

## **Chapter 5**

### **POSTWAR IMAGES AND IDENTITIES OF MOSTAR**

Before the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mostar was recognized and appreciated both locally and internationally as one of the most important historic urban ensembles in the region. It was also known as a quintessential Bosnian city with a culturally mixed population and urban form that reflected its position as a point of cultural intersection. Most argue that this multicultural image of the city was lost during the recent war, but there has been little consensus as to what new urban identity has replaced it. In fact, the intersection of various local cultures and the international community in postwar Mostar has led to numerous, competing visions of Mostar.

How Mostar has been seen and understood and the nature of its urban identity in the past decade has been influenced by the destruction, demographic change, and mobilization of competing nationalisms that took place during the war. In addition, events of the postwar period, especially reconstruction and new building programs, have also greatly influenced Mostar's image. As perceptions of the city and of sites within it have both been continuously revised, these discussions have become inseparable and mutually influential. Each new architectural, urban, or reconstruction project in the city can only be understood within the context of Mostar's overall meaning and symbolism, but this urban identity is at the same time also affected by each individual project.

The competing visions of postwar Mostar are also interrelated with the greater national identity debates taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina today. In addition, like each of the individual construction and reconstruction projects in the city, discussions about Mostar's postwar identity have also been linked to tensions between reuniting or further dividing the city. The discourse on Mostar's urban identity thus also reveals how various interpretations of and competitions between national identities are being represented in the urban environment.

This chapter will explore the many ways Mostar has been conceptualized in the postwar period, revealing the often contradictory images and identities of the city advocated by different audiences, including the international community, the Bosnian government, Mostar's Croat population, Mostar's Muslim population, and Bosnia's independent media. Each of these groups has weighed in on the debate over potential new meanings for the city. Examining the different conceptions of the city as well as who is advocating them and their rationales is an effective way of observing the continuing competition between different cultural identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

## **PREWAR MOSTAR**

The history of Mostar's urban development and its resultant physical form significantly influenced how it was perceived in the centuries preceding the 1992-1995 war. The succession of empires, kingdoms, and republics in which Mostar has found itself since its mid-fifteenth century origins have all left their marks on the city, as they did throughout the country. This surviving layered heritage continues to influence interpretations of Mostar and of Bosnia-Herzegovina today. Thus before turning to the urban identity of Mostar, a quick overview of the city's historic

development will make both its past and present meanings more readily understandable.

### **Historic Development of the City**

Soon after conquering the medieval Bosnian Kingdom in the 1460's, the Ottomans declared the site of today's Mostar as the seat of one of their new administrative districts. At the time, there was no settlement, only a wooden suspension bridge with fortifying stone towers spanning the Neretva River. Nevertheless, the location was privileged over the important and thriving nearby town of Blagaj, which had grown during the early medieval period on the foundations of an earlier Roman settlement and had become the seat of the dukes for which the region of Hercegovina was named.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a few market streets with numerous small shops were built quickly in Mostar, as was typical of new cities founded by the Ottomans throughout the Balkans (fig. 74). This bazaar, or *čaršija*, spread out on either side of the river and was anchored by the wooden bridge. In the mid-sixteenth century, the Ottoman Sultan ordered that bridge's replacement with the stone arch that survived until 1993.<sup>1</sup> This center was and is still today surrounded by a number of distinct neighborhoods, called *mahalas*, each characterized by tight windy streets and walled courtyard houses. In addition to the Old Bridge, numerous other monumental architectural structures in Mostar's center were built during the early Ottoman era,

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<sup>1</sup> Mehmed Bublin, *Gradovi Bosne i Hercegovine: Milenijum Razvoja i Godine Urbicida* [Cities of Bosnia-Hercegovina: Millennium of Development and the Years of Urbicide] (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 1999), 61-67; and Ranko Findrik, "Mostar," *Arhitektura Urbanizam* 1, no.4 (1960): 17-19.



Figure 74: Reconstruction drawing of Ottoman Mostar at the time of the Old Bridge's construction in the mid sixteenth century. View from the North, c.1994. (image: Amir Pašić, AKTC, Geneva).

including mosques, baths, and a tannery complex.<sup>2</sup> The abundance of local stone allowed for construction of both these monumental buildings and most homes in masonry, and the style of these buildings reflected typical Ottoman provincial architecture in the Balkans, including simple volumes, plain facades, and domed mosques with single minarets and arcaded porches.<sup>3</sup>

The acquisition of administrative control of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878 led to immediate and dramatic physical changes in most Bosnian cities, including Mostar. The character and extensiveness of building during the brief Austrian era, which lasted only until the empire's dissolution at the end of the First World War, fundamentally changed the character of Bosnian urbanism. Places

<sup>2</sup> *Treasures of Yugoslavia: An Encyclopedic Touring Guide* (Belgrade: Yugoslaviapublic, c1980), 301-2.

<sup>3</sup> Amir Pašić, *Islamic Architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1994).



Figure 75: Plan of Mostar when the Austro-Hungarian Empire assumed control of Bosnia-Herzegovina, prepared by Stefan Sirtanang in 1878, and reconstruction of the plan according to which the city was developed, prepared by Elias Zivić in 1881. (image: Vienna War Archive and Amir Pašić).

like Mostar were transformed from typical Ottoman cities into typical Central European cities in only thirty years due to imperial aspirations and local implementation efforts.<sup>4</sup> The modern planning principles and elements introduced to Bosnia-Herzegovina at the end of the nineteenth century included the first streets, squares and blocks as consciously composed urban elements.

Austrian era urbanization efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina focused on developing four specific cities, including Mostar, as regional political and cultural centers.<sup>5</sup> Mostar's Ottoman center was kept intact, but the city was extensively enlarged, spreading out into the flat valley to the north and west of the historic core (fig. 75). Mujaga

<sup>4</sup> Amir Pašić, *Celebrating Mostar: Architectural History of the City, 1452-2004* (Gračanica: Grin, 2005), 56.

<sup>5</sup> The Austrians also focused attention on the cities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Tuzla.

Komadina, the mayor of Mostar during this period, traveled to Vienna and Budapest and sought to quickly modernize his city along the lines of these new models. Grandiose urban spaces, such as the Rondo, were laid out at this time. Komadina also organized the development of the city's infrastructure, including the construction of three broad new bridges across the Neretva River, the first since the narrow, pedestrian Old Bridge had built in the sixteen century. In addition, the city's water, sewage, and electrical infrastructure all dates from this period.<sup>6</sup>

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, local and Austrian authorities constructed a number of wide, tree-lined avenues filled with office buildings and houses with big windows, no courtyards, and entrances opening directly onto the street. Unlike the strictly separated market and residential districts of Ottoman Mostar, in the new Austrian city, multipurpose buildings with ground floor shops and offices and upper story apartments were built. These were designed in the Secessionist and Historicist styles popular in Austria at the time. Many of the most monumental buildings in Mostar which survived until the recent war dated from this period, including the Metropolitan's Palace, Franciscan Church, Municipal Baths, Girl's High School, Gymnasium, and Hotel Neretva.

The entire twentieth century was a time of steadily increasing urban growth in Mostar, the city's population had doubled during the Austrian administration, then doubled again by the 1950s, and then continued to increase until the early 1990s.<sup>7</sup> Little urban development or significant new construction was planned in Mostar, or anywhere in

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<sup>6</sup> Pašić, *Celebrating Mostar*, 53-4.

<sup>7</sup> "Mostar," in *Svijetlost Evrope u Bosni i Hercegovini* [The Light of Europe in Bosnia and Hercegovina], ed. Ismet Huseinović and Džemaludin Babić (Sarajevo: Buy Book, 2004), 94; and "Mostar," *Encyclopedia of Islam* v. 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 244.





Figure 76: Mid- and high-rise apartment and office buildings constructed in the northwestern part of Mostar during the 1960s and 1970s. (image: author).

Bosnia-Herzegovina, during the period of the first, royal Yugoslavia between the two World Wars. However, during the SFR Yugoslav era, Mostar was again enlarged and further modernized, especially beginning in the 1960s, which has been described as a period of Bosnian Renaissance.<sup>8</sup>

Architectural projects of the 1960s and 1970s in Mostar were characteristic of postwar modernism in socialist countries, primarily including monotonous concrete high-rise buildings separated by hardscaped open spaces. Construction from this era is mostly included administrative buildings, department stores, hotels, and multistory housing complexes (fig. 76). Roads and service systems were improved, and libraries, schools and other public facilities were built in the third quarter of the twentieth century. In Mostar all this new building was interspersed within the Austrian part of the city and further beyond to the west and north.

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<sup>8</sup> Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 181.

The Ottoman Old Town, or *Stari Grad*, remained intact during this period and this historic core of the city became a popular tourist center filled with cafes, postcard and souvenir shops as well as local artisans working in traditional crafts. Mostar's Old Town underwent a comprehensive and well-researched restoration in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the high-quality and innovative self-sustaining economic system of which were recognized by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1986.<sup>9</sup>

### **Historic Identities of the City**

Undoubtedly, the historic and contemporary identities of the city of Mostar and of its Old Bridge are linked as a result of the inextricability of the city's history from that of its iconic centerpiece. The city is named for the bridge around which it was established: in south Slavic languages *most* means bridge and *mostar* means bridge-keeper. Thus Mostar's image has always been interconnected to its bridge, and it was widely known as the city with the famous bridge long before its increasing international repute in the 1990s. In addition, the river spanned by the Old Bridge has also always been integral to the city's identity: Mostar has long been known as the "City on the Neretva," a moniker by which it is still frequently referred to today.

Though Mostar's urban identity has been linked to its bridge and its river both before and since the war, many other aspects of its image have changed. It has lost its status as Bosnia's second largest city, having been surpassed in population by both Banja Luka and Tuzla in the past decade. On the other hand, it probably retains its status as the only Bosnian city other than Sarajevo familiar to most foreigners.

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<sup>9</sup> "Conservation of Mostar Old Town, Yugoslavia, 1979," *Mimar* 24 (June 1987), 40-42; and Aga Khan Award for Architecture, *Report of the 1986 Master Jury*, Third Award Cycle, 1984-1986, [http://www.akdn.org/agency/akaa/thirdcycle/mj\\_86.htm](http://www.akdn.org/agency/akaa/thirdcycle/mj_86.htm).



Never known for its industrial production – like Tuzla and Banja Luka, or for its position as a political and institutional center – like Sarajevo, Mostar’s prewar identity focused on its cultural and literary heritage. It was a literary center within Bosnia beginning in the mid-nineteenth century when the region’s second printing press was established there, and throughout the late Ottoman and entire Austrian eras it was home to numerous newspapers and journals focused on various cultural, political, and entertainment topics.<sup>10</sup> It has been known as a city of poets since the early twentieth century, when writers such as Aleksa Šantić, Svetozar Ćorović, and Osman Ćikić brought it regional notice.<sup>11</sup>

But far more extensive than the city’s image as a center of literary and artistic production, was the reputation of its remarkable built environment, for which it is indeed still known today. The most consistent references to the city by local poets and songwriters as well as foreign visitors through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were simply allusions to the city’s beauty. For example, in the seventeenth century, Derviš Paša Bajazidagić, a local poet and Ottoman administrator, opened a poem describing the charms and riches of his hometown with the question: “who could verse all the beauties of lovely Mostar?”<sup>12</sup> Though British traveler W.J. Stillman arrived in Mostar in the midst of the violent Hercegovina Uprising in 1875, he still wrote in his account that he could remember no “city among all I have ever seen so completely pictorial as Mostar.”<sup>13</sup> In the mid-twentieth century, Ivo Andrić, Nobel Prize winning

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<sup>10</sup> *The Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski Leksikografski Zavod, 1983), 219-223.

<sup>11</sup> Dejan Ćupina, *Mostar and Its Surroundings*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Zagreb: Turistkomerc, 1985), 51; Ante Čuvalo, *Historical Dictionary of Bosnia and Hercegovina*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1997), 173; and Salih Rajković, *Mostar: Photoguides “Jugoslavija”* (Belgrade: Izdavački Zavod “Jugosavija”, 1965), 14-5.

<sup>12</sup> *Mostar: 99 Pictures* (Mostar: Micro Book, 1998), [4].

<sup>13</sup> W.J. Stillman, *Hercegovina and the Late Uprising* (1877), quoted in Omer Hadžiselimović, *At the Gates of the East: British Travel Writers on Bosnia and Hercegovina from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 59.

author from Bosnia-Hercegovina, described Mostar as a “by nature privileged city.”<sup>14</sup> By the late twentieth century, Mostar's Old Town, centered on its Old Bridge, was known an outstanding surviving example of early Ottoman Balkan architecture and a regionally appreciated historic ensemble. Throughout the federal Yugoslav era, it was a picturesque historic city visited by foreign tourists on day trips inland from the Dalmatian coast and by many Yugoslavs as a rest-stop while traveling towards the sea.

In the second half of the twentieth century, guidebooks, travel accounts, and histories of Bosnia-Hercegovina described Mostar as a crossroads and cultural meeting point, where the coastal Mediterranean climate and cultures intersected with those of the inland mountainous Balkans.<sup>15</sup> For some it was the tension of its geographical position that made the city so different and enthralling; however, most focused on its similarly unusual combination of cultural heritage as its source of interest and captivation.

Though one guidebook argued “there are two Mostars: the modern-day Mostar and the Mostar of history,” most described the prewar physical city as a place that made visible how “different cultures meet [and] interweave,” or as a “kaleidoscope of oriental, Byzantine, pseudo-Moorish and western elements.”<sup>16</sup> In this way, Mostar’s urban identity was not unlike that of the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, whose pre- and postwar image has also centered on the concept of cultural pluralism and interaction.

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<sup>14</sup> *Mostar: 99 Pictures*, [4].

<sup>15</sup> Brian Aldiss, *Cities and Stones: A Traveler's Yugoslavia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 106; J.A. Cuddon, *The Companion Guide to Jugoslaiva*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 339; Čuprina, *Mostar and Its Surroundings*, 7; Čuvalo, *Historical Dictionary of Bosnia and Hercegovina*, 173; Lovett F. Edwards, *Introducing Yugoslavia* (London: Methuen and Co., 1954), 205; *Mostar* (Zagreb: Turistkomerc, n.d. (before 1992); Mito Njavro, *Herzegovina* (Zagreb: Privredni Vjesnik, 1985), 20; and George Oor, *Yugoslavia Today* (Paris: Editions j.a., 1977), 133.

<sup>16</sup> Čuprina, *Mostar and Its Surroundings*, 51; Oor, *Yugoslavia Today*, 133; *Mostar: Photoguides Jugoslavia*, 16; and Ernest C. Peixotto, *By Italian Seas* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 105.



Figure 77: Austrian-era postcard revealing Mostar's multiculturalism through depictions of Ottoman and Central European architectural styles and modes of dress, Main Street (Maršal Tito Street), c.1900. (image: Verlag Pacher and Kisić, Mostar).

As in prewar depictions of Bosnian multiculturalism, this cultural diversity in both Sarajevo and Mostar was suggested as a positive characteristic. But before the war, it was seldom explicitly and self-consciously celebrated as it has been during and since.

Mirroring the larger debate on Bosnian identity, depictions of Mostar as a multicultural city also contained images of clear distinction between types and eras and of living together separately, as well as images of harmonious mixture, reflecting the two different ways of understanding multiculturalism itself. Beginning in the nineteenth century, postcards printed by and for the Austrian administrators depicted street scenes of Mostar that juxtaposed smaller-scale Ottoman shops with larger Central European style institutional buildings as well as juxtaposed people in traditional and typical western-style dress (fig. 77). Other postcards of the time highlighted the diverse cultures represented by the city's monumental buildings,



Figure 78: Austrian-era postcard revealing Mostar's multiculturalism through depictions of important Muslim and Christian architecture, c.1900. (image: Srpska Knjižarnidža B.M. Radovina, Mostar).

