically conscious researchers who purposefully work 'with' those in post-war environments. This might allow the development of a deeper appreciation of 'local' knowledges, capacities and limits, and the social dynamics of research

in post-war contexts. Academic researchers clearly also have important knowledge and resources to offer, but these should not be taken as superior to the significant knowledge that exists amongst NGO activists and local communities who live their lives in post-war contexts.

Throughout this and the preceding chapters, I have developed a critique of 'normal science' approaches to research, and problematised the ways in which Conflict Resolution research practices have limited our understanding of post-war environments. I have also shown my attempts to negotiate my way through the research process using reflexive methods in chapter five. The next chapter in this thesis shares the epistemological and methodological aims of the preceding chapters and continues to negotiate the research process, whilst revealing more of the complex, nuanced, and visceral experiences of the everyday in post-war Bosnia. The next chapter also builds on my critique of positivist methodologies and 'normal science' outlined in chapter three, and further develops the argument made in this chapter to explore visual representation and the use of visual materials in the constitution of post-war environments. It takes issue with the assumption made by some researchers that, the researched are simply objects of knowledge, and does this through a consideration of a number of visual everyday enactments, which pointedly critique the international community. As Richmond and Mitchell have recently argued, there is a need to critique international peacebuilding 'from the perspective of the everyday', and it is clear in the next chapter that this has

already begun in Bosnia, from the perspective of those who have experienced the peacebuilding attempts of the international community⁵⁵.

The next chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part of the chapter, 7a, I present four visual ‘journeys’ that explore representations of post-war Bosnia. There is a deliberate move to provide alternative ways of ‘seeing’ the everyday realities of post-war Bosnia, and it does this through the use of found and researcher generated visual materials to enact an engagement with the politics of representation, whilst acknowledging that our accounts of what exists/ of reality/ of the social world are not, and cannot be, simple or linear readings of reflections of the world. This part of the chapter also shows my attempts to work against a normalized academic habitus, and to re-present as assemblage of my experiences of Bosnia to disrupt ways of knowing Bosnia as a singular post-war reality. This follows John Law’s ‘ontological politics’, and accordingly, it might appear ‘messy’ in some places, but this is the intention - to re-construct and re-present an incomplete, fragmented understanding of the messy politics and realities of post-war Bosnia. It also refocuses on the sensory and visceral elements of fieldwork, and on the silences, absences of everyday realities in Bosnia. Elements, which I have argued, are significant to our understanding of post-war environments.

In the second part of the chapter, I explore in more detail the significance of visual images in Conflict Resolution, to argue that visual images should be understood as sites of meaning and resistance, which narrate powerful stories of injustice in post-war Bosnia. When Carolyn Nordstrom argued that

⁵⁵ Richmond, O. & Mitchell, A. (2012). ‘Introduction- Towards a Post-Liberal Peace: Exploring Hybridity via Everyday Forms of Resistance, Agency and Autonomy’ In Richmond, O. & Mitchell, A. (Eds.) *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p14.

warzones are fraught with difficulties which 'play havoc' with research approaches, analytical tools and categories developed in the peace and quiet of comfortable offices, she was not only pointing to the chaos of war; but also to the difficulties of attempting to 'translate' the realities and meanings of war into language and into texts⁵⁶. This part of the chapter represents my attempts to deal with such 'havoc', and foregrounds my attempts to interpret, analyse and make sense of the everyday realities in post-war Bosnia as a researcher in a politically situated place and subject.

⁵⁶ Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p87.

Chapter Seven (a)

Disruptions: Visual Journeys in Post-War Bosnia

'For a long time -- at least six decades -- photographs have laid down the tracks of how important conflicts are judged and remembered. The Western memory museum is now mostly a visual one. Photographs have an insuperable power to determine what we recall of events' ¹

'There are visual materials in most if not all of the situations of inquiry that we research. We ignore them at our peril. Instead, we can engage them, seek to understand how visibility is constitutive of those social situations, and come to terms with their rich and dense contributions to social life' ²

Photographs and visual materials in Bosnia have often been used as claims to realism and documentary truth. Images of the 'ethnic cleansing' of rural villages, photographs of emaciated young men in 'concentration camps', images of people dodging bullets from behind UN tanks in 'sniper alley' in Sarajevo, came to determine what was remembered in the 'international' imagination about Bosnia, particularly in the absence of other, alternative visual discourses.

In Conflict Resolution, images of bullet scarred and decimated buildings in Bosnia have also repeatedly served to represent the horrors and destruction of war; and simultaneously the rebuilding of particular sites such as Stari Most (the Old Bridge) in Mostar, have become almost iconic representations with 'preferred readings' which have become visual metaphors for peace and

¹ Sontag, S. (2004). 'Regarding The Torture Of Others'. *The New York Times* May 23, 2004. The New York Times.

² Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. London: Sage, p205.

reconciliation³. Often such images are produced *by* and *for* the international community, and yet there have been few attempts to collect such materials and analyse the ‘work’ that they do.

If, as Donna Haraway argues, we should understand images as sites of meaning and resistance where social differences are visualised or rendered invisible, and power relations are articulated, reinforced and challenged; it is essential to become critical about the images that we consume and produce⁴.

This chapter presents four visual ‘journeys’ and textual interludes, which attempt to disrupt singular and simplistic representations of the complex post-war realities in Bosnia. The ordering of these images is purposeful, and works to justify particular interpretations, and to inhibit others. This ordering, along with a lack of text to immediately explain the ‘meaning’ or significance of these images is also intended to encourage the audience to make their own interpretations out of the inevitable polysemy of the images. This is a deliberate epistemological move to provide alternative ways of ‘seeing’ Bosnia, and to add a sensory dimension to understanding everyday realities.

My point in doing this is to do what I can to make my ‘research’ – all the mess and ambiguity, intelligible. I am seeking to communicate the landscape of Bosnia in a way that opens an inner dialogue and simultaneously constructs and deconstructs our understanding. I do this in specific contrast written texts – which are overwhelmingly the means of knowledge

³ Hall, S. (1980). ‘Encoding/Decoding’ In *Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. London: Hutchinson, p134.

⁴ Haraway, D. (2002). ‘The Persistence of Vision’ in Mirzoff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge, p679.

transmission and fixing in CR. These forms of knowledge production (which I address in Chapters 2, 3 and 4) tend to simplify, fix, categorise, sanitise, and in so doing tend to deform, to create a facsimile. Through this visual journey – both my self-generated journeys, and then my analysis of ‘found’ images (in 7b) seeks to disrupt this sanitising process by journeying through a complex and deeply troubling landscape where there are no easy answers, ready solutions, or fixed understandings. This then allows a further crucial point to be considered. To what extent is it possible for international peacebuilding efforts to work if they are built on assumptions about peace, conflict and peacebuilding (in Bosnia) which are cut off from lived realities?

Visual Journey 1

Walking in Sarajevo

































A 'simple' walk down the street in Sarajevo is an overwhelming and complex sensory experience, and I'm finding it difficult to write about it. Each time I take a walk down the main street from my flat (otherwise known as 'sniper alley') it's impossible to go further than a few meters without seeing and being reminded of the destruction and devastation of the war and the continued presence of the 'international community'. There are multiple visual representations, sometimes similar, sometimes contradictory, each competing in a kind of symbolic battle for visual space on the streets of Sarajevo. Today as I walked along the street from my apartment towards the centre, past the memorial wall for local people killed during the siege of Sarajevo, I noticed a new series of EUFOR billboards. Some of the adverts showed smiling and friendly faces of the EU military forces, and others showed clasped hands (a helping hand or hand up?) whilst declaring 'peace and security' in Bosnia. Further down the street there were also a series of billboards evoking genocide in Srebrenica, where instead of a smiling face, a UN soldier is shown as indifferent to the plight of a distraught woman whose arms are outstretched. At the same time literally hundreds of other posters have been pasted onto boards, walls and bus-stops to publicize a 'Justice for All' protest in Sarajevo later this week. The posters show a bleeding heart being hit by a gavel. There are numerous plays at work: the geographical shape of Bosnia which is heart shaped, leading to the local description of the country as a 'heart shaped land', linking in with local constructions of Srebrenica as the heart of Bosnia; and the gavel hitting the heart on its left side, thus striking the Muslim Federation of Bosnia rather than the Republika Srepska, geographically located on the right.

Walking up towards Koševo, a camp for 'Srebrenica survivors' has been set up following The Hague verdict, which was been angrily received by many (the Serbian State was convicted of failing to prevent genocide in Srebrenica, but cleared of any responsibility to pay reparations). At the same time graffiti has also started appearing on the streets, and the word 'balija' (a derogatory term meaning 'Muslim whore') is appearing more and more, and vying for space on the pavements next to the damage caused by shells.

I'm beginning to realise that almost all of my prior visual knowledge has been largely determined by images which imply a simplistic vision of Sarajevo and Bosnia, but that seems profoundly out of touch with the visual and narrative realities that exist here. The Unitic Towers, Parliament Building and Holiday Inn, for example, have been extensively photographed both during their destruction in the war and in the years since their reconstruction. 'International' images often seem to (self-evidently) present a war/peace dichotomy and a reconstruction-as-progress narrative, and yet the rebuilding of these sites has radically alternative meanings for some Bosnians. What I mean by this, is that although it is not clear from many of the war/post-war photographs, these buildings stand only a few meters from each other in a loosely configured triangle. International officials are often reported to stay at the Holiday Inn, and the Unitic Towers house a number of major International and commercial organisations that are stationed in Bosnia, including the OSCE and the European Union. Collectively, locals have renamed the buildings as 'The Bermuda Triangle'. This signifies narratives about the 'disappearance' of money and resources into these buildings, which locals say is never seen again.

Many of the images I have seen don't capture how all-encompassing the war is (and continues to be), and they further fail to capture some of the disdain for the international community. A monument, known locally as the 'spam' monument has been built outside the museum for contemporary art. The monument was intended as a tribute to international community, and replicates the tins of beef that were distributed by the European Union during the siege of Sarajevo. A local activist was asked about the purpose of the monument in a local paper: "The message is clear, the canned beef is remembered by the people of Sarajevo with disgust. Cats and dogs did not want to eat it and people had to. Everybody agreed that we should do the project in this way. It's witty, ironic and artistic."

The inscription on the monument reads:

MONUMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

(from the) GRATEFUL CITIZENS OF SARAJEVO

Visual Journey 2

Stari Most (The Old Bridge)

Mostar

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In July 2004, after several years of reconstruction, Mostar's Old Town and the 'New Old Bridge' were ceremoniously re-opened in front of the world's media. Bosnia's High Representative, Paddy Ashdown declared that the reconstruction of the bridge symbolized the 'knitting together of the communities so recently torn apart'; and a year later, the Bridge and Old Town became an UNESCO World Heritage site, with its reconstruction described as 'an exceptional and universal symbol of coexistence'. The bridge was represented as bringing together the Muslim community on one side, and the Catholic community on the other, and became a powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation.

When I first arrived in Mostar I began to look for the architectural symbols of peace (and war) that I had seen on the covers of books that I had read, and as I walked around I took photographs that unwittingly replicated those that I had seen. Yet as I walked I realised that there were also a number of things which hadn't been visible in the images which adorned the front of the books and, as I later learned, these were things which radically disrupted the story of a city that had been reunited and reconciled.

