BRIDGING THE DIVIDES-'UNIFICATIONS' OF MOSTAR

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INTRODUCTION

When I first started considering writing about Mostar, the idea that came into my mind was to start writing about the change in atmosphere that happened in the city in the past four or five years. As an outsider I have thought that one of the reasons for this change was among other things the rebuilding of the Old Bridge. However, as I started digging deeper, the story of Mostar became more and more interesting, revealing itself in front of me with all its complexities and processes. The more I discovered the more interested I became, especially in its everyday life, its symbolisms, its 'unifications', its citizens. Although I was going to Mostar regularly for the past seven years, with the progressing of my research I started looking at it differently, more as an insider than an outsider, maybe understanding for the first time what many of the citizens of Mostar told me, and that is that Mostar is a city that for many of them has two sides, one in the pre-war memories, of poets and gardens, and youth, and the other, the 'real' one, jobless, divided, and without a clear future. As I was learning more about the city my objectives for the paper became somewhat different. I wanted, to see *where Mostar is a unified city for its citizens, in which way do the citizens communicate, if at all; where are the meeting points; which identities are most salient and which less, what is the role of buildings and symbols in Mostar, how do the citizens of Mostar see the future of the town*. I realized that it is important to research the processes of cooperation on various levels in order to better understand the complexities of everyday life not only in Mostar but in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well, particularly in conditions of multi-ethnic coexistence. By examining these complexities new incentives and solutions for Mostar and for Bosnia and Herzegovina can be created.

Mostar, a town by many described as blueprint or microcosm of Bosnia and Herzegovina[1] after the war ended up divided between Bosniaks and Croats. Even before the war the east side of the town was predominantly Muslim and the west side predominantly Croat, with significant Serbian minority.[2] The war started in 1992 between the Yugoslav army (JNA) on one side and Croatian Defense Council (HVO) and Bosnia-Herzegovina Army (Army RBiH) on the other, and ended in expulsion of large number of Serbs from West Herzegovina. During the Muslim-Croat war both sides were ethnically cleansed. By signing the Washington Agreement in 1994 the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed, Mostar was put under the administration of European Union, which lasted last until 1997. Although the EU wanted to reintegrate the town, the appointed EU representative Hans Koschnik found strong resistance, especially from the Croat side. The Interim Statute reached in 1996, strengthened further the division by organizing Mostar in six municipalities, with an equal distribution of power, and a central zone governed through a power-sharing layout. However, all other local structures were divided, such as healthcare and sanitation, public education, and postal communication. This is how the town went on functioning for the next eight years. Provisions granted to the Office of the High Representative made possible for Paddy Ashdown, High Representative from 2002 to 2006, to begin with the reform of Mostar, based on the report and recommendations of the Commission for Reform of Mostar, in 2003. Since the local authorities made no effort to resolve the conflicting interests of the municipalities that brought Mostar to a dead end street, the High Representative decision was to change the administrative organization of the town by unifying it. There were to be six electoral units, unique and unified budget, unique public and communal sector which was a

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[1] Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp.105-107.
[2] According to the last official census from 1991, the population of Mostar comprised of: 48,856 Muslims (cca 35%); 43,037 Croats (cca 34%), 23, 846 Serbs(cca 19%), 12,768 Yugoslavs (cca 10%), and cca 3,000 Others (cca2%). For more details on census data in Bosnia and Herzegovina please see the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Federal Office of Statistics,
http://www.fzs.ba/Dem/Popis/Nacionalnost%20opcine%20Popis%201991.pdf

huge step for such a divided community. The idea was that this administrative unification will bring more cooperation and thus more tolerance into the community.

Mostar is a town full of symbols, from its churches, mosques, to the historical and cultural heritage from various time periods and influences, of which the biggest were Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian. The main identifiers and symbols of the town before the war were bridges over the river Neretva, of which the Old Bridge, a 16th century monument, was considered to be the representative of the town's identity.[3] Eight bridges were destroyed during the war between the JNA and HVO and Army RBiH. In the Bosniak-Croat war the town got divided by a front line between the two ethnic groups, Muslims being on the east side and Croats on the west side of the frontline Bulevar-Šantićeva Street, cutting through the middle of the town. The divide between the two sides got its worldwide headlines and attention after the destruction of the Old Bridge, describing its destruction as 'killing the soul of a city', 'bridge battered to death', 'a bridge betrayed'[4] and similar. Media all over the world compared the destruction of the bridge with the Bosnian society as a whole, giving the bridge new dimension and new symbolism. Most bridges were rebuilt very soon after the conflict. Since 1999 the rebuilding of the Old Bridge began, under the supervision of UNESCO. The reconstruction of the bridge and of most of the Old City core ended in 2004, and the opening of the new Old Bridge was represented by politicians and the international community, including the media as the symbolic unification of the town. They have especially stressed the idea of 'bridging the divides', 'giving Mostar back to its citizens', as first step towards true reconciliation.

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[3] Mostar got its name from the word *mostari*, the bridge keepers. In the urban area of the town there are nine bridges.
[4] For example see: Chuck Sudetic, *Mostar's old Bridge Battered to Death*, November 1993, New York Times, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE1DB1130F933A25752C1A965958260&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss ; or

When I first came to Mostar in 2001, I did not know much about the divisions within it, except that of Croats being on the west side and the Bosniaks on the east side. I was staying on the Croat side, what my hosts at that point showed me was the west side of the town, and they were reluctant to take me to the east side. The remains of the war were on every corner, buildings destroyed with signs that the buildings may collapse. Although the war ended almost seven years ago, its traces were everywhere. The whole atmosphere of the town felt sad, and as if stuck in the division created during the war and entrenched in the interim period. Luck had it that from then on I started going to Mostar for several times a year, and I was able to witness how the town from its complete divisions started getting its urban image again. Each time there was something new built, in many cases illegally. But the Bulevar did not change. It was later that I found out more about the political division of the town into six municipalities and the central zone, and how it was possible for the old frontline to not be rebuilt. The changes started happening soon after the 2000, and in particular in 2004, after the new statute and new structure of town started being implemented and after the largest part of the Old city was rebuilt, including the Old Bridge, by UNESCO, putting Mostar once again on the World heritage list, and on the tourist map.

For the purpose of the paper I define two main 'unification' processes, the administrative and symbolic. By symbolic I understand not only the rebuilding of the Old bridge, but also the rebuilding of other symbolic cultural or similar pre-war and after-war sites, giving some form of normality to the town itself. The administrative unification, imposed by the High representative Paddy Ashdown, had primary objective to make political elites of Mostar cooperate, and a task of normalizing the functioning of the city on the political, economic, social and cultural level. The main goal is to show that even though the divide is still present, the citizens themselves participate in these processes on everyday basis. Main hypothesis is that *even though Mostar is still a divided city in many aspects, the so*

called 'unification' processes within the city have created incentives for cooperation and coexistence among citizens of Mostar, providing different meeting points for individuals. These processes are built on various views of how the city should be arranged. On one hand there are programs which are focused on diversities, emphasizing them and their multicultural character, in the case of Bosnia and Mostar the multiethnic character, and on the other programs which are focused on the individual as member of the society, not by completely ignoring the ethnic component, but pushing it aside in favour of other identities. This second alternative can be understood, as a cosmopolitan scheme, where individuals have cross-cutting identities which need to be fostered for cooperation and communication (music, sports, religion etc.).

There are many scholarly works written on Mostar, focusing mostly on the divided character of the city, stressing its multiethnic present and multicultural past, in particular with regards to its architecture, and mainly the Old Bridge. In the past few years however, this has changed. Many anthropologists and urbanists have started researching Mostar, its citizens, its education system, the town's differences, the role of symbols and urban sites on the communities, etc. Various authors, for example, Robert M. Hayden and Emily Makaš, started presenting Mostar through its complexities but also mainly focusing on identity and symbolism. For the purpose of this paper, I will build on some of their arguments and work, but taking a more of an interdisciplinary approach, from philosophical, to historical and political, to anthropological level. In order to do so, and also because during my research these concepts were present on every corner, in the paper I will use as its underlying premise the concepts of multiculturalism(multiculturalism) and cosmopolitanism . There are several reasons for this. The first one is their interdisciplinarity, and the second their common usage among citizens of Mostar (especially of the first two), and in present scholarly and political debates regarding arrangments of Bosnia which are using these concepts as part of their

rethoric. Many of the programs for Bosnia are using the concepts of of multiculturality and multiethnicity, cultural diversity, and recognition of these diversities in various forms. Relying on the debates and using Mostar as a case study the underlying question of the thesis is: What is the best solution for Bosnia in the light of these debates, a multiethnic and/or multicultural Bosnia or a cosmopolitan Bosnia? The concepts of multiculturality and multiethnicity, and cosmopolitanism have many meanings, especially the first one, and therefore it is essential to clarify how they will be understood in the paper. Multiethnicity and multiethnic society are rather clear terms, signifying a society that is diverse, but this diversity is based on the ethnic character, and not a cultural one for example. Multiculturality, multiculturalism and similar terms have various definitions and there are numerous debates concerning their usage and meaning. The context of multiculturality which will be used in this paper is a simple one, almost common sense one, defining multicultural society as one whose members identify themselves on the basis of some cultural value, such as customs, language, religion and similar. Although in academic debate one could connect the two into a frame of ethno-culturality, for reasons of simplicity I will use the above mentioned distinctions.

My recent research has only scratched the surface of the effects the 'unifications' had on everyday life in Mostar, and the purpose of it is to show that the 'unifications' in Mostar have created incentives for cooperation and coexistence among its citizens, by providing new and old meeting points, both through bureaucracy, cultural events, sporting events etc, and by building new and rebuilding old symbolic places. Because of these unifications, the citizens themselves have to a certain degree managed to engage themselves in creating new incentives, in form of non-governmental organizations, various interest associations, movements etc. In order to get more of a clear understanding of these processes within the city, and for the purpose of this paper, I decided to combine several methodological approaches. These approaches can be divided into three parts. The first one is data analysis of

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available literature, reports and documents which are to a great degree available to general public through international actors, such as OHR and OSCE, but also certain NGO's, such as International Crisis Group. When it comes to political processes in Mostar, which give an overview of the internal political dimension I have focused on data analysis of political parties' websites, City of Mostar website, City Council website where many documents, reports, transcripts of sessions and interviews can be found. Secondly I also used content analysis of some of most read dailies in Mostar, such as *Dnevni list*, *Večernji list*, *Dnevni avaz.*, and some of most popular internet forums where many young people from Mostar participate in, such as *Bljesak.info*, *Vrisak.info*, *Mostarskaraja* and *Pincom.info*. Since the space of the paper is limited, as well as the time for research, I mostly used these media for better understanding of current events in Bosnia and Mostar. However, the approach which I find to be most relevant for conclusions I draw from my research came from ethnographic methods, mainly through participant observation and non-structured interviews with people of Mostar.

