

Gender and Nationalism: The Role of Sport in Reinvention of Serbian National Identity

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Abstract

I explore the intersection between sport, nationalism and gender and the ways in which female and male athletes reinforce Serbian national identity. I examined masculinities and femininities expressed in sport. I analyze media representations of male and female athletes and look at narratives around them. My methodology consists of a discourse analysis of the online version *Blic* and *Blic Sport*. I used both qualitative and quantitative analysis. My findings suggest that male and female athletes are depicted differently in sport. Male athletes are portrayed through their physicality and manliness while female athletes are portrayed through their femininities. Moreover, male athletes reinforce Serbian national identity through embedded masculine characteristics. On the other hand, female athletes are not seen as representatives of the Serbian nation and therefore they have a minor role in claiming national belonging.

Table of Content

List of Figures -----	iii
I Chapter Introduction -----	1
1.1 Data -----	2
1.2 Methodology -----	5
1.3 The context of Yugoslav wars in the 90's and declaration of Kosovo independence -----	6
1.4 The Kosovo myth -----	8
II Chapter Gender, Nationalism and Sport -----	10
III Chapter Nationalism -----	15
3.1. Serbian "Moderate Patriotism" in sport? -----	15
3.2. State-Nation Bound -----	20
3.3. State, Citizenship and Serbianess -----	24
3.4. Nationalism in Action -----	26
IV Chapter Masculinities and Femininities -----	29
4.1 Femininity before athleticism -----	29
4.2. Cavic's gentlemanliness -----	36
4.3. Infantilized femininity -----	39
V Chapter Gendered Nationalism in Sport -----	43
5.1. Sport as a metaphor for war -----	44
5.2 Masculinized national traits -----	48
5.3. Sporting Heroes -----	49
5.4. A masculinized "spectacle" -----	52
5.5 The role of female athletes in representing the nation -----	54
Conclusion -----	59
Bibliography -----	63

List of Figures

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



I Chapter Introduction

In my thesis, I will focus on how masculinities, femininities and nationalism have been expressed through sports in the post Milosevic era in Serbia. More precisely, I want to explore the intersection between gender, nationalism, and sports and see how these concepts are related.

I hypothesize that sports can be a substitute for war and by using war metaphors in sport, sporting events usually are of great importance in periods of wars, political unrest or crises. Since both sports and war are constructed as masculine, I will focus on the role of masculinity. In that sense I am interested also to look at male athletes who are, in my opinion, often seen as figures of the nation and who construct the idea of national identity through masculinities.

Moreover, keeping in mind Serbia's involvement in the 1990's wars, Zarkov and Cockburn (2002) argue that the dominant masculinity in that period was militarized one. Therefore, I would like to explore and compare militarized masculinity to masculinity as it has been represented through athletes, as well as more specifically comparing dominant masculinities of the Milosevic's era with those of the post-Milosevic era. I would expect the link between masculinities and nation to be different in the post-Milosevic era. I am going to explore whether the images of the Serb are being built on specific masculine characteristics that are presented in sports. Furthermore, I will look at the presentation of bodies in sports through media images and try to see how athletes who use this representation further construct Serbian national identity. On the one hand I will explore the relationship between masculine constructions and gender roles, and on the other hand the relationship between masculinity and nation.

By exploring masculinity I am also interested in comparing how sportswomen are represented in sports. Are female athletes represented on the same terms as male athletes and how

are they depicted in Serbian dominant discourse? What are the differences between masculinities and femininities in sport and how do they shape local forms of nationalism?

My analysis consists of media analysis of a daily newspaper *Blic* and it is organized into 3 chapters. In Chapter Two I focus on nationalism and two male athletes Novak Djokovic and Milorad Cavic, and explore the ways in which sport is used to claim Serbian national identity through these athletes. In Chapter Three I examine the role of sport in reinforcing traditional gender roles and according to that my aim is to see how female and male athletes are portrayed through the press. I also look at how masculinities are used in order to undermine athleticism and ask whether femininity serves the same goal. Finally, in Chapter Four, I am looking at gender, sport and nationalism together. In this chapter I am curious to find out about the differences between male and female athletes in sports and their relation to the Serbian national identity and nationalism.

1.1 Data

In order to answer these questions above I am going to focus on sports where Serbia has been most successful in international competitions. These are the individual sports of tennis and swimming. I will analyze media representations of the male swimmer Milora Cavic and female swimmer Nadja Higl and of the male tennis player Novak Djokovic and female tennis players Ana Ivanovic. I do this through an investigation of the online version of the Serbian daily newspaper *Blic* and its sports subsection *Blic Sport* in the year of 2008 and 2009. More precisely read all the articles that concerned these athletes and chose to analyze the ones which are in my opinion present the best discourses that I am showing. Firstly, I chose to analyze *Blic* because it

is the most popular newspaper in Serbia with the widest circulation according to a media audience survey in 2008 carried by the Strategic marketing agency.¹ One more reason for choosing this newspaper has a reputation of being objective. *Blic* is owned by the Swiss company *Ringier*. In contrast to some tabloids like *Pres* or *Kurir*, which in my opinion report in sensational way and are regarded as right wing press, conservative and pronationalist oriented, I decided on *Blic* since it seems that its position is “centered” when it comes to daily politics.

In *Blic*, there is an online section, *Blic Sport*, which is devoted only to sport. In the printed version of *Blic*, sport topics are placed at the end of the newspaper, occupying several pages. For my purposes, although I pay attention to all articles that appeared in 2008 and 2009, I especially focused on *Blic Sport* since their rubric should filter news only in the field of sport. However, it turned out that this rubric is not paying as much attention to sport as such in terms of the athletes’ performances, but it is intertwined with politics and it is a fruitful source for exploring masculinity and femininity.

Secondly, I have chosen to analyze the two year time period of 2008 and 2009 because this period was perceived to be a major challenge to Serbian sovereignty. This period was very significant because in February 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia. This event was a trigger for reinventing discourses in the media about the victimization of the Serbian nation and assault on the Serbian national dignity and manliness. I assumed that Kosovo’s independence would have an impact on sport as well and in my analysis there is a visible connection between sport and the question of Kosovo in reinforcing Serbian nationalism. Thirdly, I focused on the most successful athletes in the year of 2008 and 2009. Milorad Cavic represented Serbia at the European Championship in Eindhoven where he won a gold medal. As I

¹ Blic Online. 2008. „Blic najcitanije novine” < <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/46248/Blic-najcitanije-novine>>

will describe later, he was subsequently suspended because at the awards ceremony he wore a T-shirt with the words “Kosovo is Serbia.” This event shaped my analysis and inspired me to look at the role of athletes in claiming national belonging and producing nationalism. After the event in Eindhoven, Milorad Cavic was competing with Michael Phelps, the world’s best swimmer, at the Beijing Summer Olympic Games in August 2008 and he lost in a close finish for one hundredth of a second.. In order to explore Cavic’s depiction in the press I compare him with Nadja Higl, a female swimmer who was as successful as Cavic. Nadja Higl won the World Championship in Rome in 2009 and was awarded the title “Serbian Sportswoman of the Year” for the year 2009 by the Olympic Committee of Serbia. Milorad Cavic was also awarded by the same committee as the best athletes of the year 2009.²

Similarly, I investigate representations of tennis players Novak Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic. In 2008 Novak Djokovic won Australian Open Tournament which ranked him number 3 at ATP list. On the other hand, throughout the year of 2008 Ana Ivanovic was ranked first on WTA list for 9 weeks, and this year was the most successful year for Ivanovic since she won Grand Slam title at French Open. It was difficult for me to choose between Ana Ivanovic and Jelena Jankovic who a very good tennis player at the international level as well. I made my choice by investigating rankings in 2008, and I pick Ivanovic because her ranks were slightly better in 2008. Although Jelena Jankovic took a leading position in 2009 and proved to be more successful from that time on than Ana Ivanovic, 2008 was the most successful year for Ivanovic. Taking that as a starting point I decided to analyze only Ivanovic. Moreover, I could not focus on

² Sportske. Net. 2009.” Higl i Cavic sportisti godine u Srbiji “ 24.04.2011.<<http://www.naslovi.net/2009-12-18/sportske/higl-i-cavic-sportisti-godine-u-srbiji/1459141>>

both female athletes since they *Blic* covers a large number of articles about them. Having in mind given time limitations as well, I have to narrow down my textual analysis.

1.2 Methodology

My methodology consists of a discourse analysis of online version *Blic* and *Blic Sport*. I used both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Although I most of my research base on the qualitative one, I realized that the most useful is going to be if I apply quantitative analysis in Djokovic's case. My aim is to analyze media representations of male and female athletes and see how narratives around them in the press shape nationalist discourses. I investigate the intersection between gender, sport, and nationalism in order to see how the content of the articles published in the period of 2008 and 2009 reproduce Serbian national identity. After reading all articles which were written about Milorad Cavic, Novak Djokovic, Ana Ivanovic and Nadja Higl I identified the main topics as related to gender and nationalism and decided to analyze the ones that best represent the discourses that I am describing. I included articles which concern the most important athletes' performance in international competitions such as Grand Slam Tournaments, World and European Championships, the Beijing Olympic Games as well as the political event of Kosovo's independence.

I try to explore the latent meaning of narratives written in *Blic* and see what are the discourses that those articles produce. That is not to say that *Blic* directly reflects the facts and therefore created public discourses in relation to events, journalists and public audience (Zarkov, 2002) but rather as Taylor points out that "representations are not innocent, transparent or true; they do not simply reflect the reality" (cited in Zarkov, 2002: 185). More precisely, I take *Blic*'s articles "as a form of social practice" (Tonkiss, 1998: 249). In addition, it is important to note

here that I provide my own subjective reading and translation of the articles written in *Blic* concerning sports athletes.

1.3 The context of Yugoslav wars in the 90's and declaration of Kosovo independence

The history of Yugoslavia has brought up many analyses about the increasing level of nationalism that led to war in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The war in Croatia lasted from August 1991 till August 1995, the war in Bosnia lasted from March 1992 till November 1995 and the war in Kosovo lasted from February 1998 till June 1999 (Zakosek, 2008). The rise of nationalism and wars for territory led to a decade of mass crimes, atrocities, looting of properties and atrocities that happened during these wars. Vetta argues that Serbian nationalism has not disappeared but arguably changed its form putting in focus the question of Kosovo (Vetta, 2009).

First of all, Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, later Serbia.³ As a constitutive part of Serbia, Kosovo had autonomy similar to Vojvodina. When Slobodan Milosevic took political control over the communist party and became one of the most popular figures among Serbs, his main goal was to increase his power and nationalism was a tool for doing it. In the year of 1989 Milosevic used the six hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kosovo to gather million Serbs from all over Yugoslavia and gave a speech which is considered the foundation of Serbian nationalism during the 90's. As Mertus (1999) claims that Milosevic uses this event “to solidify

³During the last 15 years Serbia has changed its name 3 times. In further text, I will use name Serbia instead of Yugoslavia, just to avoid confusion.

his populist movement”(1999:296). This event established Milosevic among Serbs, as the first Serbian leader since the Second World War to have defended Serbia's interests (Jansen, 1999).

In the 1990s, the discourses of rape and victimhood justified Serbian nationalism and military interventions in Kosovo (Bracewell, 2000). Serbian state politicians managed to abolish Kosovo's autonomy and take absolute control over the territory of Kosovo. The measures that were imposed violated human rights in Kosovo. Eventually, human rights violations against the Albanian population turned into war, massacres, kidnappings, torture and rapes that took place in Kosovo during the last decade of the 20th century. As war was heating up, the international community warned Milosevic to stop the conduct of his politics in Kosovo as well as killings; otherwise, NATO will bomb Serbia (Jansen, 1999). The bombing started on the 24th of March and in the Western discourse it was seen as a way to stop the ethnic cleansing and the killing of Albanian Kosovars. The expectation on the part of NATO was that Serbia would capitulate to the West and therefore end the war. This did not happen. Instead Yugoslavia stepped up its war. After 73 days of bombing, Yugoslavia and NATO signed an agreement. Resolution 1244 was adopted and led to the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (NATO's role in Kosovo, 1999). This event in Serbian discourse was seen as threat to Serbian sovereignty and impossibility to take control over Kosovo.