On my walk around the Old Town and Bridge I noticed a large cross on the hill above Mostar. The cross dominated the skyline, and, unlike the bridge, was visible from every point at which I stood in Mostar. The cross, I later learned, had been erected on Hum Hill in 2000 at the request of the Bishop of Mostar, and was intended as a celebration of the birth of Jesus and 'to spread the fruit of peace to all sides of the world'. Hum Hill, I was told, had been a crucial military position during the war, and it was widely understood that whoever controlled the hill controlled the city. The Hill, initially controlled by Serbian forces, had been taken by Croat forces, which became the strategic position from which the (Muslim held) Old Town and Bridge were destroyed and from where hundreds of people had been killed and injured. The placement of the cross on Hum Hill was described to me as a flag planted on conquered territory, and instead of the Bridge of Peace and Reconciliation that had been imaged (and imagined) by the international community, the Bridge in the presence of the Cross represented the continuing (symbolic) war between Croat Catholics and Bosnian Muslims in Mostar. As I sat in a café on the outskirts of the city, I chatted to the waiter who told me a local 'joke'...'why do Muslims in Mostar always drink their coffee with straws?...because if they drink their coffee in the usual way they'll see the cross and be reminded of being shot'.

Visual Journey 3

UN Base and Battery Factory

Potočari Srebrenica

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I first heard about the graffiti at the UN base in Potočari whilst having coffee in Sarajevo. I was talking to a Bosnian woman about the Hague verdict when our discussion veered towards the role of the UN in Srebrenica. The UN Dutchbat peacekeepers, she explained, had allowed genocide to take place, and 'didn't care' what happened to Bosnians. Her narrative about the UN and the things that had happened at Srebrenica was similar to those of some of the survivors that I had heard speak before, with the exception of one detail. She mentioned, almost in passing, that the UN peacekeepers had drawn 'shameful graffiti' on the walls of the battery factory near Srebrenica that had become their base. This proved, she said, that they had no intentions of protecting Muslims from attacks by Mladić.

When I asked her to tell me more about the graffiti, she seemed surprised that I hadn't heard about it. She had not seen the graffiti herself, but had heard there were sexual drawings and writing that said Bosnian girls looked and smelt like shit. 'What did they expect them to look like after months without food and water? They were meant to be protecting them from genocide, not smelling them...but they were only interested in nice looking women'. Everyone else, she said, was 'left to fend for themselves'.

A few weeks later I visited the UN base at Potočari and the memorial centre, which had been built directly opposite the base. It was here, just outside of Srebrenica, that Muslim men and boys had been separated from their wives and children, before being taken and killed in fields and ditches around the base by Serb forces. The UN base stood largely empty and there were signs of dilapidation and general neglect. It was possible to walk freely around parts of the base, and I wandered into rooms that had been filled with graffiti. Some of the graffiti had been painstakingly drawn and included dates, and rank and file numbers, which corresponded to the time the UN had been stationed there. Other parts of the graffiti appeared to have been more quickly sketched with some sections including local language. I wondered whether some of it had been added after the UN had left, although it was clear from conversations I had with Bosnians, that the graffiti had been wholly attributed to the UN peacekeepers. In places the graffiti was explicitly sexual, with women illustrated in a variety of sexual positions and in various states of undress. Some of the women were depicted as holding guns, whilst others seemed to offer themselves to the passing audience. Men, when they were depicted, were pictured as virile and in control, and their weapons and sexual organs appeared to be interchangeable.

Visual Journey 4

Tarik Samarah

'Srebrenica 2005'

(Coffee Table Book)

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I saw Tarik Samarah's coffee table book 'Srebrenica 2005' in the window of my local bookshop in Sarajevo, and on the shelves of several of the NGO activists I knew. Its opening page read:

'For several years after the war, the massacre in Srebrenica was a crime without corpses. The military and political leadership of Republika Srpska actively denied that the atrocity had ever taken place, concealing evidence of the crimes and their perpetrators. The post-war chapter of the Srebrenica saga is the tale of a long and painful search for the truth, with no prospects of success; for years, the survivors of the Srebrenica massacre were one of the country's most marginalized social groups. Bosnian society demonstrated, and continued to express, a predilection for holding its victims in contempt; and for a long time after the war, the international community did nothing to re-examine its own role in the Srebrenica massacre.'

The book listed 7109 names of the men and boys missing from Srebrenica in alphabetical order, covering the pages of almost a third of the book. After the names were photographs taken by Tarik Samarah in 2002. They included photographs of the UN base, the sites of mass graves, the identification process of human remains, the burial of remains at the memorial centre, and the faces and lives of the women who had survived.

Sometime later I heard about a commemoration and peacebuilding project by one of the NGOs I volunteered with 'Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava' (Youth Initiative for Human Rights). In the days leading up to the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, the Serbian based NGO had paid for commemorative billboards to be displayed at 40 locations in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Cacak, and Nis in Serbia. Each showed one of four photographs by Tarik Samarah followed by one clear message:

'Da vidiš, da znaš, da pamtiš Srebrenica 1995-2005'

(See, Know, Remember, Srebrenica 1995-2005)

The aim, they said, was to 'confront the systematic denial' of genocide in Serbia, and also to serve as a 'cultural event'. Within hours many of the billboards had been damaged, some ripped, others defaced with paint. The graffiti written across the adverts included the phrases 'Biće repriza' (There'll be a rerun), 'Nož, žica, Srebrenica' (Knife, wire, Srebrenica), and 'Long Live Mladić'.

Visual Journeys Postscript

The visual representations and ‘readings’ in this chapter allow us the chance to reflect on what Jon Prosser has described as ‘researcher found’ and ‘researcher produced’ images⁵. The images presented here both problematize and challenge dominant visual and textual narratives. These visual narratives construct Bosnia either as a place of ancient hatreds and ‘ethnic cleansing’, or alternatively as a place of reconciliation, thus suggesting a simplistic binary of war or peace; as a place that is overrun with irrational violence, or is peaceful and in the process of reconciling. Even where the Conflict Resolution literature places an emphasis on peace and reconciliation – ie the depiction of the Stari Most bridge – research remains focused on ‘ethnic’ violence in Bosnia⁶. This has unintentionally reiterated the western stereotype of the Balkans as a place of ethnic and ancient hatreds. Razsa and Lindstrom argue that in many cases:

The Balkans still tend to be characterized, often in a rather unreflective manner, as negative, backward, chaotic, and violent - terms like powder keg and balkanization immediately come to mind.⁷

Many of the images which have shaped our understanding of Bosnia, for instance women and children fleeing from burning villages; pictures of mass

⁵ Prosser, J. (2006). *Researching with Visual Images: Some guidance notes and a glossary for beginners*, Real Life Methods Working Paper, University of Manchester and University of Leeds.

⁶ See for example: Olzak, S. (2011). ‘Does Globalization Breed Ethnic Discontent?’ *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 55, 1, pp3-32; Whitt, S. (2014). ‘Social Norms in the Aftermath of Ethnic Violence: Ethnicity and Fairness in Non-costly Decision Making’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 58, no 1, pp 92-119.

⁷ Razsa, M. and Lindstrom, N. (2004). ‘Balkan is Beautiful: Balkanism in the Political Discourse of Tudjman’s Croatia’, *East European Politics and Societies*, pp 628-650.

graves; of men women and children dodging sniper fire in besieged Sarajevo; are now taken for granted. They are assumed to be representative of Bosnia as a place of ethnic and ancient hatreds. Bosnia is thus constructed as 'semideveloped, semicolonial, semicivilized, semioriental'⁸. By constantly producing images which suggest a war/ peace binary, these images also create a 'dominant form of visibility' about Bosnia which, if put into words, would be viewed as simplistic and problematic to a wider academic audience⁹. Maria Todorova's concept of 'Balkanism', which draws on the work of Edward Said, illustrates the dangers of essentialising the 'Balkans' in this way as 'Other', in contrast to the developed, civilized 'West'. My contention here is that often these forms of visibility are not only simplistic, but are also profoundly disconnected from the ways in which post-war Bosnia is visually constituted and understood on the ground. These disconnections, I argue, raise questions about 'whose' reality is revealed in such photographs, and whose realities are rendered absent.

Unquestionably, a key reason the images in this chapter are important is that they challenge and problematize how other scholars have represented Bosnia. Instead of reiterating and redrawing the 'ethnic Balkan' stereotypes, these images frame Bosnia in a way that illustrates the multilayered, complex and contradictory visual realities of the post-war environment. They do so in a way that is crucial to understanding the post-war environment beyond the usual and simplistic representations of ethnic violence and binary

⁸ Todorova, M. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁹ See Donna Haraway on dominant forms of visibility: Haraway, D. (2002). 'The Persistence of Vision' In Mirzoff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge p 679.

oppositions. Thus they complicate the visual composition of post-war Bosnia, and undermine the visual shorthand of 'bridges to peace' in the conflict resolution literature. For example, whilst Conflict Resolution literature posits the destruction/reconstruction of the Stari Most as a binary symbol of war and peace, Bosnian narratives make explicit and critical references to this particular representation of the Bridge, as an imagined reality, created both by, and for, the international community. Indeed, for many Bosnians, the representation of bridges in the Balkans, encapsulates Todorova's concept of 'Balkanism', and links the bridge as a leitmotif to the simultaneous absence and presence of irrational ethnic violence. As Marina Antić argues, the central metaphor of a Balkan bridge conjures up an image of a space 'between civilizations, between races, between the 'civilized' West and the 'barbaric' East, between reason and chaos. In essence, a bridge between 'us' and 'them''¹⁰.

The transportive nature of visual and arts based images allows a glimpse into post-war environments, allowing the viewer to connect with the embodied journey of the researcher or individual taking the image. This visual proximity to post-war contexts is significant, in that it has the potential to both disrupt what is extremely familiar or taken-for-granted, or alternatively, may allow entry into a context or experience which might remain otherwise unseen. As Sarah Pink (2013:2) suggests, 'visual ethnographic media and materials offer us *forms of continuity* between fieldwork in academic and applied research

¹⁰ Antić, M. (2003). 'Living in the Shadow of the Bridge: Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina* and Western Imaginings of Bosnia'. *Spaces of Identity* Vol 3, no 3. August.

contexts that other mediums cannot' (emphasis added)¹¹. It is these forms of continuity which offer one method of creating space for researchers and academics in Conflict Resolution to reflect on, or reconsider what might have been previously been taken for granted. In effect, it makes complexity and mess visible against an articulated – written and thought – narrative opening the mind to alterities. The peacebuilding campaign by YIHR, outlined in visual journey 4 in this chapter, for example, shows the increasing importance of visual images in local peacebuilding practices. Here, visual images of widows and artifacts from Srebrenica are enlarged and mounted on billboards in Belgrade, to compel the public to engage in dealing with the past in a way that both challenges and disrupts the “understood” and accepted practices of contemporary conflict resolution imploring a reconsideration of “what is” in light of the multiple challenges presented by the reflective visual journey. These local peacebuilding practices, which inherently acknowledge the significance of visual images, demand that we re-conceptualise the way that we think about peacebuilding practices in post-war Yugoslavia, and suggest an approach to contemporary fieldwork that departs from conventional text-only based Conflict Resolution academic work. This is not to say that images can or should replace words and texts in conventional academic work and theoretical discussions, but instead to argue for what Marcus (1998) has termed ‘simultaneity’ and the development of texts, which incorporate visual images to recognise and represent the

¹¹ Pink, S. (2013). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Third Edition. London: Sage.

continuities between 'diverse worlds, voices or experiences' in Conflict Resolution research¹².