The structure of the paper will begin with theoretical discussion, including historical facts regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the first Chapter the focus will be on the idea of dealing with diversity in divided societies, from the theoretical discussions dealing with constitutional arrangements of the state to theories focused on diversity in general, thus providing a general overview of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the problems that both the state and the society faced in the conflict years and after the signing of Dayton Peace Agreement. In the second Chapter the focus will be on Mostar and its history, mainly on immediate after-war period and the Interim Statute period from 1993 to 2004. This Chapter will also examine the role of international institutions in Mostar, as well as problem which is common for Bosnia and Herzegovina in general, the issue of constituent peoples, minorities, IDP's, returnees and refugees. This Chapter can be seen as a form of introduction into the main

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Chapter of the thesis, the one focused on the 'unification' processes as they were explained in the first part of the introduction. Here the administrative and symbolic unification of Mostar will be examined, by focusing on the levels of cooperation and the effects of unification processes in everyday life of Mostar's citizens. Final Chapter will then focus once again on Mostar as a blueprint of Bosnia, by giving an analysis of commonalities, as well as differences, focusing on current situation in Mostar.

CHAPTER 1. -DEALING WITH DIVERSITY – MULTICULTURAL (MULTIETHNIC) OR COSMOPOLITAN BOSNIA?

Is there a solution for deeply divided societies, in particular those with recent history of conflict? On which principles should a state as such be organized, in order to primarily prevent future conflicts and also to create incentives for cooperation, first on the level of political elites and subsequently on the level of society as a whole? The first step is a constitutional solution. The constitution has to be defined in such a way to create cooperation between the conflicted sides and their political elites, by providing incentives for such cooperation. In recent years, the most successful approach has been democratization through consociation and integral models. The objectives of these programs are to create cooperation, and a means of political expression for all parts of the society. The next step should analyze idea of inclusion and exclusion, identity and possible ways of dealing with the issues of diversity, through various policies directed either at groups or individuals.

On the political level the institutions are a key for functioning of a liberal democracy making the institutional design one of the key tools for democratization.[5] Democratization can be defined as a process of transition from one political system to democratic principles, such as liberal institutions, multiparty system, electoral system etc. What was once only defined as process of accepting the democratic electoral system, was complemented by the criteria of sustainability of democratic institutions and not merely their establishment and operation. Since then democratization is seen as a process of regime change including the transition and consolidation.[6]

Many of the transition states were faced with violent conflicts, and programs were drafted to solve them peacefully. One such program is consociational democracy,

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[5] KatherineBelmont, Scott Mainwaring & Andrew Reynolds, *Institutional Design, Conflict Menagement and Democracy*, The Architecture of Democracy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p.1
[6] David Chandler, *Bosnia, Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 2nd ed., Pluto Press, London, 2000, p.44

theoretically developed by Arendt Lijphart. He claims that every plural society can be defined as a society divided by its 'segmental cleavages', such as political parties or interest groups, and these cleavages need to be taken into account when it comes to organizing the state, in order to preserve pluralism and avoid conflict situations.[7] Consociational democracy offers a promising method for achieving both democracy and a considerable degree of political unity, through its basic elements of grand coalition, mutual veto, segmental autonomy and proportional representation. However, it is also important to note that consociational democracy is more concerned with the equal or proportional treatment of groups than with individual equality;[8] its approach is group-based, focused on cooperation between political elites as the major mechanism to manage conflict.[9] Moreover, consociational theories tend to assume that motives for conflict reduction already exist among the leaders of the groups.[10]

The second level is naturally interconnected with the political level, particularly when it comes to designing policies for accommodating members of minority groups. Since the 1990s in post-communist countries in particular, the democratization process included condition of accommodating these groups through various policies designed for respecting the members of different language, religious or cultural groups. Many of these policies are based on multiculturalism or liberal pluralism, defining groups according to their distinctive identity (religion, language, customs etc.) and granting them certain rights on the basis of this distinctiveness. In the recent years the condition of rights on the basis of group distinctiveness and in the form of minority policies became a necessary condition for the accession of post-communist states and a concern within the European Union with regards to the immigrant policies.

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[7] Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1977, p.49
[8] Ibid.
[9] Roberto Belloni, *Peacebuilding and Consociational Electoral Engeneering in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, International Peacekeeping, Vol.11, No.2, 2004, p.336
[10] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Conflict Menagement for Policymakers*, in Joseph V. Montville (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, Lexington, Toronto, 1990, p.116

1.1. Solution for the conflict in Bosnia – debates on organizing the new state

In Europe, the problem of organizing the deeply divided societies came into focus after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav republics which had been brought together on the principle of *'Brotherhood and Unity'* after the Second World War were now rising against each other violently, calling upon 'repressed' national sentiments. The dissolution of Yugoslavia also brought new minorities into play. Once 'brothers' now became majorities and minorities. The question of minorities on one side bore the question of recognition for some republics and also was the key for continuous violence, from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to Macedonia and Kosovo. After the conflicts ended the newly emerged states were faced with divided societies and issues of hatred, prejudices, discrimination etc, and the introduced process of democratization became difficult because of existing hatreds, prejudices and discrimination toward the other ethnic group(s).When the war in Croatia broke out, Bosnia's position was weakened. The recognition of Croatia and Slovenia by then European Community left the door open for Bosnia and Herzegovina to apply for it. The decision was to be made by a referendum and a significant percentage of citizens voted for independence. Although the referendum was boycotted by many Serbs, the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was officially proclaimed on March 3, 1992, and it was recognized as Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 6, 1992. The recognition marked the beginning of the war. Violent conflict lasted from 1992 to 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed by representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. War brought a great deal of suffering for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1995 all three warring sides were weak and dependent on some form of international support. When the Dayton Peace Agreement was finally signed by the warring parties, it established international control over military forces, but it also gave the international community a possibility to put into practice a

new agenda for long-term peace-building and democratization.[11] The studies of democracy always state that the most important prerequisite for democracy is a democratic electoral system. However, during the past decades the requirements for democracy and the process of democratization itself changed. Beside the elections as a necessary requirement, the process required establishing trust and protection of minorities and concepts of transition and consolidation.[12]

As mentioned earlier the debates on the future arrangement of Bosnia started immediately after it was obvious that Yugoslavia will not last much longer, although some of the arrangements called for loose confederacy as a temporary solution for Yugoslavia, such as Lord Carrington's plan. Once the dissolution became inevitable and after the Badinter Commission issued the opinions regarding the former Yugoslav republics, new plans for arranging Bosnia and Herzegovina were created. These plans can be divided into internal plans, made by the internal actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina and plans drafted and proposed by the international actors, namely United Nation (UN) and European Community (EC). Most of the plans had common elements, such as the references to protection of human rights as stated in international conventions. The distrust of the conflicting parties and the constant violations of these rights made the provisions of equality and protection seem only to be words on the paper. The second provision common to most of the plans was the territorial division of Bosnia and Herzegovina along ethnic lines.[13] After the war started it was up to the international actors to negotiate peace and provide satisfactory answers for all three involved sides. The plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina were being incorporated in the peace plans designed during the war, such as the Vance-Owen plan and Owen-Stoltenberg plan. The UN and EC efforts for solving the conflict in Bosnia were connected at the London conference in

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[11] David Chandler, *Faking democracy After Dayton*, p.1
[12] Ibid.
[13] Rober M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts*, The University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 2000, pp.99-100

1992. The objective was to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table. Cyrus Vance represented the UN Secretary General, later followed by Thorvald Stoltenberg, and David Owen was the EC representative. The Vance-Owen plan was to divide Bosnia into ten cantons, three for each nationality, with control of Sarajevo by all three groups.[14] At first the plan was accepted by all three sides. However, at a meeting of Bosnian Serbs held at Pale, outside of Sarajevo, it failed to gain support. The Serbian Assembly rejected it, even though the plan was being endorsed by Slobodan Milošević. The decision of rejecting the plan was later confirmed in a popular referendum. The Owen-Stoltenberg plan had similar objectives, and it was designed to accommodate Bosnian Serbs objections.[15] By this plan Bosnia was to become a "Union of the Republics", composed of three Constituent Republics and encompassing three constituent peoples: the Muslims, Serbs and Croats as well as a group of other peoples.[16] The downside of this plan was the fact that most of the power would be assigned to the 'Constituent republics' and not to the union itself, thus creating a union state without any true authority to govern it. The plan was being negotiated for a longer period of time, and was eventually marked as failed. Main commonality of all these plans was giving primacy to the territorial division along ethno-national lines and not focusing on constitutional arrangement which would provide solid grounds for true democratization of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the failures of Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg plans, US was the one to come up with new solutions for Bosnia. The first one was negotiated and signed in Washington on 18 March 1994 creating a 'Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina', giving basis to a joint Bosniak-Croat entity. Negotiations for ending the war in Bosnia and

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[14] Robert J. Donia & John V.A. Pine Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina, A Tradition Betrayed*, Hurst and Company, London 1994., pp.260-261
[15] Ibid.p.262
[16] Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* pp.106-107

Herzegovina took place in Dayton, Ohio where the 'General Framework Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina' was finally accepted by all three parties. The agreement is known as the Dayton Peace Agreement and its annexes are a base for post-war arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The model chosen for Bosnia can be defined as rigid or fixed consociationalism. In theory, this model should guarantee the political representation of each national group, from issues of protection of group rights to self-government, as well as promotion of inter-ethnic accommodations and compromises.[17] The ultimate goal of the Agreement was the reconstruction of multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina by preserving the peace, decentralization of political power, preservation of unified Bosnia and Herzegovina, and protection of minorities' interests through consociational elements such as ethnic quotas which guaranteed group representation on all levels of government and in state-wide public administration, veto powers, and proportional electoral system.[18] The most important aspect of the Dayton Peace Agreement was the Annex 4, providing a Constitution for Bosnia and Herzegovina, its implementation overseen by the Office of the High Representative, appointed by Peace Implementation Council.[19] His mandate is set out in the Annex 10 of the Agreement and his powers even more strengthened at Bonn PIC Meeting in December 1997 on Bosnia and its structures. The conclusions at the conference stated that the High Representative has the possibility to interpret his own authorities and powers, which now extended also to making recommendations to the state and entity authorities, and in the case of the dispute, to giving his interpretation and ultimately recommendations.[20]

[17] Roberto Belloni, *Peacebuilding and Consociational Electoral Engeneering in Bosnia and Herzegovina* p.336
[18] See Belloni, p.336 and Chandler, 43-51
[19] For more information on the role of the High Representative, the Office of the High Representative, The Peace Implementation Council and European Union Special Representative please see: http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-infor and http://www.eusrbih.eu/
[20] Chandler, p.53

In order to protect the interests of the three dominant groups, the central state institutions were organized on the basis of an ethnic key which guaranteed representation to all three sides. One of the most important arenas of confrontation was the electoral engineering. International community wanted to promote moderation and inter-ethnic accommodation, but the nationalist parties have systematically used the electoral process to pursue their own agendas, securing the ethnicity as primary identity.[21] It can even be said that the used electoral system facilitated the victory of the main nationalist parties and thus has contributed to the legitimization of the social order which arose from the war.[22] Participation in government is often seen as the most important mechanism for overcoming the group exclusion, by giving the governments in deeply divided societies the necessary legitimacy in the eyes of all major communities.[23] However, the problem occurs if the government fails to operate in a cohesive way, dividing the power without sufficient cross-group cooperation, or even by excluding less significant groups from the decision-making process.[24] Then the entrenching of ethnic divides in such cases seems unavoidable.

