

Phoenix or Phantom: Residents and Sarajevo's Post-War Changes

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“From behind lowered eyelashes I saw Sarajevo, so much ruined and so much loved – loved as never before – rising up from the earth, taking off and flying away, somewhere beyond, where everything is gentile and tranquil. It flew toward the deepest recesses of reality, where it can be loved and dreamed about, and from where it can shine back upon us, rich with meaning, like a beckoning destination.”

- Dzevad Karahasan, *Sarajevo, Exodus of a City*

Abstract

This project looks at the changes that Sarajevo endured as a result of the war of the nineties and at how those changes affected residents' relationships with the city, approaching the topic from an urban perspective. To answer these questions, I conducted historical and theoretical research on the city and conducted a series of ten interviews. Two of my interviews were factual interviews that augmented my knowledge of the city and its physical changes, and eight of the interviews were sociological interviews that helped me to understand residents' experience of change in the city. This paper presents my findings by characterizing the city of Sarajevo before the war through looking at how the city developed both physically and socially, by outlining main areas of change in the city, and finally by discussing residents' remarks about Sarajevo's past, present, and future.

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Introduction

The term *change*, when applied to cities, is a catch-all for the forces of growth and decline that blow into and out of urban spaces. Change is also a popular term, something that everyone talks about: politicians pledge to bring it, planners struggle to induce it, and residents complain about the changes that they do not like. Of course, change in cities also arrives unplanned with conflicts and natural disasters. These changes, oftentimes the most far-reaching and profound, carry with them the power to alter the course of a city's history. Monumental changes are important to the trajectory of the city's development, but they are also important to the city's residents, whose home and lives they alter. This long view of change, with respect to development, is one that urban historians treat frequently, but the shorter is often passed over. To be able to respond effectively to monumental change, though, the people that think about and shape urban space must first understand how that change itself immediately alters the way that residents use a city's space.

I came to the capital of the Bosnia and Herzegovina,¹ Sarajevo, to study its specific example of urban change as a result of conflict in this shorter view, seeking to answer the question: How have the physical and social changes that Sarajevo endured as a result of Bosnia's 1992 war changed residents' relationships with the city? I wondered if and how a place like Sarajevo that had endured so much damage and upheaval, that had witnessed so much senseless misery, could still feel like home to its residents. As I pursued this topic, I found that in order to understand how residents' lives in Sarajevo are different today I needed to understand what Sarajevo was before the war and how the city

¹ Though the official title of the country is Bosnia and Herzegovina, from here on the country will be referred to simply as Bosnia for brevity's sake.

is physically different today. Thus, this project took a two pronged approach, looking first at how the city has physically and socially changed and then at how those changes have affected residents' relationships with the city. Similarly, this paper will follow the same structure in communicating my results. First, I will give an overview of the city's history to show how those that ruled Bosnia in the past instilled in Sarajevo physical and social features that defined the city's character before the war and influence it even today. Then I will speak about the changes to Sarajevo brought by the siege and the city today. Finally, I will discuss the impact that these changes have had on residents' relationships with the city.

Note on Terminology

Bosnia is constitutionally defined as a state of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, three of the several distinct South-Slavic ethnicities.² The existence of the countries of Croatia and Serbia complicates the use of these terms of ethnicity, though. In this paper I will use the terms *Bosnian*, *Croatian* and *Serbian* to refer citizens of the countries Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, regardless of ethnicity, or to the languages of those countries. I will use the terms *Bosniak* (or *Bosnian Muslim*), *Croat* and *Serb* to refer to members of these nationalities, regardless of the country in which they hold citizenship.

Literature Review

My literature review for this project incorporated a variety of publication types. Coming into this research, I knew almost nothing about the city of Sarajevo, only the

² Unlike in the United States, the term *ethnicity* here does not carry racial implications. Here ethnicity refers to identification with particular group and its traditional political and religious history.

disparate pieces of information that I had acquired on our program's visit to the city. So I picked up and read any material that I could find on the city – histories, literature, papers, anything. My readings offered a range of perspectives on Sarajevo, on why the war tore the city apart so completely and what the city's problems are today. Though they each hold a bit of the answer to the terrible conundrum of Sarajevo, none of the materials that I consulted treated my particular research question.

The book that proved most valuable to my research is Robert Donia's *Sarajevo, A Biography*,³ a history of the city that focuses on the city's political and urban development. Donia argues that Sarajevo has experienced a number of upheavals in its history and that the city has always recuperated, always preserved its multi-cultural heritage despite the odds, a thesis that I will discuss further after my overview of the city's planning history. This book, in tandem with my factual interviews, helped me most to understand what the city was before the war and how that city came into being.

I also read collections of pieces by a number of local authors, most notably Gojko Berić and Dzevad Karahasan. Gojko Berić is a columnist for famous Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobođenje* who split his time between Sarajevo and Dubrovnik before the war. After the war broke out, he traveled to Ljubljana for a professional commitment and found himself unable to return to Sarajevo for a number of years. Berić writes fervently and prolifically about the ills of Bosnian politics, but his *Letters to the Celestial Serbs* also includes reflections on his experience of change in Dubrovnik and Sarajevo. His piece "After the Rain"⁴ in the collection is a somber tribute to the Sarajevo that he found when

³ Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006.

⁴ Gojko Berić, *Letters to the Celestial Serbs*, London: Saqi Books, 2002.

he returned to the city early in 1997. Berić also subscribes to the theory of urbicide⁵ as a motive for the destruction of Sarajevo. Berić is also highly critical of the region's nationalisms, and holds them responsible for the events of the nineties as well. Dzevad Karahasan is also a writer from Sarajevo, and his collection of vignettes, *Sarajevo, Exodus of a City*,⁶ is one written during the siege of the city. He also treats many of Bosnia's most pressing issues, but some of his most poignant reflections are those on his witnessing the slow decimation of his city. He also sees the destruction of culture, even of civilization, as a primary motive of the siege of Sarajevo and describes the resistance that he and other intellectuals participated in by continuing the cultural life of Sarajevo despite unbearable conditions.

I also read a number of scholarly articles, most of which treated specific areas of post-war life in Sarajevo. Louis Sell describes the events leading up to and the advent of the Serb exodus from Sarajevo after the Serb-controlled territories were handed back to the Federation⁷ in 1996 in his article "The Serb Flight from Sarajevo: Dayton's First Failure,"⁸ blaming a divided international community for the failure to create an environment that would allow Serbs in Sarajevo to remain in their homes. Guy Robinson and Alma Pabrić describe many of the smaller elements that reinforce nationalism that have arrived in Sarajevo since the war, like the re-naming of the city's streets and some of the city's current museum exhibitions, in their article "Nationalism and Identity in

⁵ *Urbicide* is a term that refers to the deliberate to deny or kill the city that is gaining currency in a number of fields. Here the theory describes the attempt by rural Serb soldiers to take revenge on perceived urban enemies by decimating Sarajevo and other cities during Bosnia's war, one of many explanations for the conflict.

⁶ Dzevad Karahasan, *Sarajevo, Exodus of a City*, New York: Kodansha International, 1994.

⁷ The Dayton agreement divided Bosnia into two entities – the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats and the Republika Srpska – and the district of Brčko.

⁸ Louis Sell, "The Serb Flight from Sarajevo: Dayton's First Failure," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 179-202.

Post-Dayton Accords: Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁹ Cynthia Simmons once again examines the idea of urbicide in “Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo,”¹⁰ suggesting that the lost city of pre-war Sarajevo was never the multi-cultural Mecca that people claim.

When I started interviewing, my interviewees also provided me with books and periodicals in the local language whose information I have done my best to translate and incorporate into my research. Though no work that I found directly treated my topic of study, I found insight in each that contributed to my understanding of my topic. Donia’s history of Sarajevo helped me to understand what the city was. The scholarly articles helped me to understand what some of the city’s current issues are, and the beautiful reflections of Sarajevo’s writers gave me eloquent glimpses of the kind of experience of change that I hope to further characterize. A sizable body of planning and architectural literature also exists about Sarajevo, but with only a month to conduct both my scholarly and field research, I was unable to read deeply into that discourse. Of course, there is much more to read, more to know about Sarajevo, and I have only scratched the surface, but my initial review leads me to conclude that my research will connect a number of established ideas about Sarajevo that may not have been looked at together before.

Methodology

To study this topic I conducted a series of semi-structured private interviews with citizens of Sarajevo. My interviews fell into two categories: factual and sociological. I used factual interviews to supplement my knowledge of Sarajevo’s history and current

⁹ Guy M. Robinson, et. al., “Remaking Sarajevo: Bosnian Nationalism after the Dayton Accord,” *Political Geography* 20, no. 8 (2001): 957-980.

¹⁰ Cynthia Simmons, “Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo,” *Partisan Review* 68, no. 4 (2001): 624-630.

plans for development and redevelopment, so the sample of this first part of my study was Sarajevo's planning community. I conducted two factual interviews: one with the Director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, where we discussed the war-related changes to Sarajevo that he perceived as having the most effect on the city, the state of Sarajevo today, and the past and current plans for the city's development; and the second with a student in her final semester at Sarajevo's Faculty of Architecture and Planning, where she gave me a short planning history of Sarajevo from its inception to the present. Of course, I supplemented these factual interviews with my own research.