The population of Kosovo was comprised of predominately Albanians, especially after the year of 1999, when many Serbs decided to leave Kosovo. However, today there is still minority of Serbs living in Kosovo. Besides the Kosovo myth and the fact that there is Serbian minority living in Kosovo still gives Serbian authority the right to claim Kosovo territory and refute Kosovo declared unilateral independence. On 17th of February 2008, Kosovo declared unilateral independence from Serbia, although the legality of the declaration was disputed. From

that point on, Serbia insisted on not recognizing Kosovo as an independent country and used different tools to claim its illegitimacy. As I will show later, one of the ways to do it was through sport competitions using male athletes.

1.4 The Kosovo myth

After the wars in 90's and the fall of the Milosevic regime, the main issue in Serbian dominant discourse today is still the Kosovo question. I have just read updated news from June 1, 2011 and found out that the Minister of Police of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, suggested the division of Kosovo so that one part be united with Albania and the other with Serbia.⁴ The Kosovo question is still very visible in Serbian daily politics and it is often used in order to reinvent Serbian national identity. To be more precise, the Kosovo issue has been important for Serbs since it is considered to be “a heart of Serbia.” The Kosovo soil is regarded as sacred in Serbian discourse because there are a large number of Serbian orthodox monasteries and churches which are of great importance for Serbian national identity. In order to explain the connection between the Kosovo and Serbian nationalism I am going to describe the battle of Kosovo in 1389 which was the origin of the Kosovo myth.

Florian Bieber (2002) argues that the Kosovo myth is at the core of Serbian nationalism. The myth concerns the Battle of Kosovo Field which took place on 28 June 1389 (St Vitus's Day), which is now considered “a key marker on the Serbian national calendar” (ibid:95). The Kosovo battle took place in Kosovo polje where Christian armies with Knez Lazar as leader and Ottoman army led by Sultan Murad. (Mihaljcic, as cited in Florian: 2002). Although the Christian

⁴ B92. 2011. “Podeliti Kosovo sa Albanijom” 1.06.2011.
http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2011&mm=06&dd=01&nav_category=640&nav_id=515853

army was defeated, the crucial point of the myth was the day of the day of defeat when Knez Lazar was asked whether he wants to establish a heavenly or an earthy kingdom. His decision to establish the heavenly one led to the defeat of the Christian army but “ensured the creation of a perpetual heavenly realm for the Serbian people“ (Bieber, 2002:96). From that point on, the defeat was celebrated because the “Serbian/Christian side emerged as the ultimate spiritual victor” (Lauer, quoted in Bieber, 2002:96).

Svetlana Slapsak in the interview given together with Ivan Colovic argues that the myth about Kosovo as a cradle of the Serbian nation, was crucial for establishing the Serbian state and claiming national belonging. Furthermore, she is of the opinion that the majority of Serbs do not think about the Kosovo myth as a myth but more as a “rule, law or ideological construct.” It is a national political myth which serve politics and proved to serve the cause of war (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2009)

Colovic (ibid, 2009) argues that Kosovo’s myth is a myth about Serbian national identity. The myth consists of heroic killing and heroic death of the battle’s protagonists. He also argues that the main character of Kosovo’s myth is the Serbian nation. By summarizing the core of the myth he says that the Serbian nation is the hero, with its culture, language, religion, which has been born in Kosovo. He says that in Serbian nationalist discourse it is believed that the heart of the nation is in Kosovo and all in all Serbian nation was born there and Kosovo is the only place where it can die. The hero, the Serbian nation, always does the same, fights with enemies, suffers, and kills (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2009).

In my research I am going to explore the ways of using this myth in sport and see how this myth is claimed by athletes in order to reinforce Serbian national identity.

II Chapter Gender, Nationalism and Sport

Here, I provide a short overview of what has been done on concepts of gender, nationalism and sport to see why it is important to look at this intersection in the Serbian context.

To start with, it is vital to acknowledge the influence which sport has as a social institution on social relations. Frey and Eitzen (1991) claim that sport is useful in order to study social behavior and practices, in other words social life. They also consider sport to be one of the most important factors of socialization (ibid). Theorizing sport, Messner asserts: “Sport is a key site for ideological contest over the meaning of “masculinity”, as well as “femininity” (2005:314). In his understanding of men, gender and sport, Messner points out that sport is an institution where male bodies are privileged over female bodies and that the presence of female athletes in modern sport, “directly threatens the ideology of male superiority and thus men’s positions of centrality” (ibid:314).

In recent years there has been an expansion of the research on the nature and forms of masculinities. In order to explore masculinities, one cannot help but start from the pioneering researcher of that field, R. W. Connell. Her frameworks and concepts have been widely influential and shaped most of the scholarship in this field. In my thesis, the concept of hegemonic masculinity developed by Connell will serve as a starting point to investigate masculinities. In her book “Masculinities” Connell (1995) argues that hegemonic masculinity consists of practices which ensure the subordination of women and the domination of men. In light of widespread criticism that the concept has attracted, Connell and Messerschmidt redefined the concept of hegemonic masculinity in order to show more sophisticated features of exploring this subject. In their article “Masculinities: Rethinking the Concept” (2005), they clearly show

that the concept of hegemonic masculinities in media representation has been developed through the images of athletes in sports and through war images. In addition to these, Connell also looks at representation of bodies in relation to masculinities, thus developing the concept of “bodies as arenas” (Connell, 2002). Moreover, Connell and Masserschmidt (2005) argue that “Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body of personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting” (ibid: 836). Additionally, Connell’s and Masserschmidt takes the earlier concept of “hegemonic femininity” and redefine it as “emphasized femininity. ” (ibid: 848). They argue that femininities are as important as masculinities and that femininity should be studied deeper in order to understand how “hegemonic masculinities” work. (ibid:848)

Using Connell’s and Masserschmidt’s article as a foundational text, I will frame the assumption that masculinities take myriad forms. The concept of hegemonic masculinities will help me to understand masculinities in the sports arena better and compare it with the masculinities which have been expressed during wars in the 1990’s in the Former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, Messner and Sabo state that sport is not just a reflection of masculinity but that it produces and reinforces a particular kind of masculinity (cited in Connell and Masserschmidt, 2005:833).

Maguire argues that sport is used to “produce the nation with which people can identify.” (1999: 177). Anderson (1983) defines the nation as “imagined community” with its members who create the feeling of belonging although they have not met each other or seen each other. Yet, there is a strong image of belonging to the same national community. Similarly, Enloe argues that “a nation is a collection of people who believe that they have been shaped by a

common past and destined to share a common future” (1990:45). This sense of national belonging is particularly visible in sports. Bainer understands sports competitions as relationship between athletes and fans where there “emerges a bond which can be understood only in reference to the idea of nation” (cited in Sack and Suster, 2000: 306). The intersection between nation, sport and gender is particularly well developed by Mervi Tervo’s article (2004) where he argues that sports are used for political purposes and have been based on confrontation throughout history. He states that by taking part in sports competitions, nations construct and reproduce their identity and uphold their national selfesteem. Similarly, in the very influential research done by Messner on masculinities, he also states that professional athletes use their “bodies as weapons” (quoted in Connell and Masserschmidt, 2005: 837). Taking that into consideration, I assume that sports can be a substitute for war and that sporting events are used in periods of war, political unrest or crises. Moreover, masculinity is one of the most significant traits in both war and sport, therefore it should be explored in more details.

Having in mind that athletes are seen as prominent figures of the nation and that they construct the idea of national identity through masculinity in sport it is crucial to examine the relationship between masculinity and nationalism. I refer to Nagel’s understanding of nationalism and masculinity where she argues that “nationalism and masculinity articulate well with one another” (1998: 249). Similarly, Cythia Enloe (1990) argues that nationalism is always considered masculinized. However, she does not explore what kind of masculinity she is referring to. Dudnik (2002) explains that by using the concept of masculinized nationalism, Enloe mainly refers to a militarized masculinity. Dudnik challenges the notion that all masculinities are militarized, and he goes further in his analysis of the Dutch army, trying to understand what kind of masculinity is present there. He arrives at the concept of “soft masculinities” arguing that it is

of great importance to distinguish between different masculinities that help the construction of national character. Dudnik's concept of soft masculinity, which is different from the militarized, is still very important in the building of national identity. It shows that it is crucial to explore different kinds of masculinities in the creation of national identity.

There is also a limited range of scholarly articles that deal with masculinities in the Former Yugoslavia, which are mainly focused on militarized masculinities. For instance, Bracewell questions the relationship between nation, nationalism and masculinities in the Former Yugoslavia coming up with the concept "threatened masculinity" (Bracewell, 2000: 567). She understands "threatened masculinity" in relation to militarized masculinity where militarism might have been one of the solutions to restore manliness. Greenberg (2006) also analyzes different kinds of masculinities in relation to nationalism. Moreover, she discusses two different sorts of masculinities: democratic and undemocratic, which make relationship between family, state, and nation in the post Milosevic context. My thesis will explore masculinities from a different perspective than has been done in the past. The issue of sports, nationalism, and gender have not been adequately addressed and analyzed together in the Serbian context. In my research I intend to see how masculinities in the post Milosevic era differ from masculinities in the pre Milosevic period as well as investigate the differing shapes that these masculinities take. Do these masculinities just move to sports arenas and recall the masculinities that Bracewell (2000) or Zarkov and Cockburn (2002) discuss? Or do these masculinities take new and different forms? By analyzing these issues in the Serbian context, I will try to explore the far reaching discontinuities within nationalism during the Milosevic regime to explore whether nationalism has changed its shape. This research will also help me to understand the ways in which sports

have been utilized as a vessel in transporting symbols of masculinities and nationalism within Serbia.

III Chapter Nationalism

In this chapter I want to put media-generated stories of Cavic and Djokovic, a famous swimmer and a tennis player respectively, in a broader context and see how the comments made by the press construct Serbian national identity through these athletes. In other words I want to see to what extent sport has a role in representing Serbianess as personified by Cavic and Djokovic. My intent is to address questions of patriotism in order to more deeply explore the relationship between nationalism and patriotic beliefs that are present in newspaper articles and their relation to sports. I argue that Serbian athletes reinforce Serbian national belonging and therefore they are important figures in forging nationalism.

3.1. Serbian “Moderate Patriotism” in sport?

It is usually very difficult to take a stand on what kind of patriotism is acceptable and how it differs from nationalism. It is also difficult to take a stand on nationalism due to its various definitions and forms. I will refer to Spencer and Wollman’s (1998) notion of nationalism. They are distinguishing different kinds of nationalisms, arguing that “at the heart of the nationalism as a political project , whatever form it takes, is essentially exclusionary logic” (ibid: 256). Moreover, they criticize the differentiation between good and bad nationalism. In this regard, Spencer and Wollman see nationalism as construction defined against the Other, saying that “nationalism must always seek to define the nation by reference to something else that is not” (ibid: 271). In addition, I also find also useful Brubaker’s understanding of nationalism as a “category of practice” that “can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action” (ibid: 7).

Moreover, it is necessary to pay attention to the concept of patriotism in order to understand the difference between patriotism and nationalism. I will draw on Dixon's (2000) concept of "moderate patriotism" in sport and explore the nature of patriotism in sport in Serbian dominant discourse expressed in press during 2008. My attempt is to show that patriotism in sport always mingles with nationalistic sentiments which are visible in the press that I will analyze.

In Dixon's opinion there is nothing harmful in praising national athletes. He states that patriotism necessitates that both athletes and fans identify with their country and to share a success achieved on the playing field. He introduces the concept of a "moderate patriotism" in sports asserting that patriotism cannot be harmful unless it involves negative attitudes toward foreigners. Dixon argues that patriotism in sport can be understood in the same way as special concerns of the wellbeing of our friends, relatives or anything else. Dixon writes: "The goodwill that we feel towards our country is, just like our special concern for the welfare of our friends or family members, an intrinsic good (ibid: 83)." Furthermore, he states that there are many examples where patriotism easily goes hand in hand with nationalism and jingoism, but Dixon attempts to show that favoring our own country in sport competitions is not harmful. However, he claims that both athletes and fans should maintain "the spirit of modesty" because only in that way can patriotism stay moderate and "morally innocuous" (ibid: 74).