1.2. Entrenching the Divide – Bosnia after Dayton

Post-war arrangements came under heavy criticism, mainly because they are seen as obstacles in normalizing ethnic relations, and have caused the political life to be 'imprisoned' in issues related to identity.[25] The democratic identity also depends on whether the societies can construct wider identity formations in the reality of conflicted identities and it seems that in Bosnia and Herzegovina everything became marked only by one identity, that of ethnic groups. To put it in other words, the institutionalization in Bosnia or in multiethnic societies

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[21] Florian Bieber, *Institucionaliziranje etničnosti: postignuća i neuspjesi nakon ratova u Bosni i Herzegovini, na Kosovu i u Makedoniji,* Forum Bosnae, Sarajevo, 2004, p.13
[22] Belloni, 337
[23] Bieber, pp. 4-5
[24] Ibid.
[25] Christophe Solioz & Tobias K. Vogel (eds.), *Dayton and Beyond: Perspectives on the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2004, p.25

in general used the idea of protecting the individual rights in federal and consociational states in order to ensure and promote group rights, and create group boundaries. The problem becomes greater when different groups within a state have radically opposing opinions regarding the boundaries of the community. Then the very nature of institutions is disputed and becomes the center of a political struggle.[26]

1.2.1. Constituent peoples and minorities in Bosnia

Yugoslavia was constituted of six republics, and their constituent peoples were terminologically categorized as *nations* or *narodi*, while the peoples who had a nation state outside Yugoslavia such as Italians, Hungarians, Jews, etc. were defined as *nationalities* or *narodnosti*. After the Second World War the communist ideology portrayed Partisan movement as the victors and saviors who expelled both the foreign occupiers and the internal enemies, for example through movies, TV shows and textbooks where they were portrayed as brave fighters who defeated evil fascists;[27] emphasizing their 'Yugoslav' identity, their will to work and fight together for Yugoslavia and its peoples, regardless of their membership in a nation or nationality. The objective was to stop any possibility of antagonism among ethnic groups, present greatly during the Second World War in form of Ustashas, Chetniks, and other fascist groups. From the present perspective this is considered to be one of the gravest mistakes of Yugoslav leadership, since the traumas of the Second World War were not dealt with. The issues were covered by the extensive propagation of the policy of *Brotherhood and Unity*.[28]

The first aim of this policy was to strengthen the common identity to be shared by all peoples and nationalities in new Yugoslavia, that of Yugoslav nation. This concept was not a

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[26] Belloni, p. 336
[27] Monika Palmberger, *Making and Breaking Boundaries: Memory Discourses and Memory Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in M. Bufon, A. Gosar, S. Nurković & A.L. Sanguin (eds.), *The Western Balkans – A European Challenge*, Library Annales Majora, Koper 2006, pp.528-529
[28] Ibid.p.529

new one, but it was now being strengthened by calling upon the common South Slavic origins of nations in Yugoslavia, focusing on providing a supranational common identity and at the same time not denying the national identity of peoples in the republics themselves. Each republic was formed of constituent peoples and nationalities living in it. To be a constituent people (*narod*) meant being 'state-building people and to not being a national minority or nationality (*narodnost*), regardless of whether the people in question is a numerical minority.[29] Bosnia and Herzegovina became a center of this common identity building, on one side the so called Bosnian identity and on the other the Yugoslav identity. However, after the Second World War, Muslim politicians demanded to be recognized as Bosniaks. They were accommodated partially in 1968 by gaining recognitions as *Muslim by nationality* (or Muslim *with capital 'M'*, while people practicing Islamic faith were defined as *muslims* with small letter 'm'). This decision was also included in the BiH Constitution from 1974 which stated that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a republic of 'Muslims, Serbs and Croats, and members of other nations (*naroda*) and nationalities (*narodnosti*) that live in it'.[30]

During the 1980s there was wide dissatisfaction with then present economic and political system. This influenced destabilization of Yugoslav politics. In the end of the 1980's first independent political parties emerged, soon followed by first multiparty elections in Slovenia and Croatia, where predominantly nationalist parties won. The trend continued to other Yugoslav republics, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was no different The three parties, whose programs appealed to the three dominant nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina won the elections: Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije - SDA) appealed predominantly to Muslims, Serb Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka - SDS) to Serbs, while Croat Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica - HDZ) appealed to

[29] ICG Balkan Report, No.128, *Implementing Equality: „The Constituent Peoples" Decision in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, , 2002, p.2
[30] Ibid.

Croats. The first multiparty elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in December 1990, where the mentioned parties formed a coalition on a power-sharing model. At first they represented some degree of pluralism.[31] However, because of the events on federal level, the events in Croatia and Serbia, and especially because of the influences from the neighboring states, the more extreme elements soon started taking over within their respective parties, blocking any policy or reform in Bosnia.[32] The growing nationalism did not escape the state which was building an identity of Bosnians and Yugoslavs. In May 1991 the SDS set up a Serb Autonomous Areas, its leader stating that it does not consider their constituents bound by the decisions of BiH Government. In November 1991 HDZ in Western Herzegovina proclaimed Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna, with West Mostar as its capital. The *Brotherhood and Unity* doctrine fell apart.

When the Washington Agreement was signed by the representatives of Croats and Bosniaks, establishing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation was sub-divided along ethnic lines into ten cantons. The Dayton Peace Agreement and its annexes divided the country between two entities, Republika Srpska on one side and Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other side, each having wide ranging powers of self-government. Each entity had to 'establish its own constitution and power over defense, police, issuing of passports, finance and external relations and cooperation with other states'.[33] However, even though the established power-sharing model existed on state and entity levels, their inner dynamics were completely different. At the state level power-sharing was established between the three constituent or dominant nations, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. On the entity level in Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, power-sharing was established only

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[31] Florian Bieber, *Post-war Bosnia: ethnicity, inequality and public sector governance*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p.20-23
[32] Ibid, p.24
[33] Fionuuala Ni Aolain, *The Fractured Soul of the Dayton Peace Agreement: A Legal Analysis, in Reconstructing Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in Sokolović & Bieber, *Reconstructing Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina,* Ashgate, Aldershot, 2001, p.73

between Bosniaks and Croats, while Republika Srpska did not adopt the power-sharing model. The multi-ethnic government emerged from this model was seen as vital against nationalism and for regional stability. Its aim was to decentralize political power and to provide security to all ethnic groups.[34] This multi-ethnic government at that point had 'no army, no police force, did not raise taxes, did not control its own borders, had a judiciary with extremely limited responsibilities, legislature that cannot formulate laws without the entities' approval.[35] All these provision were determined, and some still are determined on the entity level, thus giving the entities the possibility to act as *de facto* states within the central state.

The Preamble of Annex 4 establishes three constituent nations, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks and 'Others', and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina as peoples who determine the Constitution. Taken into consideration with the already existing constitutions on entity levels, a conflicting situation happened. Although they are constituent peoples on the state level, same preambles were not part of the entity constitutions. The Constitution of Republika Srpska stated the following:

„Republika Srpska shall be the State of Serb people and of all its citizens"[36]

At this point in time the Bosniaks and Croats did not constitute Republika Srpska. Similarly, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that:

„Bosniaks and Croats as constituent peoples, together with 'Others' and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina...reform the international establishment of the Federation territories..."[37]

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[34] Chandler, pp.66-68
[35] Ibid.
[36] Constitution of Republika Srpska, http://www.kfunigraz.ac.at/suedosteuropa/verfassung/Bosna%20i%20Hercegovina/Ustav%20Republike%20Srpske.pdf (in Serbian)
[37] Constitution of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, http://www.ads.gov.ba/javniispit/doc/ustav_federacije_bosne_i_hercegovine.pdf (in Bosnian/Croatian)

At the time of drafting the Constitution of Federation Bosnia and Herzgovina there was no mention of Serbs. These provisions clearly did not give room for constituent peoples from one entity to have equal status within the other entity. This created a paradox, and a situation where discrimination and violation of individual human rights became everyday reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since Serbs in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosniaks and Croats in Republika Srpska did not have any granted rights. It was not even clear whether they would be acknowledged as others or only as citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were a minority in the state where they are considered to be a political majority. In July 2000, the Constitutional Court of BiH made a ruling requiring the two entities to amend their constitutions in order to ensure the equality of constituent peoples in both entities. As a result, the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch gathered representatives of parties from both entities. After lengthy negotiations Sarajevo Agreement was reached in March 2002. The Agreement was rejected by the entity parliaments and eventually imposed by the High Representative. Its provisions recognized Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs as constituent peoples in both entities, introduced proportional representation for all ethnic groups in the central and entity institutions. One of the most significant aspects was the creation of an upper house in Republika Srpska that would be composed of equal number of Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats. This meant that all legislation in Republika Srpska has to be adopted by the upper house, in order to protect the vital interests of all three ethnic groups.[38]

One important aspect of the process of democratization process is the treatment of minorities in a state, and should also be mentioned here. Bosnia does not have a clear majority, but it does have dominant nations. The question arises however, how are the nations which are not among the three dominant nations treated. When one reads the Preamble of

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[38] Constitutional Watch, A country-by-country update on constitutional politics in eastern Europe and the ex-USSR, East European Constitutional Review, Vol.11, No.3, 2002, http://www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/vol11num3/constitutionwatch/bosnia.html

Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution, there is a statement about peoples determining the Constitution. One of the categories mentioned is the category of 'Others'. This terminology was taken over from the former state, when it included all those who do not declare themselves to be Bosniaks (then Muslim), Serbs or Croats. Therefore it comprised then so called nationalities (or *narodnosti*), such as Jews, Italians, Ukranians, Roma etc.