As I argued in Chapter 3, positivist methods such as surveys, one-off interviews, and questionnaires can fragment experience and move away from the embodied, relational, emotional and sensory aspects of lived realities in places subject to cultures of violence. Conventional research practices and methods framed within positivist paradigms, in Law's (2004), words "deal poorly with the non-causal, the chaotic, the complex" and actively "distort" realities and phenomena, and force complexity and the mess of lived experience into a semblance of coherence and clarity which often fails to grasp the "textures" of life, and are unable to deal with the sensory, the emotional and the kinaesthetic (Law 2004)¹³. He argued that traditional methods cannot adequately represent complex events and situations because they represent and enact experience in ontologically simple ways. Law insisted that if we accept that the world and lived experience is complex, then researchers need to think and relate to the world in new ways, developing ways of knowing realities that are multiple, sensory, emotional, complex and messy.

A further risk associated with conventional research that relies on word and language based data forms, is that researchers can become narrowly focused on texts, through the familiar and everyday habitual tasks of reading,

¹² Marcus, G E. (1998). *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. West Sussex: Princeton University Press.

¹³ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, p2.

transcribing, and writing, which can often take place far removed from the journeys and everyday contexts in which the data was gathered. Loic Wacquant (2011) describes this as '*gazing from afar*', a practice, which he argues is fundamentally blind to the research process itself¹⁴. Instead, Wacquant argues that 'good' ethnographers should provide: 'a practical, tactile, sensorial grasp of the prosaic reality she studies in order to shed light on the categories and relations that organise the ordinary conduct and sentiments of her subjects...which proceeds beneath the level of consciousness *before it becomes mediated by language*' (emphasis added). The question of how to do this, however, is not immediately obvious, and Wacquant himself explores this dilemma:

How to go from the guts to the intellect, from the comprehension of the flesh to the knowledge of the text? Here is a real problem of concrete epistemology about which we have not sufficiently reflected, and which for a long time seemed to me nearly irresolvable...To reconstitute the carnal dimension of ordinary existence and the bodily anchoring of the practical knowledge...requires indeed a complete overhaul of our way of writing social science...'

Wacquant details a potential resolution to the problem of '*gazing from afar*', through the use of multiple modalities, including the use of different writing styles and the use of photographs:

I had to find a style breaking with the monological, monochromatic, linear writing of the classic research account from which the ethnographer has withdrawn and elaborate a multifaceted writing, mixing styles and genres, so as to capture and convey "the taste and ache of action"... enable the reader to feel emotionally and understand rationally...for this, the text weaves together an analytic lattice, stretches of closely edited field notes, counterpoints composed of portraits

¹⁴ Wacquant, L. (2011). 'Habitus as Topic and Tool: Reflections on Becoming a Prizefighter' *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. p88.

of key protagonists and excerpts from interviews, as well as photographs whose role is to foster a synthetic grasp of the dynamic interplay of the factors and forms inventoried in the analysis, to give the reader a chance to “touch with her own eyes”¹⁵.

This kind of ethnography, Wacquant argues, allows the development of critiques and constant questioning of the practices and methods of analysis and knowledge construction, which are grounded in, and informed by the epistemic journeys of the ethnographer. The significance of this is in acknowledging the transformation of knowledge, from the deep immersion of the field into disciplinary knowledge. These in turn, allows us to consciously and critically break with intellectual and political hegemonies through a ‘return to the instruments of construction of the object, as opposed to the subject of objectification, which is the hallmark of what one might call epistemic reflexivity’¹⁶.

Visual images can therefore allow us to critically explore how knowledge is constructed, and how researcher positions and perspectives have evolved. This is likely most important in cases where the assumptions underlying the various positions are taken-for-granted. In terms of theoretical framing, this also engages what Jabri calls ‘the discursive and institutional continuities implicated in the legitimation of violent human interaction’¹⁷, and thus conflict resolution is significantly limited both in terms of critical reflective analysis, and

¹⁵ Ibid.p88.

¹⁶ Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, and Polity Press, Cambridge p36.

¹⁷ Jabri, V. (1996). *Discourses on Violence: Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p146.

its transformatory potential. What is needed, Jabri argues, is a critical approach to conflict resolution, which opens the field up to critical questioning, and a consideration of the taken-for granted assumptions, which underpin both the practice, and study of conflict resolution. Visual images can provide scholars a way to engage in critically reflective analysis of field research and their disciplinary practices, and offer ways to engage in the deeply contested political nature of conflict resolution, and the performative and complex nature of the field.

My visual journeys and the Chapter that follows (7b) argue that visual methods can provide a way – an example of the use and impact of alternative methodologies - of revisiting the epistemological and ontological assumptions about lived experiences and realities in post-war settings in Conflict Resolution. Conflict Resolution researchers might learn from the scholarship that has developed in visual ethnography, geography and other social science fields, where there is growing recognition of the importance of visual and digital media and technologies to complement traditional text and numerical approaches to research. There is also increasing acknowledgement that visual and digital media can allow researchers to explore and capture more detailed insights into lived experience through more innovative methodological research approaches, such as visual storytelling methods, mapping, diary keeping, and the use of visual media in photo voice, participatory video and photo-elicitation interviews. When used successfully these methods can provide insights into otherwise unseen realities and experiences, and show the multi-layered complexity of

experience, its intensity and human significance, which may be particularly useful to scholars in Conflict Resolution trying to understand the minutiae of how conflict develops, and in which circumstances it occurs.

Chapter Seven (b)

Reflections on Visual Journeys in Post-War Bosnia

War and photography now seem inseparable¹

Visual images and materials are embedded in the everyday realities of the social world and, in places which have been subject to large-scale conflict, violence and genocide, visual images have also helped to define what we see, know remember about conflict. As Susan Sontag argues:

for a long time, at least six decades, photographs have laid down the tracks of how important conflicts are judged and remembered. The Western memory museum is now mostly a visual one. Photographs have an insuperable power to determine what we recall of events².

Following on from the series of visual journeys in the previous section, this chapter aims to outline the significance of visual images in the social sciences and in Bosnia, and explore the potential for using visual images and materials in Conflict Resolution. I argue that Conflict Resolution could benefit from a much greater awareness of the importance of visual images and materials, and how they are implicated in terms of how post-war contexts are represented and understood. I have already suggested that visual images are part of everyday life and the social realities of post-war Bosnia, and I argue here that bracketing the visual out of our ways of knowing seems to unduly limit our understanding of the very places which we seek to know

¹ Sontag, S. (1971). *On Photography*. London: Penguin, p167.

² Sontag, S. (2004). 'Regarding the Torture of Others', *The New York Times*, May 23, 2004.

more about. As Adele Clarke has argued, if we ignore visual materials we also lose valuable knowledge about the cultures, lives and experiences of the people and places we are interested in³.

By using visual images in this chapter I am suggesting that we should be critical of simplistic visual representations of war and peace in Bosnia, and go beyond the idea of visual images as simple reflections of reality. This involves understanding images as powerful mediators of reality, which have the ability to structure our knowledge of the social, material and emotional realities of everyday life. Through a discussion of 'Bosnian Girl' I also argue that images can be understood as sites of meaning and resistance which narrate powerful stories of injustice in post-war Bosnia, and in doing so I also try to add a deeper level of visual contextualization and analysis to my account of research in Bosnia. This chapter, as a whole, attempts to disrupt the 'dominant forms of visibility' in peace and conflict literature, and consider how images might be used to develop more complex and situated accounts of post-war contexts⁴.

The Visual in Social Science

Using visual images in research raises some difficult issues and challenges. In part, this is because there is debate over the truthfulness of visual images, but it is also because images may be interpreted in particular ways dependent on where and how the image is viewed and audience.

³ Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. London: Sage, p205.

⁴ Haraway, D. (2002). 'The Persistence of Vision' In Mirzoff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge p 679.

Historically, photographs have been regarded as 'evidence' in research and have most often been used to support positivist 'facts' in the sciences. Douglas Harper argues that the relationship between what we see and what we know is (in part) attributable to Galileo and his invention of the telescope, as he redefined and conflated the relationship between seeing and knowing⁵. Harper argues that this development meant that reality which was seen through an instrument (first a telescope, and later the camera) was understood to be a more profound (and truthful) reality than could be observed by the human eye. From this point Harper argues that 'to see' was 'to know'⁶. More recently, the invention of photography meant that reality could not only be seen, but could be captured and fixed for a time seemingly without end. For this reason photography became an integral part of science, and at the same time was used for the regulation of social behaviour by the bureaucratic institutions of the state. Photography became a means of the modern project, in which 'racial types' and 'deviance' were recorded, defined and categorized in order to articulate the differences between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'. This process served to 'Other' those who were not 'normal' or the primary subject⁷. Here, photography was viewed as a way to simply record the 'facts' and 'truths' of what was seen, and the images that were captured on film were regarded as straightforward and unproblematic reflections of the social world.

⁵ Harper, D. (2003). 'Reimagining Visual Methods: Galileo to Neuromancer' In Denzin, N, K. & Lincoln, Y, S. (eds.) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Second Edition. London: Sage, p193.

⁶ Ibid.p193.

⁷ Sturken, M. & Cartwright, L. (2001). *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p95.

More recently the relationship between seeing and 'knowing' has been problematised, and within the period spanning the crisis of representation the way in which some researchers think about images has profoundly changed. In the same way that the 'transparency' of texts was challenged, Rose Gilligan explains that the 'transparency' of photographs (as well as other visual images) has now also been challenged⁸. She notes that even though the world is rendered in visual terms, photographs and film interpret and represent the world in a very particular ways, and further argues that we need to remember three very important points when considering any visual image. Firstly, that images 'do something', and by this she means that images are sites of resistance, recalcitrance and compliance and, because they visualise or render invisible social differences, images are consequently a crucial element in the production and reproduction of these social differences⁹. Secondly, Gilligan suggests that it is also important to consider not simply the image itself, but at the way in which it is looked at. Quoting John Berger's 'ways of seeing', Gilligan argues that we need to acknowledge that we see from *somewhere*, and that the things we gaze upon are determined by our own social environments, cultures and social practices¹⁰. In this sense, we become spectators who bring 'scopic regimes' to the viewing of any image, which intersects with the social context of the viewing itself.¹¹ In her third and final point, Gilligan argues that it is important to be aware of the sites at which the meaning of an image are made, this is in

⁸ Gilligan, R. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage, p6.

⁹ Ibid.p17.

¹⁰ Ibid.p19.

¹¹ 'Scopic Regimes' (or visibility) refers to the way in which vision is not simply about the capacity of the human eye to see, but concerns the way in which *what* we see, *how* we see, and *are allowed* to see is culturally constructed. See Gilligan, R. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage, p6.

terms of the site of production, the site of the image itself, as well as the site at which it is viewed by audiences. She argues that these elements affect how our own ways of seeing are mobilized by the image, and are therefore crucial in considering its meaning(s)¹².