Writing in on 19th August 2008, *Blic*'s correspondent observed in the title "The fraud of the century," that the Serbian athlete Milorad Cavic was cheated out of the gold medal although he deserved it. At the Beijing Olympics, Cavic touched the wall 1/100th of a second after Michael Phelps, which maintained Phelps' 7th gold medal during these Olympics. Throughout the article *Blic* analyzes the competition between Phelps and Cavic, by explaining it through a lens of

conspiracy. The journalist said that the race was “a conspiracy of olympic proportions.” At the end he notes:

It is not good for sports, swimming, or anyone else if Phelps had not won the medal. The defeat at the Olympic competition would signify the biggest disappointment to the greatest athlete on the international level. However, putting this aside, Milorad Cavic showed that he is the greatest swimmer and athlete. He accepted defeat in a sportsmanlike manner, admitting that it is not a shame to be defeated by the best. Maybe because he knows who was first in Beijing (Blic Sport, 19 August, 2008).

This article shows that the media works to represent Cavic as a true winner of the Beijing Olympics Games. I am not concerned if he won the competition or not, but rather I want to see what kind of rhetoric emerges around his second best winning position. The article “The fraud of the century” reminds me of Dixon’s (2000) question of whether it is always patriotic to take the side of the athlete who represents your country. This question merits further exploration.

Taking Dixon’s argument about “moderate patriotism” into consideration, it seems that the “patriotism” that appeared through media coverage about Cavic and Phelps is not negligible. By carefully analyzing the articles “The fraud of the century” (Blic Sport, 19 August, 2008), and “Milorad swim!,” (Blic, 29 Septembar, 2008) both related to the Beijing Olympics and Cavic’s defeat, I identified two approaches that journalists usually take in relation to Cavic’s winning position yet the message that is conveyed is the same. In the article “The fraud of the century” it is noticeable that Cavic is represented as the actual winner of the Olympic games. One of the reasons why he is perceived in this way, according to journalists, is due to the objective victory that he won against Phelps. These narratives maintain that the competition’s result was unfair and that a huge mistake was made by time-measure technology. Another explanation depicts Cavic again as the only one who deserves the medal, but not due to the fact of his winning but rather because he expressed the character of a champion. Although the Serbian athletic team lodged a

complaint claiming that it was some sort of “conspiracy” Cavic announced that he is satisfied with his achievements. The message that is might be communicated here is that by challenging Phelps, the world’s best swimmer, Cavic himself becomes the greatest. Is this a “moderate patriotism” that Dixon speaks of? In my opinion it is not. By portraying Milorad Cavic as the only one who deserves the medal, the author of the text does not acknowledge the real possibility that Cavic is the second best. By taking into account that the discourse that appears in the press describes Cavic as the only one who deserves a medal, Dixon would not consider this to be a “moderate patriotism” anymore because moderate patriotism should recognize the option for other athletes to be the best as well .

Moreover, the narrative in the article “The fraud of the century” refers to the concept of conspiracy. Donskis understands conspiracy “as a phenomenon radically opposed to the principle of tolerance” (1998: 349). He points out that the conspiracy theory can be understood as a theory of society on the one hand or it can be used as propaganda with political applications. Popper explains the conspiracy theory through society and he stating:

It is the view that whatever happens in society-including things which people as a rule dislike, such as war, unemployment, poverty, shortages-are the results of direct design by some powerful individuals or groups. This view is very widespread, although it is, I have no doubt, a somewhat primitive kind of superstition (quoted in Donskis, 1998: 349).

In Serbian example the conspiracy seems to be more related to the propaganda and political applications since the conspiracy theory has been used in Serbian discourses throughout the wars during the 1990’s. For example, Gagnon explains how the conspiracy theory against “innocent Serbs” worked in the period during the beginning of the war in the 90’s in order to justify further Serbian military actions (1994: 128). Similarly, Byford and Billing (2005) state that in the early 90’s in Yugoslavia the involvement of the West in Serbian politics was taken as a

sign of subordination by the Serbian people. In short, whenever conspiracy is taken into account it is understood as conspiring against Serbs. The conspiracy against Serbs justifies nationalism and the construction of the Other and as Donskis point out the conspiracy is usually directed to “demonizing the Other” (1998:349). Moreover, conspiracy theories attempt to portray Serbs as victims and therefore deny any responsibilities for the war in the 90’s. In this regard, Jalusic (2007) refers to “organized innocence” as a significant part of nationalism in the Former Yugoslavia during the 90’s.

In order to show more clearly the connection between nationalism, sports and representations of athletes I will analyze Novak Djokovic. Djokovic is regarded as one of the best tennis players in the world and therefore he is especially praised by many people in Serbia. For example, in 2008 he was both World Number 2 and 3 in ATP rankings. By examining the article “The feat for history,” written in 19 November 2008, explains how Djokovic won a Grand Slam tournament and how he is coming closer and closer to Roger Federer who held the ATP number one position and who is no longer unbeatable. The article “The feat for history ”indicates that Djokovic is not the best player at the moment but rather that he is surrounded by the best makes him the best. Again, the same attitudes are expressed in the article “The fraud of the century” (Blic Sport, August 19, 2008), about Cavic, which strengthen my argument that the “moderate patriotism” Dixon speaks of is not applicable here. More precisely, it seems that the press does not acknowledge the possibility for Djokovic to be the second or third best and as Dixon explains it can violate the modesty of patriotism. In other words Dixon explains: “However dominant we might be in sport in general, every country has unique qualities in other areas that will surpass others that will surpass ours. Keeping our nation’s athletic triumphs in this perspective will go a

long way towards guaranteeing that a moderate patriotism in sport will remain moderate” (Dixon, 2000:85).

My intent here was to demonstrate how “a moderate patriotism” in sport is not applicable in my examples and my second step is to show that “moderate patriotism” usually goes hand in hand with nationalism. In next lines I argue that in spite of the fact that Djokovic and Cavic are the representatives of the country for which they compete, more importantly they represent the Serbian nation all over the world. In order to show this, in next subsection I analyze the relationship between the state, nation, and athletes.

3.2. State-Nation Bound

In 18th of November 2008, the newspaper *Blic* ran the headline “ You play good tennis Serbia!”. The article is very short with the opening line “Once upon a time, there was a tennis country called Serbia” and the main characters of the “fairy tale” are well known tennis players including Ana Ivanovic, Novak Djokovic, Jelena Jankovic. They are considered to be “diamonds of Serbia” with a therapeutic effect for the whole nation. The journalist raises a question: “Who would not be proud of our tennis players?” referring to their victories on the court. This article suggests that Serbia as a country is in crises (economic and political) and only the athletes can save the country’s international reputation. By representing Serbia as unable to provide for the well being of Serbian athletes, due to the fact that they practiced and gained all the skills abroad, I argue that Serbia as a state has a role to promote the Serbs. Although the article “You play good tennis Serbia!” (Blic, November 19, 2008) notes that tennis players are the ones who promote the country, the idea that is disseminated is that they promote the Serbs. It seems that in this article, Serbia is a place where the dreams to be respected as a nation came true thanks to the athletes.

According to Erjavec and Volcic (2009) Serbia is internationally in a difficult position since there are problems with war criminals and European Union which claims that it will stop the entry negotiations between Serbia and European Commission which represents the EU unless war criminals are arrested and therefore makes impossible for Serbia to join the EU. Taking Serbia's reputation and difficulties that it faces into consideration, Serbianess has to be distinguished from the Serbian state and therefore I argue that Serbian athletes embody Serbianess. Not only are athletes in Serbia praised, they have a healing effect as well. For example, Jackson and Ponc (2001) develop the idea about the crises of Canadian self since the threat of Americanization is always present. The Canadian nation is constructed through its differentiation from the US identity and this notion is fundamental to "Canadian social memory" (ibid: 49). The concept of crisis is important here because "the crises has been used as a means of drawing upon time/honored symbols and meanings which have constantly served to capture and mobilize the national collective in Canada" (Jackson and Ponc, 2001: 58). More precisely, Jackson and Ponc argue that instead of strengthening Canadian national identity, Canadian athletes weaken it due to the fact that athletes disappointed the nation either by marrying an American woman or being tested positively for steroids. Drawing a parallel, Serbian nation is constructed in relation to recent history and wars of the 1990's. In this regard, those events posed a threat to Serbianess, and the athletes embody the redemption of a war torn country in need of a unifying Serbian identity. In comparison to the role of Canadian athletes who contributed to the crises of Canadian identity on the one hand, Novak Djokovic is seen to be strengthening Serbian identity on the another.

One more article that tackles the issue of the nation- state relation is "Our Success, Our Exaggerations," which asks why Serbia is full of talented athletes. It begins:

There is no citizen of Serbia who is not elated by the success of Novak Djokovic. If all the nations like Russians and Americans are happy for their athletes, we should be happy for ours too. It is very important that there is someone great among us because we are not represented in a great way (Blic, February 6, 2008).

It is also noticeable that in the press Novak Djokovic was the one who represents the nation and their qualities. His figure was constructed in a way that he needs to prove to the world that Serbs are not as they have been historically represented and, as the article suggests, Djokovic attempted to cleanse the national reputation. Furthermore, in the same article the question is reformulated and the author asks “how is it possible to have such success among Serbs in such a difficult economic situation?” (Blic, February 6, 2008)

Thereafter, it is significant to note further developments in the story and its connection to the NATO bombings. More precisely, in the article “Our Success, Our Exaggerations,” Novak Djokovic is asked to answer the question stated above. He said that the fact that Serbia has such great athletes might be “a consequence of the NATO bombing.” The author concludes: “Is it a consequence of our spite, or is it a genetic code change?”

Three issues are noteworthy here. First is the notion of the We image, which implies that Serbia is a country of only Serbs. Although the article starts with the word “citizens” it immediately switches to Serbs as the only citizens of the Serbia. The second issue deals with the collective Serbian national self-representation through sports to explain why athletes figure so prominently in Serbian consciousness. The third issue is worth much more attention. The implication of the “NATO bombing” (Blic, February 6, 2008) and “genetic code change” in the same article should be explained in more detail. As I explained in the introduction, the NATO bombing put Serbia in conflict with the rest of the world. In Serbian dominant discourse the

NATO bombing is considered to be an attack on the Serbian national identity since the reputation of the Serbian state was depicted as the initiator of the war.

At first sight, the NATO bombing and the excellence of the athletes do not have any thing in common. It seems to me that Djokovic's comment when he said that the reason why Serbia has such great athletes might "be a consequence of NATO bombing" (Blic, February 6, 2008), conveys a message that although Serbia suffered in the past and was "despised" by the rest of the world, it managed to create excellent world renowned athletes. But how is this possible? All of the athletes were trained abroad, for instance Cavic has never lived in Serbia, and it seems that the athletes' success is hardly related to Serbia. But the story becomes much clearer when I take into account the journalist's comment on genetic code change. As I stated previously, athletes do not represent the state but only the nation. By saying this, their excellence in sport can be attributed to the entire nation due to their common genes and ancestry. According to Manning Nash ethnicity can be defined through the notion of biology and more precisely "bed blood and cult. " (quoted in Eriksen, 1993: 34) Nash thinks that ethnic groups define themselves as "biologically self-perpetuating and endogamous" which means that the nation believes that they have "an ideology of shared ancestry and shared religion" (ibid: 34). Thus it seems as if the narratives surrounding Djokovic carry the meaning that his Serbian genes created him as an athlete. According to Tannsjo (2000) the association with the notion of genes has its origin in Nazi ideology. In his example he wants to convince readers that whenever someone praises an athlete they are praising the athlete's strength and abilities as better than the other competitor and therefore this praise can be regarded as fascistic act. In Djokovic's case, it would be wrong to conclude that the NATO bombing created a great athlete and therefore "change[d] the genetic code" but rather that genetics made Djokovic a great tennis player. Since Serbian genes created

Djokovic as an athlete, it means that the whole nation “shares the same ancestry” and therefore Djokovic success is the success of the whole Serbian nation.