Under the constitutional arrangements of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a leading state institution, such as House of Peoples included an equal number of the three constituent nations. The House of Peoples comprises of 15 Delegates, five Croats, five Serbs, and five Bosniaks. Each group has the power of veto on legislations which are considered to be against their national interests. This provision is essential when it comes to power-sharing, but the problem in Bosnia is the fact that both the international community and the political elites in Bosnia did not consider the issues and problems of minority groups. Because of the focus on the sole issue of constitutiveness of three dominant ethnic groups made the problems of minorities practically invisible. The position of national minorities or the 'Others' has not been dealt with until 2002, when they were mentioned in Sarajevo Agreement. This Agreement called for fair representation, of both constituent peoples and 'others', in both entities. Another step was the adoption of *Law on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities*. The law promotes and protects the use of minority languages in both public and private spheres, as well as establishment of the media for minorities. The amendments of the two entity constitutions also include provisions for the representation of 'Others', which grants them a minimum inclusion. The importance is stressed on the principle of non-discrimination. Their rights are still limited, but the situation, at least politically has changed for the better. A member of the 'Others' cannot run for Presidency but now there is a provision to have one 'other in the council of ministers, 10 members, three for each constituent people and one for the Others. On a practical level the constituent peoples and minorities in Bosnia and

Herzegovina are still faced with cruel reality of discrimination on everyday basis, especially in the case of Roma, who are like in many other parts of Europe, suffering from discrimination, poor living standards, problems with citizenship and employment. Constituent people also face discrimination, particularly in places where they are a *de facto* minority.

The constitutional arrangement was based on explicit domination of the national factors. In some occasions this dominance led to absurd situations. In a state where everything is divided along ethnic lines, some of the most important characteristics such as language, and areas of possibilities for common identity, such as education became new battlefields for nationalist politics. However, these strives for recognition of one own language, or education with one own history, had little to do with the idea of 'politics of difference' or multiculturalism. These were calls for 'national affirmation'.[39] The present consensus is the use of all three languages (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian) in public sphere, which sometimes creates grotesque situations where all official documents have to be translated, and the segregation only increases. The biggest battles, however, occur in the area of education. Before 2003 most schools, especially in areas with no significant majority were segregated, and before 2003, there was no control over what was being taught. All three constituent peoples used their own nationalist narratives, using their own approaches to certain historic events. Most of the textbooks were written and produced by the neighboring countries, and were at that time considered discriminatory by the international community. This gave an incentive to the Office of the High Representative in 2000, who stressed the importance of removing all present forms of segregation. Finally in 2003 the Committee for Revision appointed by the High Representative gave permission for new textbooks to be used in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though this can be considered as a step in the right direction, the question of segregated schools and universities still remain some of the

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[39] Florian Bieber, *Post-war Bosnia: ethnicity, inequality and public sector governance*, p.90

pressing issues of Bosnia and Herzegovina's education system. The textbooks may be approved by the Commission and they may have excluded the discriminatory texts from them, however the fact of being segregated into Croatian, Bosniak or Serbian schools or universities still remains a reality of segregated Bosnian society.

How Bosnia will finally be arranged is not a finished story. The entities are being disputed on everyday basis, and again these arguments are calling for new arrangement of Bosnia, from three different stand points. The first one is the idea of multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be based on three ethnic entities. The other idea is the some form of status quo with regards to entities, but with better power-sharing layout, and better defined rights of constituent peoples and minorities. The third idea would is the one of decentralized Bosnia and Herzegovina, with regional or economic divisions. All three ideas have their place and support in Bosnian society, and all of them base their rhetoric on importance of accommodating ethnic and cultural diversity. How plausible their arguments are will be examined on the case of Mostar.

CHAPTER 2.- A DIVIDED CITY – (MULTI) ETHNIC MOSTAR: FROM 1994-2004

Similarly to the state level and the entity level, urban areas of Bosnia, especially those with no significant majorities had to be arranged according to some specific rules which were to initiate and then foster the cooperation between the citizens and political elites, and help the urban areas restore their normal functioning.

Mostar became a symbol of the war in Bosnia, and after the conflict somewhat of a blueprint for arranging the state itself. A town, known as a multicultural centre of Yugoslavia, where the diversity of identities and cultures and was cherished as a town's image, during the war was faced with two conflicts, and two sieges, one during the conflict between HVO and Army RBiH against the JNA and VRS, and the other between former allies, Bosniaks and Croats. The conflicts left a destroyed city and people with destroyed homes, destroyed friendships, families, and most of all destroyed trust in their fellow citizens with whom they grew up, played with, and went to school with. In my conversations with some of the people in Mostar they told me about the sadness they felt, wondering how the things will go from here. They felt relieved that it was over, but on the other hand with a great fear of what their lives will look like next.

The signing of the Washington Agreement brought peace but Mostar's future remained unclear, just as the future of the state itself. The town was divided and contested between the two sides, Bosniaks and Croats. Just as there were numerous plans made for Bosnia as a state, there were different plans for Mostar. The town was literally divided, on all levels, from political to everyday communication levels. The plans for Mostar at that point can be differentiated into those for unification and those for keeping the division. The programs of unified Mostar were also different, on one side to promote its pre-war image, but

in a centralized state, on the other lobbying for Mostar to become the capital of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, again internally among the political elites of the town and the state, and externally, by international actors, both the European Union and the international agencies which were given competencies in Bosnia by the Dayton Peace Agreement. The purpose of this chapter is to present the developments and processes during the conflict and the years of the interim statute where the political elites, but also the international community had their say in keeping Mostar a divided city.

2.1. History of Mostar

Mostar is a town of rich history and many influences, pre-Ottoman, to Ottoman-Islamic, Christian, Austro-Hungarian and Mediterranean influences,[40] in both the architecture and customs. Three periods are most important for Mostar and its development, the Ottoman period, the period of Austro-Hungarian rule and the period of second Yugoslavia. From the late 15th to late 19th century Mostar was, like most of Bosnia, under the Ottoman rule. The name Mostar, came from the builders and keepers of the bridge in mid 15th century, when it became known as a home of Herzeg Stjepan Vukčić Kosača, whose title of *herzeg* gave the name to the region Herzegovina (land of the herzeg - duke). During the Ottoman period it became a vibrant merchant center on the road between Dubrovnik and Sarajevo. It became especially known for its 16th century bridge, considered to be a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture, and over the next few centuries it became a symbol of the town. In the late 19th century, the city fell under the direct control of Austro-Hungary, giving it new cultural and urban identity. This was the time when some of the most beautiful buildings and parts of town were built, from churches, both Serbian Orthodox and Catholic, to a gymnasium, theatre, new bridges, streets, hotels and other, causing the town to start developing rapidly.

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[40]Amir Pašić, *The Old Bridge in Mostar*, Grin, Gračanica, 2006, pp.2-5

The third important period for Mostar was during the first and second Yugoslavia, as well as a short period as part of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). During second Yugoslavia, because of industrialization and large migrations from all parts of Yugoslavia, Mostar became a true multicultural center, known for its diversity, and culturally mixed population. It also became a center of tourism and industry, from the hydroelectric power plant to various factories (bauxite, aluminum, tobacco etc.). Its demographics changed, the western part of Mostar started building and developing. It became a true urban centre, and over the years became a popular spot for cultural events and meeting point for young people from all over Yugoslavia.

In the beginning of the 1990s the war raged in Croatia. With joint efforts EC and UN managed to negotiate a ceasefire agreement requiring the JNA to withdraw from Croatia. At the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its request for independence. As a result Republika Srpska was proclaimed, and the JNA units still located on the entire territory of Bosnia supported the local Serb paramilitary units and even organized and trained them eventually into formal Army of Republika Srpska (Vojska Republike Srpske – VRS).[41] Mostar was during the war subject to two separate conflicts, and it was one of the most damaged cities during the war in Bosnia. Almost the entire city centre was destroyed or damaged, especially the Old city center and the area of the front line, going from destroyed Tito's bridge through Šantićeva Street across Bulevar and through Mahala.

The first conflict began in April 1992, and the city was surrounded by Bosnian Serbs and the VRS, and with the support from the JNA, whose troops and weaponry were stationed in Mostar. The second conflict, the Bosniak-Croat war began in May 1993 with the support of

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[41] Emily Gunburger Makas, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar*, History of Architecture and Urbanism, Department of Architecture, Cornell University, PhD Dissertation January2007, p.132http://emilymakas.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=5&Itemid=29 ,

Croatian Army and state. The HVO forces were under the command of General Slobodan Praljak. In the first few months of the conflict the HVO cleansed the western part of Mostar, expelling the Muslims and the remaining Serbs, either out of the town or to the eastern part of the city. The HVO forces began shelling the city from the surrounding hills. However the Army RBiH started fighting back, and soon the city itself found itself in a stand-off position. Thousands found themselves displaced, or killed or as refugees outside their country. However, at the same time, tens of thousands of people fleeing from eastern Herzegovina and central Bosnia came to Mostar.[42] The conflict between the Bosniaks and Croats ended with the signing of the Washington Agreement in March 1994. The Agreement was signed by the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić, Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granić, and the Bosnian Croat representative Krešimir Zubak.[43] According to the Agreement the territories controlled by the HVO and Army RBiH were to be joined into one entity, named Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is divided into ten cantons.[44] According to the Agreement Mostar was defined as a capital of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, as a joint Bosniak-Croat city.[45]

2.2. A Tale of the Divided City –Interim Statute and the Role of International Community 1994-2004

After the signing of the Washington Agreement the meeting in Geneva took place with the objective to decide the future of Mostar. The signed Memorandum of Understanding gave the European Union mandate in Mostar over a period of time, until there is an

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[42] Ibid.p.136
[43] For details please see the United States Institute of Peace website with full Washington Agreement text at http://www.usip.org/library/pa/bosnia/washagree_03011994_toc.html
[44] These are: Una-*Sana Canton, Posavina Canton, Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Bosnian Podrinje Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Sarajevo Canton and Canton 10* (previusly named County of Herzeg-Bosna, later proclaimed unconstitutional). For more on cantons see Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Federal Office of Statistics website, http://www.fzs.ba/Podaci/ustroj11.htm
[45] Florian Bieber, *Local institutional Engineering: A Tale of Two Cities, Mostar and Brčko*, International Peacekeeping, Vol.12, No.3, 2005, p.422

established multi-ethnic, unified city administration,[46] The task of the European Union Administration in Mostar (EUAM) was, with the help of local political elites, to bring some form of normalization to the city by creating incentives for freedom of movement, protection of human rights and securing the return of refugees and displaced persons. The EUAM would also provide assistance regarding infrastructure, reconstruction, maintenance of public order and similar. However, the EUAM and Hans Koschnik as its representative were obstructed from the very beginning, mainly by the HDZ, resulting even in physical attacks on Koschnik himself.[47] However, efforts were made to negotiate some form of progress regarding Mostar's future. Madrid Agreement, signed in 1995, established that there is a need for full implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding; pointing out main principles of what type of administrative structure should Mostar have, establishing as the main objective the unification of Mostar by creating unified administration.[48]