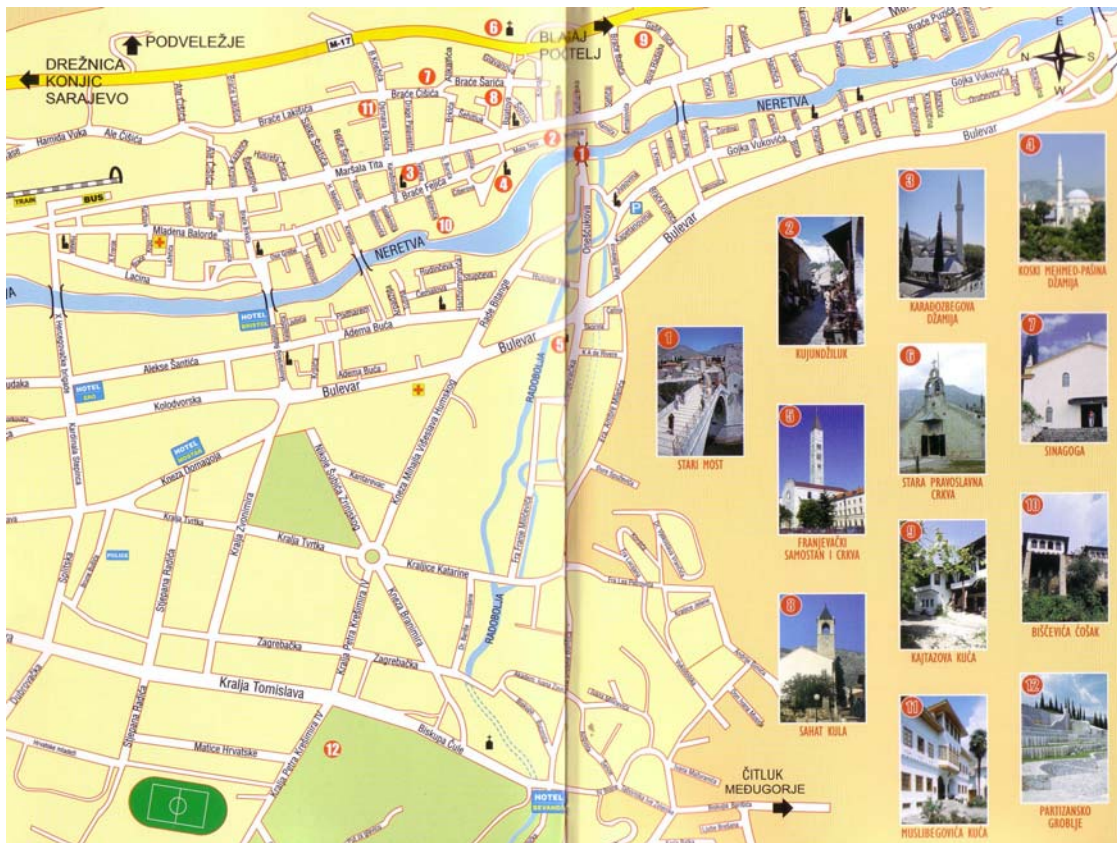


Figure 79: Map: Contemporary tourist guidebook map of Mostar demonstrating the continued use of monumental architectural sites representing different faiths (Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic Christian, and Jewish) to present a multicultural image of the city. *Mostar with Surroundings*, 2006. (image: IKC Mostar)



depicting both its impressive mosques and churches, as well as the Old Bridge (fig. 78). Contemporary postcards and guidebooks of both Mostar and Sarajevo make this same argument in similar ways today (fig. 79).

This image of Mostar was embraced by locals as well as foreigners, especially during the communist era when “brotherhood and unity” was the Yugoslav motto and Bosnia, as the most multicultural republic in the country, was increasingly recognized and celebrated for this quality. While affirming Mostar’s positive multicultural character, the phrasing in one local guide from the 1980s revealed the inherent potential for separation and disunity, both visual and cultural, within this type of environment by noting: “Different worlds and different periods confront each other in Mostar, each period having gained a place and an expression of its own. And although it may sound paradoxical, in Mostar these incompatibilities exist peacefully side by side.”<sup>17</sup> Though referring to its physical location and architecture, not its socio-political context, a British travel writer similarly described Mostar in the 1960s as a “town of peace and tension.”<sup>18</sup> Suggesting the city’s multiple geographies, architectural styles, and/or cultures were incompatible implied that their peaceful coexistence should not be assumed.

At the same time, other prewar guides astutely noticed the impossibility of classifying even individual buildings as belonging to a single culture: since some of the oldest shops in its Ottoman bazaar and its historic mosques clearly reflect the influences of the Dalmatian stone masons that participated in their construction.<sup>19</sup> Evidence of this cultural interaction is present in later building projects as well, most notably in

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<sup>17</sup> Čuprina, *Mostar and Its Surroundings*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Aldiss, *Cities and Stones*, 106.

<sup>19</sup> *Treasures of Yugoslavia*, 302.

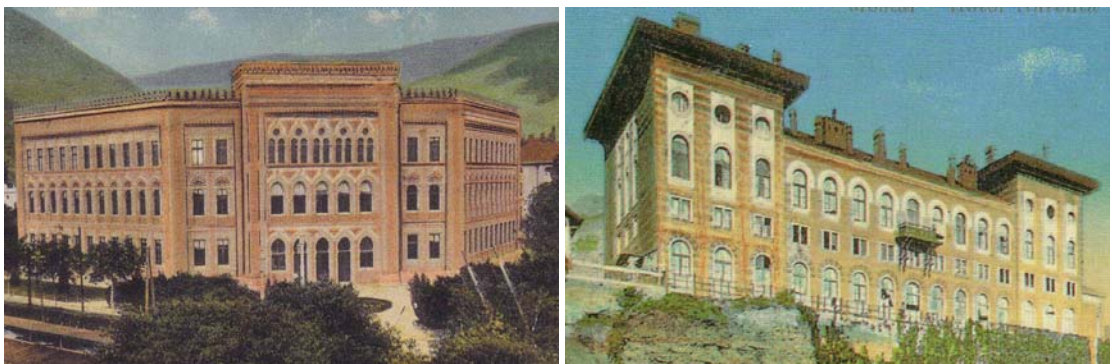


Figure 80: Gymnasium, Franc Blazek, 1902 and Hotel Neretva, c.1905. Two pseudo-Moorish style buildings constructed in Mostar by the Austrian authorities. (images: Braća Alikalfić, Mostar and Slovo, Blagaj-Mostar).

Austrian-era buildings designed in the so called pseudo-Moorish style. This invention of Viennese-trained architects working in Bosnia was meant to reflect the region's traditions; however, the stylistic references were either fanciful creations or allusions to Spanish and North African medieval architecture, not to the Ottoman provincial styles actually familiar and indigenous to the region (fig. 80).<sup>20</sup> However, these supposedly local and Islamic ornamental programs were always applied to buildings whose symmetric plans and monumental massing were clearly central European.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Mostar was simultaneously described by many visitors as a city of “mosques and minarets,” a “picturesque bit of the Orient,” or a “predominately Muslim town.”<sup>21</sup> While this idea is perhaps to be expected from early travelers who saw the city while still under Ottoman control, even on the eve of the recent war, a 1989 *New York Times* travel article described Mostar as

<sup>20</sup> Ellen Barry, “How the Vijećnica was Lost,” *Metropolis* (June 1999), 109; and Nedžad Kurto, *Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine: Razvoj Bosanskog Stila* [The Architecture of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Development of the Bosnian Style] (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 1998), 32.

<sup>21</sup> Cuddon, *The Companion Guide to Jugoslavia*, 339; *Fodor's Yugoslavia 1984* (New York: Fodor's Travel Guides, 1983), 192; Peixotto, *By Italian Seas*, 105; and John Gardner Wilkinson, *Dalmatia and Montenegro: With a Journey to Mostar in Herzegovina and Remarks on the Slavonic Nations* (London: John Murray, 1848), 57.



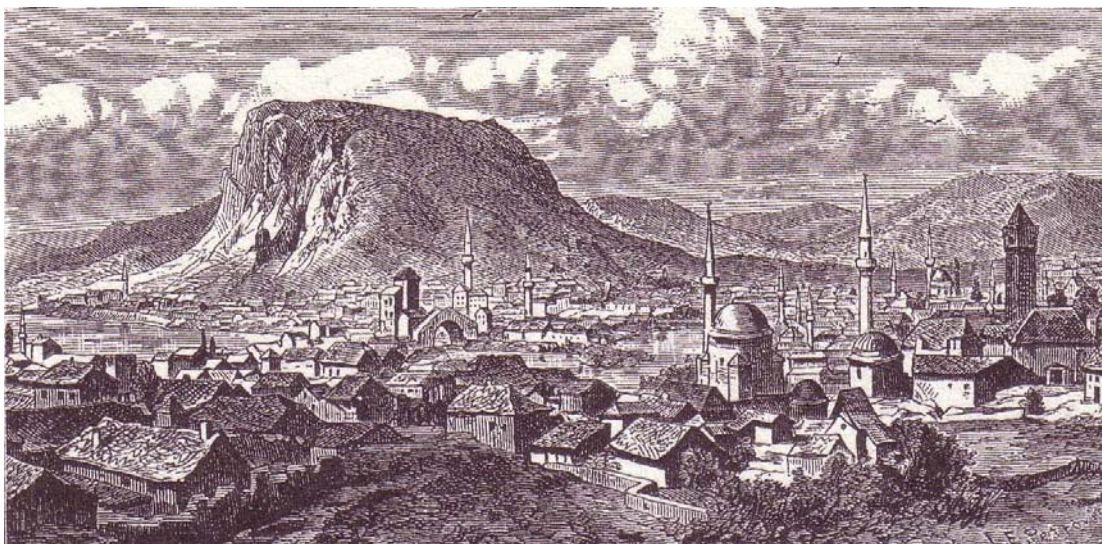


Figure 81: Nineteenth-century lithograph of Mostar before the Austrian administration in which the city's minarets are prominently featured and its Islamic character is emphasizing. "View of Mostar," L.E. Petrovits, 1878. (image: Hartlebend, Vienna).

"a Yugoslav city of minarets."<sup>22</sup> This idea of the city was also depicted visually in historic views and drawings of Mostar, in which the city's monumental mosques and numerous tall, thin minarets dominated its skyline (fig. 81).

Many foreigners presumably focused on this particular aspect and idea of Mostar because of its exciting difference from typical European cities, and in order to grab the interest of the western tourists for whom their accounts and guides were written. In fact, all of Bosnia-Herzegovina was imaged as an accessible "other," by European travelers and authorities in the nineteenth century as well as twentieth century guidebooks, such as the *Fodor's Yugoslavia 1984*, which subtitles its chapter on Bosnia-Herzegovina "Approaching the Orient."<sup>23</sup> This idea was sometimes repeated locally as well, especially in foreign language guides geared for the city's international tourists, where Mostar was described as "the Orient in the midst of Europe."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Claire Frankel, "A Yugoslav City of Minarets," *The New York Times*, April 16, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

<sup>23</sup> *Fodor's Yugoslavia 1984*, 182.

<sup>24</sup> Rajković, *Mostar*, 3.

This predominately Islamic image of Mostar persisted simultaneously with the multicultural vision of the city before the war in the same way that multiple visions of Mostar coexist in the postwar period. And even those accounts that focused on Mostar's Ottoman architecture and the Muslim or "oriental" character, almost always also called attention to its later phases of construction and noted either Mostar's architectural or demographic diversity.<sup>25</sup> Distinguishing which groups focused on which aspects of the city is more difficult in the prewar period: at various times and among various authors, both locals and foreigners have been enamored with the city's beauty and its multicultural character, though its international visitors have stressed its Islamic character to a significantly greater degree than locals.

## **POSTWAR IDENTITIES**

During the 1992 - 1995 war, multiculturalism became the overriding image of both Mostar and of Bosnia-Herzegovina more generally for the international community, local Muslims, and Bosnian patriots. As was true for the bridge, it was this idea of the city that fit within their narratives of the war itself. Most agree that this formerly multicultural image of the city was destroyed during the war, and the city's pre- and postwar population statistics are typically invoked to demonstrate this loss. According to the 1991 census, Mostar's population was 34.5% Muslim, 34% Croat, 18.8% Serb and 12.7% other (Jewish, Yugoslav, Roma). Thus Muslims, Croats, and others were fairly evenly represented in the city and lived interspersed throughout it.<sup>26</sup> But according to a population assessment in 1998, slightly more than half the city was Muslim, slightly less than half was Croat, and only a statistically negligible few Serbs

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<sup>25</sup> Frankel, "Yugoslav City of Minarets."

<sup>26</sup> International Center for Migration Policy Development/Repatriation Information Center (ICMPD/RIC), *Municipality Information Fact Sheet: The City of Mostar (Central Zone)*, Sarajevo: ICMPD, November 1998.

and “others” remained.<sup>27</sup> Not only did the overall percentages of the population change during the war, but more importantly, their distribution within the city changed as well, with the remaining Croats and Muslims living in physically separate areas.

In the past decade, envisioning Mostar has been simpler for the international community, which has largely understood Mostar’s meaning and symbolism as reduced only to that of its iconic bridge. With the war and the Old Bridge’s destruction Mostar became known as a polarized and divided city. Today, the international community sees Mostar’s multicultural character as reemerging since the city has been politically reunified and the bridge has been rebuilt. Though the international discourse about the bridge and participation in its reconstruction has influenced local attitudes, discussion of the Mostar’s postwar image within the city has been much more complex, and changes are not seen as so dependent on a single architectural project. Debates about the urban identity of the city in Mostar and throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina have been dominated by questions of what has replaced its former character or if its prewar images persist or should persist.

In the past decade, multiple responses to these questions have been offered. Mostar has been conceptualized as a divided city, two separate cities, a Croat city, *the* Bosnian Croat city, a symbol of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federation, and as a model united and multicultural city. Rather than that understanding Mostar as multicultural, then divided, then multicultural again, locally these images have not come in simple succession but rather been simultaneous and overlapping. Though some new images of the city have come and gone other, often contradictory associations continue to hold salience within the city.

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<sup>27</sup> In 1998 Mostar’s population was 52.3% Muslim, 44.7% Croat and 2.1% Serb. ICMPD/RIC, *Municipality Information Fact Sheet*.

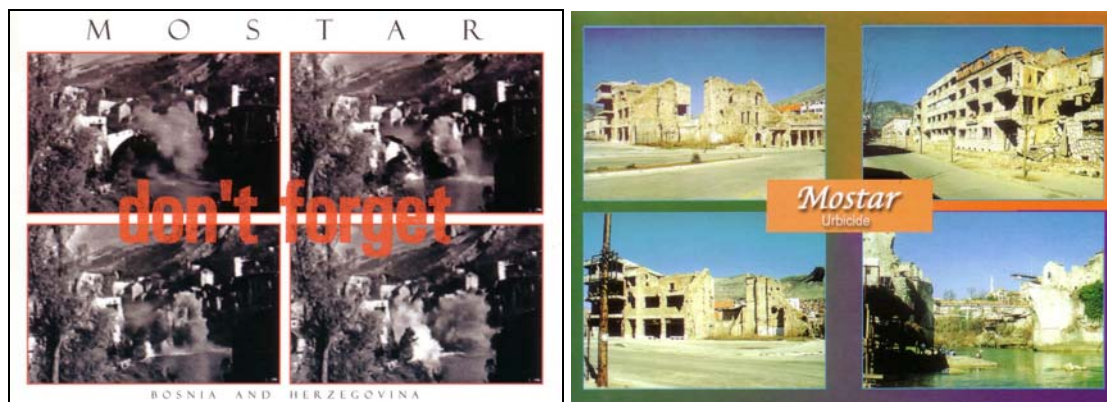


Figure 82: Early twenty-first century postcards of Mostar, labeled “Don’t Forget” and “Mostar Urbicide,” which exported the image of the destroyed Old Bridge and city, c.2000. (images: Acid DTP and Karttis, Mostar).

## Divided City

As has already been noted, the most notorious legacy of the 1992-1995 war in Mostar has been its demographic, political, and psychological division. Since the war, Mostar has been synonymous throughout the country and especially throughout the world with excessive destruction and polarized communities. In a 1999 *New York Times* editorial, Richard Holbrooke, American diplomat and architect of the Dayton Peace Agreement, described Mostar as “the most broken city on the European continent.”<sup>28</sup> According to Sumantra Bose, a British political scientist who has written extensively on postconflict societies, “from being a symbol of Yugoslavia’s diversity, Mostar was reduced to the ultimate symbol of the division and destruction wrought by the Bosnian war.”<sup>29</sup> Postcards of the city in the years following the war exported this image of devastation and called attention to the purposeful destruction of the city (fig. 82).

<sup>28</sup> Richard Holbrooke, “Battles after the War,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

<sup>29</sup> Sumantra Bose, “Building Bridges in Mostar: Microcosm of a conflict,” *Trouble in the Balkans*, London School of Economics, c2000, <http://www.fathom.com/feature/121939/index.html>.

Mostar's political division into a Muslim controlled east side and a Croat controlled west side between 1993 until 2004 concretized the abstract images of Mostar as a divided city.<sup>30</sup> Dubbed the Balkan Berlin, postwar Mostar was often compared to the quintessentially divided German city during the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> Though the comparison made Mostar's situation instantly understandable to foreign audiences, it also oversimplified the city's realities. Divided Berlin and Mostar shared political, structural, and urban characteristics, but in terms of timeframe and divisive and unifying tendencies, the two cities were very different. In the short period since Berlin's reunification, Mostar was divided and reunited again and this compactness accentuated activities within the city. The division was not something that was instituted a generation or two ago, but rather by many of the same people who participated in the reunification and are still politically active today.

Berlin's division has also typically been understood as a top down decision, one unnaturally imposed and allegedly only enforceable by building a wall to keep people apart. No wall was necessary in Mostar: the psychological barrier and a deserted boulevard kept people voluntarily separate during the decade of division. Though undoubtedly the war involved elite manipulation of identities and local sentiments, pitting neighbor against neighbor where animosity had often not previously existed, the violence, betrayals, and identity distinctions that occurred during the war were very real and not easily forgotten. Therefore today, even as individuals cross the

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<sup>30</sup> *Interim Statute of the City of Mostar*, signed in Rome, February 20, 1996; and Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar, *Recommendation of the Commission and Report of the Chairman*, ed. Norbert Winterstein, December 15, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> "Balkan Berlin," *The Economist*, June 22, 1996, 48; Mirsad Behran, "Balkan Berlin Remains Divided," *Balkan Crisis Report* 123, March 10, 2001, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?achive/bcr/bcr\\_20000310\\_3\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?achive/bcr/bcr_20000310_3_eng.txt) ; and Ian Traynor, "Bridge Opens but Mostar Remains a Divided City," *The Guardian*, July 24, 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,1267238,00.html>.

boulevard which physically divides the city and actively use both east and west Mostar, the separation and distinctions persist in people's minds.

As of 1998, the last year for which there are reliable statistics, 99.5% of Mostar's Bosnian Croats lived on the west side and 89% of its Bosnian Muslims lived on the east side.<sup>32</sup> Though administratively there are no longer sides, and though the pace of returns of families to their prewar homes have increased dramatically in recent years, the overall statistics have not shifted significantly and the city still remains divided for many of Mostar's inhabitants, regardless of where they physically live.