3.3. State, Citizenship and Serbianess

When it comes to the relationship between state, citizenship and national identity in sport it is very important to explore how Cavic claims his Serbian identity although he has never lived in Serbia and has double citizenship (American and Serbian). It is also significant to see how the press shapes stories about the role of the state and national character in claiming Cavic’s belonging to the Serbian nation.

In *Blic*, there are many contradictory articles that deal with Cavic’s connection to Serbia and the Serbian nation. There are several issues that should be addressed here. Firstly, it should be noted that there are mixed emotions evident in the press related to the Serbian state. There is a notion that the Serbian state does not do a lot to help and support Serbian athletes. For example, in the article “Abuse of Medals” from 18th of August, 2008, it is written that Cavic and Djokovic’s parents deserve praise for the success of their sons because they enabled them to be trained and skilled abroad instead of the Serbian state which should have taken the responsibility. In the article “Cavic will get a flat” (*Blic*, September, 2, 2008), a journalist explains that the least that Serbia should do is “to donate Cavic a flat”. This action was resulted by the fact that Cavic has never lived in Serbia before, and since he is competing for the Serbian state, it seems that the Serbian state wants him back so that “boundaries between states follow the boundaries of subjective identity” (Billig 1995: 24). Similarly, in the article “When fanfare stops playing” the author raises the following question: “Do we have to be reminded that Cavic is still waiting for a promised flat and that for the last championship he was training in Rome because in his

homeland he did not have good enough conditions to do so” (Blic, August, 3, 2009). I argue that the notion that Cavic is a Serb and claims Serbian identity creates a discourse in the press that presents Serbia as a true “homeland” to Cavic. Although Cavic can be regarded as more American than Serbian with respect to his personal relationships, educational background, childhood and language, he is presented as a symbol of the Serbian nation and as an instrument of hardening national identity.

In *Blic* it is hardly mentioned that Cavic actually lives abroad and it seems that this topic is entirely avoided. What is more, he does not speak the Serbian language so well. The article “Milorad, swim!” written on 29th of September 2008, represents the single example where Cavic’s upbringing in the US is pointed out. More precisely, the author states that Cavic acquired his greatness in America and that by this virtue he conquered Serbia, and now Serbia starts to conquer him. At the end the journalist states: “It is normal that he misses Serbia while his popularity and modest behavior opened doors for him in Serbia.” The assumption that it is “normal” that he misses Serbia seems to be made in relation to his national identity. The journalist probably is of the opinion that Cavic misses Serbia because Serbia is a state of Serbs. However, although Milorad Cavic lives in the US, dominant Serbian discourse always represented him as truly Serbian. Having in mind that Cavic defines himself as member of Serbian nation, the assumptions that are at work here suggest that Serbia as a state needs to bring together all members of the nation and therefore strengthen its sense of nationhood. Milorad Cavic, as a Serbian athlete is used in order to increase the sense of national belonging and in the next lines I will show more precisely some examples where the figures of athletes was used in this way.

3.4. Nationalism in Action

Finally, in order to show that sport provides nationalistic sentiments, I will use articles that report on Cavic's and Djokovic's political engagement in denying Kosovo's declared independence. I argue that by taking an active part in denying Kosovo's independence both Cavic and Djokovic emphasize their national belonging through focusing on "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) and therefore reinforce nationalism.

In the article "Kosovo's pledge," written in *Blic* on February 22, 2008 a journalist reports on the protest against Kosovo's independence which took place in Belgrade. Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on 12th of February and this protest was organized in order to show the world that "people from Serbia do not accept Kosovo's independence" (Blic, 22 February, 2008). It is important to note that the mass rally organized in Belgrade against Kosovo's declared independence was at first peaceful but then it turned to be violent because protestors attacked the US embassy and several others. Jelena Obradovic (2008) points out that violence that broke out during the mass protest in Belgrade was reminiscent of militant nationalism during the Milosevic's period. However, the article "Kosovo's pledge" does not report on attacks on embassies but only comment on what politicians said and among them was the tennis player Djokovic. After the short introduction, where the journalist explains the causes of the mass rally and describes that more than half a million people were chanting "Kosovo is Serbia" the article continues with Novak Djokovic's statement who reported via webcast:

This is one of the worst moments in the Serbian history and that's why I want to say thanks to everybody who came today to support this protest and send a message to the world that we are not tiny, we are united, and that we are ready to defend what is ours. I deeply regret that physically I am not with you, but I want everybody to know that my family and myself are with our hearts with Kosovo. The whole situation is really hard for

me to stand because we all know that history of Serbia was written in Kosovo. Kosovo is Serbia and that's the way it always should be. (Blic, 22 February, 2008)

Novak Djokovic showed support to people who came to the protest and by giving his speech he reinforced the myth about Kosovo which is strongly embedded in Serbian dominant discourse. To be clear, this myth comprises of the beliefs about the origin of the Serbian nation, and the notion that it is sublime. The focus of the whole myth is placed in Kosovo territory which represents the cradle of the Serbian nation. It is believed that Kosovo territory is sacred and as such contributed to the Serbian national identity. Ivan Colovic adds: "The development of the idea of national identity as centripetal force, which wrests the Serbian nation from the society of other nations, inspired the poet Matija Beckovic to imagine Serbia as an autonomous heavenly body, with Kosovo as its equator: Kosovo is the equator of the Serbian planet" (2002:66). Kosovo's independence might have direct implications on Serbian identity, which means that by accepting Kosovo's independence, Serbs will lose their identity, and what is more their "heart." Furthermore, throughout the article "Kosovo's pledge" (Blic, February 22, 2008) the journalist refers to Novak Djokovic as "Nole," a nickname of endearment. This narrative describes Djokovic's status in Serbian dominant discourse as a person who is popular among Serbs not only because he is a great athlete but because he verbalizes desires and hopes of the Serbian nation when it comes to Kosovo. Ross Poole argues that the nation exists through the consciousness of its member (1992: 32)". In this regard, the organized protest can be understood as bringing to the consciousness Kosovo's question and by doing it reasserting the Serbian national identity. Dokovic's reference to the numbers of protesters that appeared and the quote which said that "[protestors] send a message to the world that we are not tiny, that we are united, and that we are ready to defend what is ours" implies that Serbian national identity has being reinforced in relation to this event. More precisely, Cronnin and Mayal (1999:2) claim that sport

is not used for harming other's nation or other's ideology but rather to claim the nation which is imagined.

Similarly, Djokovic's political engagement was also described in the article "Novak Djokovic tomorrow visits the north of Kosovo" (Blic, 2 April, 2008) and "Nole was welcomed in Kosovska Mitrovica by 10 000 Serbs" (Blic, 3 April, 2008). The city of Kosovo called Kosovska Mitrovica is comprised of two parts divided by the bridge: north and south. The north part is populated by Serbs while the south of Kosovska Mitrovica is populated by Albanians. Novak Djokovic went to Kosovo to support Serbs who are often considered in Serbian public discourse to be endangered. Again, giving a speech in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica he recalled the same rhetoric as he did in the protest by saying: "This place is very deep in my heart, and I will come back here whenever I can to support the people who need it the most." (Blic, April 3, 2008) He uses the word "heart" which reinforces the emotional connection between Serbianess and Kosovo territory. He also says: "This is one of the indicators that there are a lot of us." However, he does not explain who "We" are, and it seems that he refers to Serbs because Kosovo in Serbian dominant discourse is seen to be a cradle of the Serbian nation. By doing this Djokovic claims his national belonging and therefore he seems to reinforce the sense of Serbianess.

In this chapter I argued that Djokovic and Cavic are seen as representatives of the nation and that by engaging in political projects they play a large role in claiming national belonging. In order to see how sport influences gender roles I am going to analyze the relationship between sports and gender in order to explore the implications of femininities and masculinities on nationalism as expressed in sport.

IV Chapter

Masculinities and Femininities

In this section I turn to masculinities and femininities in sports arenas. I analyze four female and male swimmers Nadja Higl and Milorad Cavic and two female and male tennis players Ana Ivanovic and Novak Djokovic. By looking at their representation in the daily newspaper, *Blic*, I will explore the differences between the depiction of males and females in the media. I argue that male athletes are differently portrayed than female athletes and that those portraits take different forms. More precisely, my intent is to show that on the one hand, male athletes are represented in a way that ensures their dominant position in sports. On the other hand, the press constructs femininity through depicting female athletes as sexualized and infantile rather than showing their achievements, capabilities and skills. I will use Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinities in order to explore media representations on female and male athletes further.

4.1 Femininity before athleticism

Many scholars have pointed out that male and female athletes are treated differently in sports media. For example, Duncan et al. assert that according to gender, athletes receive different amounts of media attention both in quantity and quality. Female athletes receive less media coverage and they are portrayed as “girls” and male athletes are usually portrayed as “gentlemen” (Duncan et al, quoted in Speer, 2001:105). Frey and Eityen point out that sport is traditionally used to subordinate women celebrating achievement of men and putting women in “a secondary status” (1991:516). In addition, not only are women differently represented in the media, but according to Mc Kay there is something about sport as an institution which allows

men to achieve control over women (as quoted in Stevenson, 2002). Wit in mind, in this subsection I am going to analyze the representation of Ana Ivanovic and Nadja Higl.

As I stated in the introduction, Ana Ivanovic is a popular tennis player who ranked very high on the ATP list and managed to win a Grand Slam title at the French Open. To start with, I am going to describe what I have found on Ivanovic's web site⁵. Having visited her site, it looked like I entered the wrong URL because I was confused with the amount of images that I thought to be a promotion of a fashion magazine. The website is colorful with a floral design set as a background. On the left, Ana Ivanovic pops up in different poses and dressed up in stylish skirts and outfit as a Hollywood superstar. For example, one photo shows her positioned lying down with full make-up, jewelry, and nail polish. In another photo, she is standing holding a disco ball as if she is ready for partying. The first impression that I get from Ivanovic's web presentation is that she is not an athlete (who might hold a tennis ball), rather a model. If you scroll down you will notice the latest news about her competitions, her blog and a photo gallery from the tennis court. After reading her biography, in the subsection about the awards she has received, I notice that among a large number of awards, many of them are not related to her tennis playing. More precisely, a lot of awards that Ana Ivanovic received were related to her looks. For instance, she received awards such as "the most beautiful body in the sport," "the sexiest female tennis player," "the best looking tennis player," and "the hottest female athlete." ⁶ However, not only is it important to see how Ana Ivanovic was portrayed on her website and represents herself to the

⁵ Ana Ivanovic. 15, April 2011 < <http://www.anaivanovic.com/>>

⁶ Ana Ivanovic. 15, April 2011 < <http://www.anaivanovic.com/>>

world, but it is also significant to see how she was depicted in a daily newspaper, *Blic*, and identify some of the main topic that emerge around her name.

A useful concept which will help to develop a further analysis of this representation is Connell's (1996) concept of hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities. According to Connell hegemonic masculinity ensures man's domination in all spheres of social practices and more precisely presents "the configuration of gender practice, which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (1995:77). When it comes to femininities his concept of "emphasized femininities" suggests that all femininities are subordinated and oriented to accommodate men's ascendancy (Connell, 1996). However, Connell does not elaborate how it is achieved. Taking that into consideration I will use Shippers (2007) concept of "hegemonic femininities " where she argues that some femininities can be subordinate to other kind of femininities. More precisely she asserts: "Hegemonic femininity consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (ibid: 94). My attempt is to show how femininities are represented in the field of tennis and swimming and to compare it with masculinities in order to argue that the different presentations of female and male athletes indeed put women in a subordinate position.

In the articles written in 2008 about Ana Ivanovic, some themes are given greater attention than others. For example, topics on Ivanovic's appearance and personality outnumbered the references to her achievement and her playing. Some authors like Billings (2000) argue that female athletes are invisible in the domain of sport and therefore sport remained the field of men's dominance. In Billings' example, he mentions that in the American survey list on the best

athletes of the 20th century, there were only eight women. However, there are some sports, such as tennis, where women receive more media attention, as my study shows but in a different way that men do.