The EUAM representative Hans Koschnik in February 1996 issued a decree stating administrative plan for Mostar, with an outline of geographical division of Mostar into seven parts, three Bosniak and three Croat majority municipalities with a neutral central zone, which was to include the centre of Mostar, including the former frontline and the Old city.[49] The reaction, especially from the Croat side was not a mild one. HDZ announced that the Croat side was breaking off the relations with the European Union. The demonstrators have trapped Hans Koschnik in the car in front of the hotel where he was staying. The EU presidency responded by calling for an emergency conference in Rome. On 18 February 1996 the Rome

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[46] ICG Balkan report No.90, *Reunifying Mostar, Opportunities for Progress*, Sarajevo/Washington/Brussels, 2000,p. i. http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=1521
[47] Ibid., pp.4-6
[48] Ibid.
[49] The central zone at this point was a compromise solution between SDA and HDZ proposals for Mostar. The SDA proposed that the central zone included the integral city centre, while the HDZ wanted it to be reduced to a minimum. For more details please see: ICG Balkan report No.90, *Reunifying Mostar, Opportunities for Progress,*

Agreement was signed, and two days later the Interim Statute for the City of Mostar was proclaimed.[50]

The Interim statute of Mostar divided the town into six city-municipalities, three with Croat majority and three with Bosniak majority, and with a neutral central zone which was to be governed by a mixed city government.[51] The statute established Mostar as a 'highly decentralized city with power-reaching mechanisms, which sought to counteract the territorial control of the communities, while at the same time recognizing, and thereby institutionalizing, the ethnic division.'[52] The mayor and the deputy mayor had to be of different ethnic identity; as well as the mayor of Mostar and the Governor of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. The mayor and deputy mayor would rotate after one year, with the idea that such power-sharing would bring more cooperation. However this was not the case, their administrations were also divided on ethnic lines, working more as two parallel units then as one cooperative body. The division which was made for political elites of Mostar to cooperate towards a unified city became a failure of power-sharing model, mainly because of continuous obstructions from the Croat side. In June 1996 HDZ announced the forming of single 'Union of Croat Municipalities' calling for joint administration of West Mostar. The announcement was immediately condemned by the international actors but it managed to survive until 1997 when it was finally disbanded. The political status quo continued well until the end of the 1990s. After the political change in Croatia the climate towards the Croat politics in Herzegovina and in Mostar generally changed. The separatist rhetoric in Mostar started getting less support.

The whole time of the European Union Administration control over Mostar was characterized by the obstructions of any step made towards the unification. The biggest

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[50] Ibid., pp.9-11
[51] ICG Report No.150, *Building bridges in Mostar*, Sarajevo/Brussels, 2003, p.2
http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2374&l=1
[52] Florian Bieber, *Local institutional Engineering: A Tale of Two Cities, Mostar and Brčko*, p.422

success of EUAM is in its assistance aid of around 300 million German marks (DEM) for the reconstruction of the city. This money managed to restore water supply, electricity, gas, telephone services, schools and hospitals, but again ethnically separate ones. After the EUAM mandate ended in the beginning of 1997, the international organizations, which competencies were set out by the annexes of the Dayton Peace Agreement took over the mission for reconstruction and reintegration of Mostar.[53] The role of the High representative in Bosnia as a whole has brought great change in reducing some divisions. The two measures which helped the most were the introduction of unique monetary system (Konvertibilna Marka –KM) and introduction of unique license plates. Although the primary goal was to intensify traffic communication between the two state entities, this measure provided the same for the citizens of Mostar.[54] Besides the role of the international actors whose competencies were established by the Dayton Peace Agreement, the role of Croatia and the relations of Croat political elites with the government in Croatia were also very important, especially because the support from Croatia dictated most of Croat responses in Mostar. The political climate change in Croatia in 2000 brought more moderation in local and regional HDZ in Mostar as well. Neven Tomić, HDZ representative became mayor of Mostar, emphasizing as his motto a slogan of 'Mostar as normal city'.[55] This sudden change in HDZ politics came as a surprise, not only for the international actors, but also for SDA. Even though the two sides were now speaking about the normalization this was far from happening. However the change in HDZs position was still a step forward. Unfortunately these positive steps were diminished because of increased

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[53] These organizations are: International Police Task Force (IPTF – police monitoring, training); Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE – framing electoral rules, conducting elections and grassrooots democratization initiatives); United nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Reconstruction and Return Task Force (RRTF) for promoting refigee and displaced persons returns; Stabilization Force (SFOR) and Office of the High Representative (OHR) for formulating startegy and coordinating civilian agencies. For more details see: Sumantra Bose, *Mostar: International Intervention in a Divided Bosnian Town, 1994-2001*; p. 69, in Peter Siani-Davies (ed.), *International Intervention in the Balkans since 1995, A Critical Evaluation*, Routledge, 2003.

[54] Ibid., pp.70-71

[55] BiH Dani, *Ličnost u fokusu: Neven Tomić*, No.155, 2000, http://www.bhdani.com/arhiva/155/fokus155.htm#f10 ; see also Vjesnik, Mostar-Velika ideja za budućnost, 19 October 2000, http://www.vjesnik.com/pdf/2000%5C10%5C19%5C06A6.PDF

tensions between the HDZ and the international community, started after the changes in electoral system. The Croats reacted in March 2001 when the Croat National Assembly (Hrvatski Narodni Sabor – HNS) and its president Anto Jelavić declared Croat Self-Rule in Bosnia, thus rejecting the newly elected Federal government.[56] The crisis turned into an open conflict when the SFOR entered offices of Herzegovina bank, and into open campaign for separate entity, resulting in demonstrations for separate entity.

Throughout the war period and during the institutionalization of the divides in Mostar the ones who really suffered most were its citizens, not only divided physically but on all levels, political, social; burdened with hate, many of them without their homes, or families. Town known for its diversity became unrecognizable for its citizens. Because of the fresh war memories, the fear of being attacked and condemned forced the citizens of Mostar to avoid the 'other' part of town. The central zone did not function as the planned unifier. It was rather the contrary; people avoided the old frontline as much as possible, concentrating in two different centers in town, one on the Croat side, and one on the Bosniak side. Most of social activities were divided, including sports, theatres, concerts, bars and other.

During the war the Serb population of the town was ethnically cleansed, and they either fled to the parts of Republika Srpska or to Serbia proper, their numbers decreased dramatically, from making almost 19% of town's population to hardly 3%, with all their cultural and religious monuments destroyed, including the Serbian Orthodox Church built during Austro-Hungarian rule. The ethnic cleansing continued during the second conflict too, from Croat side by expelling Muslims to the east side of the town, and *vice versa*, many of them fleeing from one part to the other, chased away from their homes.

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[56] For more details see: OHR Progress Review No 14, http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/hr-rol/thedept/sup-ohr-inst/hr-updates/default.asp?content_id=6178

In years immediately after the conflict the political elites were rigidly keeping the town in constant fear and psychological block, especially the Croat side, forcing the citizens to function each on their side, completely divided in everyday communication. The attempt of the EUAM, through the Interim statute to create more incentives for communication and cooperation by dividing the town into six municipalities and a neutral central zone turned out to be a failure. Both sides and especially the three Croat municipalities were focused only on 'their' side, completely ignoring the possibility of united administration. Some communication started only after 1998, first when the license plates were changed, making it easier to cross to the other side, and by rebuilding some of the Mostar's bridges which were now making easier the crossing to other parts of the town.

Between 1994 and 2000 the return of displaced persons and refugees was very slow. Before 2000 the number of Bosniaks returning to the parts of Mostar controlled by Croats is only several hundred. During the period of 1996 and 1997 they were again forced to leave west Mostar. The return of the Croats to the east side of the town was numerically even smaller, particularly because of conscious efforts of local and regional HDZ to seal the territorial division.[57] Return in the conditions of fear and continuous discrimination was for a long time a step that many were afraid to take. The number of returnees in Bosnia, of both displaced persons and refugees started intensifying only after 2000 and in Mostar after 2001. The numbers that used to be well under a hundred in 2000, in 2001 increased dramatically. Around 1,500 Bosniaks returned to west Mostar, along with 962 Serbs from the nearby Nevesinje in Republika Srpska.[58] The return to the east Mostar was lesser but still proportionately higher than the previous year. The intensification of the return is mostly due to the rigid implementation of property law, a strategy which ensured that all citizens of Bosnia who have been dispossessed of their property during the conflict, have the right to

[57] Sumantra Bose, *Mostar: International Intervention in a Divided Bosnian Town, 1994-2001*; p. 72
[58] Ibid., pp.72-73

repossess it. [59] The intensified minority return also brought new dynamics in the town, creating more communication between the two sides, which would be even more increased after administrative unification in 2004.

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[59]; Ibid.; See also: Larissa Vetters, *The Power of Administrative Categories: Emerging Notions of Citizenship in the Divided City of Mostar,* Ethnopolitics, Vol.6, No.2, 2007, pp.187-209

CHAPTER 3. - BRIDGING THE DIVIDES – ADMINISTRATIVE AND SYMBOLIC 'UNIFICATIONS' OF MOSTAR

My experiences in Mostar provide me with a good array of observations. When I started researching for this paper, however, I realized how little I actually knew about the town's dynamics and processes, especially the political ones. During the past seven years I was aware of daily routines, of the most popular spots for young people, of the music they listen to, etc. Now my perspective changed, and I found myself more observant of citizens' discourses, their daily experiences and thoughts about the past in Mostar, about the 'unifications' of Mostar, about the 'other' in Mostar, about several layers of identities in and about their visions of city.

In the introduction the main arguments of this paper have been outlined, and some of them have been pointed out in the first two chapters. The idea was to present the dichotomy of institutional arrangements for Bosnia. This dichotomy can also be connected to the present debates concerning social and policy arrangements European Union as a whole, along with its member states, as well as United States, and which are concerned with group based rights and group based arrangements.[60] In this chapter this dichotomy will be addressed in more details. Mostar as a divided town is arranged on one group identity, the ethnic one. The previous chapter showed most of the institutional arrangements for Bosnia were, philosophically speaking, perfect blueprints for a multiculturalist view, where diversity is being incorporated in all aspects of life. However, as it has also been shown, the downsides of such policies and arrangements are grave, bringing to even greater divisions, instead of cooperation and unification. Perhaps one could argue that the diversity policies made were too rigid and focused only on one aspect of this diversity, not taking into account the diverse individual's

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[60] The policies in question are mainly concerned with the issues of minorities, including national minorities, cultural and religious groups, and most of all immigrant groups.

values. The rigidness of this type of power-sharing led to working for personal or party agendas instead of working for normal functioning of the town.