I used my sociological interviews to explore how changes that transpired in Sarajevo during and after the war affected residents' relationships with the city, so the sample of this second part of my study was long-time residents of Sarajevo who were old enough to remember the city before the war. In my eight sociological interviews I asked participants about their memories of pre-war Sarajevo, their experience of change, and how their life in contemporary Sarajevo compares to their life in pre-war Sarajevo. I tried to collect the widest variety of voices that I could in the time allotted, and I was able to interview both women and men of a range of ages, but because my project relied on word-of-mouth to acquire interviewees, it did take on certain aspects of homogeneity, like the occurrence that all of my participants were college-educated. Also, because I needed to speak with my interviewees in English, many of them were younger than ideal because they were still children or teenagers at the time of the war.

This project was very much an explorative study, a look at a few of the city's many voices, so it was not meant to be a complete or definitive analysis of the topic. I was concerned with two groups of Sarajevans in this study: 1) the group that stayed in the

city during the siege, and 2) the group that sought refuge elsewhere during the siege and returned to the city after the war. Though I discussed the meanings of these groups with my participants, and I was careful to include members of both of these groups, the answers of any of my participants that fits into one of these groups cannot be counted as representative because my sample size is too small. Any other group identification, like that of ethnicity, was made known only if the participant offered such information, so my participants' opinions are not representative of any ethnic or other group. My interviewees that held prominent positions in government or in the third sector were identified by name, with their permission. All others were given pseudonyms. In Bosnia a person's name often points to their family's ethnic identity, to the pseudonyms that I assigned were random and do not point to any participant's identified ethnicity.

My relationship to the city of Sarajevo itself was a simple one. I arrived knowing nothing about Sarajevo, with no preconceived notions. My experience with the city was one of discovery, pouring over as much information as I could find in my short time here. I lived here, buying groceries, visiting cafes, and as I leave, Sarajevo is now a familiar place but not yet an intimate one. Socially, though, my role as an outsider studying Sarajevo, especially in such a research-saturated place as Sarajevo, was something that I was acutely aware of as I conducted my research. I did not want to be the foreigner who drops into a place and passes judgement on the people and problems with only a superficial understanding of the area. I also did not want to be the foreigner who is fascinated with and lives vicariously through the surreal and desperate stories of Sarajevo under siege. I did discuss aspects of wartime Sarajevo with my participants when the information was relevant to my study, as in discussion of people's experience of the city

literally crumbling around them, but my main goal was to move beyond the war by looking at how wartime changes manifest in the city today. The main point of similarity between my participants and myself was that we all have had an emotional relationship with a city, but the common ground mostly ended there. I have never watched my city slowly become, or returned to find my city, destroyed. Also, no place that I have lived has undergone the kind of social upheaval that Sarajevo has in the past fifteen years, with as much as half its pre-war population relocating. Unavoidably, my perspective was also a more clinical one than those of my participants because I am looking at Sarajevo as a troubled city, but not my troubled home. My identity specifically as an Urban Studies major also came into play as I carried out my research because it dictated the type of data that I collected and the questions that I asked. Many times, respondents were impatient with my questions about Sarajevo's physical changes because in their eyes these issues are minute in the face of the huge social and economic problems that Bosnia and Herzegovina faces today. In addition, because I was an outsider, my interviewees often felt overwhelmed by the amount of information that they felt that they should convey to me.

In the end, I felt that my biggest methodological constraint was the short time that I had in Sarajevo to both research and write this paper. Because I only had a month to complete this project, I found myself researching and interviewing simultaneously. Ideally, though, I would have liked to have completed my scholarly research before I began my interviews. I also would have conducted a series of interviews with my participants, rather than just one, if time had permitted. I think that I would have been able to more deeply understand the nuances of residents' feelings about Sarajevo if I had

this opportunity for multiple interviews. Despite all of the limitations to my research, though, I am walking away surprised and delighted at just how much I was able to learn, and to accomplish, this month.

History of Sarajevo's Development

The Sarajevo valley has a long history of inhabitants, from Neolithic hunters and gatherers to the Romans and Illyrians in the first centuries of the new millennium. The Sarajevo valley was attractive to these disparate peoples because of the ample fresh water available there. In addition to the Miljacka River, which runs through the center of the valley, the area is full of smaller mountain streams and freshwater springs. The South Slavic people who now inhabit the region arrived in the 7th century AD and formed several medieval villages in the valley.¹¹ Though the valley has a long history of habitation, none of these settlements occurred in the central part of the valley that the city inhabits today. The city of Sarajevo itself was founded by the occupying Ottoman Empire in the mid-15th century. The Ottomans were the first of the three regimes that had considerable influence on the shape and development of Sarajevo, building the heart of the city. Later, the Austro-Hungarian Empire brought western ideals to the city, which had previously been planned in accordance with eastern ideals. Finally, in the second half of the twentieth century, Tito's socialist regime once again reimagined Sarajevo's form and function.

Ottoman Origins

Sarajevo's year of founding is traditionally thought of as 1462, when the city became an official town in the Ottoman Empire (as opposed to a village). The name "Sarajevo" is thought to come from a contraction of two Turkish words – *saraj* (court) and *ovaši* (field) – which likely refers to the wide fields that once bordered the Ottoman administrative buildings.¹²

Sarajevo was constructed according to the Ottoman planning ideals, giving the heart of the city distinct elements and organization. Perhaps most noticeably, this Ottoman spatial organization called for a strict division between commercial and residential space, so the *čaršija* (market) area of Sarajevo housed only commerce, government, public buildings, and religious institutions (of all faiths). The *Baščaršija* (Main Market) is the only part of the *čaršija* that survives today. Key monuments built in the *Baščaršija* include the Gazi Husrevbeg mosque (1530), the Old Serbian Orthodox Church (1539), the *Morića Han* (1551 – a traveler's lodge), the *Brusa Bezistan* (1551 – a covered, vaulted commercial structure), and later the Assembly Church (1863 – known locally as the New Serbian Orthodox Church) and the *Sebilj* public water fountain (1753). Public water fountains were an important part of Ottoman religious and cultural life. The *čaršija* also has an organic street plan and no public squares, contrasting the Occidental system of grids of streets and public squares. Despite the organic plan of streets, their function was strictly organized, with each street designated to house all the shops of a particular kind of craft, like cotton weaving or copper-smiting. Instead of

¹¹ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

¹² Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006, p. 8-9.

public squares, the Ottoman city plan provided alternative gathering spaces like public courtyards outside mosques and a coffee shop beside every *han* (traveler's lodge).¹³

Ottoman residences dotted the hills around the center, divided into *mahalas* (neighborhoods). Mahalas traditionally were Islamic neighborhoods centered around a mosque.¹⁴ As Sarajevo grew in the sixteenth centuries Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish mahalas also came into being, and through this mahala system, residential segregation by religion persisted in Sarajevo until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁵ Also, because women were only allowed outside to go to the *hamam* (bathhouse), Ottoman houses were spacious, with many rooms and large courtyards. This priority given to private space is an idea that would later influence Sarajevo's socialist planners.^{16 17}

Sarajevo flourished in the 16th century as a military outpost of the Ottoman Empire, where soldiers would come to prepare for battle in the lands north of the town. Sarajevo also served as the regional capital in the Ottoman Empire during this golden age for the city. After that time, when the Ottoman Empire began to contract, Sarajevo went into decline as well. The Austro-Hungarian army burned the town in 1697, and though the

¹³ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

¹⁴ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

¹⁵ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 15.

¹⁶ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

¹⁷ Though no mahalas exist intact in Sarajevo today, and therefore their organization does not influence the contemporary city at all, they had several interesting features. Each mahala had around 200 people, between forty and fifty houses, and all of the men in the neighborhood could fit into the mosque for Friday prayer. When the neighborhood grew, and all of the men could no longer fit in the mosque on Fridays, a another mosque would be built and a new mahala born. Mahalas consisted of a wide main street that went diagonally up the hill, with smaller residential streets cutting across, parallel to the topographical lines of the hill. It was important for people not to be able to see too far down these streets, so they were never straight. Houses were built in a checkerboard pattern along the street, so in theory no house was ever supposed to sit directly across the street from another. Later, though, when the city became more crowded, this rule was broken. Also, no house was supposed to be visible from the street. A high wall ran along the street with small doors that led to the courtyard, behind which was the house. But as the city grew, houses were constructed that could be seen from the street, and it became popular for houses to have a large bay window from which the women could observe the activity on the street. Ottoman residential planning called for a strict division between male and female space, so each gender had its own wing of the house.

infrastructure was eventually rebuilt, physical growth ground to a halt and Sarajevo's population did not recover until the 19th century. From a peak population of about 24,000 in the early 17th century, the population fell to 20,000 and stayed at that level for almost 200 years.¹⁸ A short time later, in 1699, Sarajevo lost the title of regional capital when the seat was moved first to Travnik and later to Banja Luka. More than a century later, in 1850, Sarajevo was eventually reinstated as the capital.¹⁹ Beginning in 1729, Sarajevans responded to growing instability by constructing a series of walls, towers, and gates. Two of these gates and a portion of a wall survive today. The Ottoman legacy Sarajevo still permeates Sarajevo today, from the Turkish coffee and sweets that residents appropriated to the tradition of religious tolerance that has become a hallmark of the city's identity even today.