Donna Haraway makes a number of similar points to those made by Gilligan, although she explicitly argues that images are sites of meaning where power relations are articulated, reinforced or challenged¹³. In her writing she argues that we need to understand that there are dominant forms of visibility which are intimately linked to power relations and discourses, which represent particular ways of seeing the world (which we are often unaware of)¹⁴. Here Haraway argues that social relations such as gender, class and 'race' are articulated (and often reinforced) through visual images, and argues that 'vision is *always* a question of the power to see'¹⁵. However, she does suggest that visual images also offer ways to see the world non-hierarchically, and can be useful for articulating complexity and avoiding binary oppositions, though we need to first become critical about the ways in which 'we learn how to see'¹⁶.

The expanding range and accessibility of visual technologies such as digital cameras, videos and smart phones have also increased our ability to produce and distribute images in ways that were unthinkable even a few years ago; and for these reasons, the importance of visual materials and an

¹² Ibid.p24.

¹³ Haraway, D. (2002). 'The Persistence of Vision' In Mirzoff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge. p679.

¹⁴ Ibid.p679.

¹⁵ Ibid.p680.

¹⁶ Ibid.p679.

awareness of visuality in social science has become far more apparent in recent years. As Sarah Pink argues,

'images are everywhere. They permeate our academic work, everyday lives, conversations, our imagination and our dreams. They are inextricably woven with our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies, as well as with definitions of history, space and truth'¹⁷.

Visual materials are therefore present in the contexts where researchers conduct their research, and as Adele Clarke argues, if we ignore them we lose materials which represent the cultures, lives and experiences of the people and places we are interested in¹⁸. In this sense, if visual materials of war are ignored or overlooked then key aspects of how war is audienceed, judged and remembered are silenced and rendered absent¹⁹

The Visual in Bosnia

In Bosnia, visual materials such as photographs and video have been regularly used as claims of realism and documentary truth, and images of women and children fleeing burning villages and emaciated men in detention camps were used to testify to acts of injustice and the horror and destruction of the war in Bosnia²⁰. Amongst the countless numbers of images that emerged during the war, the images of the Trnopolje detention camp near Prijedor stand out in terms of their dissemination across a range of media,

¹⁷ Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Second Edition. London: Sage, p21.

¹⁸ Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. Sage: London, p205.

¹⁹ Sontag, S. (2004). 'Regarding the Torture of Others'. *The New York Times*, May 23, 2004.

²⁰ See for example: Gow, J. Paterson, R. Preston, A. (eds.) (1996). *Bosnia by Television*, London: British Film Institute.

their span geographically, and their impact politically. The still image of Fikret Ali and others (figure 1) for example, was taken from a 1992 television report by ITN news, and became 'one of the key images of the war in the former Yugoslavia'²¹. This image was regarded as clear evidence that Bosniaks were being held by Bosnian Serbs in 'detention camps', and was used to argue that genocide was being allowed to take place in Europe²². This image, along with others, was shown around the world and became crucially important in terms of how the war in Bosnia was visualized and understood. The image served to undermine political discourses on the war in Bosnia, which had tended to emphasise the equivalence of ethnic hatred and atrocities between ethnic groups, which had been used to justify a position of non-intervention during the war²³.

The image also visually and symbolically linked the camp in Bosnia to The Holocaust, provoking significant shifts in both public and political opinion. Where it had been assumed that nothing could (or should) be done to intervene in the 'inevitable' destruction caused by 'ancient hatreds' in Bosnia, some opinions shifted to an insistence that something *must* be done in Bosnia to halt another Holocaust taking place in Europe²⁴.

²¹ Jeremy, M. (1993). *The Independent*, 5 August.

²² Burns, J. (1996). *The Media as impartial observers or protagonists: conflict reporting or conflict encouragement in former Yugoslavia*. In Gow, J. Paterson, R. Preston, A. (eds.) *Bosnia by Television*. London: British Film Institute.

²³ Gow, J. & Michalski, M. (2007). *War, Image and Legitimacy: Viewing Contemporary Conflict*. Oxon: Routledge, pp33-35.

²⁴ Burns, J. (1996). *The Media as impartial observers or protagonists: conflict reporting or conflict encouragement in former Yugoslavia*. In Gow, J. Paterson, R. Preston, A. (eds.) *Bosnia by Television*. London: British Film Institute.

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 1²⁵.

'Seeing' the emaciated figures of men behind barbed wire in camps had become a visual shorthand to 'knowing' the 'truth' about what was happening in Bosnia, although the 'truthfulness' of these images was first disputed by Bosnian Serbian military leaders, and later in the Western media. These images later became the focal point of an extended controversy between Independent Television News (ITN) and Living Marxism (LM) magazine, in which Thomas Deichmann argued that the images were not what they seemed. Under the title: 'The picture that fooled the world', Deichmann argued that ITN had deliberately misrepresented the camp, and had 'fabricated' the images which suggested that atrocities were taking place²⁶. Deichmann instead argued that the people in the images were not

²⁵ The front cover of Time magazine shows a 'video capture' taken from video footage by ITN in 1992. *Time* August 17 1992.

²⁶ Deichmann, T. (1998). 'The Picture that fooled the World' In Clark, R. (ed.) *NATO in the Balkans: Voices of Opposition*. New York: International Action Centre.

imprisoned, and that the camp was actually a transit centre for refugees²⁷. The barbed wire that was seen to imprison people in the camp, he argued, actually surrounded an old agricultural compound next to the camp, and people were free to leave if they chose to²⁸. Deichmann concluded that it was the ITN camera crew, not Bosnian Muslims, who had found themselves behind barbed wire²⁹. The controversy resulted in a High Court legal challenge, and LM was found guilty of libelling ITN³⁰.

The competition for 'truth' over these images illustrates what is at stake in terms of how visual materials are presented and interpreted in war. As David Campbell, a leading academic on Bosnia argues:

At stake is how we understand the nature of the war in Bosnia, the specific Bosnian Serb war aims in the Prijedor region, and the place of the camps in the fulfilment of those aims. Furthermore, there are issues which can be located in but exceed the war in Bosnia: among them, questions about how specific images of atrocity are interpreted, the way in which the Holocaust has become the benchmark for evil in the modern world, and the relationship between pictures, moral indignation and the course of international policy³¹.

Campbell, who extensively researched this dispute over a three-year period, goes on to argue that the images had far-reaching implications in terms of how war and atrocity in Bosnia were understood. The images, he recalls, provoked a public outcry and in political circles eventually forced a policy of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Deichmann, T. (1997). 'Real Balkan politics with false TV pictures' *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Fall pp88-101.

³⁰ The costs associated with The High Court verdict led to the bankruptcy and closure of LM. See: Campbell, D. (2002). 'Atrocity, memory, photography: imaging the concentration camps of Bosnia--the case of ITN versus Living Marxism , Part 1' *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol1(1).

³¹ Campbell, D. (2002). 'Atrocity, memory, photography: imaging the concentration camps of Bosnia--the case of ITN versus Living Marxism, Part 1' *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol 1(1), p 14.

intervention in Bosnia. Quoting Gowing, Campbell argues that ‘the ITN camp story was one of those rare moments where television unnerved governments and forced ‘panic policy’’³².

After the war ended Bosnia later became what MacMahon and Western called ‘the poster child for international reconstruction efforts’. A substantial influx of reconstruction finance and assistance led to the production of images which represented the newly reconstructed Bosnia. These images were: ‘routinely touted by US and European leaders as proof that under the right conditions the international community could successfully rebuild conflict-ridden countries’³³. These images worked to produce ‘preferred readings’ to suggest that peacebuilding and ‘reconciliation’ were underway in Bosnia, and that international interventions and reconstruction efforts in Bosnia were an overwhelming success³⁴.

In turn, these images appeared on the covers of Conflict Resolution books and presented as windows onto the world of war and peace in Bosnia. As discussed in the visual journeys part of this chapter, images including the Old Bridge in Mostar, helped to create a visual account of Bosnia as a place that is overrun with irrational violence, or alternatively, is peaceful and in the process of reconciling. By constantly producing images which suggest a

³² Although debate remains about how far these images influenced policy, see: Campbell, D. (2002). ‘Atrocity, memory, photography: imaging the concentration camps of Bosnia - the case of ITN versus Living Marxism , Part 2’ *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol 1(1), p 158.

³³ McMahan, P, C. & Western, J. (2009). ‘How to Stop Bosnia from Falling Apart’. *Foreign Affairs*.<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65352/patrice-c-mcmahon-and-jon-western/the-death-of-dayton> [accessed 26.01.10].

³⁴ Stuart Hall argues that images produce ‘preferred meanings’, i.e. that images are produced within a ‘dominant cultural order’ which impresses its meanings and categorizations onto the culture into which the image is be viewed. He argues that ‘preferred meanings’ then become ‘preferred readings’ when the images are viewed by audiences and preserve the ‘institutional/ political/ ideological order imprinted on them. See: Hall, S. (1980) ‘Encoding/Decoding’ In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. *Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*. London: Hutchinson, p134.

binary of war or peace, these images also create a 'dominant form of
visuality' about Bosnia which, if put into words, would be viewed as simplistic
and problematic to a wider academic audience³⁵. My contention here is that
often these forms of visuality are not only simplistic, but are also profoundly
disconnected from the ways in which post-war Bosnia is visually constituted
and understood on the ground. These disconnections, I argue, raise
questions about 'whose' reality is revealed in such photographs, and whose
realities are rendered absent³⁶.

A visual counter-narrative to peace and war: Bosnian Girl

So far I have discussed the significance of the visual not only in the social
sciences and in Bosnia, but also in relation to my own visual journey(s) as a
researcher. In this section my intention is to reflect specifically on what Jon
Prosser has described as 'researcher found' images, to discuss how, in the
context of post-war Bosnia, this and other associated images have become
interwoven in the process of creating and representing a 'picture' of
injustice³⁷. This analysis seeks to show how embedded visual memories
have become in the local consciousness and presents an important
illustration of how international interventions are remembered in Bosnia. My
interpretation of this image, and the hybrid image which has been created in
response to the original, is based on Adele Clarke's and Gillian Rose's visual

³⁵ See Donna Haraway on dominant forms of visuality: Haraway, D. (2002). 'The Persistence of Vision' In Mirzoff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge p 679.

³⁶ This is not to suggest that atrocities and rebuilding have been fabricated, but simply to raise questions about the visual dominance of particular kinds of images which serve to define and structure our understanding and knowledge about Bosnia.

³⁷ Prosser, J. (2006). *Researching with Visual Images: Some guidance notes and a glossary for beginners*, Real Life Methods Working Paper, University of Manchester and University of Leeds.

analysis frameworks³⁸. These have allowed me to form a loose but critical approach to 'reading' visual images, informed in turn by discussions about the images with 'ordinary' Bosnians³⁹. Given the arguments I have already outlined in this thesis, my reading of these images is not an attempt to suggest that there is one essential 'truth' or 'meaning' intrinsic to each of these images, as I understand these images as situated and partial representations of the realities in Bosnia. However, my emphasis here is on how these photographs are used visually in the present, to evoke the past, for the purpose of creating and representing a 'picture' of injustice. The first image I refer to (figure 2), is a photograph of graffiti taken by Tarik Samarah in the now abandoned UN base in Potočari.

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 2⁴⁰

³⁸ See: Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. London: Sage pp 205-256; Gilligan, R. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage, pp 135-186.