The 'unifications' of Mostar happened on various levels, and that process is still a continuing one. The levels on which this chapter will focus on are the administrative and symbolic. Both of the 'unifications' were being planned since the ending of conflict and for restoring Mostar's identity and normal urban life, the symbolic one by rebuilding town's most significant symbols, from churches, mosques, to bridges, emphasizing the rebuilding of the Old Bridge, and the administrative one by unifying the divided city structures, thus giving Mostar functionality as a town. .

3.1. Administrative unification of Mostar

Mostar for a number of years functioned as ethnically divided town, in largest part because of the political elites, which were unable to compromise and cooperate effectively. The division became town's new 'normality'. Every aspect of life was divided, from healthcare to sanitation, and everyday services, such as telephone, or communal services. Many agreements and plans for Mostar have been negotiated during the interim period, calling for town's unification in its administration. After year 2000 the actors which were calling for continuation of divisions became more silent, since they stopped getting the support which they had for years in Croatian governing structures. The status quo started unraveling, but was at one point halted because of new electoral system which was considered unsuitable by the Croats. One step forward became two-steps back, ending in demonstrations and open conflict with the international actors. The political situation in Mostar deteriorated and the only way out of the stalemate position which seemed irresolvable, was by imposing political change.

The call for change came from the High Representative Paddy Ashdown, who stated the need of unifying and strengthening central city administration. This decision was also influenced by the Constitutional Court decision regarding the equality of constituent peoples. In September 2003 he appointed the Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar, composed of twelve members, six representatives of political parties, a Chairman and up to five experts.[61] The objective was unified Mostar, by establishing institutions which would 'enable the city to function as a European city, as a unified city, organized in a way that promotes efficiency in the delivery of services to citizens, ensures the collective rights of the constituent peoples and promotes the fundamental rights of all citizens, in accordance with European standards'.[62] This commitment signed by the party representatives has very clear formulation of what is expected of the future unified city of Mostar, to be once more focused on the ethnic division, by 'ensuring collective rights of the constituent peoples'. Although at the same time the promotion of individual fundamental rights of citizens is present one cannot help but notice that the idea of collective had precedence over the individual. During the two-month period the Commission drafted the new plans for Mostar, and several proposals by political parties have been made as to future structures the city will have. The negotiations were again showing the differing views. Now the HDZ plan for Mostar was a unified city, which would be comprised of one municipality. However this plan was debated by the SDA who were supporting the plan of one city, six municipalities.[63] After three months negotiations the Commission recommended the new structure, the new electoral system and the new statute, proposing also amendments to federal and cantonal constitutions.[64]

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[61] There were actually two commissions, one established in April 2003, appointed by the mayor and the deputy mayor. Although this commission gathered great amount of informattion, its memebrs were unable to reach compromises regarding the new structure of the city. For more informations please see: Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar, *Recommandations of the Commission*, December 2003, http://www.ohr.int/archive/report-mostar/pdf/Reforming%20Mostar-Report%20(EN).pdf

[62] Ibid., p.10

[63] Ibid., p.60

[64] Ibid., pp.16-22

The work of the Commission lasted for three months, and in the course of its work, the Commission members had to cooperate and reach new decisions for Mostar. There were some parts on which the Commission could not reach the compromise, so it was up to the Chairman to make recommendations, these mainly being fields of electoral system and electoral units within the city. The New Statute was declared by Paddy Ashdown in January 2004. Its provisions state that Mostar is a unified city, with unified city administration, working with a single and unified budget. It is divided into six electoral areas, following the lines of the six interim-period municipalities.[65] The new city Council was formed with thirty-five council members. The elections for the City Council take place in six electoral units and the main city area. Each unit chooses three representatives for the Council. The remaining representatives are chosen in the city area as one electoral unit (City list). The provision which was described by some political parties as discriminator organizes the electoral system in such a way that the central city area chooses only from the City list, while the other six electoral areas chose from their area and the city list.

The imposition of the statute was not welcomed by political elites in Mostar, both HDZ and SDA considered it to be discriminatory, the first because of the electoral system, the latter because of the City Council structure.[66] However the decision was there and the politicians in Mostar did not have much choice when it came to its implementation. The expectations for new Mostar's administration were high, but it was a push Mostar needed if it was to become a functional city. The administrative unification however cannot be understood as a done deal. One has to remember that the six municipalities in the interim period had their own administrations, their own finances, and their own staff. The new system, apart from

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[65] For the entire text of the Statute (in Croatian/Bosnian languages) please see the City of Mostar website: http://www.mostar.ba/statut.htm

[66] For more on the proclamatioan of the statute and the reactions of local politicians please see OHR website Media Round-up from 29 January to 3 February 2004,and on 25 February when both HDZ and SDA refused the imposition of the Statute: http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/presso/bh-media-rep/round-ups/2004.asp

having the task of normalizing the city and turn Mostar into a functioning urban space, had to resolve remaining of the past administrations, build political authority in obtaining the new office and create incentives for new Mostar to be established. It is the process which was by some taken lightly, but which with the symbolic unification of the city is working towards normalization of the town.

3.2. The 'Symbolic Unification' of Mostar

Although sometimes taken for granted, the urban space is important for daily lives of town's citizens. It is also the trigger for memories, with its buildings, popular spots, monuments etc. Mostar before the war was famous for its Old Bridge and annual dives from it into Neretva River, the poet Aleksa Šantić and summer festival of poetry (so called Šantić Poetry Nights- Šantićeve Večeri Poezije), its diverse cultural heritage, such as the Orthodox Church with the cemetery, Partisan cemetery, Austro-Hungarian style buildings, bridges and churches and mosques. The large part of this heritage was destroyed during the war, its buildings and its pre-war symbols were either completely destroyed or severely damaged; the town was divided and contested making the urban space unrecognizable and in many cases dysfunctional. After the conflict ended, and because of the administrative division of the town into six municipalities and a central zone, urban space, similarly to political one, was contested among the two divided sides, turning the rebuilding of Mostar into the rebuilding of symbolic venues of a particular group, and consequently into a competition of the two dominant ethnic identities.

For the purpose of this paper I understand the symbolic unification as a process of using the urban space and places within that space (including buildings and monuments) for bringing normalcy to the city and its everyday functioning. I analyze this unification through the lens of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, or pluralism (including particularism) and individualism. Most symbols in Mostar can be divided into those representing of one of the

dominant ethnic groups, for example churches and mosques; into those having various meanings for different groups, such as the Old Bridge, and those which are considered to be representative of cross-cutting identities, such as the monument to Bruce Lee.

3.2.1. The role of symbols in Mostar – From Old Bridge to Bruce Lee

In this part of the chapter I will build on Emily Gunzburger Makaš work who has conducted extensive research on Mostar, focusing on the role of symbolism in Mostar, the role of buildings and monuments in functioning of the city and in creation of group identities in Mostar.[67] Similarly to Makaš's idea that the symbols have their role in creating group identities in Mostar, in my research I understand symbols in Mostar as unifiers and dividers. I divide the symbols in Mostar into those representing only one community, and the symbols which look beyond the groups-specific and connect to the individuals. To understand the role of majority of symbols in Mostar the role of religion also has to be explained in short. Religion in Bosnia in general is considered to be the main defining factor of dominant nations, in the sense that each dominant nation identifies itself with certain religious tradition, even if they are not practicing believers. Therefore Croats are identified with Catholicism,[68] Serbs with Orthodoxy and Bosniaks with Islam. In Mostar all three groups were represented in the urban space, through churches and mosques, which were greatly destroyed during the war.[69]

The rebuilding process can be divided into either group-based projects (Croat and Bosniak) or individual-based projects. The symbols built and rebuilt by Croats have completely changed the image of the urban space, by building a Jubilee Cross on hill Hum in 2000, and by rebuilding the Bell tower of Fransiscan Church of St. Peter and Paul. The first

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[67] Emily Gunburger Makas, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar*,
[68] Catholicism in Mostar (and herzegovina in general) is is mainly identified with the Fransiscan order which was present in these parts for a very long time, and are often in conflict with the Bishop of Mostar.
[69] It is important to note that apart from the three constituent peoples in Mostar, The Jewish community also participated in the creation of the urban space.

one is a 33 meter high 'white steel and concrete monument built as monument for two thousand anniversary of birth of Jesus as a symbol of universal values'.[70] The Catholic Church representatives defended its installation as being the symbol of peace, and as a reminder so that nothing similar happens again in Mostar. However, the building of the cross was seen as provocation on the east side of Mostar, especially since it is built on the hill Hum, from which both VRS and HVO shelled the town. The second symbol to create tensions for the east side of Mostar is the Franciscan bell tower; after it was rebuilt it was twice its previous size,[71] again creating resentment among Mostar's non-Catholic population. The two symbols of Catholic Croats are dominating the urban space in Mostar, they can be seen from all parts of the town, and many of the citizens of Mostar, especially from the east side find them offensive, since many feel their purpose is to state the Croat dominance over the city. Although the east side did not build or rebuild monuments which would dominate the entire city area, it did get a predominantly Islamic character. Not only were the mosques that were destroyed during the war rebuilt, but also those whose remains were found during the restoration. Mostar after the conflict had thirty eight mosques, while before the war there were only sixteen.[72] Both sides were claiming the other is trying to dominate the urban space, thus creating even more areas of divisions.

The group-specific symbols in Mostar will remain a reality as long as the group-specific identity, in this case the ethnic and the religious, is the most salient one. However there are other pre and post-war symbols which were focused more on either the pluralistic (multicultural) character of the town or on the individual as a member of citizens of Mostar. The representative of the first would be the Old Bridge with its various meanings and the other the symbol of Bruce Lee.