Austro-Hungarian Rule

Ironically, Sarajevo's second period of great growth was induced by the same empire that had nearly destroyed the city in 1697. The Austro-Hungarian Empire brought western planning ideals and architectural styles to the city along with major demographic changes. The empire's planners left the Ottoman center of town intact, but they influenced its character in three major ways. First, they did away with the Ottoman divide between commercial and residential space, introducing the city's first apartments in the city center.²⁰ Second, they enhanced its multi-religious character by building a number of Catholic and Orthodox religious structures, allotting all three major confessions the same visibility for the first time. At the same time, planners were careful to make sure that

¹⁸ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 32.

¹⁹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 24.

mosques were also well taken care of and new mosques also built across the city. The city's leaders supported all four of the Sarajevo's religious communities because they saw religion as a means to control the nationalism that was already emerging in the city.²¹ Third, Ottoman planners also redesigned the Sebilj fountain and moved it to its current location, which remains a hub of activity today. Similarly, Austro-Hungarian planners made several major changes to the city as a whole. The Miljacka River had flooded every spring, an occurrence that had not been problematic for the old Ottoman town because it was situated far enough back from the bank. But the Austro-Hungarians desired to build structures along the riverfront, so they erected high walls on both sides of the river, ensuring the safety of their new structures. Austria-Hungary also brought Sarajevo its first railroad, connecting the city with other regions of the monarchy. In addition the empire introduced the tramway to Sarajevo, a feature that has been the backbone of the city's public transportation system ever since.²² The empire also began to industrialize the city, opening the city's famous brick factory. With this advent of this industrialization, the čaršija's traditional trades began a long decline that stretched over many of the following decades.

The monarchy also built a number of large buildings along an east-west axis through the valley that has been the spine of the city's development ever since, marked by the City Hall (now the National and University Library) on the bank of the Miljacka river on the east and the Regional Government Building (now the Presidency Building) on the one-time western edge of the city. The empire also brought the first professional

²⁰ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

²¹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 63.

²² The tram system was actually introduced to Sarajevo before Vienna because Sarajevo served as a test city for the system before it was widely instituted.

architects into Sarajevo, most notably the Czech architect Josip Vancaš, who designed the Regional Government Building and the Catholic cathedral just west of the čaršija. Most of the buildings built under the empire's eye were designed in the tradition of romantic historicism, where each building's design evoked the architecture of the previous era deemed most representative of its function, so the Cathedral was built in the neo-Gothic style and many of the city's government buildings in the neo-Renaissance style. These foreign architects did not simply import Western architectural styles to Sarajevo, though. They also developed a new style of architecture, known as pseudo-Moorish or neo-Orientalist, that was meant to showcase Sarajevo's unique ties with both the east and the west. Architects sought to draw elements of Ottoman architecture into the new monumental buildings they were designing, but because Ottoman architecture in Sarajevo was sparse and provided little material, architects looked to the great Moorish buildings in Spain for inspiration. The most prominent example of this style is the City Hall building, but many Islamic religious and cultural centers were also built in this style.²³

The occupying empire also promoted the growth of Western culture in the city by founding the Regional Museum (now the National Museum). The Regional Museum served not only as a museum, but also as the city's premier library, archive, and research institute. The museum had several homes after its founding and moved to its current location, an impressive complex in what is now the Marindvor²⁴ district of the city, in 1908.²⁵

²³ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 67-72

²⁴ The original Austro-Hungarian name for this neighborhood was originally Marijin Dvor (Mary's Court), and the name was later shortened to Marindvor, but the names are still used interchangeably.

²⁵ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 88-89.

The Austro-Hungarian period, lasting from 1878 to 1918, saw Sarajevo's second great wave of population growth, where the city almost doubled in size, reaching a population of more than 50,000 by 1910. Though all religious communities grew in size, Catholics saw a staggering increase in number, from 698 in 1879 to 17,922 in 1910. By 1910, their numbers nearly equaled the number of Muslim residents of the city.²⁶ Despite the prosperity and advances that the empire brought to Sarajevo, some of the empire's changes did not work perfectly within the existing Ottoman frame. Though traffic increased rapidly, the Austro-Hungarians rarely widened streets, leading to a congestion problem that still plagues the city today. City blocks were also too small to house the new Austro-Hungarian buildings, leading to inner courtyards so small that they were unusable.²⁷ Despite their flaws in implementation, and despite the fact that their reign was much shorter than that of the Ottoman Empire before them, the Austro-Hungarian Empire achieved comparable influence on the city's form. The empire's administrators and planners expanded and reimagined the central backbone of the city and added an entire family of Western monumental buildings to the city's fabric.

Perhaps the most notorious event in Sarajevo's history occurred in 1914 when the young Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand on a small street along the Miljacka river, beginning the series of events leading up to World War I. After World War I the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was dissolved and Bosnia was absorbed into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed Yugoslavia in 1929). Sarajevo was largely ignored by the Kingdom's government, leading to twenty-

²⁶ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 64.

²⁷ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

three years of stagnation and decline for the city. However the second Yugoslavia, formed after World War II, ushered in the city's third era of development and growth.

Sarajevo under Socialism

Sarajevo was occupied by Nazi and Ustasha²⁸ troops during World War II. The city endured the genocide of most of the city's Jewish residents (and also Serbs, gypsies, and other minorities), both axis and allied bombing, and Nazi sabotage of many of the city's industrial sites. Despite the devastation wrought by the war, the Partisans enjoyed strong support in Sarajevo, and both the residents and the new regime set out enthusiastically to remake the city.

1. Postwar Period

Sarajevo's development immediately after the war was largely influenced by models in other communist countries. Sarajevo's most pressing problem at the conclusion of World War II was providing enough housing for the city's rapidly-growing population, which had increased to 108,000 in 1945 from a pre-war population of 90,000, so the construction of modern high-rise apartment buildings²⁸ commenced immediately. In 1947 Sarajevo's boundaries were expanded more than a mile westward, to Ilidža at the far western end of the valley, and by 1977, the city of Sarajevo was made up of ten municipalities. Sarajevo's first comprehensive urban plan was drafted in 1948. It was never formally adopted by the city, but many its provisions were implemented nonetheless. It called for the construction of a city bakery, a national library, a medical faculty, and a faculty of philosophy. It also planned for huge westward expansion of the

²⁸ The Ustasha was a far-right Croatian nationalist party that came to power as a puppet regime in Croatia and parts of Bosnia during the Nazi occupation of the area.

city, and the creation of a second axis of development northward, along the Koševo Stream. Indeed, the University of Sarajevo was founded in 1949, and facilitated by Sarajevo's territorial gains, high rise housing complexes spread westward across the new city land. The first of these were Grbavica and Čengić Vila in 1949. Grbavica is an interesting space because though its area is quite large, the complex lacks any kind of city block system. Rather, the space is simply divided into two superblocks. Inside these superblocks, streets meander around with no pattern, which does cut down traffic, as it was planned to, but it is easy to get lost in the neighborhood. Like in the Soviet Union, the official architectural style of Tito's Yugoslavia was Socialist realism until 1950, but the style's precepts were never strictly enforced and architects were often allowed to experiment.²⁹

The new communist leadership also began a huge economic expansion initiative, constructing many new factories in the northwest area of the city.³⁰ The government also called for the development of heavy industry, electrification, transportation, and communication infrastructure. It was through this initiative that the city expanded the tram lines to reach all the way from the city center to its westernmost suburbs, and that Sarajevo's new rail station was built.³¹ This industrialization hastened the economic tailspin that traditional craftsmen had been enduring for years as Sarajevo became increasingly industrialized. After Tito's split with Stalin in 1948, Yugoslavia moved toward its famous policy of "soft communism" and courted Western aid. When the

²⁹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 211-232.

³⁰ Because it got more sun than the south side of the city, where for much of the day light was blocked by the hills in the south, the north side of the city was always considered the most desirable residential land. These new communist factories were built on this sunny north side, intentionally and symbolically placing the workers on the privileged sunny side.

³¹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 231.

money started flowing, Yugoslavia entered a period of short-term economic prosperity, the backdrop against many of the communist era's most resonant marks upon Sarajevo were made.

