

MONUMENTS IN MOSTAR AS MARKERS OF THE SYMBOLIC BORDER AND POST-WAR MEMORIALIZATION

SPOMENICI U MOSTARU KAO OZNAKE SIMBOLIČKE GRANICE I POSLIJERATNE MEMORIJALIZACIJE

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This article argues that monuments in Mostar have functioned as markers of symbolic borders and competing memorializations after abrupt changes in the political orders of the polities of which Mostar has been a part. In that sense, monuments in Mostar can be seen as manifestations of sedimentation and erosion of communities in the urban zone. For analytical purposes, the concept of monument is defined as an object that commemorates a specific event. Almost all of the monuments in Mostar can be traced according to their function, while shape and design are secondary. Four historical periods in which larger changes to ethno-religious dominance in the political and social systems took place are analyzed regarding memorialization of urban space in Mostar. These are Austro-Hungarian rule, the period during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia, that of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the post-socialist era in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1992. Research results show how material structures, such as monuments, tell identity-based stories about the intertemporal relations of communities in Mostar, within the frameworks the wider historical and contemporary social contexts in which members of these communities have interacted.

KEYWORDS: monuments; social sedimentation and erosion; ethno-religious communities; Mostar; Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ovaj članak ispituje jesu li spomenici u Mostaru funkcionirali kao oznake simboličkih granica i konkurentskih memorijalizacija nakon naglih promjena u političkim poredcima političkih zajednica čiji je Mostar bio dio. U tom smislu spomenici u Mostaru mogu se promatrati kao manifestacije sedimentacije i erozije zajednica u urbanoj zoni. Pojam spomenika u ovom radu definira se kao objekt koji obilježava određeni događaj. Gotovo svi spomenici u Mostaru mogu se pratiti prema funkciji, dok su oblik i dizajn sekundarni. U memorijalizaciji urbanog prostora Mostara analiziraju se četiri povijesna razdoblja u kojima su se dogodile veće promjene etnoreligijske dominacije u političkim i društvenim sustavima. To su: austrougarska vladavina, razdoblje Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca/Jugoslavije, razdoblje Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i postsocijalističko doba u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1992. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju kako materijalne strukture, poput spomenika, pričaju identitetske priče o međuvremenskim odnosima zajednica u Mostaru, u okvirima širega povijesnog i suvremenim društvenim kontekstima u kojima su članovi tih zajednica komunicirali.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: spomenici; društvena sedimentacija i erozija; etnoreligijske zajednice; Mostar; Bosna i Hercegovina

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, during a peaceful January night, a strong detonation woke up people in the Mostar city center. A monument to fighters of the Bosniak-majority Army of Bosnia & Herzegovina (ARBiH) and other defenders of Mostar and of the state of BiH was damaged in an explosion, less than a year after it was erected in a Croat-majority part of the city. Media reported how ethnic and political tensions and divisions between Croats and Bosniaks were raised in the post-war city (Al Jazeera Media Network, 2013). Despite this incident, everyday life continued to flow, even as politicians and journalists focused on the monument.

The construction and destruction of the monument, and the failure since then to either repair it or remove the pieces, are manifestations of larger patterns of interaction between two communities, members of which live and interact in the same city on economic, institutional and social levels. Generally, Croats and Bosniaks in Mostar have different interpretations of the 1990s war, and differing orientations towards the future development of the city. In that sense, the monuments they have built and are building tell identity-based stories of and the urban space, especially in the post-war period after 1994. Some monuments also testify about other communities that have shaped Mostar's history and interactions between each other. Finally, the patterning of Mostar monuments since the 1990s war provides physical evidence of the border which divides the city in two ethnic parts, despite its formal unity.

In this article, monuments in Mostar are analyzed as markers of social sedimentation and erosion, not only since the 1990s but also from the period of Austro-Hungarian rule (1878–1918) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–1941), through the period of socialist Yugoslavia afterward (1945–1991). Marking a specific past event or important person for a certain ethnic community, organization (association or institution), and institution on the local or state level, represents an act of memorialization, while the monument is a material object (bust, statue, fountain, figure or a plaque) that commemorates a specific event.

The majority of the existing monuments in the city of Mostar were visited and their attributes listed, then interpreted and analyzed through the theoretical concept of social sedimentation and erosion. The categorization of the monuments was done according to historical, political and social context in which they were erected by a certain community or state and with a certain intention and messages to be sent to other communities, and their physical features and locations recorded. For analytical purposes, a monument is defined as an object that commemorates a specific event. It can be a building, a bust, statue, fountain, figure or a plaque.