³⁹ Adele Clarke for example, urges us to ask: 'Who gets to look? At whom? What is represented? What, if anything, are viewers being told to do or think or be? Not to do or think or be? What difference(s) does this image make? What is the work of the image? What work is the image doing in the world? What is implicitly and explicitly normalized? Naturalized? Unnaturalized? Marginalized? Featured? Reinforced? Excluded? Silenced? Disrupted? Challenged? Taken for granted?' See: Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. London: Sage, pp 227-228.

⁴⁰ Black and white photograph of graffiti in the battery factory at Potočari by Tarik Samarah See: Tarik Samarah website: <http://tariksamarah.com/genocide.htm> [accessed 09.04.07].

The graffiti visually poses a series of questions: 'no teeth...?' 'A mustache...?' 'Smel like shit...?' and responds with an 'answer': 'Bosnian Girl!'. The agency and location of this photograph is not immediately clear, but we are told by Tarik Samarah that the photograph was taken in 2002 at the UN base in Potočari. The graffiti, we are also told, is written by an unknown Dutch peacekeeper stationed at the base near Srebrenica between 1994 and 1995⁴¹. The caption for the photograph in Samarah's book reads:

Graffiti written by an unknown Dutch soldier on a wall of the army barracks in Potočari, Srebrenica, 1994/95. Royal Netherlands Army troops, as part of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992, were responsible for protecting the Srebrenica safe area⁴².

In photographing this graffiti, Samarah's tells us that his purpose is to document the aftermath of Srebrenica, which includes the abandoned UN base and the identification and burial processes of human remains found in mass graves near Srebrenica. He invites us to 'see' and read the actions of UN peacekeepers stationed at the base at the time they were responsible for protecting people in Srebrenica; and simultaneously we are invited to see (and hear) the peacekeepers' questions which imply the repulsiveness of Bosnian 'girls'. In revealing these actions, we are asked to 'see' a contradiction: that UN peacekeepers were responsible for protecting people in Srebrenica, but were simultaneously engaged in making judgements about the sexual attractiveness of Bosnian 'girls' (or a supposed lack thereof). It appears that we are meant to draw the conclusion that these actions are

⁴¹ Srebrenica was declared a UN 'safe area' in 1993.

⁴² Black and white photograph of graffiti in the battery factory at Potočari by Tarik Samarah See: Tarik Samarah website: <http://tariksamarah.com/genocide.htm> [accessed 09/04/07].

incongruous and incompatible, and this acts to visually problematise the proliferation of representations of peacekeepers as beneficent protectors. This photograph of graffiti destabilizes an imagined sense of the UN as peacekeepers⁴³.

This photograph was later re-used as part of a 'public project' between Tarik Samarah and Bosnian artist Šejla Kamerić. Central to this project is the production of a new image, one which juxtaposes the first photograph of graffiti against the image of a woman, who I later found was Šejla Kamerić herself (see figure 3).

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 3⁴⁴.

⁴³ For example, the representation of the smiling faces of EUFOR troops presented in chapter 6a.

⁴⁴ Šejla Kamerić website: 'Bosnian Girl' image 2003. Photograph by Tarik Samarah. http://www.sejlakameric.com/art/bosnian_girl_foto_2.htm [Accessed 20/10/07].

This monochrome image shows Kamerić from head to waist as she stares defiantly into the camera, and into the audience beyond. The image draws our gaze from her face to the questions positioned over her chest, and although the purpose of the image is not immediately clear, the questions and 'answer' appear out of place with the attractive woman who is pictured. The small section of writing at the bottom of the image seems as though it might offer an explanation about what the image is about, and draws the audience in further. It repeats the caption in Tarik Samarah's book and tells us that the graffiti was written by an unknown Dutch soldier on the wall of the UN base in Potočari⁴⁵. This image was later flyposted in Sarajevo and Berlin in 2003 and 2004 (where Kamerić now lives) (see figures 4 and 5).

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 4⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ The caption in full reads: 'Bosnian Girl, 2003. Photography by Tarik Samarah. Graffiti written by an unknown Dutch soldier on a wall of the army barracks in Potočari, Srebrenica, 1994/95. Royal Netherlands Army troops, as part of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992, were responsible for protecting the Srebrenica safe area'

⁴⁶ Šejla Kamerić website: 'Bosnian Girl' image posted in Sarajevo July 2003 http://www.sejlakameric.com/art/bosnian_girl_foto_2.htm [Accessed 20/10/07].

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 5⁴⁷.

Like many other posters and images on public display, these images vie for position amongst others. In the photograph, which depicts the 'viewing' of this image in Sarajevo (figure 4), a number of passer-bys have stopped, and seem to have been drawn in to a closer viewing of the image. They appear to be reading the caption, which tells us the graffiti was written by an unknown

⁴⁷ Šejla Kamerić website: 'Bosnian Girl' image posted in Berlin January 2004. http://www.sejlakameric.com/art/bosnian_girl_foto_1.htm [Accessed 20/02/08].

Dutch soldier, although we can't see their faces or their reaction to the image. In contrast, in Berlin, a passer-by seems oblivious to the existence of the image (figure 5); and it appears no more remarkable than the other posters that surround it.

Three years later, in 2007, this image was also used as part of a protest outside of the Dutch Prime Minister's office at The Hague (figure 6) ⁴⁸. Pictured holding Bosnian Girl images are women from 'The Mothers of Srebrenica', who are suing the Dutch state for their failure to protect Bosniaks from Bosnian Serb forces in the 'safe area' of Srebrenica.

Image removed for copyright purposes

Figure 6⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ The protest took place on June 4, 2007.

⁴⁹ Srebrenica-genocide.blogspot website, with photograph by Frank van Rossum (Reuters/WFA Netherlands). The caption for this photograph reads: 'Unidentified women, relatives of the Srebrenica victims, react during a march to Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter

There is no simple answer to the question 'what do these images mean?' As Stuart Hall reminds us, visual images are 'polysemic', that is, they have multiple and contested meanings⁵⁰. Yet, as Gilligan and Haraway point out, images 'do something', they visualise or render invisible social relations such as gender and race, and they are a crucial element in the production and reproduction of these social differences⁵¹. Understood in these terms, the Bosnian Girl image depicts and refers to a particular set of social relations: those between UN Peacekeepers and Bosnian women, and on a wider level, between the international community and Bosnians. Whilst in many ways the international depiction of UN Peacekeepers is that of courageous soldiers struggling to protect Bosnian women and their families from the violence perpetrated by other (ethnically diverse) Bosnians, the situation for some Bosnian women and girls was very different during the war⁵². In 2002, hearings conducted by the US House of Representatives found that the fifty thousand UN Peacekeepers in Bosnia had fuelled a huge demand for sex during the war, and numerous brothels had been set up outside of the gates

Balkenende's office in the Hague June 4, 2007. Angry relatives of victims of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre on Monday sued the Dutch state and the United Nations for allowing thousands of Bosniaks to be killed by Bosnian Serb forces in the U.N. protected 'safe haven' enclave of Srebrenica that was guarded by Dutch troops in 1995. Women are holding a portrait of a "Bosnian Girl" with shameful graffiti written by an unknown Dutch soldier'. See: <http://srebrenica-genocide.blogspot.com/2007/06/milorad-trbic-srebrenica-protests-dutch.html> [Accessed 25/06/07].

⁵⁰ Stuart Hall further argues Since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have 'one, true meaning' or that meanings won't change over time, work in this area is bound to be interpretative- a debate between, not who is 'right' and 'wrong', but between equally plausible, though sometimes competing and contesting, meanings and interpretations. The best way to 'settle' such contested readings is to look again at the concrete example and try to justify one's 'reading' in detail in relation to the actual practices and forms of signification used, and what meanings they seem to you to be producing. See: Hall, S. (1980). 'Encoding/Decoding' In *Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. London: Hutchinson. p134.

⁵¹ Gilligan, R. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage, p17.

⁵² I mention women and girls in particular here in relation to the Zeid Report (see below).

of many of the UN compounds⁵³. The hearings found that SFOR peacekeepers in particular had been instrumental in forcing Bosnian women and children from local populations into prostitution, whilst women were also 'bought' and trafficked by SFOR peacekeepers and 'sold' to brothels in Bosnia⁵⁴. The Zeid Report also found evidence of gross sexual misconduct by some UN Peacekeepers, who were involved in widespread sexual exploitation, with desperate women and children enticed to engage in sexual acts in return for small sums of money or food⁵⁵. The report also found that some Peacekeepers had been involved in the rape of women and children, sometimes giving them money or food afterwards to make intercourse appear consensual. It described these practices as 'widespread and ongoing' amongst UN Peacekeepers, along with highly organized efforts to avoid prosecution through the bribing of victims, witnesses and investigators⁵⁶.

Knowledge about these practices is well-known at a local level in Bosnia, and the 'Bosnian Girl' image merely reiterates for many, the way in which Bosnian girls and women (and Bosnians more generally) were regarded and treated

⁵³ See for example: Allred, K, J. (2006). 'Peacekeepers and Prostitutes: How Deployed Forces Fuel the Demand for Trafficked Women and New Hope for Stopping It. *Armed Forces and Society*, 33(5), pp 5-23; Murray, J (2003). 'Who Will Police the Peace-builders? The Failure to Establish Accountability for the Participation of United Nations Civilian Police in the Trafficking of Women in Post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 34(475), pp 502-4.

⁵⁴ House Committee on International Relations, *The U.N. and the Sex Slave Trade in Bosnia: Isolated Case or Larger Problem in the U.N. System*, testimony of David Lamb (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 107th Congress, 2nd session, 2002), 66-71, http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa78948.000/hfa78948_0f.htm [Accessed March 2007]; also see testimony of Martina Vandenburg of Human Rights Watch, who presented evidence that at least three International Police Task Force (IPTF) officers bought women from traffickers or brothel owners; *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly 'Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in All their Aspects. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini. UN general Assembly Document. A/59/710 2005 <http://cdu.unlb.org/Portals/0/Documents/KeyDoc5.pdf> [accessed 18/04/08].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

by Peacekeepers and the international community⁵⁷. In a conversation with a woman from Srebrenica about this image, she raised the problematic issue of international peacekeeping 'activity' in terms of the ways in which peacekeepers had 'used' local women, and yet how there had been a simultaneous passiveness, whereby peacekeepers, and the UN failed to intervene to prevent genocide in Srebrenica. She told me, 'they (the peacekeepers) were meant to be protecting us, not looking at us like sex objects, our boys and husbands were killed and they let it happen'⁵⁸. In this conversation, and others that I had, there were occasional references to women being 'used' by peacekeepers⁵⁹.

I want to suggest that what is important about the Bosnian Girl image is that as a form of visual knowledge, this image stands in for the misconduct of Peacekeepers, and has become embedded in local memory as part of how international interventions are remembered in Bosnia. This image has also become part of a process which is intended to create and represent a more general picture of injustice in Bosnia, which not only evokes the injustices of the past, visually in the present; but also works to create a powerful visual critique of 'internationals' in Bosnia, which can be mobilized and disseminated to different audiences when required, as illustrated in the images of Sarajevo Berlin, and The Hague. As Susan Sontag argues, there has been a qualitative shift in the use of photography, and photographs are

⁵⁷ This is an important point that will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

⁵⁸ Notes from a conversation with AB, Potočari, 16/03/07. AB's husband and two boys were separated from her at Potočari in June 1995. One of her sons' remains were found in a mass grave and have now been buried at the Potočari memorial cemetery. Her husband and other son remain 'missing', they are presumed to have been killed during the Srebrenica genocide.