2. Mid-century Prosperity

After 1950, Yugoslav architects had unlimited access to Western design ideas, ushering in an era of experimentation in the new and old parts of the city. Sarajevo's next urban plan was approved in 1965, which, much like its predecessor, planned for great growth of the city. The biggest addition to Sarajevo during the mid-century period was the building of the commerce center Marindvor along the Austro-Hungarian east-west axis, west of the Regional Government Building, which was widened in this area to become a highway. Marindvor was built according to the new planning ideals of the time with large, stark government and commerce structures set far back from the street. The district is also much less dense than the older city center. It houses the faculties of philosophy and of the natural sciences, the parliament building, and the famous twin UNIS towers. These buildings tower around the older Regional Museum, the only large Austro-Hungarian structure in the area. Marindvor and the Parliament building inside the neighborhood were designed by Slovenian architect Juraj Neidhardt.³² In the years following Marindvor's construction, though, planners have found that Marindvor simply is not dense enough and have been adding structures to open spaces to "densify" the neighborhood. Later, in the 1980s, the famous yellow Holiday Inn building was also added to the district. The Holiday Inn and the twin UNIS towers were designed by

³² Neidhardt said of Marindvor that he sought to make the urban center like a big Bosnian carpet – with features spread out in a non-linear pattern. Neidhardt was also heavily influenced by Le Corbusier's tower in the park idea.

architect Ivan Štraus. Along with residential architect Zlatko Ugljen, these were the three most influential architects of the time.³³

Not only was Neidhardt the mastermind behind Marindvor, but he was also an influential voice in the great debate about Baščaršija that raged from the 1940s to the 1970s. Many modern architects at the time, including Neidhardt, felt that allowing the Baščaršija to stay in the center would render the space unusable in the modern world. In 1945 a significant number of craft stalls in the Baščaršija were torn down, and in 1953 Neidhardt drew a plan for the area calling for all but the most monumental structures to be leveled and for a theme park to be erected in the Baščaršija's place. The old Ottoman center was saved from destruction by the prospect of tourism, though, and in 1975 the city pledged to preserve the Baščaršija and to rebuilt the stalls that had been demolished in 1945.³⁴ ³⁵ Finally Neidhardt designed a number of new buildings for the young University of Sarajevo, whose faculties are spread across the city. Founders of the university initially decided against a traditional campus for the university in accordance with communist doctrine that students lives should be integrated into those of the workers rather than sequestered off into a privileged campus space.³⁶

Though the city benefited immensely from the construction boom, the constitutional changes during this period severely limited the city's authority, a hindrance that became more and more problematic as the years wore on. In the workers' self-management system that the government introduced in the 1950s the municipality, not

³³ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

³⁴ When the stalls of Baščaršija were rebuilt, they were zoned as commercial spaces, and therefore require to meet the specifications for commercial space, so the new stalls are identical to the originals but 50cm higher, in accordance with the minimum height of a commercial structure.

³⁵ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 232-233.

³⁶ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

the city, was the “basic sociopolitical community” in the country and therefore was afforded the most control over matters. In 1955 Sarajevo was constitutionally defined as a coordinating body for its constituent municipalities. Sarajevo’s status as a city was eventually recognized in the 1963 and 1974 constitutions, but the individual municipalities retained a level of autonomy that would tear the city apart in the nineties.

3. 1984 Winter Olympics

Sarajevo began preparing for the Olympics ten years before the 1984 event. The city used the Olympics as an opportunity to invest in new housing developments and stadiums and to make a broad range of infrastructure improvements. The Sarajevo airport was renovated and a bevy of new housing developments were constructed near the airport in the west, including Nova Breka, Dobrinja, and Alpašno Polje,³⁷ In addition, by this time, the construction of so many high rises in the city over the years had actually started to impede air flow in the valley, trapping cold air in the eastern part of the city. The city responded by protecting the Koševo Stream valley from further development by designating the area solely for residential and recreational purposes, hoping that this action would keep this north avenue for air flow open.³⁸ The city also made a major infrastructure development in the name of improving air quality – they installed gas pipes in the city, switching the main heating source from coal to gas. Though this upgrade was a major improvement at the time, it would prove to make the citizens of Sarajevo much more vulnerable during the siege. When the Olympics rolled around, Sarajevo was truly a

³⁷ Unfortunately, this development is one of the city’s greatest urbanistic disasters. The development was based on the Berlin model of constructing tall, narrow, snakelike buildings as a way to “economize” Le Corbusier’s original tower in the park idea idea. Unfortunately, the buildings in the development were built too close together, and they were on the South hills of the city, so the complex receives virtually no light. Today the area is one of the most notorious slums in the city.

³⁸ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

winter wonderland for those two weeks, and many residents remember the event as perhaps the highlight of the city's history. A stately Austro-Hungarian villa was designated as the Olympics museum and kept mementos of the games. However, Yugoslavia was already facing deep economic decline in 1984, and after the Olympics Sarajevo experienced that as well, with building projects grinding to a halt and some even abandoned incomplete.³⁹ Like the rest of the former Yugoslavia, Sarajevo also experienced rising nationalism in the years to come. These two forces brewed to produce Sarajevo's terrible ordeal of the nineties.

Sarajevo's development occurred in three distinct stages, under three governments that ascribed to wildly different ideologies. The marks of all three of these actors stood prominent in the city in 1992, lending Sarajevo an ambiance unlike any other European capital city and defining the city that so many risked everything to defend during the siege.

The Siege⁴⁰

The larger Bosnian conflict touched Sarajevo when the city found itself under siege in 1992, and for four long years the citizens of Sarajevo struggled simply to survive as the world watched on. In 1991, after the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), the party of Serb nationalists, won a significant number of seats in the governing bodies of Sarajevo's municipalities in Bosnia's first free multiparty elections, the municipalities with SDS majorities began to break away from the city, eventually joining the Serb Autonomous

³⁹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 248.

⁴⁰ This is by no means a complete account of the siege of Sarajevo or the events leading up to it. The following summary seeks only to give the reader an introductory understanding of the destruction that the city endured, not a full understanding of the many aspects of the siege.

Region that was forming in eastern Bosnia. Other municipalities that did not have the majority strength to secede outright set up parallel Serb government structures. These municipalities were on the outside of the city, not in the city center, so almost all of the hills surrounding Sarajevo eventually came to be controlled by the SDS by 1992. Bosnia held a referendum on independence in 1992, which was overwhelmingly supported by citizens (though Serbs boycotted the vote). Serbia's president Slobodan Milošević had anticipated this action of Bosnia's and transferred all of Yugoslavia's soldiers born in Bosnia (mostly Bosnian Serbs) to the republic, so when the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) was forced to withdraw from the newly independent country, ninety percent of the JNA's forces stationed in Bosnia remained in the country as members of the country's new army, along with a considerable supply of heavy artillery. This heavy artillery was placed on the Serb-controlled hills around Sarajevo, and slowly, beginning with outlying villages, these tanks began to fire on the city. Though the Serb forces had the firepower to take the city at the beginning of the war, they never did 1) because they sought the partitioning of Sarajevo into a Serb and an other (largely Bosnian Muslim) part and 2) because the city was more useful to them as a city full of hostages.⁴¹

By May 1992 the lines of the siege were largely set, and they changed little during the next four years, despite continuous fighting between Serbs surrounding the city and the resistance forces seeking to break the siege from within. Many of the Serb-controlled neighborhoods outside the line of the siege were of mixed nationality, and most of the non-Serbs were quickly forced out. Those that stayed were subjected to harassment and

⁴¹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 277-285, 287-299.

assault by government officials, paramilitary troops, and even neighbors.⁴² Inside the lines of the siege life became chaos. Shelling became a daily hazard as heavy artillery from the hills rained down on the city. Snipers shot at pedestrians and drivers from the Serb-controlled center-city neighborhood of Grbavica. All roads into the city were blockaded and the city was nearly completely cut off from food, water, electricity, and gas. Sarajevans struggled simply to carry out their daily lives in this dangerous and isolated world. Notably, Serbs inside the lines of the siege were also harassed by police and by gangs. In April 1992 a number of Sarajevan Serbs were detained for a time in the Koševo Stadium, but after the summer of 1992 official harassment subsided, though Serbs inside the lines endured suspicion and violence throughout the siege.⁴³

Though shells pelted the city at nearly all times during the siege (with the exception of a year long hiatus from February 1994 to February 1995) the heaviest shelling occurred at the beginning and end of the siege, during the summers of 1992 and 1995. In 1992 the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) undertook a campaign of “memoricide,” seeking to destroy the cultural history of Sarajevo with incendiary shells. Throughout the summer and fall of 1992 the VRS struck cultural, commercial and media centers. The Olympic Museum was one of the first buildings hit, followed by the National and University Library. Little of the collection of the National and University Library was able to be saved because as the building burned, snipers shot at anyone who tried to fight the fire.⁴⁴ The offices of the Sarajevo’s daily newspaper *Oslobodenje*, the

⁴² Svetlana Broz, *Good People in an Evil Time: Portraits of Complicity and Resistance in the Bosnian War*, Edited by Laurie Kain Hart, Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursac, New York: Other Press, 2004, p.38.

⁴³ Donia 317-325.

⁴⁴ Notably, though, a 15th century Haggadah that had been smuggled out of Spain by the Sephardic Jews that settled in Sarajevo and later successfully hidden from Nazi and Ustasha forces during World War II was once again saved, having been taken from the library to safety a week before the building burned.

Bosnian Assembly Building, the twin UNIS towers, and the Holiday Inn were also hit relentlessly. Some of these buildings, like the National and University Library and the *Oslobodenje* offices were rendered unusable. Others, like the Holiday Inn, continued to function throughout the siege.⁴⁵ Heavy artillery also targeted bread lines, water lines, marketplaces and funerals, leading to fifteen public massacres during the four years of siege.⁴⁶ Hospitals were also a repeated target of shells, with the Koševo Hospital, which housed the city's main trauma center, receiving 131 hits over the course of the siege. Means of transportation, especially public transportation, were singled out as well, leading to the destruction of most of the city's buses and trams by the end of the war. Journalists reporting from the Serb positions in the hills recounted with horror how clearly and how closely Serb soldiers could see their targets as they fired. Though many of the shell attacks were directed at precise targets, many other shells were fired randomly, creating an atmosphere of terror in the city below.⁴⁷

Sarajevo underwent a number of social changes during these difficult times. Because Serb nationalists sought to partition the city, Serbs in the central Bosniak part of the city were encouraged to leave for VRS-controlled territory and many did, though many also stayed behind in defiance of this nationalistic division of territory. A large percent of the Croat population also left the city, and Sarajevo's remaining Jews were evacuated. It is estimated that about half of the city's prewar population left the city before and during the siege. An almost equal number of Bosniak refugees, mainly from eastern Bosnia, sought refuge in the Sarajevo during the war because though the city was treacherous, those dangers were preferable to the larger one of genocide that engulfed

⁴⁵ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 314-315.