Patterns of building in the past decade have reinforced the city's division. As previously noted, prohibiting the construction of buildings linked exclusively to one particular group in the Central Zone, such as the theater and cathedral, were attempts to save this neutral space for shared institutions and as a foundation for the city's future reunification. However the result was to also further solidify the city's division by ensuring that all Croat and Muslim cultural and religious institutions were only constructed on their own "sides." The Central Zone was the only part of Mostar where both groups could have built in close proximity during its decade of division, but by the time the city was reunified institutions had been built or moved to the two separate sides increasing each group's vested interest in staying only there.

Because of the locations of some of the most controversial postwar construction projects, it has been argued that Mostar's Croats consciously attempted to create a border between their side of the city and the other.<sup>33</sup> Sumatra Bose has noted that,

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<sup>32</sup> ICMPD/RIC, *Municipality Information Fact Sheet*.

<sup>33</sup> Chris Hedges, "On Bosnia's Ethnic Fault Lines, It's Still Tense, but World is Silent," *New York Times*, February 28, 1997, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.



“the most troubling aspect of Mostar’s partition consists of visual symbols used to mark zones and boundaries of territorial control.”<sup>34</sup> According to Heiko Wimmen of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Mostar Southwest municipality employed a “strategy of consciously engineering public space to achieve the separation that they failed to achieve through military and political means by creating an imagined, yet powerful border in public space.”<sup>35</sup>

During the period in which these institutions were established, Mostar’s Croats *had* in fact achieved the separation of the city “through military and political means,” and actors within the Croat controlled municipality used architecture to perpetuate that imaginary border even after the political division ended. The Jubilee Cross on Hum Hill, the Franciscan bell tower, as well as the Croatian cultural center Napredak, the Croatian post office, the HVO veterans’ office, and the building sites for the new Catholic Cathedral and the Croatian National Theater do in fact form a line along the city’s divisive Boulevard (fig. 83). On the other hand, these projects were conceived of separately and independently by often unfriendly organizations, so were not really a premeditated or organized attempt to establish a firm border. Nevertheless, collectively they have indeed marked the line of division in the city and if all had been completed, would certainly have defined the entry into the Croat-controlled half of the city with imposing, exclusively Croat institutions.

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<sup>34</sup> Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), 141.

<sup>35</sup> Heiko Wimmen, “New Nations, Imagined Borders: Engineering Public Space in Post-War Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina,” paper presented as part of the Beirut Conference for Public Spheres, Beirut, Lebanon, 22-24 October 2004, 1.

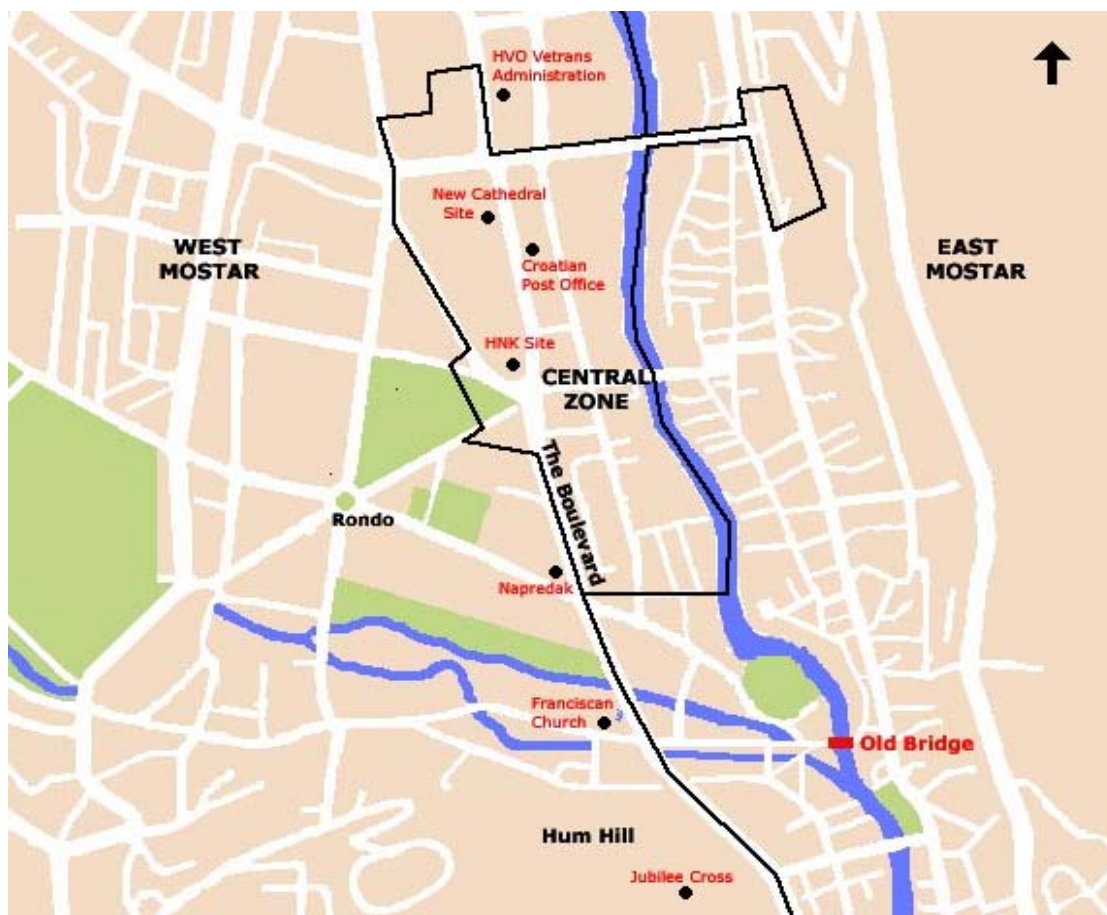


Figure 83: Map of key institutions and monuments associated with the city's Croat community established or attempted along the Boulevard in Mostar. (image: author).

### *Two Cities*

One Mostar writer and journalist who returned in 2001 after almost nine years of absence said the city he left no longer existed and in its place he found “two” new ones, which were very different from each other and from the former city.<sup>36</sup> Foreign humanitarian aid workers in postwar Mostar have also noted that they found Mostar to in fact be “two cities.”<sup>37</sup> There is a fine distinction between seeing Mostar as *one*

<sup>36</sup> Ozren Kebo, “Ovo je Bio Srpsko-Hrvatski Rat do Posljednjeg Bošnjaka!” [This was a Serb-Croat War to Divide Bosnia!], *Slobodna Bosna*, July 19, 2001, 50-1.

<sup>37</sup> “Nation-Building (Mostar),” *60 Minutes*, CBS, October 19, 2003, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/17/60minutes/main578648.shtml>.

divided city and in seeing it as *two* separate cities. A divided city is unnatural and probably temporary, but viewing east and west Mostar as two separate cities in the postwar period implied the situation's irreversibility and an acceptance of the status quo, whether reluctantly or triumphantly. In the first few years after the war, nationalist Croats and the HDZ leadership had no complaints with this new situation, seeing it as among the desired outcomes of the war.<sup>38</sup> However others, especially the international community and Muslims in east Mostar, clung to the idea that Mostar should again become a shared city and a symbol of inter-cultural cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

During the decade of division, almost all of its residents perceived Mostar as two separate cities, one Croat and one Muslim.<sup>40</sup> During the period between 1994 and 2004 when the city administration was organized according to the Rome Agreement, a mayor and a deputy mayor were chosen from among the city's two main population groups. Though ostensibly these two individuals were supposed to run the entire city of Mostar together, in reality the one who was Muslim was locally and internationally understood as the mayor of east Mostar, and the one who was Croat was understood as the Mayor of the west side of the city.

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<sup>38</sup> Ivica Šimunović, "Mostar je također i Hrvatski Grad" [Mostar is also a Croat City], *Hrvatska Riječ*, July 6, 1996, 34; and Alija Izetbegović, "Intervju Alije Izetbegovića 'Slobodna Dalmaciji:' Mostar Nikada Neće Biti Samo Hrvatski Grad" [Interview with Alija Izetbegović in 'Slobodna Dalmacija:' Mostar Will Never be Only a Croat City], *Oslobođenje*, April 29, 1993, 7.

<sup>39</sup> "Mostar: Zadnji Multietnički Grad u BiH" [Mostar: Last Multiethnic City in Bosnia], *Hrvatska Riječ*, April 21, 1997, 4; "Mostarci Ujedinjuju BiH" [Mostar Uniting Bosnia], *Slobodna Bosna*, July 24, 1999, 56; "Mostar: Ujedinjeni Grad" [Mostar: United City], *Slobodna Bosna*, August 14, 1999, 58-59; "Jedinstven Grad za Sve Mostarce" [One City for All Mostarians], *Stari Mostar*, September 16-30, 1995, 9; N. Žujo and Alija Behram, "Mostar je Samo Mostarski" [Mostar is Just Mostarian], *Oslobođenje*, May 23, 1993, 2; and Ivica Račan, "Intervju: Ivica Račan: Prošetat ću i Istočnim i Zapadnim Mostarom da bih Pokazao da je To Jedinstven Grad!" [Interview: Ivica Račan: I will Walk in East and West Mostar to Show that it is One City!], *Slobodna Bosna*, July 7, 2000, 7.

<sup>40</sup> "Jedan Grad, Dva Jezička Standarda" [One City, Two Language Standards], *Stari Mostar*, November 1, 1995, 15.

A primary reason Mostar has been seen as two cities has been the creation and persistence of parallel institutions. Despite the political reuniting of the city, today's Mostar still has two healthcare and school systems as well as two universities, two national theaters, two bus companies, two electricity companies, and two pension funds.<sup>41</sup> It even has two soccer teams. This indicates a completely segregated civil society regardless of the shared city government. Cooperation between any of these parallel institutions has been seen as an opportunity for reunification and reconciliation in the city; however, even those attempts that seem the least controversial and from which everyone could benefit have met with some kind of opposition and obstruction.<sup>42</sup>

While unifying educational curricula within the city's schools may be understandably related to vital national interests and something against which chauvinist nationalists and non-nationalists alike might argue, it is much more difficult to understand the symbolic significance of sharing a water or sewage system - something fiercely opposed by some but eventually achieved through pressure from the World Bank. This obstruction only makes sense when considering that many wanted, and continue to want, Mostar to remain two separate cities, and that the more parallel institutions and separate infrastructure continue to exist, the longer Mostar will remain divided in reality.

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<sup>41</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), *Reunifying Mostar: Opportunities for Progress*, Balkans Report No.90, Brussels: ICG, April 19, 2000, 51; Alija Kebo, "Vens-Ovenovo Sveučilište?" [Vance-Owen University?] *Oslobođenje*, April 3, 1993, 4; Senad Pećanin, "Križ u Kanalizaciji, Boban u Rektoratu" [Cross in the Sewer, Boban in the Rectorate], *Dani*, July 28, 2000, 24-5.

<sup>42</sup> Davorin Alaupović, "Neću da mi Djecu Uče kako Je HVO Agresor!" [I will not have my Children Learn that the HVO was the Aggressor], *Hrvatski Riječ*, March 21, 1998, 16-17; ICG, *Reunifying Mostar*, 52-3; Zvonimir Jukić, "Bosnia: Mostar Police Reunited," *Balkan Crisis Report*, February 20, 2002, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?m=p&o=250542&s=f&apc\\_state=hENfbcR250541](http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?m=p&o=250542&s=f&apc_state=hENfbcR250541) ; and Zdenko Jurilj, "Sanacija HE - Mostar pod 'Visokim Naponom'" [Improvement HE-Mostar under 'High Tension'], *Hrvatska Riječ*, May 17, 1997, 16.



Figure 84: New, red street signs in Croat controlled parts of Mostar. In many cases these signs supplemented rather than replaced the previous ones. This particular example reflects a name change as well as a color change, with a Franciscan priest and educator replacing Matija Gupac (image: author).

In addition to parallel institutions, the division of Mostar into two cities has not only been made visible through major skyline altering additions and marking of the line of separation, but also through subtler interventions. The quest to make national identity easily discernible is also visible in smaller changes meant to differentiate east and west and to reinforce the idea that they are indeed two separate cities today. For example, in the Croat majority municipalities of Mostar, street signs were changed from the traditional blue to a red background because red is the color of the Croatian flag and is used on everything associated with Croat identity (fig. 84). As a result, simply by the signage, one is always reminded which side of Mostar one is on – and who was in control and represents a demographic majority on that side. In addition, visitors unfamiliar with the city are inevitably confused by signs indicating the direction of the *center*, because there are *two* different centers, each with contradictory signs pointing out their different locations, and each side tending to completely ignore the other's existence in its signage.

Even on shared signage, the separation of language has also been employed as a way of creating two communities within Mostar and therefore two cities in a sense.<sup>43</sup> The distinction between the Croatian and Bosnian languages has been physically expressed in the city in the form of double plaques on all municipal and Federation buildings. Because of the overwhelming similarities between these two languages, it is often difficult to find the distinction between the two signs. This has also been a source of conflict and tension in the city, mostly in the form of constant insistence by Croat communities on recognition of their distinct language, but also in the form of attacks on and stealing of Croatian signage from public buildings.<sup>44</sup>

Berlin is not the only other city with which Mostar has been compared in the postwar period: others have been evoked in descriptions distinguishing the two postwar Mostars. In 2002, one notable editorial from the popular weekly news magazine *Dani* likened the east side to Hiroshima and the west side to Las Vegas because of their physical conditions and the rates and styles of their postwar rebuilding.<sup>45</sup> The Croat side of the city was restored and renewed much faster and more ostentatiously, and marked by the rapid construction of numerous flashy, large-scaled, historicist buildings. West Mostar had been much less extensively damaged and because it has had greater access to financial resources, including support from Croatia for the first few years after the war. The Croat side of the city was also in a better starting position for recovery because it acquired many of the city's physical resources, such as the university and the hydro-electric dam. On the other hand, east Mostar, whose buildings were almost all empty shells at the end of the war, remained filled with ruins

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<sup>43</sup> "Jedan Grad - Dva Jezička Standarda," 15.

<sup>44</sup> D. Kozina, "Na Zgradi Poglavarstva opet Ploča na Hrvatskom Jeziku" [A Plaque in the Croatian Language again on the Administration Building ], *Dnevni List*, September 8, 2002, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Igor Lasić, "Istočna Hirošima i Zapadni Las Vegas" [Eastern Hiroshima and Western Las Vegas] *Dani*, May 10, 2002, 42.





Figure 85: Two page photo spread in the west Mostar newspaper *Dnevni List* (Daily Paper) depicting a very different, and very Islamic, east Mostar, October 12, 2001. (image: *Dnevni List*, Mostar).

until the end of the millennium, reminding the author of that editorial of images of completely devastated Hiroshima.

One of the most telling and interesting media attempts to distinguish the two Mostars, the west Mostar newspaper *Dnevni List* (Daily Paper) published a two page spread of pictures taken in east Mostar (fig. 85). The images were not derogatory or negative, but served to differentiate east and west Mostar. An image of a minaret juxtaposed with the Jubilee Cross on Hum Hill reflected one real difference between the populations of the two Mostars: traditional religious associations. But the accompanying images passed off as typical east Mostar scenes were not as representative of contemporary Bosnian Muslim culture. These included: an Ottoman-era building in the historic district; metalwork with allegedly “Arab” motifs, which were really just flowers and are a common find in tourist shops throughout Bosnia;

and an newspaper kiosk described as “oriental,” which was actually a kitschy addition to the city’s tourist district from the major rehabilitation efforts of the early 1980s.<sup>46</sup>

In order to reinforce and create differences between the two sides of Mostar, and the two groups which inhabit them, this article focused on specific architectural and urban details and generalized them as typical for the “other” arguing visually that what was normal for “them” was very different from “us.” The accompanying text supported this message by arguing: “there are often differences even between the closest neighbors.”<sup>47</sup> The photo spread’s headline “Man Pushed into Second Place” and the brief article argued that in east Mostar, reinforcing an Islamic identity and making it physically visible in the city had drained resources and energies that were perhaps better spent on the humanitarian and social needs of its population.<sup>48</sup> Ironically, the same criticism could be just as convincingly made about priorities in west Mostar.

Though not specifically identified as a travel piece, the way the images were presented made the two page spread seem like it was describing and advertising an exotic and distant vacation destination to its readers. West Mostar residents and readers of *Dnevni List* probably knew the images reflected architecture from centuries past as well as tourist paraphernalia. Yet at the same time, most of them probably had not been to the other side of Mostar in a decade which had been characterized by propaganda suggesting the increasing Islamic competent of Bosnian Muslim identity. The visual argument of this Bosnian Croat newspaper’s venture to the east side reinforced ideas that it was a very different city from west Mostar.

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<sup>46</sup> “Čovjek Gornut u Drugi Plan” [Man Pushed into Second Place], *Dnevni List*, October 12, 2001, 18-19.

<sup>47</sup> “Čovjek Gornut u Drugi Plan,” 18-19.

<sup>48</sup> “Čovjek Gornut u Drugi Plan,” 18.

## A Croat City

While multiculturalism was the prewar image of Mostar on which the international community and Bosnian Muslims and patriots focused during the conflict, the city's Croats became increasingly aware of the Muslim aspects of Mostar's, and Bosnia's, character and fought physically and architecturally to make a clearly visible space for themselves in the city. The changes they have made to the city in the postwar period have led to widespread perceptions that Mostar has been transformed into a Croat city.