⁵⁹ In these conversations there were no references to men or children being 'used'. This may have been in line with their experience, but may also have reflected a general unwillingness to talk about the possibility of the sexual exploitation of men and children.

now 'less objects to be saved than messages to be disseminated, circulated'⁶⁰

Moreover, what is also significant about the Bosnian Girl image is that it articulates (and subverts) gendered 'positions of identification'⁶¹. As a number of visual sociologists have argued, we look at images in gendered ways:

The masculine position is to look (the 'male gaze'), the feminine is to be looked at, and the feminine is to be seen as lacking...thus sexual difference is understood relationally: visions of femininity depend on the vision of masculinity, and vice versa⁶².

If we look again at the image of 'Bosnian girl' (figure 3), the display of graffiti: 'no teeth...? a mustache...? smel like shit...? Bosnian Girl!' (sic); specifically targets Bosnian 'girls' with derogatory rhetoric and constitutes the active/looking male, and the idea of a passive/ viewed female (which is constructed in unproblematised heterosexual terms). When considered in terms of the place that it was produced, this language displays not only gendered positions of identification, but also shows the power of militarized masculinities to observe and pass judgment on the sexual appearance of Bosnian 'girls'. This graffiti therefore enacts militarized masculinities and the aggressively sexualized ways of viewing and talking about Bosnian 'Others', within complex relationships of power between the international community and local populations.

⁶⁰ Sontag, S. (2004). *Regarding the pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, p4.

⁶¹ Rose, G. (2007). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Methods*. Second Edition. London: Sage, p 115.

⁶² *Ibid.*p115.

By reclaiming and re-constructing the graffiti, Šejla Kamerić confronts the expression of militarized masculinities in Bosnia. In doing so, she not only challenges the (naturalized) masculine position of looking, but also resists the idea of a passive female who is looked at, to instead, defiantly look directly at the viewer. This constitutes what bell hooks has identified as an 'oppositional gaze', and in *Bosnian girl*, is a sign of resistance to the male militarized gaze⁶³. By looking back, hooks argues that there is an attempt to change reality, and that 'the ability to manipulate ones gaze in the face of structures of domination opens up the possibility of agency'⁶⁴.

⁶³ hooks, b. (2003). 'The Oppositional Gaze: Black female spectators', In Jones, A. (ed.) *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, London: Routledge, p94.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*p94.

Conclusion

This Chapter (7a and 7b combined), has sought to explore the importance of visual images and visual materials in research by using researcher-found and generated images to discuss issues of representation through visual journeys. I have drawn on the ideas of Sontag⁶⁵, Campbell⁶⁶, Gilligan⁶⁷, Pink⁶⁸, Hall⁶⁹ and Haraway⁷⁰ all of whom regard visual images as powerful forms of representation; and, I have argued that we should be critical of simplistic visual representations of war and peace in Bosnia to go beyond the idea of visual images as simple reflections of reality. This involves understanding images as powerful mediators of reality, which have the ability to structure our knowledge of the social, material and emotional realities of everyday life.

By bringing visual images into this account of post-war Bosnia, I have tried to demonstrate that there is considerable potential for using visual images and materials in Conflict Resolution. I have argued that they offer the possibility of 'seeing' post-war realities in ways that are more complex than the visual images currently used in Conflict Resolution tend to suggest. Images such as 'Bosnian girl' narrate powerful stories of injustice in post-war Bosnia, and images such as 'Spam' and 'Srebrenica: da vidiš, da znaš, da pamtiš' (in chapter 7a), radically disrupt the 'dominant forms of visibility' of Bosnia within

⁶⁵ Sontag, S. (1971). *On Photography*, London, Penguin.

⁶⁶ Campbell, D. (2007). 'Geopolitics and visibility: Sighting the Darfur conflict' *Political Geography* Vol 26(4), pp357-382.

⁶⁷ Gilligan, R. (2001). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage.

⁶⁸ Pink, S. (2009). *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. London: Sage; Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Second Edition. London: Sage.

⁶⁹ Hall, S. (1997). 'The Work of Representation' in Hall S (Ed.) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage pp13-74.

⁷⁰ Haraway, D. (2002). 'The Persistence of Vision' in Mirzoeff, N. (ed.) *The Visual Culture Reader*. Second Edition. London: Routledge p677- 684.

the peace and conflict literature⁷¹. My contention has been that many of the images currently used in Conflict Resolution are not only simplistic, but are also profoundly disconnected from the ways in which post-war Bosnia is visually constituted and understood on the ground. These disconnections, I have argued, raise questions about 'whose' reality is revealed in such photographs, and whose realities are rendered absent⁷².

In the next and final chapter I draw together the central themes within the thesis and suggest that taken together, they might be understood to constitute a counter-narrative or counter-discourse to 'normal science' accounts of Conflict Resolution research. It also builds a case for the use of critical and alternative research methodologies, including visual methods which take seriously the significance of research itself in the constitution of post-war environments.

⁷¹ Ibid.p679.

⁷²This is not to suggest that atrocities and rebuilding have been fabricated, but simply to raise questions about the visual dominance of particular kinds of images which serve to define and structure our understanding and knowledge about Bosnia in particular ways.

Chapter Eight

Final Thoughts and Inevitably Partial Conclusion(s)

We incur debts during fieldwork that can never be fully repaid. We are, by and large, the greater beneficiaries of our research endeavours¹.

A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on just what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established and unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based.... Criticism consists in uncovering that thought and trying to change it: showing that things are not as obvious as people believe, making it so that what is taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy².

Perspective-Taking: Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is a critique of current forms of being and knowing and the practices that arise from that ground in the field of Conflict Resolution. I have sought to make this critique viable *in* a post-war setting, that is, to push beyond the forms of criticism sanctioned and bounded within CR and to avoid simply saying 'things aren't good' – as Foucault sets out above.

I set out in Chapter 2 the limited extent of knowledges and of critique within CR. Chapter 3 follows this analysis with a focus on research within CR considering how knowledge is (problematically) made and then authorised and perpetuated. There are a few examples of research from within the field of CR, which has attempted to challenge the 'pseudo-scientific' positivist/empiricist approach, but with limited impact. In addition, there is a larger, but still small (by their own admission) group of anthropologists

¹ Coffey, A. (1999). *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London: Sage, p158.

² Foucault, M. (1994). *Michel Foucault: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Power*, in Faubion, J.D. (ed.) Vol 3. London: Penguin, p456.

researching in war and post-war environments using alternative methodologies which pose a significant challenge to orthodoxies within the field of anthropology (with its own positivist/empiricist legacies) – and I discuss their contributions and significance. This important work, though, has, as yet, had little impact on the field of CR.

Finally, in Chapter 4, among other things, I consider research on Bosnia – from the field of CR, and importantly, consider how ‘expert knowing’ has directly, and harmfully, influenced international peacebuilding efforts. The widely held view that the conflict was caused by “ancient ethnic hatreds” for example – led to the creation of separate ethnic entities within Bosnia. In addition, the view that Serbs were at fault for the war – led to legitimisation of extremist nationalist groups in Bosnia defining the conflict in terms of ethnicity and territory. Consequently, interventions focused on constitutional arrangements and territorial division, thereby imposing a particular and problematic/reductive identity narrative on Bosnia itself from outside and legitimating the most extreme elements within the conflict. The ‘ancient ethnic hatreds’ view led to a ‘nothing can be done’ view of Bosnia as a site of uncivilised peoples.

Two decades on from the Dayton Accords (1995) the harmful legacy of international intervention persists. The essence of this PhD therefore is to ask the question ‘In the light of this, what can be done?’ This Chapter answers this question by summarising the significance of my research as critique, as methodological example, and finally as showing the need for

change. At the end of this chapter I consider what changes should be considered.

It is important to note here the role of critique within a regime of knowledge – and as I have set out in Chapters 2 and 3, CR constitutes such a regime. Academic fields constitute regimes of knowledge – with their own rules of ‘fact’ and ‘method’ and authentication constructing boundaries around what is known – and therefore legitimate – and what is not – and therefore ‘unknown’ and silenced. Critique is a necessary, frequent and legitimate activity within a knowledge regime, as long as it remains within the boundaries of the ‘known’. Its focus is therefore, a de facto re-ordering process, not a transformative one. Within CR, academics such as Jabri and Fetherston sought to shine a light on the boundedness of knowing within the field (to see the boundaries). This work was my starting point and I have endeavoured to push further out and beyond. As such, this thesis is an attempt to open new ground in a new site, outside of the permitted boundaries of knowing (for CR). I do not claim uniqueness in taking on this challenge – as I set out in Chapter 2, others have done so before me in anthropology, including Tone Bringa, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, and Carolyn Nordstrom³. The uniqueness of my journey with Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the significant contribution of this thesis, started (visibly to the reader) with the ‘rupture’ that I recount in Chapter 5.

³ See for example: Bringa, T. (1995). *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, London, University of California Press; Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press

I left the terrain of the CR 'knowledge regime' and crossed over a boundary into – effectively - a void, a space of 'unknown', or as John Law described it, 'mess'. The written text of this PhD mirrors as closely as I can make it my journey from CR *Researcher* to *researcher* and what I encountered and learned along the way. This journey *itself* is important for the challenge to orthodoxies it generates simply (messily) by *being* 'alterity'. As Foucault highlights, that alternatives exist, that examples of boundary crossing live and breathe, make it a little harder for others to continue to take for granted what was taken for granted. Through multiple boundary crossings – of which my work is one – alterities are no longer silent and boundaries shift. This is one means through which transformation becomes possible.

The gap or disconnect between chapters 2 to 4 and 5 to 7 is significant as a marker of a site of transformative potential. This disconnect between chapters, I maintain, is no longer bridgeable – there is no way back – the genie cannot be put back in the bottle (although it can be ignored). In the same way, the Stari Most in Mostar can be – and was, physically *rebuilt* it cannot be *remade*. Experience, pain, suffering, loss, trauma, and survival fundamentally alter the epistemological and ontological states of those who experience them. Stari Most stands as a powerful visual metaphor of division to many Bosnians and of success to internationals involved in peacebuilding.

Once I had experienced the 'rupture', I could no longer *not know* – although part of me desperately wanted to do just that. I could not paper over the

cracks of the variously inadequate, inaccurate, and unethical knowledges and practices pervading CR. So I crossed the boundary. I embarked on a difficult, uncomfortable, ambiguous, and messy process of becoming. I moved from being a *Researcher* to stand – uncertainly and on shifting ground - a *researcher*. From this new (to me) vantage point I could no longer take for granted what was taken for granted and it became impossible for me to be, think and act in ways that previously had been, if not easy, at least acceptable. I had, both during and after the fieldwork ‘rupture’, to change. In the end – or perhaps its more accurate to say ‘in the beginning’, I conclude that Conflict Resolution, as a field, must also change, or become irrelevant at best - unethical and dangerous at worst. The costs of continuing to generate knowledges and practices without reference to self-reflexivity, contingency, alterity, methodological de-centering and so forth, are simply too high. These costs, it must be said, are not often born by the Researchers themselves, but rather, by the Researched. And this, in any context, but especially in post-war contexts, is unethical. This PhD is, in this sense, a call to ethics and I have assembled one route (zigzagged, contingent and messy) – amongst a potential multiplicity of routes, to engaging more effectively and ethically in fieldwork and knowledge generation.