⁴⁶ "Svi Sarajevski Masakari (All of the Sarajevo Massacres)," *Zločin* (Crime), p. 21.

eastern Bosnia.⁴⁸ By the end of the war Sarajevo was overwhelmingly Bosniak by nationality and had experienced such a great influx of people from rural areas that longtime residents complained that their city felt more like a village.⁴⁹

NATO forces began bombing Serb positions around Sarajevo in late 1994, an action that along with Serb losses in other parts of Bosnia, led to the Dayton peace talks in late 1995. The siege of Sarajevo was finally lifted in early 1996, when the last of the highways connecting Sarajevo with the world was finally reopened.⁵⁰ Though Sarajevo had survived, the city had endured heavy damage. Virtually no building in the city stood untouched by shells. Shell blasts has also eroded the city's streets, and the city was "the world's largest graveyard of cars."⁵¹ Socially, the city was a ghost of its former self. 14,385 people had been killed in the city, thirty-eight percent of whom were civilians.⁵² Sarajevo had survived an unimaginable ordeal, but just barely, and residents and administrators set out on the long, arduous task of rebuilding a physically and socially decimated city.

Reconstruction and Growth

Post-War Challenges

Coming out of the war, as both a post-socialist and a post-conflict society, Sarajevo was a city undergoing dramatic transitions. The city tackled the privatization of

⁴⁷ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 315-317.

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁴⁹ Anders Stefansson, "Urban Exile: Locals, Newcomers, and the Cultural Transformation of Sarajevo," *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, Edited by Xavier Bougarel, et al, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007, p. 60.

⁵⁰ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 329-334, 339.

⁵¹ Gojko Berić, *Letters to the Celestial Serbs*, London: Saqi Books, 2002, p. 87.

⁵² "Sarajevo 5.4.1992 – 14.12.1995," *Dani*, p. 126-127.

its factories and housing at the same that it addressed the fragmentation of the city and the reconstruction of its buildings and infrastructure.

At the end of the war, most of the municipalities around Sarajevo were still under the control of Serbian forces. As the country demilitarized after the Dayton agreement many, but not all, of these areas were handed back to the control of the Federation. When these municipalities were reunited with the Federation, most of their Serb residents left for the Republika Srpska, both because of pressure from Serb politicians and gangs to do so and because Federation politicians refused to pledge to protect those that wished to stay.⁵³ The international community, lead by the High Representative,⁵⁴ tried to bring the two sides together in talks, but the international community's own division ultimately doomed the negotiations. Today, the Sarajevo area, which is now named the Sarajevo canton,⁵⁵ is about sixty-one percent its former area.⁵⁶ The municipality Pale, to the southeast of the city center, remains in the Republika Srpska. Before the war the Sarajevo area had housed 527,049 residents, forty-two percent of whom declared themselves Muslims and twenty-nine percent Serb.⁵⁷ After Sarajevo's reunification the shrunken area had a population of 349,000,⁵⁸ eighty-seven percent of whom identified as Bosniak. The number of Serbs had decreased by eighty-nine percent, from 157,193 before the war to 18,000 in 1997. The area also lost almost half of its Croat population.⁵⁹

⁵³ Louis Sell, "The Serb Flight from Sarajevo: Dayton's First Failure," *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 179-202, p. 15.

⁵⁴ The office of the High Representative is the chief civilian peace implementation agency in Bosnia, mandated by the Dayton Accords.

⁵⁵ At it's creation, the Federation was divided into ten smaller governing bodies called cantons which function much like American counties.

⁵⁶ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 348.

⁵⁷ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 266.

⁵⁸ All post-war population quets in Sarajevo, and Bsnia as a whole, are estimates because the country has not conducted a census since the war.

⁵⁹ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 346.

Authorities sought to combat this homogenization of Sarajevo by encouraging refugees and displaced persons to return to the area, and though many people did return to areas where their ethnicity was in power – the Federation for Bosniaks and Croats and Republika Srpska for Serbs – few members of minority groups ventured back to their homes. The High Representative set out to tackle this problem by encouraging returns to Sarajevo and making an example of the canton, adopting the Sarajevo Declaration in 1998. The process of return was combined with the settlement of property claims and the privatization of socialist housing, so before families could return to their pre-war homes they would have to submit their property claims to be approved by the government and if they had been living in a social apartment, they would have to buy it from the government. This program led to a resolution of the majority of the city’s and country’s property claims by 2003, but it also opened the door for “fictive returns” – where families would regain the ownership rights to their former homes and then simply sell the property to its current residents. This phenomenon can be seen in the disparity between the percentage of settled property claims, which was more than ninety percent by 2003, and the percentage of actual returns, which remains at less than one third of refugees and displaced persons. For these reasons, the Sarajevo Declaration was successful, but not as successful as hoped. By 2003, when those that planned to return had largely done so, the percentage of Bosniaks in Sarajevo canton has dropped to seventy-five percent from the return of non-Bosniaks, but the continued demographic dominance of Bosniaks in Sarajevo after the war has led to a heightened presence of Islam in the city.⁶⁰ However,

⁶⁰ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 345-349.

most of the non-Bosniaks in Sarajevo today are older. Few non-Bosniaks are choosing to raise families in the city.⁶¹

In addition, in the initial months after the war, Sarajevo faced the physical and infrastructure dilemmas of a city coming out of four years of chaos. The frontline around the city was riddled with mines. The chords of some elevators had eroded during the war, leading to cars breaking off of them when the elevators were put back in use. Explosions in homes were also common as people reconnected gas lines. The international community pledged substantial funds to Bosnia, of which Sarajevo received a considerable portion, to aid the reconstruction process. The Austro-Hungarian Main Post Office was soon restored. Many Islamic countries contributed generously to the rebuilding of mosques and other Islamic structures. Many foreign countries chose to reconstruct preexisting buildings to house their new embassies to the independent country of Bosnia.⁶² A host of international Non-Governmental Organizations, NGOs, also arrived in Sarajevo soon after the war, doing work related to the integration of Sarajevo with Srpsko Sarajevo,⁶³ among other issues.

The diplomatic and the NGO presence supported the city's service industry in a city whose economy was largely stagnating. Most of Sarajevo's factories after the war were heavily damaged. Many had been gutted by retreating Serb forces and their machinery sent to the Republika Srpska. The machinery that remained was outdated. Most of the city's factories never reopened, and built after the war were located outside

⁶¹ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁶² Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 337-345.

⁶³ Name for the part of Sarajevo under Serb control before and during the war.

of the canton, in neighboring cities like Zenica.⁶⁴ Unemployment in Sarajevo canton has hovered around forty percent since the war.⁶⁵ Sarajevo transformed from a city where the overwhelming majority of the population was middle class, to a polarized society with virtually no middle class. Most of the city's middle class left the city during the war and now lives in Europe, North America, or Australia.⁶⁶ The city's new elite is composed of politicians that have grown wealthy by taking bribes and powerful by entrenching nationalistic divides, and of people who profited enormously from activities like smuggling during the war.

Sarajevo Today

More than a decade after the war, Sarajevo is still struggling in many ways. Reconstruction continues slowly, at the rate of one building per year, with no formal date of completion set.⁶⁷ A complete renovation of the Austro-Hungarian National Museum was finished in 2006. As part of the renovation the museum now contains a state-of-the-art system for preserving and exhibiting Sarajevo's famous haggadah. The Sephardic synagogue is also currently under reconstruction. However, other significant monuments, like the National and University Library, have stood damaged and untouched since the close of the war. A new campus for the University of Sarajevo and a new American

⁶⁴ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁶⁵ "Sarajevo 2000," Sarajevo Canton, October 2000, <<http://www.zavodzpr-sa.ba/publikacijeng.htm>> and Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁶⁶ Personal interview with Popolari, April 23, 2008.

⁶⁷ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

embassy are also being built near Marindvor.⁶⁸ ⁶⁹ The city is also being augmented with a number of new, modern commercial structures, most notably the Twist Tower.

The city has continued to benefit from the presence of foreign embassies, but the presence of most NGOs in the city has diminished. Many international NGOs are pulling their operations out of Bosnia and moving on to other areas of the world.⁷⁰ Though, many of the NGOs that have remained in the country are based in Sarajevo, they no longer do significant work in the city, citing areas of greater need in other part of Bosnia.⁷¹ Though Sarajevo is the capital of both the Federation and of the country of Bosnia, Sarajevo is no longer the center of cultural and educational life in Bosnia because of the emergence of separate ethnic centers in the country. West Mostar and Banja Luka have been developing as separate centers of Croat and Serb education and culture, so investment that in the past would have gone to Sarajevo has been directed toward these cities.⁷² In addition, Sarajevo canton inherited a number of formerly republic-wide institutions and has struggled to support them with its limited tax revenue.⁷³

Economic stagnation has continued to plague the city, visible from a simple walk through the center of the city, where streets literally one block away from the main street are riddled with empty storefronts. The Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute has developed

⁶⁸ The tract of land chosen for the campus actually has an interesting history. The area was originally military land. Then, in the 1960s, the city planned for the area to be replaced by a cultural center. The plan was never realized, and the area remained military land until after the war, when it was designated to be the new campus of the University of Sarajevo. At the same time, the American government was looking for a 40,000 square meter tract of land to house the new American embassy. When they came up empty handed, the Sarajevo government gave them a portion of the land slated to be the new campus out of gratitude for stopping the war.