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[70] Emily Gunzburger Makas, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar*,p. 269
[71] Ibid., pp.261-268.
[72] Ibid., p.294

Much has been written about the Old Bridge in Mostar. It is a 16th century monument, a wonderful witness of Ottoman heritage in Mostar, for centuries the town's main symbol and presenter of town's image. The Old Bridge in Mostar has various meanings and is a symbol for both groups, but its symbolism is different for every group, from the dominant Croats and Bosniaks, to minorities, and individual citizens of Mostar. The symbolism of the Old Bridge can be separated into the pre-war symbolism and the war and post-war symbolism. Before the war it was known as a meeting point, especially for young people, as a romantic spot and a spot for taking strolls in the summer evenings. After its destruction the Old Bridge obtained new meaning, that of being a symbol of multicultural Bosnia, of multicultural Mostar. Along with Makaš, Robert M. Hayden elaborates on the symbolism of the Bridge. The 'bridge metaphor' in general is used for promoting multicultural Bosnia, since Ivo Andrić's novel *Bridge over Drina*,[73] but also because of descriptions of Bosnia as being the connection between the East and the West, between Islam and Christianity. However the recent war gave it new meanings, as the connector, the link between the divided peoples.[74] Its destruction was described in lines with this metaphor, as a 'bridge betrayed', 'bridge battered to death', as the symbolic image of destroying multicultural Bosnia. This latter meaning was also taken over by the international community after the conflict. The rebuilding of the Bridge was portrayed in High Representative speeches and in the media as a restoring the connection between Croats and Bosniaks, as a symbol of rebuilding multicultural Bosnia. The second meaning of the Old Bridge is the group-specific one, as part of the Ottoman tradition and that of Bosnian heritage, with which most Croats from Mostar do not associate with. This meaning emerged during the conflict, and its destruction was seen as 'an attack on Bosnian pluralistic

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[73] See: Robert M.Hayden, Moral Vision and Impaired Insight: The Imagining of Other Peoples' Communities in Bosnia, *Current Anthropology*, Vol.48, No.1, 2007, p. 108; See also: Emily Gunzburger Makaš, *Representing Multinational Bosnian Identity: The Bridge Metaphor and Mostar's Stari Most*, paper presented at the conference Con/De/Recon-struction of South-Slavic Architecture, History of Architecture and Urbanism Program, Cornell University, March 2001, p. 3;
[74] Makaš, pp.4-5

tradition'.[75] Even though the Bridge and the river were not at the very separation point, 'the Old Bridge as a symbol of people's former unity became particularly powerful once they were literally divided'.[76] The Old Bridge was opened for public in the end of July 2004, with many important dignitaries from all over the world. At that point the Bridge was presented as *'the victory of the idea of Europe'*; as *'victory of BiH as a multiethnic and multicultural community on which BiH's history was based'*; High Representative Paddy Ashdown stated that the Old Bridge *'symbolizes the extraordinary progress Bosnia and Herzegovina has made in knitting together communities so recently torn apart'*, Chris Patten stated that *'By connecting the banks of Neretva river, the Old Bridge is sending a message that perhaps there is still a hope for building of new European future'*.[77] The media from all over the world saw its reopening as being 'synonymous with the greater process of rebuilding a peaceful, pluralistic Bosnia.[78]

As part of my research I wanted to find out what the Old Bridge represents to the citizens of Mostar now, four years after its reopening, did the rhetoric of multicultural symbol find its way into the discourse of Mostar's citizens, did it regain its pre-war symbolism, and is it still considered to be a symbol of Mostar identity. I mostly expected to find that the symbolism of the Bridge is similar to the pre-war meaning for most Mostarians. However, what I did find was that the symbolism of the Bridge has become a complex one for different groups of people, and even different for individuals themselves. The first thing that I noticed was that it is still, after four years, referred to as the New Old Bridge. One Croat woman told me that she considers the Bridge only to be a wonderful monument of Ottoman legacy in Mostar and that it has more symbolism for the Bosniaks of Mostar. When I asked her if she

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[75] Emily Gunzburger Makas, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar*, p.200

[76] Ibid., p.216

[77] OHR Media Round-ups from 25 July 2004: http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/presso/bh-media-rep/round-ups/default.asp?content_id=33009

[78] Emily Gunzburger Makas, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar*, p.220

goes to the old town and does she visit the Bridge she told me that she does, during summer, because it is beautiful, full of people. She told me that most people she knows, both Croats and Bosniaks, stroll through the old strolling venue, from Feić Street, through Old city, across the bridge and back through the Adem Buća street. I also talked to some young people about their view of the Old Bridge. The ones I talked to told me that in the past few years they started going to the Old city mainly because of the clubs and bars open there during the summer season. The Old Bridge is the site in Mostar which probably has the most symbolic meanings of all other symbolic places in Mostar, and this is because the image of this bridge has become indivisible of the city and *vice versa*. I also wanted to see whether there are citizens who have taken on the discourse of the international community, of the bridge being the symbol of peace and multiculturalism. I found that the bridge metaphor did become part of the discourse, especially in the older generations, but again this metaphor is used when referred to the older Old Bridge.

Apart from the symbols which are group-based, whether in a particularist or pluralist sense, there are symbols in Mostar which are supposed to be representatives of all Mostar citizens, basing their meaning in the individual. One of the first initiatives for such symbols in Mostar was the installation of the Bruce Lee statue in Mostar.[79] The idea of putting up a monument to Bruce Lee came from the NGO Urban Movement Mostar, and its two representatives Veselin Gatalo and Nino Raspudić. The intention of the project was to 'intervene into the public space by placing in a strong symbol that means something to different generations…The statue will show that the big part of peoples lives and values have nothing to do with war and ideology.'[80] The symbol of Bruce Lee is in its non-affiliation to particular identities; it is acceptable to all generations and to all political or religious options.

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[79] For more on how and why the Bruce Lee statue came to be in Mostar please see the documentary by Ozren Mihalčić, Enter the Dragon, 2006, some of the parts can also be found on You Tube portal: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1zgqq_-2SY
[80] Ibid.

It took the movement two years to get the permission to place the statue in the city park Zrinjevac, and not as was planned on Spanish square. The monument itself shows Bruce Lee in a defensive position, facing the north. As stated by the project leader Raspudić, they even had to pay attention in which direction the statue will face, so that the 'other' side would not find it offensive or have the notion as if one side is defending against the other side. In the end they decided to place it facing north, because all the major decisions are made in the north, from Sarajevo, Zagreb, Belgrade, Berlin, Washington etc.[81] The statue did not last for long, it was vandalized the first night, and soon it was knocked over. From then on it is not exhibited, waiting for possible return. However, the main objective of the project leaders was reached. For one day, Mostar was known for something else but the destruction, division, ethnicity, nationality etc. Finally, as stated in the documentary the main reason for making this project was for people to start asking themselves who their heroes are.

There are many symbols in Mostar, symbols that made headlines and those which are understood and seen differently by citizens in Mostar. Few symbols are rarely mentioned by the international media, and are what many of the people in Mostar would define as truly from Mostar (*pravo mostarsko)*, perhaps known only to peoples' of former Yugoslavia, the symbol of Aleksa Šantić and river Neretva. When asked about what image associations they have about Mostar, several people told me that for them the first association is the river Neretva, then the culture, the bridges, the multiethnic and the poems by Šantić. Šantić as a symbol of Mostar was during the conflict replaced and avoided, mainly because of Serb origin and his nationalist sentiments in the beginning of the 20th century. However, slowly, after the war, his image gradually started returning to the city, from museums to school books. Other pre-war monuments were gradually put in their pre-war spots, without causing much of stir.

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[81] Ibid.; see also Makaš, pp.306-312

3.3. Effects of the 'Unifications' - Striving for Normalcy – Everyday Life in Mostar

Both the administrative and the symbolic unification processes as understood in this paper have had certain effects on everyday life in Mostar. Mostar is still a divided town in many ways, it still continues to have separate education system, two bus stations, two universities, and people who consider only one part of the town to be 'theirs'. However, I believe the unification processes are starting to make positive changes, maybe not on an overall scale of progress, but definitely when it comes to communication on everyday level. The main argument therefore is that the two unifications processes are providing incentives for everyday communication in Mostar. In my research I wanted to find *whether the political elites have indeed started cooperating and in which areas; what kinds of interactions emerged because of the unification; did it bring cooperation among the citizens themselves, and between the political elites and citizens*. On the other hand I also wanted to explore *which sites, apart from the apparent symbolic ones, are used for everyday communication, in which way did the symbols create incentives for communication; did the administrative unification assist this communication and in which way, and finally, where the two unification processes meet, if at all*. I did not manage to get all the answers I set out to find, however, my research showed that the two processes did create additional incentives for communication, by providing new urban space and consequently new meeting points.

The administrative unification was set clearly by the new statute, and the local political elites found themselves again faced with the imposition by the international community, which once more raised passions within the local elites. Both HDZ and SDA were calling for rejection of the new statute, which did not take place. Both sides were faced with new reality and new problems. About the problems and realities faced by the new city administration I talked to Miroslav Landeka, in charge of the city's office for public relations,

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who was kind enough to help me by giving me valuable information and even some written and video material. My main interest was in the incentives created for communication among the citizens and the incentives for bringing normalcy back to Mostar. Reading the local media for the past month, I expected a more pessimistic picture of the effects of the unification. However, I was surprised to see that the process of administrative unification does play much in increasing daily communication among citizens. The mere fact of having the city administration in one place, which is in Šantićeva Street has forced the citizens from both sides to use that space regularly, thus creating more free movement. In our conversation Mr. Landeka pointed out that in the past four years, since the unification took place, many things have been done for normalization of life in Mostar, and that although there are still numerous problems, one has to be aware that this process is a slow one, and it will take a longer period of time for the effects to really take place.[82] For example, the city gives many incentives in the form of organizing cultural events, concerts, sporting events of young people, etc. One of the first steps forward in creating incentives for communication among citizens of Mostar was organizing the celebration of New Year's Eve on the Spanish Square, in the former central zone, which every year gets more attendance. Also the former central zone in general is being slowly transformed into a common area of all peoples in Mostar, maybe not yet in practice but progress is being made by organizing public debates regarding its urban space solutions, from new infrastructure to possible new symbolic buildings. Amir Pašić, one of the most famous urban architects in Mostar, known for his work on the Old Bridge has offered his solutions for these new symbolic buildings, one being the new Islamic Center and the other the solution for intersection in Spanish square. It remains to be seen whether any of these options will work out in the future.