The work of the previous seven chapters has been to articulate the change process from *Researcher* to *researcher*, from *Researched* to *researched*. In itself, this work *shows* the transformative potential of boundary-crossing. The form it has taken, as I set out previously, has emerged, first through the myriad negotiations of self and others that situated the doing of my fieldwork

outside 'normal' CR research and very firmly *in* Bosnia and Hercegovina. Second, from the mess I experienced, uncovered, wrestled with, gathered, lost, found, partially digested, and here articulated, as emergence - the alterity of which is most clearly expressed in the visual journeys. I experienced this less as any 'choice' and more as what was demanded of me as a *researcher* in intersubjective dialogue with the *researched*. As a *researcher* situated *in* and *for* Bosnia and Hercegovina. I am not saying that everyone should follow this 'approach' (if it can be called that). I am saying that 'ethical' research demands more from Researchers in CR than they are currently – with few exceptions, giving. It demands two things: firstly that they *engage with the mess* in whatever way, though always self-reflectively and critically; and secondly, in that contingency the *research*, the process and knowledge generation, be negotiated with and alongside the *researched*. The relationship, I argue, must become intersubjective, politicised, and grounded.

In summary, this thesis makes four distinct contributions to Conflict Resolution theory and practice:

- (1) It provides a critique of institutionalised normal science approaches to understanding war and post-war contexts that dominate the field, and argues that these approaches prioritise (narrowly-defined) hypothesis-testing which ultimately depoliticises research and fails to access the messy, complex lived realities that we seek to transform. It is, in short, woefully disconnected from the realities it purports to study.
- (2) It argues that researchers should explicitly acknowledge and explore how their knowledge, presence, and varied research practices impact on ordinary people living and working in post-war environments and that this should involve intersubjectivity. This work is underway in

other disciplines, especially anthropology, although anthropologists acknowledge there is much work to be done in challenging existing and limiting knowledge regimes. This has not yet been explicitly acknowledged in the Conflict Resolution literature and I have shown how, in Bosnia and Hercegovina, this has been damaging (see in particular Chapters 4 and 6).

(3) It *shows* how this work can be done – by doing it. It provides a case of substantial sustained fieldwork using critical and alternative research methodologies, including reflexive and visual methodologies, to challenge and overcome the limitations of the dominant forms of research practice in Conflict Resolution. What emerges is less clear in relation to definitive knowing, but this is the point. Definitive knowing is problematic and is here problematised. What I show through the visual journeys is fragmentary - pieces of the multiplicity which I encountered in my fieldwork. These do not fit together to create a final, pinned down, neat, shrink-wrapped understanding. What I encountered, what I 'found', was multiplicity and I chose to reflect that mess rather than to force an ordering. Such an ordering would have met the requirements and expectations of CR (and academia in general), but would have been disconnected from the realities I encountered.

(4) The challenge to *research* rather than to *Research*, to disrupt and transform our current knowledges through engaging in different methodological practices – as exemplified in my fieldwork - is a crucial step but not the last one because *Researcher-manufactured* knowledge is *used*. It is used to generate policy and practice for international peacebuilding interventions such as that which took place in Bosnia and Hercegovina. If what we understand about Bosnia and Hercegovina is that it is a place of 'other-ness', torn by ancient ethnic hatreds, and its people seen as uncivilised, as less than us, is it then surprising, for example, that Dutch peacekeepers would be unwilling to risk their lives to prevent massacre in Srebrenica. This is while at the same time being willing to engage in widespread prostitution and abuse of Bosnian

women and girls (and no doubt boys and men as well)? Change is needed in practices and this is predicated on having much better and more sophisticated and critically reflective knowledge generation from which the development of more effective practices become possible.

Boundary-Crossings: A Call to Conversation

Developing better understandings of conflict and peace is important and necessary work. One of my aims in undertaking this work has been to contribute to a re-imagining of Conflict Resolution research knowledge and practices, which shift current discussions beyond the boundaries they are grounded within. My use of alternative methodologies is, among other things, an attempt to open up space for dialogue about 'the mess'. The need is becoming increasingly obvious.

I set out specifically in Chapter 4 the current and ongoing crisis and fragmentation in Bosnia and to a lesser extent in the following chapters that engage with the difficulties of doing research and peace work in such a challenging environment. The interventions by the international community are seen by some to have paid few dividends, and this situation is becoming increasingly acute as Bosnia and Hercegovina lurches towards ever-deepening crises.

In 2014, Justino, Bruck and Verwimp writing from a sociological perspective (with cross-over into anthropology) reported on the outcomes of a major five-year study called MICROCON undertaken under the auspices of the 6th

Framework Programme of the European Commission. The research sought to address the very apparent lack of success of large international peacebuilding activity to make effective inroads in addressing violent conflict. As a starting point this project proposed that a fundamental reason for failure was a lack of understanding of the causes and consequences of violent conflict from an individual, household group and community perspectives – perspectives which, MICROCON argued, were inadequately represented in the literature and in practices. Justino et al. point out, ‘individuals, households, groups and communities are at the centre of processes and dynamics of violent conflict... Understanding these processes is critical to shaping how we support institutional, social, political, and economic capacity’⁴. This work, they argue, is at its nascent stages, and must include the development of more sophisticated methodologies capable of managing, for instances, complexity. They conclude that much more research needs to be done to increase understanding and effectiveness.

In this next section I highlight three ‘conversation’ pieces that arise out of my work. They are, in other words, dialogues on the problematic nature of current knowledges and practices. These conversations are needed to bring about greater self-reflexive and critically reflexive boundary-crossing in the field of CR. Current knowledge and practice is not working – except perhaps to enhance the self-interested activities of Researchers. Whilst the intentions of researchers may be ‘good’, they are also often immaterial in light of consequences enumerated in this thesis and elsewhere. We can, and I

⁴ Justino, P. Black, T. and Verwimp P (eds.) (2013). *A Micro-Level Perspective on the Dynamics of Conflict, Violence and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 4.

argue we must, make better knowledge and generate better (more effective) practices. These conversation pieces therefore offer three points of departure.

Conversation Piece 1: Addressing the Process of Silencing and Disconnection

As I set out in Chapters 2 and 3, the process of generating knowledges based on 'institutionalised normal science' grounds is prone to three (major) limitations which pervade the CR field.

- (1) Deductive methods lead to reductive (narrow) and disconnected findings that can say more about the assumptions of the researcher than the 'problem' being studied.
- (2) The tendency in these approaches is to view conflict as 'irrational and chaotic' and then to seek to make conflict rational, ordered and controlled. These outputs again abstract lived experience and de-politicise *Researched* landscapes.
- (3) The tendency in CR is still to think of the Researcher as an objective and detached observer and recorder who has no impact on the environment studied.

The persistence of these disconnecting/silencing practices in CR argue for just how little attention the field has paid to the reflexive and linguistic 'turns' in the social sciences⁵. The 'normal science' orientation of CR often means that research is oddly abstracted and distanced from the everyday realities of

⁵Denzin, N, K. & Lincoln, Y, S. (eds.) (2008). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. (3rd edition). Los Angeles: Sage.

post-war environments. Without detailed accounts of the sensory, political, and emotional dimensions of research, our knowledge about post-war environments and our understanding of research and the research process are disconnected and depoliticised in ways which belie the everyday realities.⁶ As such, there are silences and absences in Conflict Resolution literature, particularly in relation to the sensory, political and emotional dimensions of fieldwork, which are rarely acknowledged and often obscured in methodological accounts of post-war environments. This orthodoxy has long outlived any usefulness it may have had. Cracks are appearing and research is increasingly challenging the way things are 'normally' done. We have the means, for example, to record and make visible the lives of 'ordinary' people who live in, and have lived through, violence. More than describing those lives, Nordstrom argues that we are entrusted with telling personal experiences, yet more often than not she argues that 'the work of scholars are wor(l)ds apart from the experiences of those living and dying at the centres of war'⁷.

My research shows the impact researchers have on the environments they enter. It is a hard to believe that in light of the methodological turn(s) in the social sciences, anyone in the CR field still attempts to maintain the veneer of the 'objective gaze'.

⁶ See P. Justino, T. Black and P. Verwimp (eds)(2013). *A Micro-Level Perspective on the Dynamics of Conflict, Violence and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 4. This extensive research project provides further support for the impoverishment of current knowledge and practice (peacebuilding as currently undertaken by the international community doesn't work), and micro-level (individuals, households, and communities) need to be recognised and their roles in violence and peacebuilding much better understood. Justino et al. acknowledge the large and complicated and difficult prospects of this challenge.

⁷ Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, p8-9.

As I outlined in Chapters 5 and 6, the increasing presence of *Researchers* in post-war Sarajevo has at times overwhelmed the small community of NGOs undertaking peace and conflict work, and the practices of some researchers has been viewed with deep ambivalence, outright anger and disgust by NGO activists. Stories of *Researchers* being ill-prepared, ill-informed, insensitive, and at times exploitative are widely disseminated amongst activists, and coupled with research fatigue, this has meant that some NGO activists have begun to refuse to participate in *Research* and avoid *Research* interviews. I observed this phenomenon on a number of occasions myself in encounters with other *Researchers* during my fieldwork. As such, I have argued that *Research* has a significant political impact in post-war environments through the physical and intellectual presence of *Researchers* who encounter and develop relationships with those in the field - and construct accounts of their experiences. This is the case whether *Researchers* explicitly choose to write about their research encounters, interactions and relationships or not.

The final section of Chapter 4 provides a further example of the impact of these disconnections and silences and highlights the link between international peacebuilding organisations and the CR field. I describe NGO work in Bosnia and Hercegovina (both international and local) including the problematic nature of the relationship between international and local NGOs – INGO efforts criticised as ‘foreign plants’ and ‘projectomania’ for example. ‘Projectomania’ was the way in which international donors would shift the focus of their funding to the latest peacebuilding ‘fad’. These fads were

generated from the latest research – there is significant cross-over between donor agencies and academia.

Initially, in the early phases of intervention, for example, funding for projects which focused on psychosocial healing and gender was made available. This followed a shift to projects focusing on peacebuilding (especially cross-community) and conflict resolution (especially workshop training activity). More recently, these donor priorities have shifted again to focus on funding for EU accession activity. These funding focus shifts had no apparent connection to the needs on the ground and were not developed in concert with locals who are already undertaking peacebuilding work. A cascading effect ensued whereby smaller INGOs looking for project funding (early on worth millions of euros or dollars) would apply to run the projects for the larger organisations. Representatives from these organisations would ‘flood’ into Sarajevo and beyond ‘recruiting’ local NGOs to agree to work with them to deliver the projects. This disconnect has been a common feature of INGO interventions in Bosnia and Hercegovina and, as I described in Chapter 6, some LNGOs have found their own ways around these limitations and developed their own forms of peacebuilding. The ‘Spam’ statute to ‘thank’ the international community gives a darkly humorous example of attitudes to ‘internationals’ – and its ‘help’ (Chapter 7a and 7b).

This is difficult work, but for anyone who takes it on, these issues have to be part of their internal and external dialogues. These conversations are necessary starting places for research.