Though generally accepted as a valid characterization of Mostar in the past decade, whether this is considered a change for the better or for the worse varies between communities. For many Bosnian Croats, increasing the Croat-ness of Mostar was a purposeful plan tied to their primary objective for fighting the war, and thus it was a desirable outcome. For them, it was imperative to link their identity to a city whose prewar images as either multicultural or Islamic-oriental did not highlight their presence within it. HVO fighters were quoted in *Oslobođenje* during their siege of the city as declaring that either "Mostar will be Croat or it will be a Croat wasteland."<sup>49</sup> Other accounts retroactively argued that Mostar in fact had always been Croat, and the idea that Mostar was for "Mostarians" was simply communist-era propaganda that denied national differences and histories.<sup>50</sup> Festivals and activities publicly celebrating Croat culture have been extensively organized in the past decade as "proof" of the Croat identity of the city and in the city.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Alija Behram, "U Mostaru je BiH još uvijek Živa" [In Mostar Bosnia is still Alive], *Oslobođenje*, September 9, 1993, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Jadran Topić, "Mostar Nije Mostarski Nego Hrvatski" [Mostar is not Mostarian but Croat], *Dani*, June 15, 1994, 4.

<sup>51</sup> D. Pehar, "Dani Kulture u Mostaru - Dokaz Hrvatskog Identiteta" [Cultural Days in Mostar: Proof of Croatian Identity], *Hrvatska Riječ*, December 10, 1994, 10.

On the other hand, Non-Croats argue that the city's Croats forcibly removed others from most of the city, appropriated once shared institutions, and have culturally dominated major spaces. The formerly multicultural city was Croat-sized through these developments, which is perceived as an unfortunate change by Mostar's and Bosnia's Muslims. For them, this new identity alienated and excluded many of the city's residents and did not accurately reflect its character or composition. During the war, then Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović countered Croat rhetorical and military claims on the city by telling Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban that "Mostar will never be *just* a Croat City," and that he would never sign an agreement that leaves the city exclusively under Croat control.<sup>52</sup> Izetbegović's position was published in newspapers in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina thus clearly reflecting the Bosnian and Bosnian Muslim argument that Mostar reputation as a shared city was under threat from local Croats.

In many depictions of Mostar as a Croat city, especially in the final year of the war and the immediate postwar period, the Muslim section of town is described as a ghetto, calling to mind both the low income neighborhoods of disenfranchised populations in the late twentieth century as well as the Jewish ghettos of European history.<sup>53</sup> This image was particularly evoked during the period when Mostar's Croats maintained an economic blockade against the smaller eastern enclave and manned military checks at points of entry to certain neighborhoods to restrict the movement of the city's Muslims.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Izetbegović, "Intervju Alije Izetbegovića," 7.

<sup>53</sup> Alija Behram, "Living in the Ghetto," *War Report*, December 1995, 38-40; Alija Behram and N. Žujo, "Mostar - Geto za Muslimane" [Mostar: Ghetto for Muslims], *Osobođenje*, May 7, 1993, 9; and "Muslimani u Getu" [Muslims in the Ghetto], *Ljiljan*, May 10, 1993, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Lane, "A Muslim Town's Long Nightmare," *Newsweek*, September 6, 1993, 26; and Enes Ratkušić, "Ministru Kulture Bosne i Hercegovine Hrvati nisu Doxvolili Prijeći sa Ljeve na Desnu

When looking at the urban area of Mostar, the Old Town Municipality comprises only a third of the physical space of Mostar Southwest Municipality, though immediately following the war, the Muslim population in this area was larger than that of the Croat side. The continued propensity for Croats to live in the west and for Muslims to live in the over-crowded east has only reinforced the image of a Muslim ghetto even after the freedom of movement was restored and apartments were returned.<sup>55</sup> In addition, this image of Mostar as a Croat city with a Muslim ghetto continued long after the economic and military blockade ended because of the different rebuilding trajectories of the two sides as well as the economic discrepancies and asymmetric distribution of urban infrastructure and resources between them in the postwar period.

Seeing postwar Mostar as Croat has also been intensified as a result of recent shifts in the city's demographics: the overall percentage of the city's population identifying themselves as Croat had by 2002 increased to around 60%, up from 45% in 1998, and 35% before the war.<sup>56</sup> Thus by the time reuniting the city's political structure was being debated, it was Mostar's Muslims and the leadership of their nationalist Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije*, or SDA) who began for the first time to hesitate due to apprehension of being a minority in what they perceive would be a Croat controlled city.<sup>57</sup>

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Obalu u Mostaru" [Croats Would not let the Minister of Culture of Bosnia-Herzegovina Pass from the Left to the Right Side of Mostar], *Ljiljan*, August 24, 1994, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Behram and Žujo, "Mostar – Geto za Muslimane," 9.

<sup>56</sup> Danka Savić, "Hrvati za Jedinstven Mostar a Bošnjaci Strahuju od 'Trećeg Glavnog Grada' u BiH" [Croats for a United Mostar and Bosniaks Afraid of a Third Capital in Bosnia], *Slobodna Bosna*, September 25, 2003, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Nermin Bise, "Vinterštajn Traži Kompromis" [Winterstein Seeks Compromise], *Oslobođenje*, September 26, 2003, 8; F. Vele, "Vinterštajn: Nadam se da Ćemo Ujediniti Mostar" [Winterstein: I hope that We Will Unite Mostar], *Dnevni Avaz*, September 26, 2003, 3.

Statements from Croat politicians and journalists did nothing to stem these fears and indeed fueled them.<sup>58</sup> Even before their interest in reuniting the city's political administration at this demographically opportune moment, Mostar's non-Croat population had justifiable reservations that the city's Croats and their nationalist party, the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*, or HDZ), hoped to control the whole city.<sup>59</sup> During the war, the same HDZ party had launched the active, military attempt to conquer Mostar and claim it as the capital of *Herceg-Bosna*, the Bosnian Croat mini-state proclaimed as the "political, cultural, economic and regional entity of Croats" in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>60</sup>

Reconstruction and new construction projects in west Mostar since the war ended have also contributed to fears that nationalist Bosnian Croats aim to dominate the entire city. Those that have most contributed to these apprehensions include the reconstructed Franciscan bell tower and the Jubilee Cross on Hum Hill. As was detailed in the last chapter, the size and locations of both the tower and the cross have been perceived as aggressive and imposing.<sup>61</sup> Because of the construction of these highly visible, exclusive institutions and monuments, as well as because they claimed many previously shared resources which happened to be on their "side," Mostar's Croats appear to Muslims and others to be taking over the physical city and therefore usurping its total identity and making Mostar a Croat City.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Alaupović, "Neću da mi Djecu Uče," 16-17; and Topić, "Mostar Nije Mostarski," 4.

<sup>59</sup> Izetbegović, "Intervju Alije Izetbegovića," 7; and Šimunović, "Mostar je također i Hrvatski Grad," 34.

<sup>60</sup> Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, trans. Nikolina Jovanović (Montreal / Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 244, 247.

<sup>61</sup> Rusmir Smajilhodžić, "Nova Mostarska Elita Sagradila je Arhitektonske Monstrume" [New Mostar Elite Build Architectural Monstrosities], *Slobodna Bosna*, August 8, 2002, 52; and Senka Kurtović, "Kako je Mostar Ponovo Postao Hrvatski?" [How Did Mostar Became Croat Once Again?], *Oslobođenje*, June 6, 2000, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Emir Džanić, "Hrvati Ponovo Ruše Stari Most" [Croats Finally Destroy the Old Bridge], *Bošnjački Front*, July 20, 2004, <http://www.bosnjacki-front.com/print.php?docid+040411002107> ; and Kurtović, "Kako je Mostar Ponovo Postao Hrvatski?," 3.



### *Transforming the Rondo*

In addition to perceived attempts to conquer or dominate all of Mostar, in the parts of the city controlled by Bosnian Croats, more extensive efforts were made to transform it into a specifically Croat city. Exploring one major public space in Mostar, the Rondo, reveals in microcosm the conversion of the western part of the city from its alleged prewar multicultural character to a Croat-dominated identity. The Rondo is a traffic circle laid out during the Austro-Hungarian era, which remains one of the most beautiful urban spaces in west Mostar. Its design included six tree-lined alleés radiating outward from a landscaped center median.

The Rondo is the location of the new monument dedicated to the fallen Croat defenders, otherwise known as the HVO, which did initially defend the city but also contributed to its destruction.<sup>63</sup> Before the recent war however, its specific site was occupied by a well-known and popular café patronized by all Mostar's residents (fig. 86).<sup>64</sup> The Rondo Café was located in front of the *Dom Kultura*, the ubiquitous communist era youth cultural center that has now become the *Hrvatski Dom Herceg Stjepan Kosaća* (Duke Stjepan Kosaća Croatian Center).<sup>65</sup> The shared site has thus been claimed for a monument exclusive to one particular community and the shared cultural center has been transformed into an institution to promote a separatist culture.

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<sup>63</sup> Zvonimir Jukić, "Natječaj za Spomenik Domovinskog Rata" [Competition for the Homeland War Monument], *Slobodna BiH*, October 15, 1998, 15; and Ivana Brkić, "Spomenik Poginulim Hrvatskim Braniteljima" [Monument to the Fallen Croat Defenders], *Slobodna BiH*, April 11, 1999, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Milan Andjelić, "Strahujem od Zaborava: Sjećanja na Mostarske Kavane" [I am afraid of Forgetting: Memory of a Mostar Café], *Most* 25 (May 1999): <http://www.most.ba/025/116.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> Zvonimir Jukić, "Za Obnovu Osam Milijuna Maraka" [Eight Million Marks for the Renewal], *Slobodna BiH*, January 26, 1999, 15.



Figure 86: Prewar view of the Rondo Café and *Dom Kultura*, the Rondo, c.1970. Postwar of the Monument to the Fallen Croat Defenders and the *Hrvatski Dom*, Square of Great Croats, 2006. (images: Ćiro-Ćiril Raić and author).

Two other monumental sculptures were added to the Rondo in 2005 during the seventh annual summer *Dani Matice Hrvatske* (Croatian Source Days) festival promoting Croatian culture in Mostar. A white stone monument to Marko Marulić, the work of Šima Vidulin, was unveiled as part of the commencement of the six-week festival and a seated bronze Queen Katarina Kosača Kotromanić, sculpted by Željko Marić, was unveiled to mark the festival's closing (fig. 87)<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Radoslav Dodig, "Trg Hrvatskih Velikama: Mramor, Beton, Bronca i Istarski Kamen na Engleskoj Travici" [Square of Great Croats: Marble, Concrete, Bronze and Istrian Stone on English Grass],



Figure 87: Monuments to Marko Marulić and Queen Katarina Kosača Kotromanić, 2006. (images: author)

Katarina, the last queen of the independent medieval Bosnian Kingdom before its conquest by the Ottomans, is a universally loved figure from Bosnian history. Born in Blagaj, the small town near where Mostar would later be founded, Katarina represents one of Hercegovina's most important historical personages, but contemporary Croat, Muslim and Bosnian historiography focus on distinctly different aspects of her legacy. While Bosnian Croats revere her for her conversion and loyalty to Catholicism during a "heretical" period in Bosnian history as well as her lobbying against the Muslim Ottomans in European courts, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian nationalists stress her patriotism and diplomatic efforts to reconstitute medieval Bosnia after its demise.

Because Bosnian Croats have particularly focused on Katarina, visibly celebrating and appropriating her image in recent years, they have begun to erode her appeal to others

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*Slobodna Dalmacija*, December 2, 2005; "Otkrivanje Spomenika Maruliću Označiće Početak" [Unveiling of the Marulić Monument Marks the Opening], *Oslobođenje*, March 23, 2005, [http://www.oslobodjene.ba/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=44402&Itemid=0&pop=1&....](http://www.oslobodjene.ba/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=44402&Itemid=0&pop=1&....)

in Bosnia-Herzegovina, not unlike the constant emphasis on the Old Bridge's potential multicultural meaning has distanced the city's Croats from that formerly shared site. Though a Katarina monument could potentially have been universally appreciated in Mostar today, the location selected – in front of the Croatian cultural center and beside the HVO monument – has furthered her transformation into a Bosnian Croat symbol, just as the Rondo has been Croat-sized in the postwar period.

Marko Marulić, on the other hand, was never shared heritage and was previously not important to Mostar's, Herzegovina's, or Bosnia's past, yet has been vital to Croat history in the past two centuries. Considered the "Father of Croatian Literature," Marulić was an early renaissance poet and Christian humanist from Split, Croatia who achieved widespread fame during his lifetime. He is considered a central figure in the early development of Croatian identity, both for his writing in the vernacular language as well as for the patriotic and religious themes in his work. His most well-known epic poem is "Judita," based on the Book of Judith, the story of how the ancient Hebrews resisted the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar's armies, and has for centuries been interpreted as representing the Croatian peoples struggle against the incursions of the Ottomans at the end of the fifteenth century, the time at which Marulić was writing.

The choice of Marulić as the subject for a sculpture in Mostar is interesting for two reasons. It is notable because of his connection to the Croatian language, which is such an important component of how Bosnian Croats have sought to distinguish themselves from their neighbors in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Marulić is also interesting because of his anti-Ottoman symbolism, which is indeed an attribute shared by Marulić, Katarina, and Herceg Stjepan, for whom the cultural center which serves as backdrop for the three new Rondo monuments is named. It is unclear if this anti-

Ottoman symbolism is intended as more generally anti-Muslim, but it is certainly likely considering the common tendency among Croats today to conflate the medieval Ottoman Turks with contemporary Bosnian Muslims in order to promote anti-Muslim sentiments.

To further solidify the transformation of Mostar's Rondo into a specifically Croat urban space, the whole traffic circle, known simply as tThe Rondo since Austrian times, was renamed the Square of Great Croats (*Trg Hrvatskih Velikama*) by the Municipal Council of Mostar Southwest in the mid-1990s. This name change paralleled an even more politically controversial name change in Zagreb, where a traffic circle named in honor of the Victims of Fascism was renamed the Square of Great Croats, sparking questions of whether Croatian authorities no longer felt sorry for those killed by the Nazis during the Second World War.<sup>67</sup>

Mostar's Southwest Municipality changed the Rondo's name again in 2004, in the weeks between when the order for Mostar's reunification was made by the OHR and its official implementation, which would dissolve the separate municipalities and merge them into a newly constituted and unified city council.<sup>68</sup> As if Square of Great Croats was not exclusive enough, this time the space was named Mate Boban Square, after the wartime president of the Croat break-away entity of *Herceg-Bosna*. Boban was the political leader who oversaw the HVO's attack on Mostar, one of the most

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<sup>67</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, "The Lesson of the Square," *Harvard Design Magazine* 13 (Winter/Spring 2001): 20-22.

<sup>68</sup> V. Ćorić, "Mostar Dobio Trg Mate Boban" [Mostar gets a Mate Boban Square], *Nezavisne Novine*, February 25, 2004, <http://www.nezavisne.com/denevne/dogadjaji/dog02252004-04.php> ; Senka Kurtović, "Rondo," *Oslobođenje*, February 25, 2004, [http://www.oslobodneme.ba/index..php?option=com\\_wrapper&Itemid38](http://www.oslobodneme.ba/index..php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid38) ; "Mostar: Trg Hrvatskih Velikanma (Rondo) preimenovan u Trg Mate Bobana" [Mostar: Square of Great Croats (Rondo) Changes Name to Mate Boban Square], *bljesak.info*, c.2004, <http://www.bljesak.info/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=6194>.

chauvinist Croat nationalists of the recent decades, and a clear advocate of the destruction of Bosnia-Hercegovina and the division of its territory between Croatia and Serbia.<sup>69</sup> Thus, Boban, like the HVO, is not universally honored in Mostar or Bosnia-Hercegovina, and would have most certainly been indicted as a war criminal had he not died before the ICTY reached his case. After the Mostar Southwest Municipal Council's attempt to rededicate the Rondo to Boban and to make other last minute changes to street and place names throughout the city, High Representative Ashdown ordered a moratorium in late February on any such changes in Mostar and made that decision retroactive to the day he had issued the Decision on Mostar's reunification.<sup>70</sup>

#### *Other Renaming and Reclaiming*

The Renaming of streets, spaces, and institutions has in fact been an extensively used tactic of claiming Mostar as a specifically Croat city, as well as of differentiating the two sides of the city.<sup>71</sup> The Rondo's transformation into the Square of Great Croats and briefly into Mate Boban Square was not the only politically motivated and exclusivist change in Croat-controlled Mostar.

In a further attempt to make Mostar more Croatian by association, the name of the city's main public green space, also located in Mostar Southwest Municipality, was

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<sup>69</sup> Ćorić, "Mostar Dobio Trg Mate Bobana"; Kurtović, "Rondo"; and "Trg Hrvatskih Velikama (Rondo)."