In 27th of December 2008, *Blic Sport* released the headline “Ana, drop dead gorgeous.” The article examines Ivanovic’s ranking on WTA list referring to Canadian magazine “Globe and Mail” which posits Ivanovic on the top. More precisely it is written: “The Serbian female tennis player reached the highest position on the rank list as the most popular after she won Roland Gaross Tournament. She possesses an invaluable attraction: she is thin, 183 cm high and has extreme attractive femininity on the court. She has a little bit of a hard line stance when she plays, but off the court she is closed but always cheerful. It does not matter if she is in her half green half blue or a scarlet “Adidas” tennis outfit, the brunette attracted all the attention when it comes to tennis fashion in 2008.” This is one of a large number of articles which deals with Ivanovic’s beauty. These narratives suggest that Ana Ivanovic is seen as a women on the court, not as an athlete. Her femininity is emphasized as if she achieves her points by it. Her feminine character is put in opposition with her “sometimes” rough play. In that sense, the message that is conveyed seems to be that playing hard is not what women should do, and that kind of play should be challenged by Ivanovic’s “closed and cheerful character.”

In the article “Ana Ivanovic is winning Australian hearts” (*Blic Sport*, 21 December, 2008) it is written that not only is she the best tennis player, but she is the most attractive as well. Furthermore, media references to Ivanovic’ sexuality is represented through the article “Ana, the sexiest tennis player” with an introductory sentence: “With force Ana defeats her opponents on the court and with sensuality and beauty she breaks men’s hearts.” One more article reveals the same narrative which sexualizes Ivanovic’s game. The article, “Sexy Ana” (*Blic Sport*, 13 July,

2008), discusses her first placement on the WTA list. Nevertheless, I argue whenever her achievements are taken into consideration, her femininity and beauty is emphasized at the same time. In this vein, the article mentioned above shows these narratives:

Ana is number one. That is her position on the world rank with her Grand Slam title. However, she is also the first according to the other rankings as well. Especially as far as the male population at Wimbledon is concerned (Blic Sport, 13 July, 2008).

It is clear from the examples above that Ana Ivanovic is subject to sexualization. In Hargreaves 's opinion the female athletes serve "sporting pornography" and " strengthen the assumption that 'real' sports are for men and women are there to provide excitement and arousal" (quoted in Harris and Clayton, 2002: 404). Moreover, in my attempt to make this study more quantitative and count articles where Ana Ivanovic appeared in either task relevant or task irrelevant way⁷ (ibid, 406), I found very hard to do this due to the impossibility to make a difference between these two tasks. In other words, a lot of articles refer both to Ivanovic's athleticism and her female characteristics in the same way. As Buysse and Embser Hembert point out, "female athletes are athletes but female first" (2004:68).

In the article "I am going to be the best in the world" (Blic, 14 December, 2008) the journalist reports on Ana Ivanovic's ambition to get back to number one on the WTA list after she fell down. Ivanovic talks about her training and willingness to work hard in order to achieve her goal. Nonetheless, in the corner of the article there is a mention that she is in a relationship with the famous tennis player Fernando Verdasco. In the same manner as I argue above, Ivanovic's private life is put next to her athleticism. Stevenson (2002:212) notes that references to "sportswomen's feminine credentials" such as boyfriends or husbands are important for the

⁷ According to Harris and Clayton (2002:406), task relevant commentary takes into consideration player's athleticism while irrelevant commentary refers to athletes only in terms of their appearance or gender with no references to skills, achievements and playing.

audience to reinforce gender roles. It seems to me that Verdasco's role in reassuring Ivanovic's femininity has a big part here as well. Since Ana Ivanovic is depicted as the most beautiful and most attractive tennis player, in order to maintain her "feminine morality" and fit into appropriate gender roles, she needs to have a boyfriend. This also means that by having a partner, she will not be labeled as "promiscuous" since the attractiveness can be a trigger for this stereotype. In contrary to this, her relationship with Verdasco shows her fidelity and describes her character in a way that underscores Ivanovic's appropriate gender behavior. On the other hand, Verdasco is presented as a womanizer, and this depiction also strengthens the assumption of gender appropriate roles where women should be loyal and men are allowed to fool around. In the article "Ana Ivanovic tames Verdasco" the journalist reports:

Since Fernando Verdasco has been in relationship with the most beautiful tennis player in the world, the successful Spanish tennis player can say goodbye to his Casanova reputation. Although he was considered to be don Juan, a seducer who was with some of the most attractive women, he seems to be falling in love with Ana Ivanovic (Blic,19 December, 2008).

In addition, when it comes to Ivanovic's appropriate gender behavior, the articles in *Blic* highlight one more issues which is important to be analyzed. This issue is related to Ivanovic's sensibility. In several articles, her emotionality is being emphasized. For instance, in the article "Ana: I start crying even when I read a book"(Blic Sport,17 July, 2008) her emotionality is given priority to her athleticism and she is portrayed as a sensitive, vulnerable woman who does not hide her emotions. Moreover Ana Ivanovic adds: "On the court I learn how to control my emotions". These kinds of narratives go hand in hand with pictures followed by articles which show Ana in an emotional mood, almost unable to control her emotions. Although these emotions are different in their nature, what is important here is that they depict Ana as an emotional person.

The Figure 1 is followed by the article quoted above, portrayed Ana with her trophy where it seems that she is about to start crying out of her happiness.

Another figure that I found important to analyze is from the article "The most difficult decision in the career" (Blic Sport, 11 August, 2008, Figure 2) where Ivanovic announced that she will not compete in The Olympic games in Beijing. In this picture she is obviously crying due to her desperate situation. These photos carry meanings that not only is it allowed for the female athletes to express their emotions, but it seems that it is desirable to do so in order to stay feminine enough in the male dominated professions such as sport. In order to strengthen my argument, it is important to see how Novak Djokovic is portrayed on and off the court in comparison to Ana Ivanovic.

In my analysis of Novak Djokovic that I am going to briefly turn to it is visible that the narratives and images surrounding him differ a great deal from Ivanovic's portrayals. By reading all the articles that refer to Novak Djokovic in 2008 in *Blic Sport*, I noticed that Novak Djokovic is primarily portrayed through traditional male traits such as control, skill, power and aggression. Moreover, his images show him in mostly active positions on the court. Figure number 3 is just one of examples that feature Djokovic in action. In this photo (Figure 3) Djokovic is on the court represented as if he has just gained a point. His body is featured in physical manner with fist is in the air and holding a racket. It can be noticed that his muscles are emphasized as well. His look is serious and thus suggestive of determination. It seems that he is determined to win. The quantitative analysis that I conducted on Djokovic shows that from the 35 images that appeared in *Blic Sport* in 2008, 30 images, or 85 percent, depict Djokovic on the court with a tennis racket in action. In only 2 images Djokovic is dressed in a daily outfit. On the other hand, Ivanovic is

featured only 40 percent of the time as active on the court (11 images out of 22). These figures clearly show that Djokovic is overwhelmingly portrayed in a physical manner.

4.2. Cavic's gentlemanliness

Deborah Stevenson argues that “discourses on femininity and sexuality that underpin women’s sport are most visible in tennis.” Tennis is considered to be an appropriate sport for women or as Buysse and Embser Hembert call it “gender neutral” (2004:69). It seems that swimming differs from tennis when it comes to women’s portrayals. Nadja Higl is an example of how media narratives represent her as an athlete. As I stated in the introduction, Higl won a gold medal at the world Championship in 2009 in Rome. In my further analyses I will compare depictions of Higl and Cavic in *Blic* in order to show the differences that have occurred in the press.

First of all, it is visible that Higl is featured less than Cavic in *Blic*. The media coverage is more focused on Milorad Cavic, his achievements. Although there is focus on Cavic private life as well, I argue that his representation is depicted in masculine manner. I argue that according to Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity Cavic’s performances and achievements are given priority to Higl’s. What is more, Cavic is presented in typical masculine manner while in comparison to Ivanovic, Higl is depicted as a child. These representations in swimming fit into Duncan, Messner and Jensen’s findings that media treats male and female athletes differently by often referring to females as ladies or girls and referring to males as men or young men (cited in Kennedy, 1999) In this vein, my analysis will show that Milorad Cavic is featured as a gentlemen and as such he reinforces masculine stereotypes in sports.

Having visited Cavic's website I encountered following statement by Cavic:

Swimming has been a large part of my life and has influenced me as a man in every way I can think possible. Ever since I learned how to swim, the water has opened up a world of creativity to me and has introduced me to the notion of competitiveness.⁸

In Cavic's writing about himself, there are several issues that can be identified as relating to masculinities. All of these issues shed light on constructing manliness in the role of sport and competitiveness. First of all, it should be acknowledged that in English translations of Cavic's biography it was written that swimming has constructed him as "a man". On the other hand, in Serbian translation the word man was replaced with a word "human being." Some authors like Lever and Schafer argue that sport construct boys to be men. (quoted in Messner 1989:74). Messner (1989) also understands sports as a way for men to learn some skills as competition, toughness and asserts that these characteristics are representative of masculinity. If I take into account that Cavic says that sport has taught him how to compete, than it seems to me that swimming has shaped Cavic's manliness indeed.

However, in *Blic* there are some other issues that should be identified further when it comes to the construction of masculinities. In the newspaper *Blic* it is visible that masculinities are being represented through the figure of Cavic as a great man by emphasizing his personal traits such as a compassionate, resilience, committing, and being a gentleman.

In several articles Cavic is described as a person with a great heart who should be a role model to everyone, especially kids. In the article "Cavic and Djilas among pupils" he visited schools and advised pupils on how to be persistent and self-esteemed in order to succeed. He is

⁸ Milorad Cavic. Biography. 10. April, 2011 <<http://www.miloradcavic.com/eng/#biografija>>

considered to be “a champion of a big heart and children should try to follow his path” (Blic, 28 March, 2008). Nadja Higl was also involved in campaign promoting International Youth Day. In the article “It is important pay attention to youth” She is quoted as saying: “I am not a good speaker, but I want to tell you that only if you believe in yourself can you succeed” (Blic Sport, 13 August, 2009). Moreover, adjectives that are ascribed to Cavic tell that he is indeed represented as a true role model. In an article from 26th of August, 2008 in *Blic* “ Children wanted in a swimming pool because of Cavic” It is written that day by day there is a larger and larger number of children who want to be like Cavic. By reading about Cavic and Higl, I argue that Cavic is represented more like a role model to young people while Nadja Higl is not. In Higl’s words, she is “not a good speaker” and according to that she is already not as good as Cavic

Moreover, articles which deal with Cavic’s emotional and love life present him as an object of desire to many girls. In the article “Cavic broke up with a girlfriend” it is written: “Cavic is again available after ending his relationship with Nadezda Curcic, and many girls will be excited to hear this. The young swimmer, one of the most wanted Serbian athletes said that the reason for breaking up are Olympic games in Beijing and motivation to prepare for it, and due to this, he needs peace and concentration” (Blic, 5 June, 2008). These narratives suggest that Cavic is seen as someone whose commitment to sports is more important than his love relationships. This also shapes Cavic as rational person who is not depending on his emotions. In order to underscore this assumption of Cavic for whom sport is a priority, *Blic* covered in 4th of July, 2009 the headline “Branka: Cavic lives like a robot”, where it is explained that his girlfriend has broke up with him because he lives like a robot and does not have time for love. On the other hand, in the same article Cavic has revealed his behavior in a relationship: “I am not someone who likes to

play games in the relationship. When I am in a serious relationship I am absolutely devoted to a girl. I love to be a gentleman in every situation.” By reading this article, it seems that what it is implied here is that Cavic is a committed person either in a relationship or in sports. He is represented in a serious athlete and what is more, as a committed future husband. The narrative when Cavic says that he “loves to be a gentleman in every situation” refers to stereotypical gender roles and orders “what men should do and what women should.” Furthermore, his depiction as a gentleman is shown in the article “Neighbor Cavic” (Blic, September, 2009). The journalist interviewed his neighbors and this is how a shop accountant speaks of Cavic: “He is a wonderful person. Always nice and decent. He buys snacks etc, but when he has guest he buys vodka and whiskey.” These articles represent Cavic’s masculinity in different contexts. His masculinized character can be seen both in his private and professional life, which often reveals his commitment either to his love relationships, or his professional life. From these narratives it is seen that his professionalism is emphasized in a way to show that Cavic chooses to train hard instead dating girls. On the other hand, his great personality and gentlemanliness is put in focus as well . These articles feature Cavic’s masculinity in two different way and thereby supports Connell and Masserschmidt’s (2005) point out that “masculinities are configurations of social practices” that usually take different forms according to different contexts (2005:863). These narratives suggest that one form of masculinity is Cavic’s strong commitment and professionalism when it comes to swimming and another is his masculine behavior where he is depicted as a gentleman and a real man “drinking vodka and whiskey.”