Conversation Piece 2: Addressing the Shadow Side of Fieldwork

Research in post-war environments brings exceptionally difficult intellectual, methodological, practical and emotional challenges for researchers, and these aspects have received little academic attention⁸. This includes the relationships between researchers and the people/places taken as subjects of inquiry. This lack of attention has made it easier for CR researchers to avoid the epistemological and ontological gauntlet that every post-war environment throws down to any it touches. And of course every researcher is self-interested to some extent. We want to establish our expertise, find jobs and so on and research in post-war environment is hard and hazardous. It becomes all too easy, as I have evidenced in Chapters 5 and 6, for unethical practices to develop. I include myself as one who has lived in a post-war environment and been deeply affected by it. I do not underestimate the challenge of this work – although I certainly did before I began my fieldwork in 2006.

Nordstrom argues that there is a ‘shadow side’ of research, this is because, not least, the ‘cultures of violence’ developed during conflict and war often remain intact in post-war contexts and form part of the politics and realities of everyday life⁹. As such, researchers who work in post-war environments, particularly where large-scale violence has occurred, often face what

⁸ A number of notable exceptions include: Smyth, M and Gillian, R. (eds.) (2001). *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*. London: UN University Press and Pluto Press; Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; Wood, E, J. (2006) ‘The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones’ *Qualitative Sociology*, 29: 373-386.

⁹ Nordstrom, C. (1994). *Warzones: Cultures of Violence, Militarisation and Peace*, Working Paper, No 145. Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Australian National University.

Nordstrom and Robben describe as 'existential shock' which may trigger 'personal crises' (Nordstrom), depression (Swedenberg) and post-traumatic stress disorder (Warden-Rebours). This is largely unacknowledged in Conflict Resolution literature¹⁰. There have been few attempts to write about the personal aspects of conducting fieldwork in post-war environments or places with cultures of violence, and I have argued that separating the private narratives and experiences of the field from conflict resolution knowledge, as if they were somehow disconnected, not only works to depoliticise the knowledge produced in post-war environments, but also fails to acknowledge the interconnectedness of researchers to the people and places they study.

Conversation Piece 3: Addressing Research Practices: Navigating 'Mess'

In methodological terms, I argue, this means that it is important to develop ways of investigating such complexity, entanglement, and mess. It is problematic to assume that the visual, sensory and emotional are separate realms of experience that can or should be bracketed out of our research accounts. I have argued that conflict resolution has neglected this issue, and suggest that re-focusing attention on research and knowledge making practices offers a way to re-engage with the normative project of Conflict

¹⁰ Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (1995). 'The Anthropology and Ethnography of Violence and Sociopolitical Conflict' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press pp13; Nordstrom, C. (1995). 'War on the Front Lines' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press pp129- 154; Swedenberg, T. (1995). 'With Genet in the Palestinian Field' In Nordstrom, C. & Robben, A. (eds.) *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp 25-41; Warden-Rebours, T. (2012). 'Feet of Clay: Confronting Stigma Surrounding Emotional Challenges in Ethnographic Experience'. 7th Annual Ethnography Symposium, University of Liverpool. 29 August 2012.

Resolution and the ethical foundations of the discipline. This means that we must take seriously the consequences of research which does not explicitly address the ethics/politics and realities of conducting research in post-war environments. We should do this because it matters to those whose everyday lives and realities are the focus of our research. It matters that their everyday lives are made, re-made and un-made in our analyses and in the collective accounts of researchers - in ways that can profoundly affect their lives. If we take the normative aims of Conflict Resolution seriously, then it is also clear that this should matter to us too.

Any review of the CR literature demonstrates, as my Chapters 2 and 3 do, that Conflict Resolution scholars are generally unaware of what Denzin and Lincoln call the 'methodological revolution' taking place in the wider social sciences where conversations about critical research, politically situated knowledge, and innovative methodologies have developed over a number of years¹¹. Conflict Resolution would benefit from engaging in these conversations, particularly as many of these discussions are driven by concerns that social science research should be interested in social change, at the same time as being politically and ethically sensitive to the people involved in research.

Given the stories of NGO activists outlined in previous chapters, and the discourses that have developed around research and the presence of researchers, I have already shown that there is a need to think more critically about Conflict Resolution research.

¹¹Ibid.

My fieldwork highlights first-hand observations and accounts of how ordinary people and NGO activists respond to researchers in post-war Bosnia, and their sense of being observed and researched in their everyday work and lives by 'internationals'. This subject has largely been neglected in the Conflict Resolution literature. By drawing attention to the lived experiences of being researched, I attempt to specifically problematise the rational-scientific research practices widespread in the field (of CR and Bosnia) and the need for change. Shifting practices should include moves towards the development of critically conscious researchers who purposefully work 'with' rather than taking 'from' those in post-war environments. Attention should also be paid to the representations of the people and environments we study and how these representations are developed, if we are to avoid, for example, reiterating the western stereotype of the Balkans as a place of ethnic and ancient hatreds. The structure and content of this thesis has shown my own attempts to do this, whilst simultaneously negotiating my way within and between 'normal science' and its alternatives.

This work is still very much an 'outlier'. As such, this thesis re-presents an engagement in a politically situated place and subject, through politically engaged practices of research, and is a purposeful enactment of research by myself as a situated researcher. It shows my attempts to understand the ways that power operates to shape meaning in Conflict Resolution, and develops insights into the consequences that the construction of knowledge and representations has for people in post-war contexts. I have, in this vein,

created a purposeful set of 'assemblages' which contrasts traditional academic forms of writing with reflexive writing and visual narratives in order to juxtapose the realities of post-war Bosnia with representations of Bosnia in the academic literature. I have done this against a consistent argument that traditional research approaches and forms of representation are often inadequate, and fail to resonate with the complexities of everyday realities of post-war environments.

I have shown how a negotiated and situated research focus yields markedly different outcomes making use of two different methodologies. First, I (re)negotiated my presence in Bosnia and the focus of my research through an immersive intersubjective engagement with a number of people working in and around LNGOs in Bosnia. My focus changed and became the problem of international *Researchers* and the *Researched* (the impact of which I have set out in Chapters 5 and 6 and discussed in this Chapter).

Second, I focused on the everyday visual realities of fieldwork and how the use of visual media in research can produce powerfully de-centred, disrupting insights into the experiences of those in post-war environments. My engagement here was two-fold: to take photos myself – or make images – and in assembling these images engage in alternative forms of knowledge generation (as detailed in Chapters 7a and 7b). Taking photos became a routine part of my fieldwork diarising. They supported my understanding of my own journey of *becoming* in supporting my navigation of the mess, complexity and ambiguities I encountered. They contributed to my fieldwork

because I asked people about what I had *seen*, asked for their interpretations, their stories. For example, I saw the 'Bosnian Girl' image, and then asked a number of different people about it – I provided an extensive discussion of those encounters in Chapter 7b. This work gave much greater breadth and depth of understanding to my fieldwork and what I was experiencing but found great difficulty voicing (or putting into written text). In addition, and probably as an outcome of my focus on my visual experiences, I began paying attention to how images were being used in peacebuilding. So I 'found' images – like 'Bosnian Girl', 'Stari Most', and the Srebrenica poster campaign which I then talked about with different people, gaining a picture of the complexities of those images in the Bosnia (and Serbian) context (as I set out in Chapter 7b).

What emerged most starkly from these encounters with 'found' images and the conversations that ensued across a spectrum of activists and 'ordinary' Bosnians, was intense, challenging, difficult, ambiguous, and messy. Or to put it another way, I was confronted with the deep wounds and pain and suffering of people trying to survive in post-war Bosnia. I have wondered to myself how 'post-war' Bosnia really is given the emotional (for example) legacy that is very present. Using visual methodologies helped me to access levels of understanding not easily put into words – making these understandings more accessible – as demonstrated in the section on 'Bosnian Girl' in chapter 7b.

These purposefully fragmentary accounts of my intersubjectively negotiated engagement with the researched show the process through which the people I worked with became de-othered and co-producers of this research. This approach does not seek to fix knowledge about Bosnia, but rather seeks to present a piece/s of a much larger shifting assemblage that is 'Bosnia', and as it does this consciously creates space (rather than shuts it down) for other versions, voices, fragments, assemblages.

At the very least, CR research in post-war environments needs to work on developing expectations of researchers that they provide detailed methodological accounts of the realities of fieldwork and this should be incorporated into research outcomes. This would serve as one way to reinforce the importance of ethical relationships between researchers and the people and places studied, particularly if the experiences of those who are researched are taken as important. Further, this research points to the need for debates to take place as to whether simply utilising 'alternative' research methodologies can (by itself) address the issues that I have raised around the politics and ethics of researchers in post-war contexts. There is clearly also a need to re-theorise research relationships in Conflict Resolution, and problematise assumptions which might suggest that research subjects are 'merely objects of knowledge' for scholars, rather than, for example, knowledge producers in their own right¹². As such, this research adds to a small but growing body of literature in the social sciences that focuses on the politics and ethics of research and the importance of the positionality of

¹² Chesters, G. (2012). 'Social Movements and the Ethics of Knowledge Production', *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest*, 1-16.

researchers. The fieldwork undertaken in this thesis makes an important contribution to these nascent conversations by contributing to our understanding of research in post-war environments, and reformulating/reconceptualising researchers as unacknowledged actors in post-war environments and providing examples of doing research differently.

My research demonstrates the need for a nuanced and critical awareness of the impact of the presence of researchers in post-war contexts, which does not automatically assume that research is beneficent. This is not to imply that research should not be carried out or undertaken (although in some instances this might be the case), but instead suggests the need for a greater and more complex political and ethical awareness of those who become involved in fieldwork and research, and whose everyday realities and lives are shaped by research and researchers. Les Back has suggested that social sciences scholars should operate sensitively and ethically in relation to the lives of those it seeks to understand and return to the 'art of listening' in order to capture 'real' social life¹³. The challenge that this poses in relation to Conflict Resolution is to be explicit about the epistemological and ontological assumptions that we bring to our work; to explore the political/power dimensions of our research approaches and practice; to pay attention to the mess/silences/absences and attempts to 'order' complexity and make things coherent in our research; to consciously and reflexively examine 'self' in the research process in terms of personal, social and institutional influences; to link our research approaches and practices to wider questions of power,

¹³ Back, L. (2007). *The Art of Listening*. London: Berg Publishers.

knowledge and Othering; and finally to attempt to engage in ontological politics and produce 'better versions of the real'¹⁴. Stephen Pfohl calls such an approach 'power-reflexive', which he argues is:

to engage critically with the circuits of power and knowledge in which we are located in history...it views knowledge as participating in the world's real constitution and never a mere description of the world's reality. Power-reflexive forms of knowledge aim to materially transform- rather than idealistically transcend- existing global matrices of domination...this is to partially reverse the disembodied flight of knowledge enacted by leading professional sectors of contemporary social science. By contrast, power-reflexive knowledge imperfectly mirrors back on the ways in which our analytic constructions of the world are situated within historical knots of power¹⁵.

It is also clear that a commitment to dialogue is crucial if we want to continue to be able to work with those who we claim we want to help. If, as Smyth & Robinson argue, we have a duty to conduct research in order to prevent violence, we should also be committed to listen intersubjectively to those who we research¹⁶.

¹⁴ Law, J. (2004). *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.

¹⁵ Pfohl, S., (2008). 'The Reality of Social Constructions' In Holstein, J, A. Gubrium, J, F. *Handbook of Constructionist Research*. New York. London: Guilford Press, p662.

¹⁶Smyth, M. Robinson, G. (eds.) (2001). *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Methodological and Ethical Issues*. London: Pluto Press.

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