<sup>70</sup> OHR, "Decision Prohibiting City-Municipalities of the City of Mostar from Assigning Names to or Changing Existing Names of Streets, Squares, Bridges and Other Such Public Places," Decision 194/04, Sarajevo, February 26, 2004, [http://www.ohr.int/print/?content\\_id=31911](http://www.ohr.int/print/?content_id=31911) ; and Zvonimir Jukić, "Od 'Boban' kroz 'Lenin' i 'Tito' do 'Alija'" [From Boban via Lenin and Tito to Alija], *Dnevni List*, February 28, 2004, 10; and "Ured Visokog Predstavnik" [Office of the High Representative], *Dani*, March 5, 2004, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Zoran Vidić, "Nazivi Ulica u Mostaru Preimenovani bez ikakvog Kriterija" [The Names of Streets in Mostar Changed without any kind of Criteria], *Dnevni List*, September 7, 2002, 5.



changed from City Park to Zrinjevac because Zrinjevac is the name of one of the main parks in Zagreb. However, from habit or out of ignorance or defiance of the official change, many non-Croats and Croats alike continue to call the park, as well as the Rondo, by their former names. Immediately after the war, Zrinjsko also became the name of the newly formed west Mostar soccer team and the appropriated stadium of the city's former team Velež, which incidentally continued to play on the east side.<sup>72</sup> The park, team, and stadium were all renamed in honor of the Zrinski family, the governors of medieval Croatia best known and celebrated within Croatian culture for having fought valiantly against the incursions of the Ottoman armies into the Hungarian and Hapsburg Kingdoms. Like Marulić, the Zrinskis are definitely Croatian as opposed to Bosnian, and whether these appellations were intended as specifically anti-Muslim is unclear, but not unlikely.

In the 1990s, Mostar's Southwest Municipality renamed the city's dividing line from the patriotic communist-era name of Boulevard of the National Revolution (*Bulevar Narodne Revolucije*) to the Boulevard of Croat Defenders (*Bulevar Hrvatskim Braniteljima*).<sup>73</sup> Just as Yugoslav era National Heroes were suspect because of the ambiguity of which nation they represented, Bosnian Croats also disliked the idea of the Second World War as a National Revolution. They therefore sought to erase this memory from the city's public streets. The attempt to rededicate the Boulevard to Croat Defenders was officially ended by a 2002 decision of the shared City Council that required all streets in the Central Zone to keep their names as of April 6, 1992, the day the war began.<sup>74</sup> This means the communist slogan, Boulevard of the National

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<sup>72</sup> "Safe Bodrio Zrinjski, hoće li mu 'Veležovci' oprostiti?" [Safe Cheered for Zrinjsko: Will he Apologize to Velež fans?], *Hrvatska Rijec*, June 3, 2000, 34-35.

<sup>73</sup> Opcina Jugozapad Mostar, "Mapa," c.2000, <http://www.jugozapad.mostar.com/mapa.htm>.

<sup>74</sup> M.L. "Adresa Obnovljene Zgrade na Bulevaru je Bulevar Narodne Revolucije" [The Address of Restored Buildings on the Boulevard is the Boulevard of the national Revolution], *Dnevni List* September 11, 2002, 15.

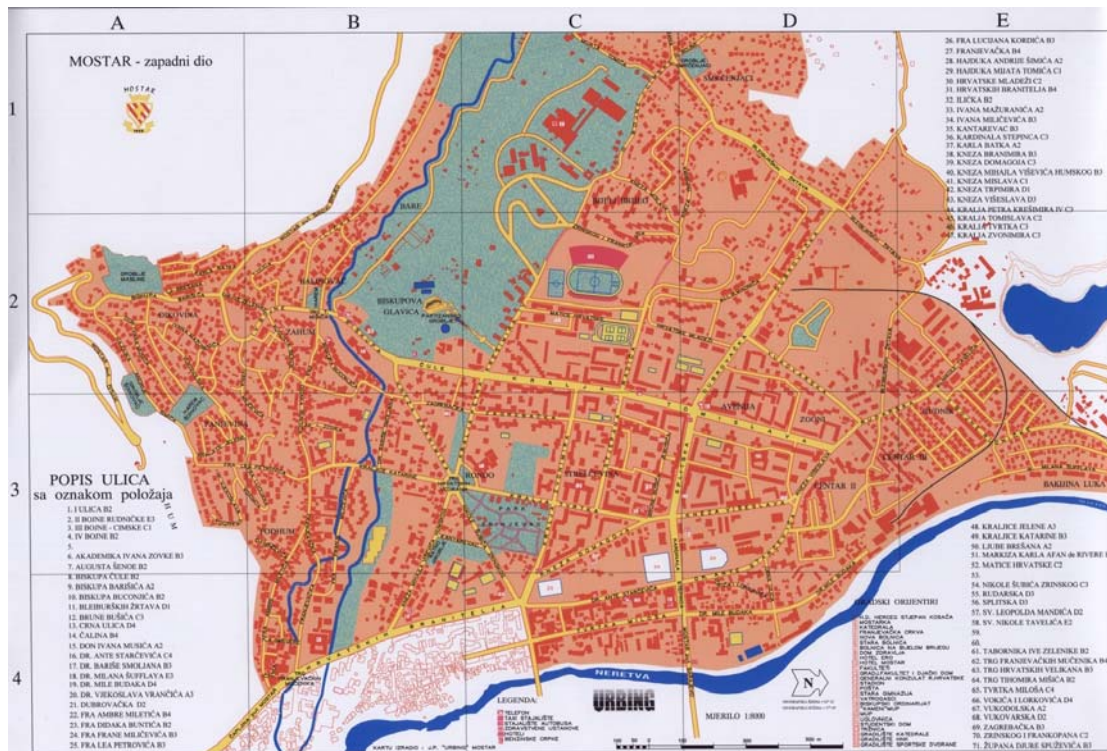


Figure 88: Map: “Mostar - Western Part” according to the Croat-controlled Mostar Southwest Municipality, c.2002. (image: Općina Mostar Jugozapad)

Revolution, has been retained. Nevertheless, a map produced in Mostar Southwest Municipality continued to label this particular street as the Boulevard of Croat Defenders, although most people in the city - from both sides - simply call it the Boulevard.

On this same maps of the Mostar Southwest Municipality, which is labeled simply “Mostar: Western Part” (*Zapadni Dio*), most of the Central Zone was absorbed within this Croat-controlled municipality, rather than shown as distinct, in an explicit denial of its existence that cartographically reinforced what building programs in the Central Zone had argued (fig. 88). The most prominent sites indicated on the map were in fact the Gymnasium and the buildings sites for the HNK and Cathedral, which legally were not within the municipality, but were *de facto* treated as such because of its relative

strength in comparison to the shared city council which supposedly administered the Central Zone.<sup>75</sup> Numerous streets and spaces other than the Boulevard and the Rondo have been renamed on this map, but most interestingly, the entire city east of the Neretva River is not even included.

Following the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005, a proposed was made in Mostar to rename Hum Hill in his honor since he was a leader “in the battle for religious tolerance and peace among people of all races and nations.”<sup>76</sup> This initiative represented the use of a well-intentioned symbolic association with an individual who is indeed respected throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, but like the cross that now tops that hill, it simultaneously reflected an exclusive association with a particular group that could never satisfy the city’s population.<sup>77</sup> The hill’s historic name of Hum is the medieval name for Herzegovina and therefore has more universal appeal for such a prominent feature in Mostar. This proposal for John Paul II Hill has not received serious attention and is not likely to be carried through, yet demonstrates a continued lack of sensitivity on the part of some Croats in Mostar to what that Hill represents for the city’s non-Catholic population and for how exclusivist names for shared landscape features, spaces, and streets are interpreted by those who are excluded.

In her study of the production of space in postwar Mostar, social theater producer Sonja Arsham Kuftinec eloquently summed up the process of using street names to make Mostar a Croat city as well as the response to these changes. She argues:

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<sup>75</sup> Općina Jugozapad Mostar, “Mapa.”

<sup>76</sup> “UHSP traži da se Brdo Hum Nazove Brdom Pape Ivana Pavla II” [UHSP seeks that Hum Hill be called Pope John Paul II Hill], *Hercegovina.info*, c.2005, <http://www.hercegovina.info/index/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=779>.

<sup>77</sup> John Paul II was well-liked throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, though his conspicuous silence on hate and religiously motivated crimes committed by Catholics, and the Catholic Church, in Croatia and Bosnia in the 1990s was often noted.

Nationalist Croats inscribe their affiliation by renaming the streets of west Mostar with their heroes. Others persist in calling the streets by their prewar Yugoslav names or by their remembered use. Each practice defies the others, disrupting efforts to maintain or erase a cohesive past.<sup>78</sup>

Kuftinec notes the relationship between the names used by different communities for Mostar's public spaces and their differing understandings of history. Just as varying interpretations of the war and of Bosnia's past have shaped perceptions of reconstruction and new building projects in postwar Mostar, they have clearly also influenced how the city has been imagined in recent years.

### *The Croat City*

In addition to being identified as *a* Croat city, Bosnia's Croat population has envisioned Mostar as *the* Croat City during and since the war. For them, it is the only truly Croat – or at least by the far the most important Croat – urban center in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a result, regardless of whether it is has or has not become a thoroughly Croat city, its importance for Bosnian Croats has been augmented.

In the forward to his monograph *Mostar: People, Culture, Civilization*, Anto Augustinović, a local Bosnian Croat, argues that the city of Mostar is the seat of all major Croat cultural, educational, sport, and political institutions and organizations in Bosnia, and was for that reason recognized as the capital of the Croatian Community of *Herceg-Bosna* during the war and has remained the Croat center in Bosnia since.<sup>79</sup> Of course it is also true that many of the institutions to which Augustinović refers

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<sup>78</sup> Sonja Arsham Kuftinec, "Bridging Haunted Places: Performance and the Production of Mostar," in *Opening Acts: Performance in/as Communication and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Judith Hamera (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 87.

<sup>79</sup> Anto Augustinović, *Mostar: Ljudi, Kultura, Civilizacija* [Mostar: People, Culture, Civilization] (Mostar: Hrvatska Kulturna Zagednica, 1999), 7.

were actually founded during or since the war, or were shared organizations that became Croat-controlled and oriented in the past decade. Nevertheless, as the contemporary home to these Croat institutions, and especially as the site of Bosnia's only University offering instruction in the Croatian language and of its only newspapers printed in the Croatian language, Mostar is today without a doubt *the* city in Bosnia-Herzegovina of importance to Bosnian Croat identity.

As a result of the increasing significance of the city to Bosnian Croats, the wartime ideas that Bosnian Croats "deserve" control of Mostar and a separate entity on par with the Serbs' semi-autonomous *Republika Srpska*, are still widely argued. Attempts to recreate *Herceg-Bosna* as a third, exclusively Croat entity resurface every few years. These efforts are actively supported by leaders in the Mostar Croat community, including Bishop Ratko Perić as well as former Croat member of the Bosnian Presidency, Ante Jelavić. Jelavić was removed from the Presidency by the OHR in 2001 as a result of his participation in separatist activities in Mostar that compromised the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the state he was meant to represent and lead.<sup>80</sup> As *the* Croat city in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mostar is always understood as the capital of this potential third entity, leaving Mostar's non-Croats to wonder about their status and fate in that scenario and further contributing to their concerns that the battle to keep Mostar from becoming *a* Croat city has not yet been conclusively won.

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<sup>80</sup> In addition, November 18, the anniversary of the original founding of *HR Herceg-Bosna* was still celebrated as a public holiday in west Mostar as late as 2002. "Biskup Perić Tražio od Vrbošića Podršku za Treći Entitet!" [Bishop Perić Asks Vrbošić for Support for a Third Entity], *Slobodna Bosna*, January 9, 2003, 12; OHR, "Decision removing Ante Jelavić from his position as the Croat member of the BiH Presidency," Sarajevo, March 7, 2001, [http://www.ohr.int/decisions/removalssdec/default.asp?content\\_id=328](http://www.ohr.int/decisions/removalssdec/default.asp?content_id=328) ; and "Jedni Proslavljali, Drugi Radili, Treći Prosvjedovali" [One Celebrates, A Second Works, A Third Protests], *Dnevni List*, November 19, 2002, 5.

### *Symbol of Croat Crimes and Shame*

For some of the most self-conscious Croats, Mostar's transformation from a shared Bosnian city to a Croat city through wartime and postwar efforts, is not a positive and desirable outcome, but rather the unfortunate result of extremists claiming to act in the Croat name, but who instead have brought collective shame. This has been particularly a response of Croats in Croatia proper, as opposed to Bosnian Croats, among which even intellectuals have for the most part failed to publicly acknowledge collective and individual Bosnian Croat crimes during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to Bosnian Muslim Ozren Kebo, a Mostar native and journalist for the weekly news magazine *Slobodna Bosna*, the vast majority of the city's Croat population, even those who are not perceived as chauvinist nationalists:

... consider the destruction of Vukovar and Dubrovnik to be criminal and savage acts, while the destruction of Mostar is seen as the legitimate defense of Croatian national interest. That type of thinking – whereby a crime is not automatically a crime, but whose nature is determined by those who committed it – makes our situation ultimately complicated. There is no catharsis, no remorse, no denazification. No understanding of the horrors that took place. They are not even seen as horrors, but as highly moral and patriotic deeds.<sup>81</sup>

Response from a minority of intellectual leaders in Croatia has reflected a different attitude however. A letter to the editor of the *International Herald Tribune* from September 1993, six weeks before the Old Bridge's destruction, questioned what it would take for the international community to criticize Croatia's destructive policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina now that "the bloody siege of Mostar has finally attracted the

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<sup>81</sup> Ozren Kebo, "The Mostar Story, or the Twenty-first-century Berlin," in *Divided Countries, Separated Cities: The Modern Legacy of Partition*, ed. Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes and Rada Neković (New Dehli: Oxford University Press, 2003), 111.



world's attention."<sup>82</sup> Hindsight shows us that it was the high profile loss of that internationally known architectural monument that would focus international attention both on Mostar and to a lesser extent on Croat crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Zagreb art historian Radovan Ivancević immediately spoke out against the Old Bridge's destruction, publishing a letter of protest in the name of the Croatian Society of Historians of Art, that argued this act made Croats no different than the locally condemned Serbs who had destroyed Dalmatia's cultural heritage.<sup>83</sup>

According to Stanko Lašić, a prominent Croatian literary historian, "The Croatian government is not responsible for the destruction of the Old Bridge, for the fact that Mostar, a multinational city, was declared a Croat city. I am responsible for that. That is my sin – the sin of all Croats."<sup>84</sup> He goes on to argue that the failure of the Croatian public to actively and publicly react to the HVO attack on Mostar as well as the massacres at Ahmici and Stupni Dol, which were all indeed supported by the government of Croatia, reflects collective compliance and support for these policies.

Ivo Banac, a Yale University history professor who emigrated from Yugoslavia as a child in the 1950s and who has become active in Croatian politics since its independence, is perhaps the best known Croatian intellectual in Europe and North America. As a world renown historian intimately knowledgeable about the Balkan region, he became one of the most vocal and often-cited critics of Croatian policy in

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<sup>82</sup> Marc Bojanić, "Judgment on Croatia: Letters to the Editor," *International Herald Tribune*, September 29, 1993, [http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/07/17/edlet\\_ed3\\_\\_54.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/07/17/edlet_ed3__54.php).

<sup>83</sup> Ivancević was later invited to participate in the Old Bridge's reconstruction as a member of the UNESCO expert advisory committee that ensured the projects authenticity. Radovan Ivancević, "On the Destruction and Rebuilding of the Old Bridge in Mostar," *Nedjeljni Vjesnik*, October 19, 2003, translated and reprinted in *Bosnia Report*, January-March 2004, [http://bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report\\_format?articleID=1055&reportid=163](http://bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format?articleID=1055&reportid=163).

<sup>84</sup> Stanko Lašić, quoted in Ivo Banac, "The Last Days of Bosnia? An Interview with Ivo Banac," by Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifshultz, *Boston Review* (February/March 1994), <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR19.1/banac.html>.

Bosnia-Hercegovina during the war, where he argued “Croatia’s good name is being sullied,” and where “Croatian leadership has graduated from Milošević’s victim to that of his accomplice.”<sup>85</sup> For Banac, Mostar, and specifically the destruction of the Old Bridge, was “a watershed” after which he could not help but speak out and after which he “no longer care[d] whether the criminals responsible for this outrage call [him] anti-Croat.”<sup>86</sup>

In an article published first in the Zagreb journal *Erasmus* in 1996, and then reprinted in the Mostar journal *Most* in 1998 as well as in numerous English language venues, Vesna Pusić, a leading Croatian sociologist and activist, argued simply that “Mostar is different.”<sup>87</sup> She suggested that:

of all the horrors which this war has produced, the tragedy of Mostar will always occupy a special place. Mostar is where the Croat nation stands on trial. ... Mostar’s fate in this war is unique for Croats because here the destruction, the terror, and the crimes were committed by our co-nationals and in our name.<sup>88</sup>

Of course the HVO was also responsible for similar activities in a number of other places, as Stanko Lašić had noted, but for Pusić as well as for Banac and Ivancević, Mostar’s extremes represented these activities in microcosm and the city came to symbolize Croat crimes and Croat shame.

Vesna Pusić also stressed the importance of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as a way to hold the individuals responsible for crimes like the destruction Mostar accountable, believing their trials, convictions, and

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<sup>85</sup> Banac, “Last Days of Bosnia?”

<sup>86</sup> Banac, “Last Days of Bosnia?”