4.3. Infantilized femininity

In comparison to Cavic, Higl's skills and achievements are not emphasized in a serious way. What is more, Higl is not sexualized as Ivanovic is although they are both the same age. I argue that Higl is featured as an athlete whose achievements are devalued due to her infantilized representations.

For example, I encountered the headline "For mom's kid, fruity cake with raspberries"(Blic Sport, August, 2 , 2009). In the first part of the article, Higl's mother talks about her daughter's competition victory and answers questions about the family's reaction to Higl's success. While it is obvious that the journalist's attempt is to relate all of Higl's success to her family, as if their relationship is very strong, one question is particularly important for further analysis.

The best swimmer in the world is probably craving for mamma's kitchen? When it comes to savory dishes, she likes the most when I cook lasagna. In spite of that she likes sweets very much. Everything that is made from chocolate Nadja adores. Nadja likes the chocolate cake 'Reforma' and milk cake the most. She especially likes when I make fruit cake from raspberries and strawberries. I will make some of these tomorrow to welcome her. (Blic Sport, August, 2 , 2009).

In these narratives Higl is represented as if she has a strong attachment to family. Her mother prepares her meals and it recalls Higl's childhood when she assumingly fed her with her favorite dishes. She is also primarily portrayed as a daughter which puts her in infantilized position. Having this in mind sports can indeed "reduce female athletes to adolescence and prepubescent status" (Daddirio, as cited in Kennedy, 2002: 63).

In order to strengthen my argument, it will be useful to explore the images of Nadja Higl and see if she has been portrayed differently than other athletes. In the article "A dolphin on Nadja's back" (Blic, 10 September, 2009) there are again references to Higl's parents, especially to her father and his reaction to Higl's victory. Besides this, the image of Higl that follows the

whole article is more than significant for my analysis. In Figure 4, Higl is holding a stuffed dolphin toy in her arms. She is smiling nicely as if she is happy that she got a toy. This photo carries a meaning that Higl is a child who plays with toys.

According to this photo, her achievements are not taken seriously and her athleticism is devalued. Rowe, McKay, and Miller argue that “the presence of physically powerful female bodies poses a threat to ‘hegemonic masculinity’ thus precipitating male ‘hysteria’ and attempts by men to contain women’s aspirations and resistance” (as quoted in Stevenson, 2002: 213). In other words, this infantilization of Higl’s figure can be a good tool to ensure that hegemonic masculinities are not threatened (Stevenson, 2002).

In the next lines I argue that Higl’s physicality is de-emphasized and that whenever her athleticism is taken into account it is devalued due to the narratives which depict Higl as a child. In the article “Rome makes my dream come true” (Blic Sport, 26 Decembar, 2009) it discusses Higl’s success with the opening line: quietly and unobtrusively, Higl started her international career at Univerzijada competition in Belgrade. Although there are some references about her “hard work talent and persistence”, she is primarily depicted as “quiet and unobtrusive”. In the same article the journalist describes the moment when Higl realized that she had won the competition and it is written: “Shy smile at the end of the race in 200m breaststroke technique, proved that in a Balkan country one more champion has been born” (Blic Sport, 26 Decembar, 2009). By reading this comment, it seems to me as if her shy smile brought her a medal, and not the best result.

In the article “I wait to wake up” (Blic Sport, 11 July 2009) Higl describes the moment of winning in the World Championship in Rome. She says: “I was shaking in the beginning, but

once I got into the water, all the stage fright was gone.” Furthermore she adds: “When I climbed the stage on the winning ceremony, it was very hard to hide tears.” After reading these lines I could not help but wonder whether the journalist’s questions were leading and as a way to emphasize her emotions. One might argue that media narratives in Nadja’s case were constructed in order to represent her as a child. In this sense it is noteworthy to cite the articles when her relationship to her father has been of great importance.

The daughter-parent connection was seen in the articles that I quoted above, but the article “Nadja’s father tattooed the result on the back of his head” (Blic Sport, 4 August, 2009) shed special light on Higl’s achievement as a swimmer. The whole article discusses Higl’s success but from her father’s perspective. Higl’s father promised to tattoo the result on the back of his head if Higl won the race. Furthermore, he describes Higl’s childhood by saying the following: Nadja as a child was afraid of water. Because I was a lifeguard I had to teach her how to swim, although she did not want it. I was persistent. After some time she started taking up swimming classes” (Blic Sport, 4 August, 2009). As Higl’s father represented here, it looks like Higl’s success is actually the success of her father. If he had not been persistent enough and taught her how to swim, she would not have achieved her success. I connect these narratives with Milicevic’s (2006) point arguing that during the transitional period in Serbia after the Milosevic regime there was a return to the patrilineal system. She explains that patrilineal system “creates relationships among male kinsmen created formal social structures, and women were seen merely as links between fathers and sons” (2006: 269). Hence, it is important to emphasize that her personal trainer is her brother as well. However, that is not to say that Higl’s success was ascribed to her father or her brother but more that her male kinship played a big role in Higl’s infantilized representation.

To sum up, as I showed above there are different kinds of masculinities and femininities that take part in media generated narratives about Ana Ivanovic, Novak Djokovic, Milorad Cavic and Nadja Higl. It is important to note once more that masculinity and femininity are not unified categories and take different forms according to different contexts (Connell and Masserschmidt, 2006). In my analysis I showed that masculinity represented in Novak Djokovic's case depicts him as a professional athlete whereas representations in Cavic's case delineate his masculine character as professional and a gentleman. According to Shippers (2007), femininities can work in a way to subordinate each other. Hence, one may argue that sexualized Ivanovic's femininity can subordinate Ivanovic's infantilized one, my analysis suggest they both work in the way to devalue female's athleticism.

V Chapter Gendered Nationalism in Sport

In the previous two chapters my aim was to show how sports serve nationalism and how athletes are used in order to claim national identity. Moreover, I demonstrated in my examples that sport is highly gendered and as such it enacts masculinities and femininities in order to assure the privileged position of men and unprivileged position of women. More precisely, in my analysis I showed that women are presented differently in sports than men in that women's athleticism is taken less into account. In this chapter I will go even further and try to see the intersection between sport, masculinities, femininities, and nationalism. I argue that by highlighting masculinities, sport constructs and reinforces Serbian national identity. Moreover, masculinities in sport play a large role in creating national belonging. I argue that female athletes

are not as visible as male athletes when it comes to claiming national belonging and that their femininities have been used in a way to emphasize athletes' masculinities.

The relationship between nationalism and masculinities has been explored a lot among many scholars. It has been argued that nationalism cannot be studied without a gender perspective, in other words that nationalism is always gendered (Nagel:1998; Walby, 1992; Athias and Yuval-Davis: 1989; Enloe: 1990; McClintock: 1993). Analyzing the connection between masculinities and nationalism, Enloe points out that “nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hopes” (1990: 45). Enloe argues that men and women have different roles in relation to the nation and men are often the ones who are seen as real actors while women usually take minor roles (ibid, 1990). Similarly, according to Nagel, nationalism consists of “masculine institutions, masculine processes, and masculine activities.(1998:243)”. Taking all of this above into consideration, I look at how masculinized nationalism works through sports. According to Robidoux (2002), sport enables national identity to embody some characteristics such as bravery, stoicism, courage, and proficiency. In the same vein, I argue that Serbian male athletes Djokovic and Cavic are crucial for defining Serbian national identity through masculinized characteristics.

5.1. Sport as a metaphor for war

The article “ Beyond an Excuse” (Blic, June 17, 2008) is of great importance for my analysis because it refers to several issues significant for the further discussion. It explores “a playing culture” and “a culture of defeat.” While reading this article, my main impression was that the journalist wants to connect sports defeat with a “political defeat” related to Kosovo’s independence or more precisely the possibility to change the declared unilateral independence of

Kosovo. This article begins in a specific epic manner, with lots of metaphors and difficult language, which is reminiscent of epic songs that refer to characters who are represented as national heroes. Ivan Colovic argues that heroes in epic songs are an “embodiment of Serbian national virtue” (2002: 60). These songs are considered to be a very important part of the Kosovo myth and they are strongly embedded in Serbian nationalism. (see Colovic, 2002). I will quote at some length :

The encounter of the greatest suggests that the battle should proceed to the end. This encounter is a game which can make you greater. Their balls are like rivaling war correspondents. These battles are temporarily over, but not done. There are going to be many more. Culture of defeat is one of the most painful issues in our consciousness (Blic, June 17, 2008).

As I already mentioned I found this article difficult to read and understand since the journalist uses a metaphorical language. The story becomes much clearer when he mentions Novak Djokovic. I can relate this article to Wellard’s (2002) argument about sports as a battlefield where masculinities can be easily expressed through the aggressive nature of male sport. In this light he regards injuries as battle scars. Similarly, a journalist’s report evokes the assumption that sport is indeed a battlefield which is created only for men. What is more, his reporting echoes warfare by seeing the balls used in sport as messages from war. Taking into consideration the political unrest due to the unilateral declaration of Kosovo and impossibility to retain Kosovo as a part of Serbia, I argue that sport in this period was particularly important for political purposes and therefore sports event were seen metaphorically as battlefields with a goal to return Kosovo. For example,

Gomberg (2002) considers sports to be a vehicle for patriotic feelings which reassert national identity and contribute to the mobilization for war. It would be misleading to suggest that sport was used to create war in order to “correct injustice.” Instead, it will be more useful to see sport as a way to reassert and strengthen national identity after sports defeats and more importantly political defeats which I explained in the introduction. As it was written in the article “Beyond an Excuse” (Blic, June 17, 2008) “defeat is the most painful issue in our consciousness,” this narrative might suggest that the journalist alludes not only to sports defeat, and the loss of the Kosovo territory, but this rhetoric can presumably be related to the wars of 90’s and the impossibility to create a Greater Serbia. In Serbia, the loss of Kosovo is widely recognized as a political defeat among the majority of political positions except for the one liberal party. On the other hand, the impossibility to create a greater Serbia is seen as a defeat among right wing nationalist parties. Having in mind that Serbia encountered large numbers of political defeats, which could have an impact on Serbian national identity, it seems that sport defeats should be received with pride in order not to threaten Serbianess.

Another article but now with masculinized rhetoric embedded in metaphors of war is an article “One hundredth of a second reality” (Blic, 19 August, 2008). Similar to the article above, it justifies Djokovic’s and Cavic’s defeats. What is more, the article strongly emphasizes Cavic’s and Djokovic’s masculinized athletic performance:

Their performances prove that the game without joy, vehement, excitement, tears and yelling, rivalry, exerting energy, it is not a game. It is not even the purpose of sports. (Blic, 19 August, 2008)

Sport is understood as an arena for expressing characteristics which are highly masculinized and shape the notion of manliness. This narrative suggests that sport is indeed represented as a gendered institution where “gender is naturalized”(cited in Anderson, 2008:

260). According to the journalist sport is a vessel to exert male energy. I can relate the notion of “exerting energy” with “biological reductionism” which explains gendered behavior in terms of biology (Gatens, 1996:4). It seems that sports is a good way to channel energy, otherwise one may argue that energy can become violent. For instance, Adi Adams, Eric Anderson and Mark McCormack argue that sport can be used to strengthen gender appropriate behavior or as “a mechanism of masculinization” in order to prevent feminine boys from becoming gays” (2010: 279). In addition, masculinity is expressed through Cavic’s representation as “a gentlemen and sportsman” (Blic, 19 August, 2008) who has been praised for accepting defeat in “a gentlemanly style.” Furthermore, there is again a comparison to war when the journalist says: “patience and wisdom taught Milorad and Novak how to bleed in the solitude of their feats.” (Blic, 19 August, 2008). The journalist wants to convey a message that those athletes are sacrificing themselves for sublime goals, like soldiers in wars. This rhetoric reminded me of Colovic’s (2002) argument that sport can be seen as “a military training” (279) or that in Yugoslavia “support for sport was a preparation for war” (282). Billing also sees the connection between sports and war acknowledging that sports use the language which “echoes warfare” (1995:123).