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[82] Miroslav Landeka, City of Mostar Office for Public Relations, Interview by author, 21 April 2008

The symbolic unification has for the most part already been explained earlier in chapter. The symbols in Mostar play a great role in urban, cultural, economic and political sense. Whether they are group-specific or oriented on the individual as a citizen, they all have several meanings giving them the character of multivalent sites.[83] My argument goes a bit further. Apart from the symbols there are new places occupying the urban space, created because of the administrative unification or near the newly rebuilt and built symbols, which are becoming new meeting points for citizens of Mostar. Therefore the processes of unification have created the incentives for new usage of the urban space, or the redefining of the urban space. There are several places like this in Mostar, such as the cafes and bars surrounding the Old Bridge, the new shopping center at Rondo, the newly renovated city park Zrinjevac, the Musala square and the nearby department stores, a new night club etc. It can be seen that one of the main connectors in these places is trade. The building of shopping malls and supermarkets created more communication. Since most of these places also include some of the most popular bars and coffee places in Mostar, these venues have become a meeting point for young people. Connected to the first one, the other factor is the service establishments in general, from restaurants, bars, coffee places, bet shops, and several night clubs which are used by both sides. I spoke to several young people, and asked them about their everyday life, where they go out, what are their daily routes, what is the situation with creating new friendships, new relationships and similar, with persons from the other side. Most of them replied the same that they do have friends from both sides, and even dating is becoming more present, although in many cases the fact of inter-ethnic dating is hidden from the parents.

The meeting point of the two unification processes can be found in numerous cultural events in the town, providing even more incentives for regular communication between the

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[83] Makaš, *Representing Competing Identities: Building and Rebuilding in Postwar Mostar* ,preliminary pages

two sides of Mostar. Apart from cultural events, one of the possible future industries in Mostar also benefited from the two unification processes – tourism. Although the tourists are coming to Mostar in large numbers, most of them are coming there only for a few hours with organized tours from Međugorje and Dubrovnik, not spending a lot of money in Mostar. There are some projects which are being considered for boosting the tourism in Mostar. The first one being the Mostar's Airport, then the possible golf courses, and a new sports center and a new swimming pool etc.

All of these factors combined make normalization in Mostar a real possibility. There is still strong division among local politicians and citizens, some of them still unresolved from the war and the interim period. The problems of illegal building are very much present within all parts of the city. There are very little new investments in the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Old town; many buildings on the former front line are still not rebuilt; the unemployment, grey economy, rising drug addiction problems, etc., these are all problems that the citizens and the administration of Mostar deal with on the daily basis. However, even though the problems are there some new decisions and new incentives are being made, especially with regards to the building within the urban space, on one side by rebuilding the pre-war sites and on the other by new incentives, such as the newly signed contract for construction and building of a completely new bridge Sutina, which would settle the rising issue of Mostar's traffic and parking problems. As stated by the Mostar's Mayor Ljubo Bešlić the signing of the contract for building the bridge Sutina "is a big event for the city of Mostar, because after the rebuilding of all of its bridges, we are now building a completely new one. In this way Mostar is showing that it has the vision of development."[84] Mostar through the processes of unifications can be described as striving for normalcy. It still has a long road ahead of it, and it is still in many ways a divided town, however with right policies and

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[84] Mayor of Mostar Ljubo Bešlić in a statement for the press, please see: Dnevni List, 27 may 2008, http://www.dnevni-list.ba/?mdls=1&mdls_tip=2&nid=21269

investments it might develop into a thriving inter-cultural city most of the people in Mostar wish for.

One of the indirect consequences of the two unifications and the increasing everyday communication can be seen in the emergence of one pre-war identity – the common urban identity of a Mostarian (*Mostarac*). This identity was always present in the discourse of the citizens of Mostar, however in the immediate war and after-war period it was pushed aside by the ethnic and religious identity. The institutionalization of the divides in Mostar did not help in the restoring of the urban identity; on the contrary it only emphasized and entrenched the ethnic and thus the religious one. The pre-war meaning of the urban Mostar identity signified a person who is by origin from Mostar. After the war the urban identity changed. Both sides still designated their belonging to the city, by declaring that the 'true Mostarian is the one who would do anything for Mostar', who stayed in Mostar during the war, usually translating it to the context of war and the debates on who did what in the town, who defended the town, who is the guilty party and most importantly who spent the entire war, or some part of the war in the city.

In the past few years, and I argue since the administrative and symbolic unifications processes started taking place, the urban identity is slowly getting back into the common everyday discourse in Mostar. The identity of the Mostarian has several levels. On the first level, it signifies the already described meaning with war pretext. The second level would be that of the origin from Mostar. The third meaning, which is also to a certain extent the pre-war meaning the one making the difference between the 'cultured', 'multicultural' Mostarians vs. the 'uncultured', 'nationalist' arrivals into the city, usually portrayed as 'peasants'. During my research the latter meaning, combined with first meaning was often used in the conversations with the individuals. This urban vs. rural debate is slowly entering the discourse, thus providing a commonality for the individuals by giving the urban community the new 'other'.

For example, I talked to, a Croat who has friends from both sides of Mostar and from various ethnic groups. I asked him to explain to me the urban identity of Mostar. He told me that most of true Mostarians want to forget the war and are acting tolerant towards everyone, they do not provoke, and are acting completely normal, and these new arrivals and refugees that came during the war and little after, that they are full of hatred, and that they are the ones provoking, creating incidents and tensions because they were driven away and they understand everything on ethnic lines. I have had similar conversations to other people in Mostar, coincidentally none of them were arrivals in Mostar. Many of them repeated the same, that true Mostarians are more tolerant, more 'cultured', and do not care about the ethnic belonging. The people who have during the war, or immediately after found refuge in Mostar are not considered to be members of 'true Mostarians', and neither are refugees returning to their pre-war homes. Most of them are seen as if they betrayed the city and people who stayed.[85]

It can be concluded that the urban citizenship in Mostar is evolving, and it is slowly replacing the sole division according to the ethnic or religious lines. The common identity of being members of the urban space has been supported by the increased communication and new meeting points is proving to be another positive step in the normalization of everyday life in Mostar.

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[85] For more on the citizens' identity in Mostar see: Larissa Vetters, The Power of Administrative Categories: Emerging Notions of Citizenship in the Divided City of Mostar, p.196

CONCLUSION

Can Mostar and the experiences from Mostar be understood as blueprints for arranging Bosnia? The system change, brought about with the new statute in 2004, was established on the ethnic division, but using the 1991 census data, thus creating a power-sharing layout which includes all three constituent peoples, as well as the 'others'. The recent political climate in Bosnia is such that the debates about its constitutional arrangements are once again in the focus of political and social interests. What is the best solution for Bosnia? The programs offered are more or less similar to those starting from the dissolution of Yugoslavia. There are three main options, the first one calling for Bosnia based on three ethnically based entities. This option never left the nationalist rhetoric in Bosnia, especially Serb and Croat groups. In the end of March and the beginning of April 2008, there was organized signing of the petition for requesting the creation of the third, Croat entity in Bosnia. The second option would be the remaining of *status quo* by keeping the established entities, Republika Srpska and Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, but providing the better protection of individual and group-specific identities. The third option also calls for decentralization of Bosnia, but by abolishing the existing entities and by establishing counties (or cantons) based on regional and economic conditions. All three options have their place in political and social discourse in Bosnia.

In the beginning of this paper I have raised several questions and arguments which I believed need to be answered for understanding the past, the present and the possible future processes of both Mostar and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main question was, what is the best solution for Bosnia in the lights of various programs and arrangements designed for it on the basis of multiculturalism (multiethnicity) and cosmopolitanism. To find the answer to this question I turned to Mostar, city which is usually described as the microcosm or blueprint for Bosnia. However, during my research in Mostar I realized that my interest has shifted from

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the mere institutional arrangements onto the everyday communications in Mostar, through what I define as administrative and symbolic unification processes. The administrative unification can be best described as the imposition of unified administrative institutions, forcing the political elites to cooperate. Although the administration itself has a long road ahead of it, the incentives have been made so that the political elites do start cooperating eventually. The second level is where the administrative unification is giving incentives by changing the urban space. At first this was imposed by the international actors by the imposition of administrative unification, and establishing institutions on both sides, making citizens use that public space. Once the usage of the urban space becomes normal and present on everyday basis the new meeting points are being established, thus providing further development of communication.

Similar was done by the symbolic unification. The argumentation about the symbolic unification I built on works by Emily Gunzberger Makaš, who has done extensive research in Mostar, analyzing the urban space through the functionality of its symbols, especially their role in creating the identities. My idea of the urban space in Mostar is that the building and rebuilding of pre-war and post-war symbols has created incentives for communication and cooperation, first of all by restoring the destroyed urban space, and also by giving and developing new meanings of these symbols. The symbols in Mostar can be divided into those whose meaning is group-specific, usually representing the religious tradition of a specific ethnic group, such as the Jubilee Cross on hill Hum and the Franciscan bell tower, which are considered by the non-Catholics as a threat to the other groups or as symbols of Croat dominance over Mostar. Some of the symbols in Mostar may have several meanings, and be both group-specific and individual, such as the case with the Old Bridge. The old Bridge in Mostar is the main symbol of the town, its image can be found on all tourist souvenirs in old City, from wallets to earrings, postcards, DVD-s, etc. It is a site with various meanings, both

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group-specific and individually-specific. For Bosniaks in Mostar, the Old Bridge is considered to be not only the symbol of Mostar, but also a piece of their heritage, connected to the legacy of Ottoman era. Croats on the other hand, do not feel connected to this imagery of the Bridge, they see it more as simply a monument, and usually do not consider it to be their symbol. However, the meaning of the Old Bridge is also understood in its pre-war meanings, as a site of romantic venues, bravery, dives into the cold Neretva, and youth. Although they mostly refer to it as a New Old Bridge and do not have such emotional ties to it, the mere fact of the occupying space with its replica is providing possibilities for creating new meeting points. Finally there are symbols in Mostar which were built or placed into the urban space for emphasizing the common values and cross-cutting identities in order to give incentives for cooperation, such as the case of monument to Bruce Lee, but also re-emergence of pre-war local heroes, such as the poet Aleksa Šantić.

The synergic effect of the two unifications can be seen in organizing various citizens' initiatives, public debates, concerts, cultural events etc. One of the indirect consequence of the two unification processes is the re-emergence of the pre-war citizen identity, understood in relation to different 'others', one being the refugees from Mostar who started coming back, and who are seen as betrayers of Mostar and its peoples. The other being also the refugees or internally displaced persons, but who have come to Mostar during the war or immediately after the war. They are usually perceived as instigators of tensions and nationalistic feelings within the community, while the identity of the 'true Mostarians' is being described as tolerant, multicultural, respectful etc. The idea of strengthening the common urban identity will provide Mostar with even more incentives for developing further communication and cooperation among citizens.

Although there are many positive effects of administrative and symbolic unifications in Mostar, these processes are far from being over. Mostar is still very much a divided city, it

still has two bus stations, two hospitals, two telephone companies, segregated education, etc. As long as the divisions are being emphasized the town and its citizens will find a hard time in restoring complete functioning and normalcy in the town. In some ways the pre-war Mostar is emerging, but this process is going to take a long time, and it will probably be generations before the true reconciliation actually takes place.

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