<sup>87</sup> Vesna Pusić, “Mostar je Drugaciji: Kušnje Hrvatskog Naroda” [Mostar is Different: Trials of the Croatian People], *Most* 108-109 (November/December 1998): <http://www.most.ba/01920/014.htm>

<sup>88</sup> Vesna Pusić, “Mostar: In the Croat Name,” *Bosnia Report*, April-June 1996, [http://bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report\\_format.cfm?articleID=1763&reportid=114](http://bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleID=1763&reportid=114).

punishments would absolve the nation they claim to represent of its collective guilt. She argued that the first step in overcoming this collective responsibility was to denounce the perpetrators and their crimes, to say that concentrations camps, the destruction of the Old Bridge and a divided Mostar are “not in the interest of the Croat nation.”<sup>89</sup>

Later, as a member of the Sabor, the Croatian Parliament, Pusić became one of the few members of that government who has ever publicly and regularly argued that Croatia’s activities in Bosnia-Hercegovina during the war constituted an aggressive attack on another country.<sup>90</sup> Others Croat intellectuals have echoed this point, arguing that Mostar conclusively marks the moment when the Croatian government involved itself in the activities of Bosnian Croat forces, since “there was no doubt that troops of the Croatian Army were taking part in HVO operations in Mostar and in all of Hercegovina.”<sup>91</sup> Pusić’s public acknowledgement of these relationships has brought her under assault from many of her colleagues, as most of Croatia’s government and population have still not come to terms with or admitted that in some cases the Croatian Army and Croatian funds were deeply involved in efforts to divide Bosnia-Hercegovina, in the killing and displacement of civilians, and in the destruction of cultural heritage.

At the October 2003 opening of the photographic and historic exhibition “The Old Bridge in Mostar” at Mimara, Zagreb’s most prominent art museum and gallery, Croatian President Stipe Mesić said he had been “saddened and angered” when he had

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<sup>89</sup> Pusić, “Mostar: In the Croat Name.”

<sup>90</sup> Vesna Pusić, “Intervju: Vesna Pusić, Presjednica HNS-a Hrvatske: Hrvatska je još u Tunelu” [Interview: Vesna Pusić, President of HNS Croatia: Croatia is still in a Tunnel], by Igor Lasić, *Dani*, March 29, 2002, <http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/250/t25005.shtml>.

<sup>91</sup> Goldstein, *Croatia*, 246.

heard of the bridge's destruction ten years earlier, and that he believed it "was an attempt to unnaturally divide an entity."<sup>92</sup> Though a seemingly innocuous statement, this represented the first public reaction by any high-ranking Croat politician to the destruction of the Old Bridge. Though not pointing fingers at any individuals or collectives, Mesić's expression of anger and his acknowledgement that a divided Mostar was unnatural implicitly suggested a disagreement with those responsible.

The "political and symbolic meaning" of President Mesić's comments were noted and appreciated in Bosnian and Bosnian Muslim newspapers, with *Oslobođenje* covering the exhibition opening with the headline "Taboo about the Old Bridge Broken by Stjepan Mesić."<sup>93</sup> According to media accounts, discussing the Old Bridge in Mostar is a subject generally avoided by Croats so as to preclude acknowledgement of culpability. Thus President Mesić's very public mention of its destruction, as well as his attendance of the exhibition dedicated to it, was celebrated in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a key moment of Croatian self-reflexivity.<sup>94</sup>

### **Symbol of Bosnia and the Federation**

Mostar has acquired other new associations and identities that extend well beyond the city, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and even neighboring Croatia. For both Bosnians and the international community, Mostar today is considered a symbol of the country's future

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<sup>92</sup> Nermin Bise, "Tabu o Starom Mostu je Razbio Stjepan Mesić" [Stjepan Mesić Breaks a Taboo about the Old Bridge], *Oslobođenje*, October 18, 2003, 11; and Đ.F., "Mesić: Bio sam Tužan i Ljut Kada je srušen Stari Most" [Mesić: I was Sad and Angry when the Old Bridge was Destroyed], *Dnevni List*, October 15, 2003, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Bise, "Tabu o Starom Mostu," 11.

<sup>94</sup> Bise, "Tabu o Starom Mostu," 11; Nermin Bise, "Mesić Otvara Izložbu o Starom Mostu" [Mesić Opens Exhibit about the Old Bridge], *Oslobođenje*, October 14, 2003, 5; F.Đ. "Mesić," 3; and A. Delić, "Mesić Svečano Otvara Izložbu" [Mesić Celebrates Opening of Exhibit] *Dnevni List*, October 14, 2003, 7.

since it is understood as the keystone holding together both the Federation and the Republic itself.<sup>95</sup> Whether or not Mostar's reunion will be successful and whether Croats and Muslims can cooperate and agree in this symbolic and real city are questions which have taken on broader significance. Mostar has been characterized as a "recipe" for Bosnia as well as "a stumbling block on which ... attempts at state- and nation-building might shatter, or a showcase for [their] ultimate success."<sup>96</sup>

Even before the war ended, Mostar's strategic position to the country's future was realized. During the second siege of the city, the battle for Mostar was characterized as "the last chance for Bosnia" in the local press.<sup>97</sup> Then American Ambassador, Victor Jaković, visited Mostar at that time and was reported to have said of its heroic defense that "many people say Bosnia may no longer exist. But, in Mostar I see that Bosnia is still alive."<sup>98</sup> Clearly he was referring both to Bosnia as a country, as well as to the idea of Bosnia as a multicultural place. Within months of the signing of the peace agreement, Mostar was declared a "make-or-break issue of the Dayton Accords."<sup>99</sup>

In addition to symbolizing the potential success or failure of the Bosnian State in the postwar period, Mostar has also represented in microcosm the future of the Federation

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<sup>95</sup> Medina Delalić, "Došlo Doba da se Kamen Proba" [The Time has Come to Try the Stone], *Slobodna Bosna*, January 26, 1997, 13; Azer Jugo, "Mostar: Recept za Bosnu" [Mostar: Recipe for Bosnia], *Stari Mostar*, September 16-30, 1995, 3; Dalida Jugo, "Federacija još ne Stanuje Ovdje" [The Federation Still Doesn't Exist Here], *Dani*, July 15, 1994, 26-28; Ozren Kebo, "Čudno Jada od Mostara Grada" [Strange Sadness from Mostar City], *Dani*, August 1996, 18-21; and Seid Smajkić, "Intervju: Mostarski Muftija Seid ef. Smajkić: Hrvati već Imaju Treći Entitet: Mostar im Treba kao 'Stolni' Grad" [Interview: Mostar Mufti Seid Smajkić: Croats already have a Third Entity: They Need Mostar as a Capital], by Tarik Lazović, *Saff*, August 2003, 24;

<sup>96</sup> Azer Jugo, "Mostar: Recept za Bosnu," 3; and Wimmen, "New Nations, Imagined Borders," 2.

<sup>97</sup> Senad Avdić, "Mostar: Zadnja Oaza hercegovine i Posljedna Šansa Bosne" [Mostar: Last Oasis of Hercegovina and Final Chance for Bosnia], *Slobodna Bosna/Ljiljan*, September 25, 1993, 11.

<sup>98</sup> Behram, "U Mostaru je BiH još uvijek Živa," 4.

<sup>99</sup> Jelana Lovrić, "Mostar Unbridged," *War Report*, February-March 1996, [http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state=heno-archive\\_warreport\\_39.html&s=o&o=archive/war/war\\_39\\_199602-03\\_02.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=heno-archive_warreport_39.html&s=o&o=archive/war/war_39_199602-03_02.txt).

of Bosnia-Hercegovina, one of the two autonomous entities that comprise that state. Though no longer officially called the Muslim-Croat Federation as it was originally named in the 1994 Washington Agreement, and though Serbs are now included as a constituent peoples of the Federation, this entity is still largely comprised of Bosnian Muslims and Croats and still largely considered their shared entity, as opposed to the clearly Bosnian Serb controlled *Republika Srpska*. This Federation predominately shared by Croats and Muslims has thus been compared to the city predominately shared by Croats and Muslims, and since 1994, Mostar has been argued to be a “mirror” of the Federation.<sup>100</sup> Following the war, whenever further efforts were made within the Federation to partition or create nationally distinct territories, especially by Bosnian Croat elements, it was referred to as “Mostarization.”<sup>101</sup>

Local Bosnian Muslim politicians and headlines have often reflected the sentiments that “2 Mostars = 3 (Ethnic) Bosnias” or that “Mostar Will Be One City – Or Bosnia Soon Won’t Be.”<sup>102</sup> If cooperation, agreement and progress could not be made in Mostar, it was argued that Bosnian Croats would have renewed cause to form a separate, third entity and the Muslim-Croat Federation would fail. One local journalist explained in December 1995 that:

Rebuilding the city of Mostar as a united political entity, with a multinational, multireligious, and multicultural orientation, could open the way for the establishment of a unified Bosnia along the same lines. But the reverse is equally possible: if Mostar remains divided into Muslim and Croat parts, this could lead to the creation of three ethnic Bosnias.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Zihad Ključanin and Nusret Čančar, “Mostar će biti Ogledalo Federacije!” [Mostar will be a Mirror of the Federation], *Ljiljan*, June 8, 1994, 5-6.

<sup>101</sup> Fahira Fejzić, “Mostarizacija Federacije: Instaliranje Rezervne Varijante” [Mostarization of the Federation: Installation of Reserve Variants], *Ljiljan*, April 30, 1997, 10-11.

<sup>102</sup> Alija Behram, “Mostar: Iskušenja Obnove Povjerenje i Suživota: Dva Mostara = Tri (Etničke) Bosne!” [Mostar: Testing the Renewal of Reconciliation and Coexistence: Two Mostars = Three (Ethnic) Bosnias!], *Stari Mostar*, November 20, 1995, 6; and Orzen Kezo, “Čudna Jada od Mostara Grada,” 18.

<sup>103</sup> Behram, “Living in the Ghetto.”



High symbolic hopes therefore were hanging on Mostar's reunion and its continued success.<sup>104</sup> If reunited Mostar fails, it would signal that Bosnia's population was in fact completely divided into three ethnically pure and physically separated peoples and therefore neither the state/territorial reality of Bosnia-Herzegovina nor the idea of Bosnia as a shared space would exist any longer.

### *Capital of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Mostar has always been known as the cultural, economic, and even political capital of Herzegovina; however, this title bears no real significance since Herzegovina is a regional toponym which has not corresponded to an administrative entity for centuries. On the other hand, because of the city's importance to the future of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the possibility of moving its capital from Sarajevo to Mostar has periodically been discussed since the entity's establishment.<sup>105</sup> The idea of locating at least some of the Federation ministries in Mostar surfaced at the time of the Dayton Agreement, and the HDZ party sponsored the first initiative to make Mostar its capital in the fall of 1998. The HDZ, and their Croat nationalist supporters, argued this was the only fair solution for "Croat" Mostar, since "Muslim" Sarajevo is the capital of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and "Serb" Banja Luka is the capital of the *Republika Srpska*.

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<sup>104</sup> Behram, "Mostar: Iskušnja Obnove Povjerenje i Suživota," 6.

<sup>105</sup> "Čelnici Političkih Stranaka i Međunarodni Dužnosnici o Inicijativi HDZ-a BiH za Proglašenje Mostara Glavnim Gradom Federacije" [Members of the Politic Party and International Community on the HDZ initiative to Make Mostar the Capital of the Federation], *Slobodna BiH*, October 2, 1998, 5; Ivan Lovrenović, "Mostar: Glavni Grad Federacije?" [Mostar: Federation Capital?], *Dani*, November 9, 1998, 42-43; and Jozo Pavković, "Mostar: Glavni Grad Federalnog Dijela BiH?" [Mostar: Capital of the Federal Part of Bosnia?], *Hrvatska Riječ*, April 27, 1998, 36.

The 1998 Madrid Declaration issued by the Peace Implementation Council, the international body organized to monitor the realization of the Dayton Agreement, suggested the international community did not oppose the proposal for moving the Federation capital to Mostar, as long as a series of stringent criteria were met first. These criteria included the existence of “truly unified city administration,” increased returns of displaced persons and refugees, the transfer of war criminals from the city to The Hague, “a functioning and independent Judiciary in the city,” and most interestingly, “demonstrable political support by all communities for the reconstruction of the old city, and no further destruction of cultural heritage.”<sup>106</sup>

Each of these criteria was slowly fulfilled over the course of the past decade, and efforts to make Mostar the Federation capital have continued. The possibility was particularly promoted by the Bosnian Croat media, which passionately raised the issue every few years.<sup>107</sup> West Mostar newspapers also reported that the former High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch expressed support for the proposal shortly before leaving office in 2002, hoping to gain legitimacy and momentum by claiming international community patronage for their cause.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Peace Implementation Council, “Annex: The Peace Implementation Agenda: Reinforcing Peace in Bosnia and Hercegovina: The Way Ahead,” *Peace Implementation Council Declaration*, Madrid: December 16, 1998, [http://www.ohr.int/print/?content\\_id=5191](http://www.ohr.int/print/?content_id=5191).

<sup>107</sup> “Bošnjaci Protiv Ideje o Mostaru Kao Glavnom Gradu Federacije” [Bosniaks against the Idea of Mostar as Federation Capital], *Slobodna BiH*, January 29, 1999, 5; Zvonimir Jukić, “Potpora Ideji o Mostaru kao Glavnom Gradu Federacije” [Support for the idea of Mostar as Federation Capital], *Slobodna BiH*, October 30, 1998, 5; Dragan Čović, “Razgovor: Dr. Dragan Čović, Ministar Financija i Dopredsjednik Vlade Federacije BiH: Mostar: Glavni Grad Federacije” [Interview: Dr. Dragan Čović, Minister of Finance and Vice President of the Government of the Federation of BiH], by Bisera Lušić, *Slobodna BiH*, March 3, 1999, 5; “Mostar Glavni Grad Federacije?” [Mostar Federation Capital], *Slobodna BiH*, March 9, 1999, 5; Miroslav Vasilj, “Izgledi da Mostar Postane Glavnim Gradom Federacije sve su Realniji” [It Seems Mostar Becoming Federation Capital is More and More Realistic], *Dnevni List*, October 28, 2002, 11; Ilija Šagolj, “Hoće li Mostar biti Glavni Grad Federacije BiH?” [Will Mostar Become the Capital of the Federation BiH?], *Dnevni List*, August 8, 2002, 12; and Alenko Zornić, “Gdje će Stolovati Federacija BiH?” [Where will the BiH Federation Rest], *Hrvatska Riječ*, October 3, 1998, 32.

<sup>108</sup> “Mostar treba biti Glavni Grad Federacije!” [Mostar Should be the Federation Capital], *Dnevni List*, February 5, 2002, 1, 4.

Because of past attempts by nationalist Croats to make Mostar the capital of *Herceg-Bosna*, others feared Croat interests in moving the capital represent attempts to control the Federation just as recent HDZ moves to unify Mostar were perceived as attempts to control the city.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, many non-Croats also supported the idea of Mostar as capital, believing such a move might thwart Croat separatism and increase their interest in productive participation in the Federation. Some of the city's Muslims also thought becoming the Federation capital would benefit Mostar economically, especially on their destitute side, and perhaps even lead to or reinforce reunification.<sup>110</sup>

Some opposed to moving the Federation capital argued that Bosnia-Herzegovina should be taking steps toward diminishing the two semi-autonomous entities and strengthening the central government, rather than reinforcing them by making decisions regarding their long-term future, such as relocating one of their seats and constructing new buildings for its institutions. Others argue the cost of the relocation and establishment of office space should be reason enough to dismiss the idea in the impoverished country.<sup>111</sup> Some Croats, including the President of the Croatian Peasants Party (*Hrvatska Seljacka Stranka*) of Bosnia, argued that the priorities of the Bosnian Croat politicians in power should be on the returns of displaced persons and other practical issues, rather than such bureaucratic questions.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> "Bošnjaci protiv Ideje," 5.

<sup>110</sup> Mirza Čubro, "Glavni Grad Zamazivanja Birača" [Capital Dirty with Voters], *Reporter*, August 20, 2002, 16.

<sup>111</sup> Čubro, "Glavni Grad Zamazivanja Birača," 16-17; Mirsad Ćeman, "Sarajevo je Odgovarajući Ambijent za Glavni Grad" [Sarajevo is Answering the Ambiance for the Capital], *Slobodna BiH*, October 2, 1998, 5.

<sup>112</sup> "Važnje je Vratiti Hrvate u Posavinu i Srednju Bosnu" [Its more important to Return Property to Croats in Central Bosnia], *Slobodna BiH*, October 2, 1998, 5.

Despite the extensive opposition to the idea, and the fact that many of its original advocates, including Ante Jelavić and Jadranko Prilić, are currently on trial in The Hague, a compromise was eventually reached. The Law on the Federation Ministries, which was passed once again not by the Bosnian Parliament, but rather by order of High Representative Paddy Ashdown in October 2002, required the relocation of the main offices of five of the sixteen Federation ministries to Mostar.<sup>113</sup> This process was reluctantly completed in 2003 and 2004, though at least three of the five Ministries maintained Sarajevo offices as well and though Sarajevo remains the official capital of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>114</sup>

### **Model United and Multicultural City**

Envisioning Mostar's urban identity as multicultural and heterogeneous was strengthened in the immediate postwar period, at precisely the time that identity seemed most threatened. Journalists as well as historians quickly looked back at the city's distant past to suggest this image had always predominated. According to the *Historical Dictionary of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, published shortly after the war in 1997, Mostar and its Old Bridge "joined the Oriental, Mediterranean, and Central European heritage into a single monument to all those who left a mark on this historic and charming city."<sup>115</sup> According to Ivan Lovrenović, Austrian building programs "brought new forms of European architecture and urban planning, producing

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<sup>113</sup> OHR, "Decision Enacting the Law on the Federation Ministries and other Bodies of the Federation Administration," Sarajevo, October 21, 2002, [http://www.ohr.int/decisions/mo-hncantdec/default.asp?content\\_id=28222](http://www.ohr.int/decisions/mo-hncantdec/default.asp?content_id=28222).