One more issue should be addressed here is the notion of “collective weakness.” In the article “One hundredth of a second reality” that journalist says: “[Djokovic’s and Cavic’s] failures are collective weaknesses which they wanted to rectify” (Blic, 19 August, 2008). It seems that just because they are men and possess characteristics which are usually ascribed only to men they have a right to correct the injustice and “collective weakness.” The collective weakness can be also understood similarly to my point that I draw about the political defeat and impossibility to get Kosovo back. I argue that although Serbs have been defeated in their political project which concerns Kosovo, their defeat can be categorized in Enloe’s words as “ masculinized

humiliation” (1990:45) . In other words, by emphasizing the notion of manliness in these narratives, humiliation is resulting in construction of masculinities in order to save a national pride.

5.2 Masculinized national traits

To strengthen my argument about nationalism and masculinities expressed through sports and their role in constructing Serbian national identity I examine the article “Lecture from Melbourne” which includes these passages:

I believe that most of you have cried this weekend. I believe that you cried out of happiness when you realized that Novak Djokovic won The Australian Open tournament. In spite of his win, as a real Serb he manages to fit in one more task. Although characteristics such as pride, defiance, provocation, usually brings us only disdain from the rest of the world , Novak managed to use them in a charming way to score a point. (Blic, January 30, 2008)

In this article, characteristics such as “pride, defiance, provocation” are not only ascribed to Djokovic but to Serbian nation as well which means that athletes represent their nation through their skills and characteristics (Wong and Trumper, 2002). I argue that Djokovic is represented as “a real Serb, ”who possesses masculinized characteristics quoted above.

However, as Nagel points out, sometimes it is difficult to differentiate characteristics such as “bravery, duty, cowardice” as either masculinized or nationalist since they are creating both the nation and manliness (1998:252). It seems that her argument can be used here as well due to

impossibility to define “pride, defiance, provocation” as masculinized or nationalistic but they suggest creating Serbian national identity through these characteristics.

In all of three articles that I analyzed “Beyond an Excuse” (Blic, June 17, 2008), “Hundredth second reality” (Blic, 19 August, 2008), “Lecture from Melbourne”(Blic, January 30, 2008), one of the significant markers of “banal nationalism” deserves attention. “Banal nationalism operates with prosaic routine words, which takes nation for granted, and which in so doing, inhabit them. “Small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making “our” national identity unforgettable.” (Billing, 1995: 93) In Billing’s words “banal nationalism is embedded in the words such as we, our, here” (ibid: 94). Similarly, by examining language in the article “One hundredth of a second reality,” the use of some words signifies nationalist discourse. For example it was written: “Cavic and Djokovic are the ones who won our heart” (Blic, 19 August, 2008). The word “our” can be a marker for the people, the country, and the nation. This means that by saying “our,” journalist invokes national identity. The article “Letter from Melbourne” is also one of good examples because the journalist claims: “[pride defiance provocation] bring us usually only hatred from the rest of the world “ (Blic, January 30, 2008). Here, the word “us” is used in a similar way as the word “our” and it might refer to national identity. The same and even more obvious reference to national identity is invoked by the expressions “our consciousness” (Blic, June 17, 2008) and “collective weakness” (Blic, 19 August, 2008). All of these are markers embedded in language which are a less visible form of practices and they are of great importance for reminding people on their nationhood on a daily basis (Billing, 1995).

5.3. Sporting Heroes

One of the most significant events that shed light on the nationalist discourse and masculinity in Serbia happened in Eindhoven during the European Championship in March, 2008. Milorad Cavic, collected a gold medal for 50 meter butterfly competition at the European swimming championship. However, he was suspended from further competitions because he appeared at the ceremony wearing a T-shirt that read “Kosovo is Serbia”. A disciplinary panel meeting, considered it to be “a clear political action” (Blic, 22 March, 2008) that violated rules and expelled Cavic from further competitions. All of these caused a lot of reactions in the Serbian public discourse. I am going to demonstrate how this event produces and reinforces the intersection of masculinity and nationalism in Serbian dominant discourses and as illustrations I will use three articles which covered this topic.

In the article “Cavic’s suspension is a shame of Europe” (Blic, 22 March, 2008) a journalist describes the event and asserts that “Cavic stoically received the decision [to be suspended].” In this narrative, Cavic’s stoicism is emphasized and he is represented not only as a great athlete but as a great person as well. If I take into consideration another article written by Zorica Tomic, “Chivalry” (Blic, 9 September, 2009) then it becomes clear that Cavic’s greatness is masculinized in a certain way. As a prominent professor in Serbia and a columnist in several newspapers, Zorica Tomic’s opinion has a significant impact in Serbian dominant discourse. She teaches the subject Culture and Media in two universities in Belgrade. One month after this article she was named as the ambassador of Serbia to UNESCO, Paris.⁹ In addition, I will quote her words: “In a period of absolute crises of morality and values, where even sport is not immune to frauds, Cavic’s statement is not only a chivalrous sign of a born winner, but should be

⁹ Megatrend Univerzitet. 15 May, 2011
< http://www.megatrend.edu.rs/vest_strana.php?v=980&language=1>

understood as a model to our public life.” Furthermore she writes: “Cavic accepted the result spontaneously and with praise and he said that the fact that his rival swam so well is the right motivation for him to continue to compete.” (Blic, 8 August, 2009). Writing in *Blic*, she describes Cavic’s amazing personality by emphasizing a typical male trait: chivalry. Again, the notion of Cavic’s resilience is being in focus since he accepted the defeat by Phelps in a manly way. It seems as if she tries to show Cavic’s personality through his strong character.

By taking into consideration her status in academic circles and the fact that she was positioned as ambassador of Serbia to UNESCO, one may conclude that Tomic’s opinion is highly appreciated by political elite in Serbia and therefore her opinion expressed in writing can play a big role in creating Cavic’s as a role model. Having in mind these narratives that appeared in *Blic* around Cavic’s figure, it looks like Cavic gained a hero status.

For example, in the article “Cavic suspension is a shame of Europe” president Boris Tadic said that what happened is a big injustice because Cavic is “a great athlete and even greater person who represents the country in the best possible way” (Blic, 22 March, 2008) . One more comment made by a handball player in the same article was that: “Everyone has a right to express his or her opinion. It is normal that he loves his country. Cavic is a great person and an amazing athlete.” All of these comments portrayed Cavic’s greatness which can symbolize Cavic’s status in Serbian dominant discourse. By wearing a T-shirt with “Kosovo is Serbia” written on it, he gained a status of a hero. Tunner argues that sports celebrities are more popular than for instance actors. He notes that the reason for that is that they are related to the nation through national sports and therefore they represent the nation (cited in Allain, 2011). Indeed by wearing T- shirt “Kosovo is Serbia” Cavic was seen as a representative of Serbs. One of the athletes in the article “Cavic’s suspension is a shame of Europe” (Blic, 22 March, 2008) claims: “As a Serb I

understand Cavic's move and I am absolutely thankful to him. He did not offend anyone with his T-shirt but he showed solidarity with his nation."

Wearing a T-shirt proclaiming that "Kosovo is Serbia" made Cavic a hero. His depiction as a great person and amazing athlete not only gained him the status of a hero but, by showing solidarity and understanding with the Serbian nation, he became a good representative of the whole nation. By saying this, it seems that the characteristics represented by Cavic might be ascribed to Serbianess as well.

5.4. A masculinized "spectacle"

The event in Eindhoven was particularly significant because it carried symbolic meaning through the imagery of Cavic and his behavior. The whole event might be regarded as "a spectacle" in McClintock's words (1993:66). For example, McClintock explains the Tweede Trek (Second Trek) as a spectacle which was a central symbol of Afrikaans history and created the notion of collective identity. She asserts that "Nationalism takes shape through the visible , ritual organization of fetish objects: flags, uniforms, maps, anthems national flowers, national cuisines and architecturesas well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle- in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular culture and so on (McClintock, 1993: 71). In a similar way, Cavic's action at the ceremony can be considered as a spectacle because it includes all the components that McClintock lists. For example, the spectacle works in the way that the question of Kosovo has been fetishized. in a way that has a direct impact on Serbian national identity. Recalling the Kosovo myth, it seems that the dominant nationalist discourse in Serbia understands the loss of Kosovo as the loss of Serbian national identity since it is perceived as a cradle of the Serbian nation.

Taking into consideration that the ceremony in Eindhoven can be considered as a spectacle with embedded masculine's characteristics embodied through Cavic, two more issues should be addressed here. In order to argue that the aim of Cavic's action was to strengthen Serbian national identity I should acknowledge two important markers which symbolize nationalism.

Cavic's actions were widely covered by many international media such as CNN and almost each and every outlet of the Serbian media. The two pictures that were highly recognized during that time are shown below. The first one (Figure 5) appeared in *Blic* under the already analyzed article "Cavic's suspension is a shame for Europe" (Blic, 22 March, 2008). Cavic expression was happy, and moreover, it seems as if he was excited. He is placed, in showing a three fingered salute front of a Serbian flag. I argue that these markers are particularly important in constructing and reinforcing Serbian national identity. The second photo (Figure 6) shows how Cavic actually behaved during the ceremony. Before announcing Cavic as a winner, he climbed the stage with the flag wide open and with the T-shirt "Kosovo is Serbia." During the announcement, while the national anthem was playing, he wrapped himself in the Serbian flag.

Firth argues that flags today "perform a symbolic function, have a focus for sentiments about society and symbolized the sacred character of the nation" (Billing, 1995: 39). According to Jarvie (cited in Hunter, 2003) by removing national emblems from sports competitions, the tension between the nations will be decreased as well. Billing notes that there is a distinction between "mindless flags" which are usually unwaved and can be seen on the streets, buildings etc. However, he explains that when the country's sovereignty is endangered, flags become more important and symbolize nationhood and homeland. (Billing, 1995: 41) Having that in mind, Billing's argument can be applied to the event that happened in Eindhoven. Although there were

comments in the article “Cavic suspension is a shame of Europe” made by Cavic’s trainer that this act and T-shirt “Kosovo is Serbia” is similar as if someone from Germany put a sign “Bavaria is Germany,” (Blic, 22 March 2008), it should be acknowledged the context in which this act had happened and political meaning that T-shirt carried. More precisely, it was a period when Kosovo declared its independence and Serbia highly disputed it. Wearing a T-shirt “Kosovo is Serbia” had a highly political message and thus cannot be analogized with the context of Germany since Bavaria is recognized as Germany. What is more, the issue that attracts attention as well is a three fingered salute. In the picture followed by the article “Cavic’s suspension is a shame of Europe” I argue that the three fingered salute is used as a marker to represent in Firth’s words “a sacred character of the nation and it is revered by loyal citizens and ritually defiled by those who wish to make a protest.” (quoted in Billing, 1995: 39). This salute has been widely accepted as a national symbol. However, what is striking here is that this salute was used by soldiers during the war operations in the 90’s and therefore is considered it to be a symbol for nationalism and a project of Greater Serbia. Moreover a three fingered salute is used mostly when Serbian nationalist want to assert their support of Serbian identity. By using the national markers such as T-shirt “Kosovo is Serbia”, three fingered salute and claiming Serbian national belonging, it seems that Cavic’s heroic status reinforces Serbian national identity. In order to see how female athletes serve nationalist projects I am going to turn to the next subsection.

5.5 The role of female athletes in representing the nation

My attempt to explore the nature of the relationship between female athletes Ana Ivanovic and Nadja Higl, was harder due to the fact that I found very little articles that concerns their role in claiming national belonging. Nor did I find many articles suggesting their place in the

nationalist project. Before drawing a conclusion about my findings I am going to refer to very few articles that I found to be referring to the relationship between female athletes and Serbian national identity.