⁶⁹ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁷⁰ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 328.

⁷¹ Personal Interview with Mustafa Cero, Operational Manager at the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo, April 15, 2008.

⁷² Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

a plan for the growth of industry that calls for the old industrial corridor north of the Miljacka River to be transformed into residential and commercial space and for new industry to be developed along roads that lead out of town to the west by 2023. The institute would also like the city of Sarajevo to grow out to the Bosna river (west of Ilidža) in the next ten to twenty years. Finally, the institute would like to address the areas of slums that have emerged in southwest Sarajevo. Though the institute does have these long-term goals, Director Said Jamaković also stated, “We now want to recognize what is the first step, not a long plan in the future,” and explained that currently the implementation of long-term visions is taking a backseat to smaller, more specific concerns. The institute is working to alleviate areas of major traffic congestion that have existed since Austro-Hungarian rule. The institute is working most fervently, though, to curb illegal building.⁷⁴ Illegal residential development, mostly high in the hills around the city, had been a facet of life in Sarajevo since socialist times. Under socialism, low-level factory workers often were not able to secure a social apartment, so they built their homes themselves out in the hills. During the war, many of the refugees coming from other parts of Bosnia also built their own homes in the hills.⁷⁵ The illegal building continues today, partially because politicians are bribed into allowing it, partially because of the inadequate housing stock. Paltry numbers of dwellings are reconstructed or added to the city each year, far fewer than the number necessary to accommodate continued migration from rural areas in Bosnia to Sarajevo.⁷⁶ This dearth is due to a lack of money and

⁷³ Donia, *Sarajevo, A Biography*, p. 350-351.

⁷⁴ Personal interview with Said Jamaković, director of the Sarajevo Canton Planning Institute, April 15, 2008.

⁷⁵ Personal Interview with Azra (pseud.), April 23, 2008.

⁷⁶ “Sarajevo 2000.” Sarajevo Canton. October 2000. <<http://www.zavodzpr-sa.ba/publikacijeng.htm>>

investment, and because the housing investments that the city does receive are much smaller than the old socialist housing projects. Illegal buildings have become dangerous because, constructed unregulated on steep grades, they will sometimes slide down the hills. The institute works to incorporate pre-existing illegal construction into its plans for the city because the city cannot provide alternative housing for these people, but the construction continues to go up faster than the plans can be made. The institute also devotes resources to tracking the implementation of previous plans, and to mapping investment in the canton.

Planning in Sarajevo today is directed by the major issues of economic redevelopment and illegal construction. These processes are characterized by perhaps the two most significant trends catalyzed by the siege: a shift in the direction of the area's development because of territorial losses and a focus away from the city's center, toward the vary margins of the existing city. Before the war, the 1984 Winter Olympics and the recreational opportunities that Olympic structures afforded afterward ensured that development atop of the hills surrounding Sarajevo was a priority. But with Pale, Sarajevo lost one of its main mountaintop centers. Most of the other recreational areas were destroyed in the war, and though Bjelašnica mountain has recently been redeveloped, focus has shifted to the valley corridors that lead westward. Walking around Sarajevo's center, one perceives little change from the early socialist period or earlier; the most of the real change is taking shape far west.

Sarajevska mall on the east-west artery Ulica Maršala Tita used to stand as a monument to the 1984 Olympics in Sarajevo and that exiting time for the city. Today the building has been razed and another is going up in its place, perhaps closing this chapter

of great happiness and great sorrow for the city.⁷⁷ Sarajevo today *is* moving onward, but so slowly that to residents, Sarajevo feels like a city stuck in transition.⁷⁸ Some look to European Union integration to revive the city and the country, but the Sarajevo and Bosnia must improve mightily before the real possibility of integration can enter the picture.

Residents and Change

Most of my eight sociological interviewees recalled vivid happy memories before the war, but they all experienced change in Sarajevo in different ways. The affects of Sarajevo's changes also took different forms. To some, Sarajevo had fundamentally changed little, for better or for worse. Others felt that they could no longer live in this city that they had once called home. Despite participants plans to stay in or leave the city, though, all expressed great frustration with current aspects of Sarajevo.

Pre-war Memories

When we discussed pre-war Sarajevo, my respondents always came back to a few major aspects of life before the war. They immediately discussed the rich life that the majority of Sarajevans enjoyed before the war, both because of the increased leisure time that they could afford and because of certain cultural practices that made each community incredibly strong.

One of the first things that many of my interviewees spoke about when I asked them about the period before the war was the good life that almost everybody had

⁷⁷ Personal Interview with Fatima (pseud.), April 21, 2008.

⁷⁸ Personal Interview with Davor (pseud.), April 12, 2008.

enjoyed under socialism. They described day trips into nature that they used to take with their families, and the longer standard summer vacation on the coast. Sanela⁷⁹ recounted:

The life was, you know, we had a great life. It was basically going to school, spending winters skiing on the mountain for a month and a half, spending three months in the summer on the coast, going to Dubrovnik traditionally twice a year, November and May, because that's what we used to do, I mean Sarajevans.

From what I gathered, the ability to leave the city for a holiday or even an afternoon was and is central to life in Sarajevo, and the fact that many Sarajevans no longer have the means to do so is a major sign of distress for the city.

The aspect of life inside Sarajevo that people spoke about most was the spirit of their neighborhoods before the war. Nearly every interviewee described how everybody in the neighborhood knew each other and how neighbors had such strong bonds before the war. Fatima⁸⁰ described how her grandmother would leave her with the neighbor if she had to go out, and remarked, "Today that's unimaginable." Jovanka⁸¹ and others spoke about the "culture of playing" among neighborhood children that hardly exists anymore. Davor⁸² explained that there is even a term for these "neighborly relations" in Bosnian:

It doesn't mean anything in English - I don't even think that English has any word to describe it - but it's kind of the concept of this thing that neighbors should be family, so neighbors should be there to help you, and you should be closer to your neighbor than to your own family because if something happens, the neighbor is the one who would come to your house first.

This bond was one of the most important facets of a Sarajevan's life before the war.

Fatima expressed this sentiment when she gushed, "I think that it [neighborhood] is the

⁷⁹ Personal Interview with Sanela (pseud.), April 17, 2008. Hereafter citations are referred to in text.

⁸⁰ Personal Interview with Fatima (pseud.), April 21, 2008. Hereafter citations are referred to in text.

⁸¹ Personal Interview with Jovanka (pseud.), April 22, 2008. Hereafter citations are referred to in text.

⁸² Personal Interview with Davor (pseud.), April 12, 2008. Hereafter citations are referred to in text.

best thing. A person who has not experienced that, they cannot even imagine what it's like. It's just amazing, and everything else that you might have in life, like better standards or better conditions, I don't think any of that is as valuable."

Davor also spoke about how neighborhoods did more than provide a support system; they created and reinforced the values of society at that time. Jovanka praised these values for teaching respect for public space, but Davor felt negatively about these values because he felt that they were "just given, and then you just have to absorb them and take them in. You don't have room or space to think about them or about who you are." What surprised me most about this discussion of neighborhood and the values that they perpetuated was the similarity of all of my interviewees accounts. I spoke with people from the old town, Dobrinja, Koševo, Alpašno Polje, Marindvor, and Vratnik, neighborhoods that are scattered all over the city, but all of the descriptions of neighborhood that I heard were eerily similar.

Others identified other bygone values and most felt positively about them. Two of my respondents spoke about the "spirit of Sarajevo," relating this idea that gained currency during the siege of the city to the traditional values of multi-ethnicity and religious tolerance that Sarajevo was known for before the war. Mirsad Tokaća,⁸³ president of the Research and Documentation Center Sarajevo, said of Sarajevo's tradition of tolerance, "It's a style of life. Sarajevo was always unique because of its joint life." Many more respondents praised socialist Sarajevo for its social equity and lack of materialism and commercialism. Fatima said, "The role models of the society were like good scientists, or people who did useful things for the society, or doctors who found

⁸³ Personal interview with Mirsad Tokaća, President of the Research and Documentation Center Sarajevo, April 21, 2008. Hereafter all citations are referred to in text.

medicines, or things like that, and that's the very opposite of our current role models."

After this discussion, Fatima questioned, "How could we have such great values and then have such a horrible war?" This question stuck me as a difficult one for someone with both love for their city and contempt for the recent war to grapple with. Davor answered this question for himself by deciding, "I think that the people in this country and in this part of the world were always like that [greedy], otherwise we wouldn't have had a war," but most of my other participants did not analyze Sarajevo's pre-war values in this way, perhaps because in this difficult time for Sarajevo it is easier to see the positives in the times of peace before the war, even if the seeds of conflict were also present.