<sup>114</sup> The Ministries of Energy, Mining and Industry, of Transport and Communications, of Education and Science, of Trade and of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts have relocated their head offices to Mostar. At least three have maintained Sarajevo "branch" offices – often for the Ministers themselves – since Federation cabinet meetings still tend to take place in Sarajevo.

<sup>115</sup> Čuvalo, *Historical Dictionary of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 17.

picturesque contrasts and unexpected relationships between the interaction of the two worlds.”<sup>116</sup>

One postwar analyst anachronistically even argued that before the war, “the city officially imagined itself as a unified whole.”<sup>117</sup> Before its physical division during the war there was no reason to doubt the city’s unity or wholeness, other than typical neighborhood distinctions or areas reflecting successive eras of development. But since the war, unification and multiculturalism have been conflated within both international and local discourse on Mostar’s, and Bosnia’s identity, and this idea of desiring unity has been projected backward onto the prewar city.

Mostar has been touted as a model united and multicultural city as a result of the series of internationally brokered and celebrated reunifications in recent years, which culminated with the formation of the shared city administration in 2004. The functioning, however begrudgingly, of these high-profile shared institutions within a decade of the bloody and divisive conflict, have led many foreigners to argue Mostar now represents an example of rapid reunification and reconciliation for Bosnia-Herzegovina and beyond.

In 2002, a unified police force, with patrol teams consisting of one Bosnian Croat and one Bosnian Muslim officer, was established in Mostar after years of negotiating and international pressure.<sup>118</sup> These joint patrols did much to quell fears of police partiality on both sides, as well as to reduce criminals easily moving out of the jurisdiction of the many municipalities within the city. Though this was an important step in postwar Mostar, it is also important to note that for its first few years, this new

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<sup>116</sup> Ivan Lovrenović. “Myth of a Happy Age,” in *Svijetlost Evrope*, 74.

<sup>117</sup> Kuftinec, “Bridging Haunted Places,” 83.

<sup>118</sup> Jukić, “Bosnia: Mostar Police Reunited.”

force existed as one of four police forces in the city, since the separate Croat and Muslim forces took a while to disband and the IPTF continued to patrol Mostar. In addition, it was rumored that some members of these joint patrols were either hostile towards one another or passed entire shifts without speaking, clearly reflecting the weak local attachment to this reunion.

High Representative Paddy Ashdown focused his attention on the reunification of Mostar's government in 2003, appointing a series of commissions that eventually produced a new draft Statue for the city.<sup>119</sup> As previously described, the OHR decided the proposal would suffice, despite the concerns and complaints of various local communities, and he ordered its implementation in March 2004. Though well aware of the discrepancy between the city's reality and their rhetoric, after this forced reunification Mostar was publicized worldwide as an exemplary case of postwar reconciliation by the OHR as well as by other international organizations, such as UNESCO and the World Bank.<sup>120</sup> For example, researchers and policy advisors studying and deciding on the fate of Kosovska Mitrovica, a city divided between local Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, have looked to Mostar as a model, finding both parallels as well as aspects to avoid.<sup>121</sup>

Mostar's new government has become a central component of Paddy Ashdown's legacy as High Representative, and is definitely something he counts among the most

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<sup>119</sup> OHR, "High Representative Welcomes Establishment of the Mostar Commission and Provides Eight Principles for its Work," OHR Press Release, April 23, 2003, [http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/presso/pressr/default.asp?content\\_id=29772](http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/presso/pressr/default.asp?content_id=29772) ; and Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar, *Recommendation of the Commission*, 9-10.

<sup>120</sup> Kuftinec, "Bridging Haunted Places," 89.

<sup>121</sup> The aspects of Mostar this report suggested avoiding including the city's weak international administration, mafia type crime, tension between city council and sub-municipalities, and its burdensome government bureaucracy and layers. Chuck Barry, "Mitrovica Solutions Models: Mostar Case Study," Draft, June 26, 2006, 2.

important achievements of his mandate in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which ended in early 2006.<sup>122</sup> Thus one of the city's new postwar identities is largely a product of external attempts to redefine Mostar, in particular through the reconstruction of the Old Bridge and the reunification of the city. And as was true for the bridge, which has had difficulty living up to the new associations linked to it by the international community, the similarly reconciliatory language used to describe the city of Mostar is also a symbolic content which varies greatly from the lived experiences of its residents.

It is not only foreign institutions however, that have advocated Mostar's historic and revived multiculturalism in the postwar period. Local officials have also supported this urban identity for their city. Mostar has traditionally had a "second city" complex when it compares itself to Sarajevo, and this attitude has perhaps become exacerbated in the past decade as growth elsewhere in the country has reduced its status to fourth most populous. A central component of Sarajevo's identity has always been its reputation for multiculturalism, and Mostar's avocation of this identity for itself shows signs of competition with the Bosnian capital, as did efforts to move some Federation ministries to Mostar.

The Jewish Community of Mostar's argument in favor of its newly selected site for its new temple and cultural center was, for example, clearly formulated with Sarajevo in mind. They allege the construction of a synagogue on that site will make Mostar, like Sarajevo, one of the only cities in the world to have religious structures from the four main western religions in such close proximity.<sup>123</sup> As previously argued, the physical

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<sup>122</sup> OHR, "Third Anniversary: HR's Mandate from 27 May 2002 to Today," OHR Press Release, May 27, 2005, [http://www.hor.int/print/?content\\_id=34738](http://www.hor.int/print/?content_id=34738).

<sup>123</sup> Zoran Mandelbaum, "Simbol Mira i Sloge" [Symbol of Peace and Harmony], *Most* 50 (June 2001): <http://www.most.ba/050/105.htm>.

closeness of the synagogue, mosque and Catholic and Orthodox churches is intended to represent the symbolic closeness and interconnections between these communities in Mostar, and the infrequency of this reveals it is integral to the city's urban identity. Of course, the fact that the synagogue had to be moved from its historic site to a new location to make this claim possible undermines its historicity at the same time that it reinforces the identity for the present.

### *Mostar Declaration*

One of the many events which took place in Mostar in July 2004 in conjunction with the ceremonial reopening of the New Old Bridge was a meeting of cultural ministers from Southeastern Europe and Italy. These ministers discussed the role of the region's cultural heritage in its economic development and foreign relations, and the joint statement issued at the conclusion of their meeting was called the Mostar Declaration. This meeting and statement were in part a follow-up to the Message from Ohrid, a resolution signed by the heads of state of eight Southeastern European countries in 2003.<sup>124</sup> At that earlier meeting in Ohrid, Macedonia, a mutual commitment to "dialogue, tolerance and peace" had been declared.

The Message from Ohrid suggested that the region faced the challenge of "associating cultural heritage with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful symbol of a people's identity can become a unifying force for national and regional reconciliation."<sup>125</sup> This statement made at that time in that context was an implicit reference to Mostar's Old Bridge, especially considering the conference had

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<sup>124</sup> *Message from Ohrid Adopted by the Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations*. Ohrid: August 29-30, 2003, <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/2001/ohrid/message.htm>.

<sup>125</sup> *Message from Ohrid*.



been organized by UNESCO, which was not only involved in the bridge project, but also one of the greatest champions of its symbolic implications. To make the connection with the Old Bridge explicit, at the end of the conference in Ohrid, Croat Member and Chairman of the Bosnian Presidency Dragan Čović suggested that all the regional heads of state the its opening the following year to demonstrate their commitment to the Message's sentiments.

Instead, their cultural ministers met for the bridge's opening and their joint statement, the Mostar Declaration, argued this event symbolized "the ending of ethnic prejudice and highlight[ed] the normalization of inter-community relations."<sup>126</sup> It called on local and state governments as well as individuals in Southeastern Europe to refrain from the destruction of cultural heritage and to protect the region's cultural diversity through updated legislation, compliance with international agreements, cross-border collaboration, and by fostering tolerant, respectful cultural environments.

A declaration being made and named for a city does not necessarily have to reflect the values of that particular city or have any particular symbolic association with it: for example, the Dayton Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia has nothing to do with the city of Dayton, Ohio and the Geneva Convention expressing universal human rights is not specifically related to any historical event or image of Geneva, Switzerland. On the other hand, international agreements and conventions often do rely on the symbolic associations of the places and moments in which they are signed.

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<sup>126</sup> *Mostar Declaration: Joint Declaration of the Ministers responsible for Culture in South-East Europe and Italy Concerning the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage for the Stabilization and the Sustainable Development of the Region*, Mostar: July 19, 2004, [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/file\\_download.php/04b99d68a480966d4bdac2db96f0fe14Mostar+Declaration+\(English+version\).pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/file_download.php/04b99d68a480966d4bdac2db96f0fe14Mostar+Declaration+(English+version).pdf). The Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and UNESCO hosted a second Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe in Venice in November of 2005.

For example, the annual Peace Declaration of the mayor of Hiroshima takes on a greater significance than other calls against nuclear proliferation because of that particular city's traumatic history. In addition, the Hague Convention that outlines acceptable treatment of cultural property during armed conflict did draw on the Dutch city of The Hague's reputation as a host of international peace conferences and the seat of the International Court of Justice, an image that has been reinforced in recent years by the establishment there of the International Criminal Court.

In Mostar, the declaration signed in July 2004 did rely on the city's alleged position as a symbol of multiculturalism, indeed it was specifically selected as the site for the meeting of regional cultural ministers because of the symbolism of the city and the bridge ceremony taking place at the same time. The link between reconciliation and cultural heritage which the international community had established for Mostar's reconstruction was presented through the Mostar Declaration as a model united city to be emulated by other multicultural places in the region.

The appended action plan, titled "Cultural Heritage: A Bridge towards a Shared Future" reinforced the symbolic association of the declaration with the specific city in which it was signed and that city's key architectural site.<sup>127</sup> The Mostar Declaration did not get as much media attention as it perhaps might have had it not been signed within days of the largest international media event in Bosnia's postwar history. But Bosnian Croat and independent newspapers did mention it in passing, often

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<sup>127</sup> UNESCO, "Cultural Heritage: A Bridge Towards a Shared Future: Action Plan for the Implementation of the Mostar Declaration," July 19, 2004, [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/es/file\\_download.php/60beb77ec6152eee8d8d6e2d8730fbbfAction+Plan+\(English+version\).pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/es/file_download.php/60beb77ec6152eee8d8d6e2d8730fbbfAction+Plan+(English+version).pdf)

reinforcing the symbolic content of the declaration and its connection specifically to Mostar and the city's multicultural identity.<sup>128</sup>

In July 2005, Mostar's city government was one of the founding members of the Association of Multiethnic Cities of Southeastern Europe, though it has not played a disproportionately important role in this organization whose administrative offices are in Novi Sad, Serbia.<sup>129</sup> The name of this association is a bit misleading too, since the sixty plus Balkan cities that are members can not all really be considered multicultural. Though members such as Mostar and Novi Sad as well as Peés, Hungary; Timisoara, Romania; and Škoder, Albania are indeed culturally and religiously mixed cities, other members, such as Zagreb where the agreement establishing the Association of Multiethnic Cities was signed, is in fact remarkable precisely because of its homogeneity.<sup>130</sup>

### *World Heritage City*

Reunited and multicultural Mostar's exemplary status has also been recognized at a global level, especially through the marketing campaigns of UNESCO, which in the past decade has repeatedly used this city as proof of the potential for heritage reconstruction to contribute to community reconciliation.<sup>131</sup> UNESCO's inclusion of

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<sup>128</sup> "Mostarske Deklaracija Obvezuje na Očuvanje Kulturne Baštine" [Mostar Declaration on the Obligation to Protect Cultural Heritage], *Dnevni List*, July 20, 2004, 4; and Šemsudin Serdarević, "Most Prema Zajedničkoj Budućnosti" [Bridge to a Shared Future], *Oslobođenje*, July 20, 2004, [http://www.oslobodjenje.com.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=41387&Itemid=0](http://www.oslobodjenje.com.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41387&Itemid=0).

<sup>129</sup> Nermin Bise, "Mostar u Asocijaciji Multietničkih Gradova" [Mostar in the Association of Multiethnic Cities], *Dnevni List*, July 15, 2004, 10.

<sup>130</sup> According to the 2001 census, less than 4% of Zagreb's population was identified as non-Croat. "Population by Ethnicity, by Towns/Municipalities, Census 2001," *Popis Stanovništva 2001* [Population Census 2001], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Zagreb: Central Bureau of Statistics, September 14, 2003), <http://www.dzs.hr/eng/Census/census2001.htm>.

<sup>131</sup> UNESCO, "Reconciliation and Shared Heritage," *United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage*, Information Kit, Paris: UNESCO, 2002; UNESCO, "Reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge to Begin in June," Paris: UNESCO, June 5, 2002, [http://portal0.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=4692&URL\\_DO=DO\\_PRINTPAGE&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal0.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4692&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html); UN, General

Mostar's Old Bridge and Old City on the World Heritage List in 2005 made its status as model city official. Ostensibly, designation as a World Heritage Site is a recognition of the universal value of Mostar's historic architecture. However, since this city's architecture is no longer historic, but rather quite new, and since its facsimile reconstruction is in violation of most conservation principles outlined in the Athens and Venice Charters, Mostar's international importance is therefore based on the recognition of other values: multiculturalism and reconciliation.

During the war and specifically during 1993 when Mostar's Old Bridge was being increasingly damaged by general and targeted shelling, the fact that it was not already a UNESCO recognized site became a source of local and international confusion. Numerous media reports referred to it as a World Heritage Site while publicly calling attention to its threatened status.<sup>132</sup> As if the destruction of the widely appreciated and centuries old historic core of Mostar was not bad enough in and of itself, this false claim to official UNESCO recognition was made to make Mostar seem even more important and even more worthy of international protection. Those advocating this position were surely aware of the attack on the World Heritage City of Dubrovnik two years earlier, and that a successful media campaign had been launched to anger and mobilize the international community to protect that city.<sup>133</sup>

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Assembly, 58<sup>th</sup> Session, Official Records, *United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage*. Resolution A/RES/58/124. 2001, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/502/02/PDF/N0350202.pdf?OpenElement>; The World Bank, "UNESCO and The World Bank to Assist City of Mostar in Rebuilding Its Old Bridge," Press Statement 073098 (Paris: July 30, 1998), <http://www.unesco.org/opi2/mostar/pressunesco.htm>.

<sup>132</sup> "Između Mosta i Mostova" [Between the Bridge and Bridges], *Hrvatska Glasnik*, December 23, 1993, 9; "Novi Prilog Urbicidu" [New Order of Urbicid], *Hrvatska Riječ*, October 1995, 7; "Opet Pakao u Goraždu" [Fallen Again in Goražda], *Oslobođenje*, November 9, 1993, 1; "Protest Generala Perišića" [Protesting General Perišić], *Dani*, July 30, 1993, 35; "Spasite Stari Most" [Save the Old Bridge], *Oslobođenje*, July 10, 1993, 8; "Stari Most u Opasnost" [Old Bridge in Danger], *Oslobođenje*, June 23, 1993, 8.

<sup>133</sup> David Binder, "Dubrovnik Diary," *New York Times*, November 16, 1991, A4; Jean D'Ormesson, "SOS Dubrovnik," *The UNESCO Courier*, March 1992, 44; Miljenko Foretic, ed. *Dubrovnik in War* (Dubrovnik: Matica Hrvatska, 2000); Jasmina Kuzmanović, "Siege of Croatian Port

The assumption that Mostar and its Old Bridge deserved international protection was not typically made based on the valid argument that as recognized historic sites in the former Yugoslavia, they were covered under the auspices of the 1954 Hague Convention. Rather the false claim was made that the city deserved protection because a recognized World Heritage Site. The designation process for becoming a World Heritage Site requires a property to be nominated by its own government, evaluated by ICOMOS or other experts, and voted on at UNESCO's annual meeting by the representatives of the states-parties to the 1972 World Heritage Convention. These official designation procedures were overlooked in the minds of many wartime observers; however, and Mostar's clear importance as part of the universally appreciated heritage of the world was ambiguously conflated with the idea of its being an officially designated World Heritage Site and of being "under UNESCO's protection."<sup>134</sup>

This mistake was made at the highest Bosnian and international levels. For example, the wartime Bosnian Foreign Minister, Haris Silajđić appealed to the UN and UNESCO to act on Mostar's behalf since the Old Bridge "was on the list."<sup>135</sup> Even Colin Kaiser, a international expert sent by UNESCO to observe and evaluate the situation in Mostar in 1993, argued in his report that the city should be placed on the World Heritage List in Danger.<sup>136</sup> This UNESCO maintained list of threatened sites is

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Intensifies," *USA Today*, November 13, 1991, A5; Miso Mihocevic, "A Cry of the Heart from Dubrovnik," *Wall Street Journal*, December 5, 1991, A15; Mary Nemeth, "A City Under Siege," *Maclean's* 104, November 25, 1991, 36; Chuck Sudetic, "As Siege Ends, Croats Return to Ruined City," *New York Times*, Current Events ed., November 3, 1992, A6; Chuck Sudetic, "Shelling of Besieged Yugoslav Port Is Intensified," *New York Times*, November 13, 1991, A12; Strobe Talbott, "Fiddling While Dubrovnik Burns," *Time*, November 25, 1991, 56; "UNESCO and the Dubrovnik Emergency," *The UNESCO Courier*, March 1992, 46.