First of all, it should be noted that Nadja Higl's name does not look like a Serbian one, and she seems not to be originally a Serb. This can shed light on her representation in claiming national belonging and my argument that female athletes are used differently than men in relation to their nation. This can be also one of the reasons why her figure is not related to Serbianess. More precisely, as I showed in the previous chapter, Higl's depiction as primarily infantilized is strongly embedded in her representation by the media. On the other hand, it seems that Ivanovic's beauty and sexuality takes priority over her abilities as an athlete. It may indicate that although female athletes are almost invisible when it comes to claiming national belonging their feminine representations would be suited as a way for them to represent the nation.

In the articles in *Blic* written about Ana Ivanovic, the only way she references to Serbianess, was through her beauty or love relationships. In the article "I am going to be the best in the world" (Blic, 14 December, 2008) that I have already analyzed in the previous chapter, the journalist describes Ana Ivanovic's ambition to be number one. In the highlighted part of the article written with bold letters there is a sub headline "Serbs before Verdasco." In the small paragraph below the article, yet very visible, this headline draws a lot of attention. The journalist's commentary suggests that she is not going to cheer only for her Spanish boyfriend which is ranked 16th on the ATP list. In other words she says: "There has to be a distinction between private and professional life and that of course Serbs have a priority." By saying this and emphasizing her quote in the sub headline, her reference seems to be a justification for dating a Spanish tennis player instead of someone who has a Serbian origin. Moreover, if I take into

account that Cavic dates only Serbian girls, one may argue that her national belonging has to be justified in order to relate her figure to the Serbian nation. One more article that also emphasizes Ivanovic's attitude towards Serbian men is an article "I am planning to win more trophies and then I can get married" (Blic Sport, 11 June, 2008). Although the article deals with Ivanovic's success and her reaction to it, there is again a part which is highlighted with a sub headline "Our men are the most beautiful" in which she says that she traveled all over the world but she is assured that men in Serbia are, in her words, "the best and the most beautiful." By taking into account her love relationship with a Spanish guy, this seems again as if she needs to justify her choice over Serbs.

The article "Rodriguez is bothered with the beauty of Jelena and Ana" (Blic Sport, 1 October, 2008) reports on the famous tennis trainer Carlo Rodriguez's comment on the lack of charisma in Ivanovic and Jankovic and that they are not top tennis players. Throughout the article Radmilo Armenulic, the Serbian tennis expert and trainer, explains how this is not true. He adds:

Rodriguez talks about charisma, and the charisma of a Belgian athlete is zero. She played perfect tennis but she did not have anything more. Jelena is very charismatic, fans are usually on her side, and Ana is a very cute girl. There is no sense to talk about the beauty because they are ladies and our tennis players are for sure more beautiful than Justine Henin (Blic Sport, 1 October, 2008).

Although it is visible that Ivanovic's and Jankovic's appearance and "charisma" is taken into account over their ability as athletes, it should be noticed, as I argued in the previous chapter, that their figures are used in comparison to athlete's of other nations. The notion that the "charisma of a Belgian athlete is zero" and by using the phrase "Our athletes" in acknowledging how beautiful they are, suggests that what is at work here is an attempt to ascribe these adjectives to the Serbian nation. Although it would be misleading to draw conclusions like that from a

single case this example can indicate that female tennis players construct national identity through their beauty and charisma.

In order to further examine the role of women in claiming national belonging through sport I will use the article “Cavic broke up with a girl” (Blic, 6 June, 2008) which starts with an update of Cavic’s love relationship with Nadezda Curcic and their subsequent split. At some part it switches to the point where the journalist explains that “Nadezda makes him a hero” (Blic, 6 June, 2008). The article explains that Nadezda Curcic visited Cavic in the US and brought him a badge “Kosovo is Serbia,” and at that point, Cavic realized that he should act as “an ambassador of his country” (Blic, 6 June, 2008). In this article Curcic’s agency is emphasized in order to enable Cavic’s further political action. In this context Cavic’s girlfriend seems to have a persuasive and key role in Cavic’s political action. This reminded me of Yuval-Davis and Anthias’(1989) argument about several different ways in which women take part in nationalist projects with one of them being that “women have supportive and nurturing relation to men even when they have taken most risk” (ibid, 1989:10). It seems as if Cavic’s girlfriend took a role in claiming national belonging and was a trigger for his further action. However, this indicates that her role was again invisible and directed to Cavic’s support. It seems that Nagel’s point can be applicable here as well:

The roles of women and men differ a great deal, the script in which those roles are embedded are written primarily by men, for men and about men, and the women are by design, supporting actors, whose role reflects masculinist notions of femininity and women’s proper place (Nagel, 1998: 243).

The fact that I listed very few cases where women in sport are visible in the nationalist project suggests that female athletes are not seen as significant contributors to claiming national identity. Adams acknowledges that men and women have different roles in contributing to the

understanding of national identity (cited in Allain, 2011). In her example she explains how media coverage portrayed female and male athletes who won gold medals differently and she goes on to assert that “While the women’s win added to Canada’s gold medal tally, the men’s victory propped up the national psyche” (quoted in Allain, 2011:13). By referring to female athletes mostly through their feminine representations, as I showed in Chapter Four, they are represented as playing a minor role in representing the nation. On the other hand, by taking into account the fact that they play for Serbia and therefore represent the Serbian state, one may argue that they are representatives of the nation as well. However, since there is no direct connection between female athletes and nationalist project my argument should stay as an assumption.

Conclusion

Harris and Clayton (2002) point out that the media glorifies male athletes and constructs masculinity through sport and therefore reinforces national identity and a sense of national belonging. Not only is sport significant for claiming national belonging but it influences gender relations as well. In my thesis I focused on male and female athletes and explored the ways in which Serbian national identity plays a big role in sport. Moreover, I looked at femininities and masculinities expressed in sport and explored their differences to analyze how they influence nationalist project.

By defining nationalism and patriotism differently in Chapter Three I used Dixon's argument on "moderate patriotism" to show that praising Serbian athletes cannot be characterized as patriotism in Dixon's sense. Taking that as a starting point I further delineated my argument about nationalism expressed through sport. I argued that not only are Cavic and Djokovic constructed as representatives of the country, but they are more importantly representatives of the Serbian nation. Furthermore I showed how athletes' political engagement related to the Kosovo issue shed light on their role in claiming Serbian national belonging.

In Chapter Four I argued that sport is an arena for expressing masculinities and these masculinities take different forms according to different athletes. Building on Connell and Masserschmidt's argument that "masculinity is not a fixed entity" but rather "a configuration of practices in particular social setting" (2006: 863) I looked at masculinities represented through Djokovic and Cavic. Moreover, I showed that sport in my analysis reinforces different kinds of masculinity. Similarly, I argued that masculinities and athleticism go hand in hand and reassure

men's dominant position in sport. When it comes to femininities, my research discovered two different types of femininity: a sexualized one in Ivanovic's case and an infantilized one in Higl's case. These femininities work together to devalue women's athleticism and are prioritized over female athlete's skills and achievements.

In Chapter Five I argued that nationalism as expressed through sports takes masculinized forms in the Serbian context. Moreover, sport embeds masculine characteristics which are embodied through Cavic and Djokovic and thus strengthen Serbian national identity. Cavic's and Djokovic's masculine characteristics are represented as characteristics of the whole Serbian nation. When it comes to female athletes, I see similarities with McClintock's argument about "women who are constructed as symbolic bearers of the nation but they are denied any direct relation to national agency" (1993: 62). In that sense I argue that male athletes are the ones who claim Serbian national identity and that female athletes take minor parts and have an almost invisible role in nationalist and political projects.

In comparison to Serbian nationalism in the 90's, when sport was used in mobilizing for the war (see Colovic, 2002), my findings suggest that nowadays sport echoes warfare in order to reassert and strengthen national identity after sports defeats and more importantly political defeats such as Kosovo's declaration of independence. When it come to dominant masculinities in the 90's Zarkov and Cockburn (2002) identified the militarized one while Bracewell (2000) posits the notion of "threaten masculinity" which had an impact on starting the war in the 90's and restoring the manliness. My project suggests that masculinities take different form than those in the period of war in the 90's. Maculinties are embodied through the athletes and takes the form of competition, toughness, and strength on the one hand with compassion and gentlemanliness on the other. Although in my research masculinities differ from masculinities in

the 90's they still reassure the Serbian national identity and construct the Serbian nation through the athletes which are seen as its representatives.

My analysis also suggests that Serbia is not the only nation that uses sport as a tool for claiming national identity but rather it is a world wide phenomena and differs in different contexts (see Maguire 1999; Cronin and Mayall, 1998; Hoberman 1984) However, it is important to pay attention to how is sport being used in the Serbian context since the predominant nationalist project in Serbia during the 90's fueled the war. My project sheds light on the importance of sport as a tool for the reinvention of national belonging especially in the aftermath of war. In other words, tracking the role of sport in the reinvention of national identity can be a significant barometer for detecting the nationalist practices in the society as well. Moreover, sport can mirror gender relations and one may wonder if gender representation in sport reflects the gender relations in society as such. It would be interesting to further examine dominant femininities in sport and see if they are prioritized in other contexts.

At the end, it is important to refer to the limitations of my research. Although I argue that *Blic* is the most representative of dominant media discourses, my research is limited due to several factors. I used only individual sports swimming and tennis since they are the most popular and successful sports in Serbia and draw conclusions based on it. One may argue that by taking different data, for example teams sport athletes, my findings would be different. Indeed, for some next projects it would be useful to focus on team sports such as football, since "the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people" (Hobsbawn, cited in Hunter, 2003: 412). It would be also useful to include other media representations such as printed or visual media in order to further explore how sport reflects Serbian national identity. My project contributes to the existing literature of role of sport in the Serbian context and may

lead to other research about gender, nationalism and sport. This analysis can raise further question about nationalism in sport, its implication on gender and whether media representations serve to create nationalism or is it only reaction to those existing social practices.

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Blic Online

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"Plivaj Milorade!," Septembar, 29 2008 (Milorad swim!)

"Dobar ti je Tenis Srbijo!" November 18, 2008 (You play good tennis Serbia!)

"Naš Uspeh, Naša Preterivanja," February 6, 2008 (Our Success, Our Exaggerations)

"Zloupotreba Medalje," August, 18 2008 (Abuse of Medals)

"Čaviću Stan," September 2, 2008 (Cavic will get a flat)

"Kad Fanfare Utihnu," August 3, 2009 (When fanfare stops playing)

"Kosovski zavet," February 22, 2008 (Kosovo's pledge)

"Novak Đoković Sutra u Poseti Kosovu," April 2, 2008 (Novak Djokovic tomorrow visits the north of Kosovo)

"Noleta u Kososvkoj Mitrovici pozdravilo 10 000 Srba," April 3, 2008 (Nole was welcomed in Kosovska Mitrovica by 10 000 Serbs)

"Deca Hoće u Bazen zbog Čavića," August 26, 2008 (Children wanted in a swimming pool because of Cavic)

"Čavić Raskinuo sa Devojkom," June 5, 2008 (Cavic broke up with a girlfriend)

"Branka: Čavić Živi kao Robot," July 4, 2009 (Branka: Cavic lives like a robot)

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“ Čavić i Đilas među Đacima,“ March 28, 2008 (Cavic and Djilas among pupils)

“Treba Dati Više Pažnje Mladima, August 13, 2009 (It is important pay attention to youth)

“Za Mamino Zlato Voćna Torta od Malina, ” August 2 , 2009 (For mom’s kid, fruity cake with raspberries)

“Delfin na Nađinim Leđima, “ September, 10 2009 (A dolphin on Nadja’s back)

“Rim San Snova” 26 Decembar, 2009 (Rome makes my dream come true)

“Čekam da se Probudim, ” July 11, 2009 (I wait to wake up)

“Nađin Otac Istetovirao Rezultat na Temenu, ” August, 4 2009 (Nadja’s father tattooed the result on the back of his head)

“Planiram da Osvojim još Trofeja, a onda mogu da se Udam,“ June 11, 2008 (I am planning to win more trophies and then I can get married)

“Rodrigezu smeta lepota jelene i Ane” October 1, 2008 (Rodriguez is bothered with the beauty of Jelena and Ana)