When we leave a place behind, we long for certain, often unexpected, things from that place. I always asked people what they missed most about pre-war Sarajevo, and each of my interviewees answered this question in a different way. Some said that they did not miss anything, either because they felt that they had an equally good life in Sarajevo now or because they felt that there was nothing worth missing in pre-war Sarajevo. Some cited parks because so many of the trees in parks were felled during the war to fuel stoves and because even today people are building illegally on the city's open spaces. Fatima misses the neighborly values discussed above, which she calls "the unity of the people." Expressing her disillusionment after returning, Jasna⁸⁴ responded, "I guess [I miss] the feeling that I had about Sarajevo, which was positive, and I've completely lost it." Finally, Emir, who was fifteen when the war started, said poignantly, "I miss my childhood." Emir's comment highlights the personal loss that every resident in Sarajevo, particularly those who experienced young adulthood, felt as a result of the siege. Many of those that fled the city described how their youth passed in a kind of haze

in a foreign country, where they would function in their new environment but only think of Sarajevo. Those that stayed spent four formative years running or fighting, their lives on hold in order to survive. Because many of my interviewees were young – between nine and eighteen years old – at the time that the war started, most of them see pre-war Sarajevo as a period of lost youth.

Experience of Change

In my interviews, I was particularly interested to understand residents' experience of change with respect to Sarajevo. For those that stayed in the city, I wanted to know whether the city had gradually fallen apart for them or if the changes had struck them at a particular moment. For those that left and came back, I wanted to learn about their experience of returning. It was in these questions that I saw the most difference between the answers of those that stayed in the city during the siege and those that left. For those that stayed in the city, their experience of change was often explained to be a simple one: one day shells started falling and life was never the same. Those that left went through a longer process of introspection while in exile. I explored these processes with several of my interviewees that were outside of Sarajevo during the siege. I also spoke with people who had been in Sarajevo during the siege but left afterward and discussed how those experiences of change during the war colored their experience of returning to the city. Finally, I asked interviewees to cite main areas of physical and social change that they saw between the pre-war period and today.

⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Jasna (pseud.), April 19, 2008. Hereafter all citations are referred to in text.

Naturally, those that stayed in Sarajevo during the siege are not eager to talk about that time because of the difficulty and horror that they endured. Mustafa Cero,⁸⁵ Operational Manager at the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo, summed up most of my participant's experiences of change within the city with a single word – shock. Those that left during the siege also felt that shock, but from afar. Their removal from the conflict afforded them the space and the time to think about the change that the city was undergoing in their absence. All three of the participants who were absent during the siege described how their minds were always with Sarajevo. They mourned their city with the added layer of homesickness. Sanela described, “We were following every single step, every single breath of the city, we were following it and we were with it.” Jovanka described herself as “snoozing” during her entire time in the United States because emotionally she was always in Sarajevo. Jasna described a dream that she would have when she was in Sweden where she would be walking down Sarajevo's main street and everything looked the same as before, but the shops were different, like where there used to be a bakery there was a shoe shop in her dream, perhaps belying her subconscious knowledge that the city had already changed in her absence. Spending ten years outside of Sarajevo during and after the siege, Jovanka went through a long process of coming to terms with the city. She described the “survivor's guilt” that she felt having been able to leave the city when members of her friends and family were not. She instructed, “One had to prepare to go through a certain kind of combination of mourning and delight,” referring to the emotional preparation to return to the city that she undertook while she was still in the United States. All three interviewees said that they were eager to return to

⁸⁵ Personal Interview with Mustafa Cero, Operational Manager at the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo, April 15, 2008. Hereafter all citations are referred to in text.

Sarajevo when they could because it had never been their decision to leave. Jasna decided to return alone. Sanela actually convinced her parents to return to Sarajevo with her, even though her family has the opportunity to immigrate to Germany or Australia. Similarly, all three described great initial happiness to be back in the city again. Jovanka said of here return:

When I came back I was in a nirvana for a good year. I loved everything, like I would go down the street, and the second I left the building I would have this stupid smile on my face, and things would be, like this building was crooked, and I was like, 'It's perfect. It's just crooked the right way.' Like holes in the ground, everything was perfect to me. I was just so happy to be here, and I felt that at that moment and in those moments the whole gap of that whole period was erasing.

Jasna also described an initial period of great happiness back in Sarajevo.

Two of my participants stayed in Sarajevo under siege but then left the city after the war. Davor never planned to return because he found the city culturally oppressive. On the other hand, Fatima described a kind of patriotism as her main motivation for coming back to the city and to Bosnia. She thinks that her strong patriotism comes from her family and from her experience during the siege. In World War II her grandfather was one of the courageous citizens who signed the Banja Luka declaration⁸⁶ and during the siege her mother refused to leave Sarajevo even though their family had the chance to because she felt that she had to "stay with her people." Fatima's own experience under siege added to this patriotism because, as she described, "There were people shooting at me and throwing grenades at me and now I want to say this country can exist. This country can succeed. It can survive. This way of life, or the little that we have left, can

⁸⁶ This was a declaration signed by prominent Muslims in the Banja Luka community asking the occupying Nazi and Ustasha forces to spare the lives of the city's Serbs because Serbs were persecuted much like Jews in this region during World War II.

survive. It's a good culture. It's a good life." She wanted to go to the United States and study a useful field so that she could return and offer her country expertise.

No matter how much my interviewees loved or hated Sarajevo, though, they could always cite changes to the city. This question about change was perhaps the broadest because it entails physical, social, and ideological transformations to the city. Likewise, I received varied and lengthy responses.

Physically, Jovanka lamented the declining respect for public places. She described how she often saw people throw bags of trash into the river and litter in public areas. She also described an open courtyard next to her apartment that children used to play in that is now being built on by outsiders to her neighborhood. Emir expressed concern about the shrinking number of public soccer fields.

Socially, people articulated a change to the way that people look and act now after the war. Davor commented, "Individually people are just more confused." Sanela also remarked, "People were just, people's faces were lost." Many people also cited Sarajevo's drastic demographic changes, especially when describing change to their neighborhoods. Fatima said that the majority of Serbs in her apartment building moved out. Sanela described how when she came back to Sarajevo, people she did not know were living in her apartment in the Dobrinja neighborhood of the city. She returned to the apartment in 2001, but says that she still does not know most of the people in the neighborhood. Jovanka and others also described an "Islamicization" that Sarajevo underwent after the war as a majority-Bosniak town for the first time in more than a hundred years. Jovanka talked about how she felt uncomfortable calling the non-Bosniak name of her nephew in the Bašćaršija immediately after her return. Davor contended that

this Islamicization was continuing today with the introduction of Islamic education in public preschools. Respondents had different ideas about how these demographic changes may affect the city's future. Mirsad Tokaća insisted, "It is not important how many people of a specific group are here. For Sarajevo, it was always a part of the tradition of Sarajevo, that we live together without separation," but others like Davor worried that a ethnically or religiously homogenous Sarajevo may breed ignorance and lead to another conflict. Another drastic demographic change that people labeled Sarajevo's most lasting social division right now is the growing divide between rich and poor. Fatima described the economic position of Sarajevans before the war, "The majority of people were some kind of middle class, realistically, and the rich people weren't as rich, and the poor people were poor, but they had a lot assistance from the state," but said that today Sarajevo's middle class hardly exists and that the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer.

Ideologically, many people spoke about the declining value of education. Davor was sure that Bosnia is the only country in Europe now where a person can buy a college degree. One positive change that a couple of interviewees mentioned was an increase in free speech and the beginnings of more tolerance for some of Sarajevo's marginalized groups like the burgeoning gay community. Though agreeing that many of the groups and ideas that were formerly forced to go underground could now speak in the mainstream, Jovanka cautioned, "You have a [nationalistic] monopoly on public space, on public speech, on public everything. Culture and art goes more into that direction than anything else. It just takes the space, and before you had that space, but of a different content as well." Ideologically the waters muddied, though, because many of these changes have been brought on by the change in systems, from socialist to capitalist democracy, as

much as or more than they have been brought on by the war. Interviewees even attributed some social changes, like the loss of the neighborhood community, to outside forces like globalization. The question of how much the city would have changed had there never been a war, simply through a transformation to capitalism and democracy, is an interesting and important question, but it is beyond the scope of this project to answer because it would require research in other formerly-communist cities, especially other cities in the former Yugoslavia that did not experience war.

Frustration Today

Most of the discussion of change in Sarajevo revolved around negative changes to the city, and it became clear that the city's changes have produced great sources of frustration for residents that have seen the city in better times. The negative conditions and forces pulsing through the city now in the eyes of residents have prompted different responses from those that have ridden along on Sarajevo's tumultuous journey over the past two decades.

As in every city, many things, big and small, frustrate the residents of Sarajevo with whom I spoke. What is perhaps different in Sarajevo's case is that these sources of frustration are sometimes indicators of larger endemic problems for the city, even some small bothersome aspects of the city, like the rudeness that has crept into Sarajevans that Jasna is irked by:

The only thing I feel now is that everybody's working against you. Nobody would help you. Even if you are going to pay your bills at the post office, everybody looks angry or sad, and I feel like they would do anything to make your life more difficult. It's like everybody's so negative inside, so they don't... You know, it's difficult for everybody, just a simple smile.

Many other sources of frustration were connected with the problems of Bosnia as a country, especially the country's political situation. Jovanka exclaimed, "I think it's being robbed, culturally and spatially, and there are people who have power and have authority and who have disregard, and not only for spatial area but for people and lack responsibility, and you know they have responsibilities. It is not really being invested in." Sanela commented similarly, "Time and money are being thrown away just like that, and nothing is changing because they're not moving on. For several reasons, I think that the people who are leading us are not the people who should and can lead us, and they are not doing their job well." Fatima felt that the city's biggest problem was the "position of the city's young people," especially with respect to education, pointing to the country-wide brain drain that Bosnia is trying to combat.