<sup>134</sup> Asaf Becirović, "Za Rušenje Starog Mosta do Dvadeset Godina Zatvora" [For Destruction of the Old Bridge up to Twenty Years in Prison], *Oslobođenje*, December 19, 2003, [http://www.oslobodjenje.com.ba/asp/printart.asp?art\\_id=36797](http://www.oslobodjenje.com.ba/asp/printart.asp?art_id=36797) ; "Između Mosta i Mostova," 9; "Protest Generala Perišića," 35; and "Stari Most u Opasnost," 8.

<sup>135</sup> "Spasite Stari Most," 8.

<sup>136</sup> Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, "Recommendations Concerning the Cultural Heritage of Mostar," prepared by Colin Kaiser, January 19, 1993, as Appendix D in "The Destruction by War of the Cultural Heritage in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina presented by the Committee on

of course reserved only for already designated World Heritage Sites, thus making Kaiser's recommendation impossible for unofficial Mostar.

After the Old Bridge's destruction, Mostar's status with UNESCO remained ambiguous for many. Just like the idea that the Old Bridge marked Mostar's line of division, this idea of a destroyed World Heritage City was perpetuated by journalists, politicians, and representatives of international organizations, many of whom surely knew better or could have easily verified the accuracy of their claims.<sup>137</sup> For example, an *USA Today* article published the day after the bridge's destruction, declared the felled site "was included in the UN list of worldwide cultural heritage."<sup>138</sup> This mistake or misrepresentation served the needs of both locals and internationals trying to bring attention to Mostar by sensationalizing and simplifying the situation for global consumption.

The Old Town of Mostar was actually officially nominated to the World Heritage List for the first time in July 1998 by the city's administration; however, since this was not completed according to official procedures, not having been initiated by state level institutions, UNESCO suspended the city's application in 2003.<sup>139</sup> After having a chance to weigh in on Mostar's relative importance compared to all other sites in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the country's Commission to Preserve National Monuments agreed Mostar was a worthy candidate to be the first World Heritage Site in Bosnia. Presumably, they also recognized Mostar's international reputation and financing, and especially UNESCO's interest in the city in the past decade, would ensure the success

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Cultural and Education," report prepared by Jacques Baumel, Doc 6756, February 2, 1993, <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc93/EDOC6756.htm>.

<sup>137</sup> Alija Behram, "Planiran Zločin" [Planned Crime], *Oslobođenje*, November 11, 1993, 1; Joel Brand, "Mostar's Ottoman Bridge, After Defying the Centuries, Succumbs to Croat Fire," *USA Today*, November 10, 1993, 13.

<sup>138</sup> Brand, "Mostar's Ottoman Bridge," 13.

<sup>139</sup> BiH Commission to Preserve National Monuments, "Press Conference following the 18th Session," January 31, 2005, [http://www.aneks8komisija.com.ba/main.php?mod=vijesti&extra=1075460479&action=view&id\\_vijesti=401&lang=4](http://www.aneks8komisija.com.ba/main.php?mod=vijesti&extra=1075460479&action=view&id_vijesti=401&lang=4).

of its nomination for World Heritage status. The Commission approved the nomination drafted by a team from Mostar in January 2005 and forwarded it to the State Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, which was responsible for officially sending the application to Paris to be included on the list of sites discussed at the Twenty-Ninth Session of the World Heritage Committee in Durban, South Africa that July. Locally, Mostar welcomed this recognition, with both *Dnevni List* and *Hercegovačke Novine*, the local Mostar Croat and Muslim newspapers, following the proceedings from when the nomination was resubmitted in 2002, through its revisions in April 2005, and finally its acceptance later that year.<sup>140</sup>

According to the nomination report prepared by ICOMOS, whose recommendations UNESCO accepted, Mostar was deemed deserving of World Heritage listing because its “historic core, with the surrounding areas, has become a symbol of civilized living.”<sup>141</sup> Based on the criteria established by the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS supported Mostar’s application because it was “an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement;” and because

with the ‘renaissance’ of the Old Bridge and its surroundings, the symbolic power and meaning of the City of Mostar – as an exceptional and universal symbol of coexistence of communities from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds – has been reinforced and strengthened.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> D. Kozina, “Stari Most: Svjetska Kulturna Baština” [Old Bridge: World Cultural Heritage], *Dnevni List*, January 17, 2003, 15; Hasan Eminović, “Stari Grad: Svjetska Baština!?” [Old Town: World Heritage!], *Hercegovačke Novine*, May 17, 2003, 6; and “Nesporan Ulazak Starog Most i Starog Grada na lista UNESCO-a” [Uncontested Entry of the Old Bridge and Old Town on UNESCO’s List], *Dnevni List*, July 23, 2004, 12.

<sup>141</sup> ICOMOS, “Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina),” *Evaluations of Cultural Properties*. Report prepared for the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee in Durban, South Africa, July 10-17, 2005 (April 2005), 180.

<sup>142</sup> ICOMOS, “Mostar,” 182.

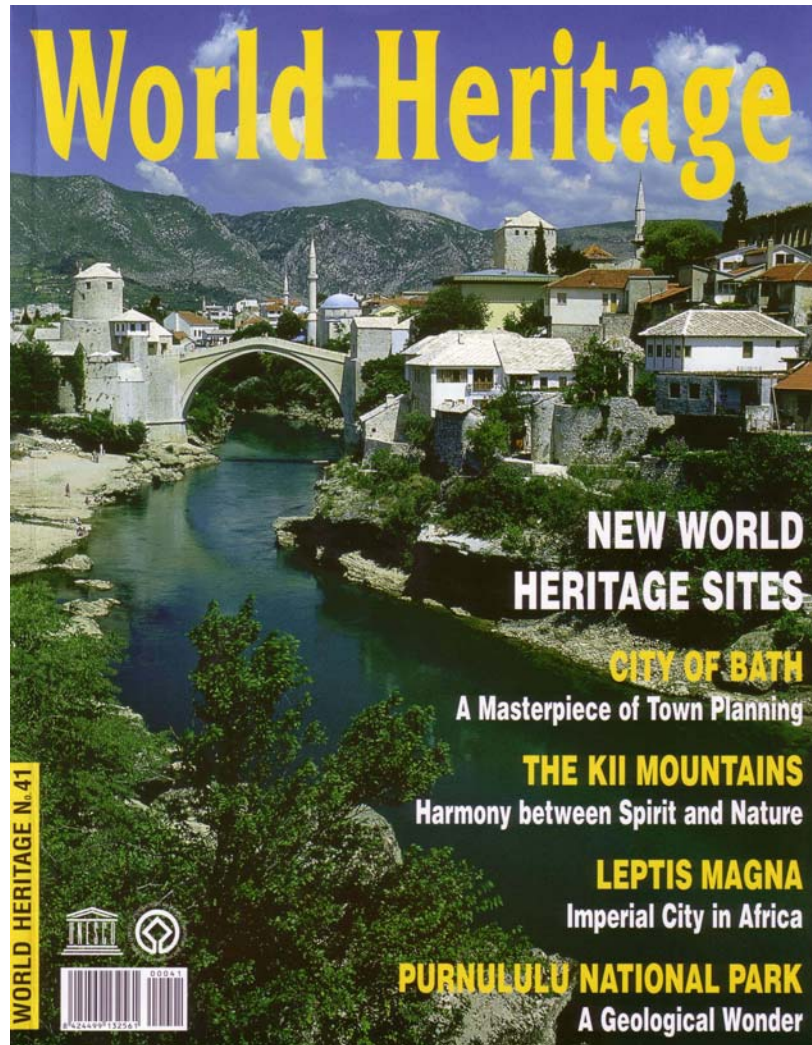


Figure 89: The Old Bridge on the cover of the issue of UNESCO's *World Heritage Review* in which the sites most recently inscribed on the World Heritage List were described, October 2005. (image: UNESCO, Paris)

Reflecting both Mostar's wide international reputation as well as the widely-recognizable specific view of the Old Bridge, its image was selected for the cover of UNESCO's quarterly *World Heritage Review* in October 2005 (fig. 89). Rather than any of the other sites designated that year or other places discussed in the magazine's articles, Mostar's Old Town and Old Bridge were privileged in this way. In the one paragraph devoted to Mostar within the magazine, the city's essence and value for the global heritage community was outlined, and Mostar and its bridge were again evoked



as symbols of multiculturalism and of reconciliation. In a statement reminiscent of ICOMOS' nomination, UNESCO claimed:

The Old Bridge area, with its pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European architectural features, is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation, and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.<sup>143</sup>

This inclusive description belies the fact that the area actually nominated is comprised exclusively of Ottoman era and reconstructed Ottoman-era heritage, with the exception of one major Austrian-era institutional building, the Girl's High School. In addition this district is inhabited almost exclusively by Bosnian Muslims, and its shops and cafes are overwhelmingly owned and staffed by Bosnian Muslims. Though the heritage and people of the city of Mostar as a whole maybe describable in these generalizing ways, the World Heritage Site of Mostar clearly is not. This fact has not gone unnoticed by the city's Croat community, which was disinterested in the Old Bridge and Old Town for most of the past decade, but has suddenly felt slighted and excluded now that this area has become profitable and frequented with foreign tourists seeking food and souvenirs.

Neither the nomination report nor UNESCO's publicity have addressed the non-multicultural character of the specific area designated within the city; however, the question of the Old Town's worthiness for the World Heritage listing despite its relative newness has been given significant attention. Mostar's inclusion was justified based on the historical accuracy and scientific basis of its reconstruction in which the "authenticity of form [and] use of authentic materials and techniques are fully

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<sup>143</sup> UNESCO, "2005: New World Heritage Sites," *World Heritage* 41 (October 2005): 12.

recognizable.”<sup>144</sup> In addition, the ICOMOS nomination report also included a short theoretical note on the site’s integrity, which acknowledged that the Old Bridge is a copy made almost entirely of new materials, as well as the fact that a high percentage of buildings in the surrounding Old Town have also been completely reconstructed. At the same time, the report argued that Mostar “has a kind of truthfulness,” that “there is no doubt of a special kind of ‘overall’ authenticity,” since the reconstruction can be seen as a “*restoration* of the intangible dimensions of the property.”<sup>145</sup> Restoring Mostar’s “intangible dimensions” can be read as referring to the revival of the city’s prewar multicultural urban identity through the rebuilding of its lost architecture.

This kind of language, and the bending of the “rules” of the Venice Charter in this way, reinforces the significance of Mostar to the international community and the idea that this city is somehow special. The report also explicitly referenced another special case, the Historic Centre of Warsaw, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 as “principally a place of memory” rather than as an authentic historic site.<sup>146</sup> Warsaw’s Old Town is also a recent construction, since like Mostar, it was almost totally (re)built following deliberate and targeted destruction during wartime.

### *Shared City*

Even when actively pursuing a separate, third entity or building exclusivist sites and spaces in Mostar, many Bosnian Croat politicians and nationalists from the city have claimed to support a multicultural Mostar. But their understanding of multiculturalism differs from their colleagues in east Mostar and from that traditionally advocated by

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<sup>144</sup> ICOMOS, “Mostar,” 181.

<sup>145</sup> ICOMOS, “Mostar,” 181.

<sup>146</sup> ICOMOS, “Mostar,” 182.

the international community. Mostar's Croat leaders who discuss Mostar as a multicultural city today seem clearly to be advocating having multiple distinct nations live in the city as separate components, rather than having an intermixed, unified society.<sup>147</sup>

In 1997, Jadranko Prlić – a Bosnian Croat who was a high ranking official in the wartime *Herceg-Bosna* statelet as well as in the postwar Bosnian government, but is now on trial at The Hague – declared Mostar was the last truly multicultural city in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Prlić argued that though many Bosnian cities had mixed populations before the war, afterwards most had become almost exclusively composed of one group or another: even in Sarajevo, the celebrated center of Bosnian multiculturalism, the postwar population was more than ninety-five percent Muslim. Thus Prlić could argue, “only in Mostar do two nations have approximately the same number of residents,” and therefore only Mostar was truly a shared city.<sup>148</sup> Neven Tomić, a moderate Croat former mayor of Mostar, echoed this assessment of the postwar city by cynically noting that “everywhere else, the issues were settled (by successful ethnic cleansing programs). Only in Mostar neither side was able to get rid of the other.”<sup>149</sup> And Tomić suggests this is precisely why Mostar remains the most complicated and contested city in Bosnia-Herzegovina today.

The difference between how Mostar's Croats and Mostar's Muslims understand the city's actual or potential multiculturalism can be explained by “whose” they consider

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<sup>147</sup> “Za Jedinstven Mostar, a ne Bratsvo i Jedinstvo!” [For a United Mostar, but not Brotherhood and Unity!], *Hrvatska Riječ*, December 17, 1994, 6.

<sup>148</sup> Jadranko Prlić, “Jadranko Prlić, Ministar Vanjskih Poslova BiH: Mostar je Zadnji Multietnički Grad u BiH, a Sarajevo je Muslimanski Grad” [Jadranko Prlić, BiH Interior Minister: Mostar is the Last Multiethnic City in BiH, but Sarajevo is a Muslim City], *Ljiljan*, June 25, 1997, 4.

<sup>149</sup> Neven Tomić, former Mayor of Mostar, quoted in Wimmen, “New Nations, Imagined Borders,” 2.

it. While many Croats, including nationalists, are willing to say it is not a Croat city, but rather both Croat and Muslim, those in favor of one shared city usually say Mostar is “Mostarian.”<sup>150</sup> This sort of distinction parallels the debate which has arisen at various times in the twentieth century about whether there is a Bosnian identity and nation and about whether Bosnia-Hercegovina is “Serb and Croat and Muslim,” or whether it is Bosnian.<sup>151</sup>

Yet like the power-sharing organization of the country itself, the particulars of the new city administration indicate that Mostar is a Muslim and Croat (and Serb and Other) city, not Mostarian or Bosnian. The city council has quotas for percentages of members from each of these four communities, and there are provisions requiring that the city’s top officials not be of the same nationality: this means that both voting and political representation in the city is not based on individual Mostar residents, but rather on a group power sharing principle.<sup>152</sup>

## CONCLUSION: MULTIVALENT CITY

According to one of the founders of Urban Movement Mostar, it was his dislike of being asked what side of the city he is from whenever he mentions he is from Mostar that inspired the idea for the monument to Bruce Lee. Both Nino Raspudić and his main partner in the Bruce Lee initiative, Veselin Gatalo, would be classified by most in Bosnia-Hercegovina as Croat because of the Catholic religious traditions of their

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<sup>150</sup> Safet Oručević, “Interveju: Safet Oručević: Ja Vjeruje u Suživot” [Interview: Safet Oručević: I Believe in Coexistence], by Žarko Ivezić, *Hrvatski Rijječ*, October 4, 1997, 8; Šimunović, “Mostar je također i Hrvatski Grad,” 34; Manojlo Tomić, “Mostar je Mostarski” [Mostar is Mostarian], *Oslobođenje*, May 11, 1993, 1; and Topić, “Mostar Nije Mostarski,” 4.

<sup>151</sup> Lovrenović, *Bosnia*, 177.

<sup>152</sup> Šimunović, “Mostar je također i Hrvatski Grad,” 34.

families. However Raspudić hoped that in the future when he told people where he was from, instead of questioning his national identity and identifying his home town as a divided city, they would respond “Yeah, I know Mostar. That is the city with the Bruce Lee monument.”<sup>153</sup>

Obviously it is highly unlikely that Mostar’s worldwide reputation will ever hinge on its Bruce Lee monument, as the members of Urban Movement Mostar certainly are well aware; however, what is important is that they envision a future Mostar whose identity is not based in any way on nationalism. For though postwar Mostar has been envisioned in multiple competing ways in the past decade – as a divided city or a united city, a multicultural city or a Croat city, or as two cities or a symbol of Bosnia, or the Federation – each of these *urban* identities is linked to questions of *national* identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

As was true of the Old Bridge, and the numerous other postwar building, rebuilding and commemorative projects in the city, the urban identity of Mostar in the postwar period has been understood quite differently by different communities. The multivalence of the city itself has also been informed by the devastation and demographic change which occurred during the 1992-1995 war, the interpretations and legacies of the war in the city, as well as by the nature of the reconstruction

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<sup>153</sup> Hrvoje Prnjak, “Bruce Lee, To Smo Svi Mi” [We are All Bruce Lee], *Feral Tribune*, August 29, 2003, trans. by Anes Alić and reprinted on Transitions Online, September 4, 2003, <http://www.tol.cz/look/wire/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=10&NrIssue=753&NrSection=1&NrArticle=10572> ; and M. Sekulić, “Prevazilaženje Prošlosti: Spomenik Danas i Ovdje” [Outdoing the Past: Monument Here and Today], *Oslobodjenje*, May 28, 2005: [http://www.oslobodjenje.ba/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=341&Itemid=0](http://www.oslobodjenje.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=341&Itemid=0) ; and Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, “Partner Organizations: Urban Movement Mostar,” n.d., [http://www.scca.ba/deconstruction/e\\_partnerski\\_projekti.htm](http://www.scca.ba/deconstruction/e_partnerski_projekti.htm).

process, including the international community's projection of idealized narratives onto the city.

Yet on the other hand, Mostar remains the beautiful, historic "City on the Neretva" for all Bosnia's populations. Its name may conjure up images of division and polarization for some, but for others it also brings up romantic images of the green river in its rocky canyon winding its way through a city of bridges, historic architecture, and picturesque views. Perhaps because the Neretva River is unfamiliar to global audiences, this moniker, on the other hand, has not been picked up or used by the international community to refer to Mostar. But it has remained one of the most prevalent identities of the city for locals, even for Mostar's Croat community during the decade of the city's division when the Neretva River lay almost completely in the other, Muslim side of town.