Only a couple of the people that I spoke with felt similarly about the city both before and after the war. For most, Sarajevo's changes and new problems have shown them the city in a new light, and each interviewee has responded to their new ideas about the city differently. Today Fatima feels that her patriotism has waned because her entire family has become exasperated with the politics in Bosnia and stopped discussing issues of patriotism and country, and practicality has taken those issues' place. Today she would even consider moving outside of Sarajevo, largely because she is dissatisfied with the lack of opportunities for career advancement in the city. She feels torn, however, because she would like to live in a Muslim country, but no other Muslim country than Bosnia appeals to her. Jasna, as well, feels exhausted by the city today and has grown stifled by the unfriendliness that she feels in Sarajevo today and has begun to feel that she may not have a future in Sarajevo. Even Davor, who insisted that he never liked Sarajevo,

admitted, “I did care about the things that were happening here,” but he continued, “ but today there’s no more room because frustration is never-ending here. And there’s nothing you can do. You can’t change this.” He still feels that Sarajevo’s traditional culture will never allow him to look for the kind of happiness that he wants from life, and now he also feels like the problems in Sarajevo today make the city an undesirable place to raise a child. They all pledge to always return to Sarajevo to visit, but probably not to live.

Others plan to stay in the city despite their negative feelings. Jovanka explained, “I want Sarajevo to be my base, and it will be the place where I’ll be spending most of my time, regardless of what happens.” Sanela expressed a similar tendency: “I never go to any other place because I don’t like it here. I go because there are more opportunities, I can learn something, but I always come back.” In addition, the commitment to Sarajevo of my interviewees who work in NGOs is quite strong and largely tied to their work. Mustafa Cero explained that his work to ensure that the conflict in Bosnia will never repeat itself helps him to work through what he experienced in Sarajevo under siege during the war. Similarly, Mirsad Tokaća explained,

I could not imagine my life without Sarajevo. This is something that is extremely important, not only for me. It is not only a problem of my personal life. This is a generational problem. When I decided to start this center, the main idea was to create a long-term institutions for remembering the past, because simply, you cannot face the past without institutions.

They are pledged optimists and have chosen to stay in Sarajevo and wait for the city to once again change course.

Most of my interviewees have great memories of Sarajevo but they have also experienced great changes in the city. The most prevalent changes, that I heard repeated many times were the destruction of the city’s recreational areas, the disappearance of

neighborhood community life, the shift in the city's demographic make-up, and the growing political economic stagnation. Many of these changes and other changes have been negative, even jarring, and I think that my interviewees are still coming to terms with their implications for Sarajevo's future. I was struck by my participants' thoughtfulness, dedication, and love for the city and the people in it. At very least, Sarajevo has ten people who want only the best for the city.

Conclusions

Though Sarajevo is small by the world's standards, the city is rich and deeply layered in many ways. Through this project I hope to have unlocked just a few of those layers. The key to my discovery was understanding the city's history, so I could place my interviewees' stories into a larger map of the city's religious, social, and developmental matrices. I think that I have begun to answer the questions that I set out to explore. I have laid out several major ways in which Sarajevo has been changed by the war, but of course, the most lasting consequences of the conflict will only emerge later, when Sarajevo has had more time to recover from the various upheavals that the city experienced. I have also placed residents' voices together into a dialogue, looking for common themes and for nuances that complicate the picture of the city's residents, looking for a pulse of the city and for the elements that make its heart skip a beat.

Of course, as much as I have learned, these insights have only shown me just how much more remains to be studied in Sarajevo. My most obvious suggestion for further research would simply be a longer, more in-depth look at the same topic because in many ways, my work has only scratched the surface, especially with respect to my sociological interviews. Another suggestion would be for the same research to be conducted by a

native Sarajevan because even though such a researcher would be hindered by other things than I, such a study would remove the language barrier that I struggled with and would start from a deeper place, thus being able to offer a more informed assessment of the issues that I covered. Because my topic was so broad, looking at all aspects of change in Sarajevo, there are also a number of more specific topics that were smaller elements of my research that would yield interesting results. The first of these avenues would be to tie my findings into existing redevelopment theory. Once again, I would have loved to ground this month's study in this existing body of discourse, but time limitations prevented it. Another direction would be to use GIS software to analyze much of the data that I worked with this month, which would add geographic specificity to many of the trends that I discussed and perhaps illuminate other trends that I was unable to discern. A final avenue for further study would be to include more demographic groups into the discussion of this question, like those who left Sarajevo during the war and have not come back or those who live outside Sarajevo, in Bosnia or Serbia, and formed perceptions of the siege from afar. Ideally, I hope that some day I will have the opportunity to tackle some of these lingering questions.

Though Sarajevo is a city entangled the specific dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, Sarajevo's experience of change during Bosnia's conflict can provide a number of lessons to those seeking to understand the effects of dramatic physical and social upheaval upon cities. Despite the negative consequences of international aid in the city, I think that Sarajevo is an example of the powerful benefit that international aid in reconstruction can have on a society with a weak economy and a weak government in the aftermath of devastation. It is through international aid to the city that many of Sarajevo's

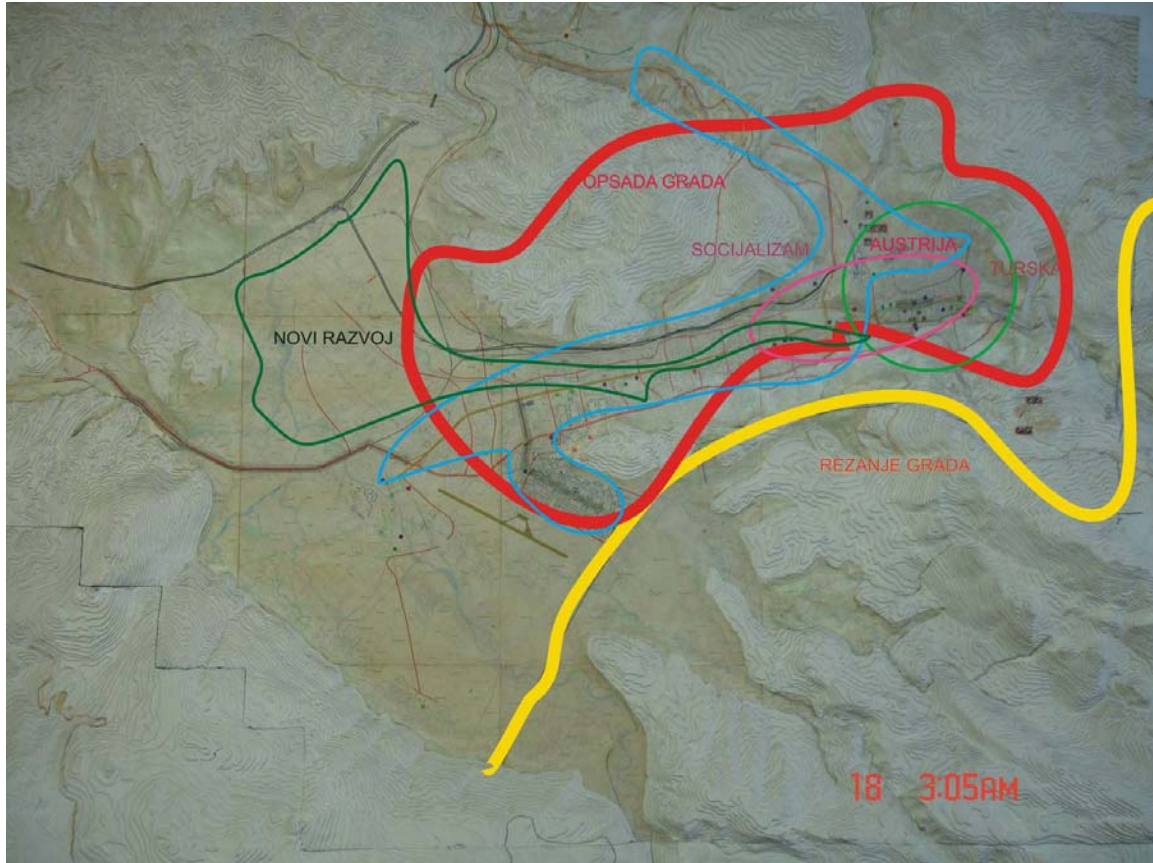
most precious monuments have been rebuilt and the physical character of the city restored. This is a step that I believe is vital to the recovery of a city because it allows the city to retain the most important aspects of its past as it begins to sort out its future. Perhaps the most precious lesson, though, is that to help a city's residents deal with change, the city must involve them in their society's recovery. The people that I spoke with who were most committed to Sarajevo were those that were directly involved in projects that dealt with Bosnia's conflict. This approach does not only aid residents' own coming to terms with the city; it also provides the city with a sector of its own people who are willing to fight for it, something more lasting and more valuable than any kind of outside assistance. Every time a city faces disaster, it faces destruction, but the example of Sarajevo has and will continue to provide examples of the many ways that a devastated city and its residents can face change and uncertainty fearlessly.

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Appendix



Map of Sarajevo's Development over the years. The lime green circle delineates the Ottoman city center, the pink oval is Austro-Hungarian development, the blue shape is socialist development, and the forest green shape is current development. The bold red line is the line of the siege, and the bold yellow line represents the current border of Sarajevo canton.