A main goal of the paper is to demonstrate how monuments in Mostar have functioned as markers of symbolic borders between the Bosniak and Croat communities since 1995. Thus the changes in distributions of monuments in Mostar can be seen as manifestations of processes of dominance and subordination of ethno-religious communities in the urban zone.¹ These social processes are made manifest in the sedimentation and erosion of the 'physical and social patterning of structures and residency' (Hayden & Katić, 2023, p. 135). These concepts of 'sedimentation' and 'erosion', transferred from geology into social sciences, denote processes in which different interrelated, interdependent cultural and social layers change over time. While sedimentation refers to the material aspects evidencing the physical and symbolic presence of different communities in one place (placement of religious objects, layouts of cities, differentiation of cemeteries), erosion indicates changes such as the degradation or disappearance of these sedimentations, or the incorporation of elements of one sediment into the sedimentations built by a later community. Thus members of different communities can construct, modify, potentially destroy and re-construct various

¹ In this paper, *urban zone* will be used as a term for the area over which a city extended throughout history in the official (administrative) sense, including modern-day Mostar. The word *part* will refer to the western part with the Croatian majority and the eastern part with the Bosniak majority in Mostar. *Neighborhood* will be used for certain quarters or smaller parts of the city. Neighborhoods can be located in both ethnic parts of Mostar, western and eastern.

material manifestations of their own or others' presence (Hayden & Katić, 2023, pp. 134–135; Katić & Hayden, 2024, p. 153). Thus in this article I show how the (dis)placements of material structures such as monuments tell identity-based stories about the intertemporal relations of communities in Mostar, and the wider historical and contemporary social contexts in which members of these communities interacted. Concepts of sedimentation and erosion rely on previous theoretical approaches and research in Mostar regarding post-war reconstruction, urbanization, memorialization (cultural memories), borders, and everyday life (Bollens, 2007; Dražeta, 2021; Djurasovic, 2016; Gunzburger Makaš, 2007; Hromadžić, 2015; Narrang Suri, 2009; Nikolic, 2008; Novak, 2024). Monuments of Mostar are a kind of reflection on all these topics in a broader academic context since their erection is always tied with current politics, thus representing continuity/extension of research practices oriented towards understanding of different communities and their memorialization.

The three main ethno-religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosniaks-Muslims, Serbs-Orthodox Christians and Croats-Roman Catholics) were easily recognizable between their members since the nineteenth century.² Social sedimentation and erosion can be observed reflecting the dominance of each community in different state(s), i.e. historical and political periods. Hence Muslim religioscapes were dominant during the Ottoman period, the Roman Catholic during the Austro-Hungarian rule, Orthodox Christian during the royal Yugoslav era. During the socialist Yugoslav period secularism was promulgated through the ideology of brotherhood and unity. The dominance of all religions was less intensive than in the previous epochs, so monuments and other forms of material culture tied with the socialist secularism can be treated as equivalent to a religioscape, i.e. 'secularscape' (Hayden & Katić, 2023, pp. 144–145; Katić & Hayden, 2024).

² Jews constituted the fourth major community until 1941, but they were never dominant, and so are not considered in this article.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The fieldwork research for this paper was conducted in September 2023 and March 2024, covering almost all urban neighborhoods in Mostar in which major memorial sites from the four periods are located. Although it was not possible to locate and categorize all memorial sites in Mostar, the majority of known sites, a total of 41 monuments, were documented. The selection of monuments was based on the era in which each was erected, as they commemorate specific events or, in some cases, individuals or groups. The spatial factor was a key criterion for analyzing the monuments, and it was useful for enabling consultations with contacts met during previous research projects in Mostar in the period between 2017 and 2024. These contacts also helped find some of the contemporary and past monuments. Photographs with geographical coordinates made during the fieldwork enabled mapping of the space and provided visual evidence useful for coordinating information about memorials across the city.

Determination of Monuments' Location

The methodology workflow related to the selection and determination of monument location in Mostar encompassed several steps. The first step involved creating a list of monuments important for addressing the research question. Particular attention was paid to gathering information on monuments, built after the 1992–1995 war. These and the monuments erected during socialism represented the majority of all analyzed memorials. The second step was to locate of the monuments through fieldwork observation and Google Earth; these were then geocoded in GIS. In the third step, specific attributes (ID, name, author, year of foundation/destruction/reconstruction) were assigned to each monument. The fourth step included the derivation of a file geodatabase, which means the organized data were compiled into a unique GIS database. The fifth step included thematic map creation, using the GIS database to generate thematic maps, which facilitated analysis and helped draw specific conclusions.

The symbolic but persistent border between eastern and western parts of Mostar, which was the front line during the 1992–1994 war and the administrative border between East Mostar and West Mostar (1994–2004), was delineated in GIS using data from fieldwork in which Mostarians were interviewed regarding their perception of the border, as well as also the author's understanding of it as derived from previous fieldwork (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 32–33, 117–247). The border is clearly shown on Fig. 4. Relevant literature on Mostar's division during and after the war was also consulted (Bollens, 2007, pp. 174–189; Calame & Pasic, 2009, pp. 3–20; Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 136–139, 256–337).

URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF MOSTAR AS REFLECTING ETHNO-RELIGIOUS DOMINANCE

As discussed by Hayden et al. (2024) in their introductory chapter in this thematic issue, Mostar initially developed as an Ottoman town on the east bank of the Neretva River, slightly extending its urban zone on the west bank. The Ottomans gained control over a medieval chain bridge on the river, around which the settlement took its name after the bridge keepers (*mostari*). Hence the original urban development of Mostar is mainly tied to the Ottoman period (1466–1878) in which major urban centers consisted of commercial/institutional center (*čaršija*) and residential neighborhoods (*džemati* and *mahale*) in which members of different religious and ethnic communities lived under the influence of Islamic and Oriental culture (Hadžibegović, 2004, pp. 12–13). In Mostar the mahalas were ethnically and religiously heterogeneous, but under clear dominance of Islam. Each of these urban neighborhoods had its mosque (*džamija*) or masjid (*mesdžid*, a place for prayer), but almost none had Christian sacral structures. Further discussions on the urban development of Mostar during the Ottoman period can be found in detail elsewhere (Hayden et al., 2024; Puljić, 2020).

During Austro-Hungarian rule, 1878–1914, intensive development and transformation of the

urban zone and its infrastructure, a large increase in population and other aspects of modernization processes characterized Mostar (Puljić, 2021, p. 4). The Austro-Hungarian period changed the urban image of Mostar by introducing Western planning schemes through the creation of wide, straight streets and of a new part of the city on the west side of the Neretva River. This part became a new administrative center, with the City Hall and Mostar Gymnasium, and lower minarets of certain mosques (Hayden et al., 2024). These developments differentiated visually the new from the old part of the urban zone, which was mainly concentrated on the east side of the river. A newly built railroad separated the new part from the old one. Although military barracks were built at each entrance to the city, monuments were not erected by the Austro-Hungarian rulers. Although Roman Catholic neighborhoods were erected on the west side of the city, unlike in Banja Luka the structures manifesting Muslim ethno-political dominance over the Christian population remained (Hayden et al., 2024).

In the period between two world wars (1918–1941), the urban development of Mostar was not as intensive as it had been during under Austro-Hungarian rule, but the city remained important on the map of Herzegovina. Ethno-religious communities remained political subjects within the new parliamentary system of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, Muslim, Serbian and Croatian political orientations radically differed from each other, which affected Mostar's urban life in the interwar period (Miljković, 2001, pp. 107–118). Muslim political aspirations varied between the largely opposing Serbian and Croatian political views, but mostly were oriented towards confessional sovereignty and property rights, as they had gained political/religious autonomy during the Austro-Hungarian rule (Grebale, 2021, p. 109).

After the World War I the new Yugoslav authorities intended to re-mark the central place in Mostar (Kurt, 2023a) which was still the administrative, cultural and political centre of Herzegovina (Miljković, 2001, pp. 107–118). Actually, the new state wanted to revive the centre on the east bank of Neretva that had been transferred

during the Austro-Hungarian rule to the west bank of the river, by building a monument there dedicated to King Peter I Karađorđević. Generally, in the new state, royal Yugoslav sedimentations tended to glorify the unification of all South Slavs under the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty and to make Orthodox Christianity dominant, as the Ottomans had made Islam dominant and the Austro-Hungarians had made Roman Catholicism dominant (Hayden & Katić, 2023, p. 144). However, neither form of Christianity became dominant in Mostar, but structures of both challenged the clear dominance of Islam that the Ottoman city were visible (Hayden et al., 2024). By choosing for the central spot in the city the focus of the urban zone during the Ottoman period, Mejdan, the authorities of the Kingdom sedimented a new cultural layer not just near the Ottoman layer (court house and public bath) but also near the Austro-Hungarian layer (public hospital). Later socialist Yugoslav sedimentation was an upgrade of the public space in this location through the building of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. However, although it is close to the old town and Old Bridge in present-day Mostar, Mejdan is now primarily a touristic spot in terms of accommodation, but without any accompanying memorial content, and is on the periphery comparing to other nearby streets and squares.

The period 1945–1991 of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia saw intensive urbanization and industrialization in Mostar. The population increased to five times more than in the period before World War Two, and all city neighbourhoods except the old town ('Stari Grad') were ethnically heterogeneous (Bollens, 2007, p. 169). Moreover, the ideology of brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) promoted by the new political order treated commemoration of World War II victims without consideration of ethnic background. Those who lost their lives during the war were 'victims of fascist terror', and most of the socialist monuments were dedicated to them along with the glorious Partisan Yugoslav army (Hayden & Katić, 2023, p. 144). The individuals listed on these socialist monuments show multi-ethnic composition of the 'fallen fighters'.

During the period of Yugoslav socialism Mostar also developed as an industrial city. While the eastern part of the city was already formed and densely populated, the western part began to develop in the housing and commercial senses (Bollens, 2007, p. 169). The political dominance of the socialist regime demanded a non-ethnic political orientation, but this was not the case in practice, since members of all ethnic communities were aware of their identities with or without religious background. This was formally and informally recognized by the central (federal) and republic governments. Yugoslav state socialism often removed 'obstacles to development', which in the case of Mostar were 'old' mosques that were torn down in order to raise new public buildings (Hayden et al., 2024).

The most recent period of monument creation is post-1992, following the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Being officially divided into Croat western Mostar and Bosniak eastern Mostar from 1994 to 2004, the city developed institutional parallelism which determined completely different memorialization of public space and people's perception about the war events. Mostar was formally united in 2004 through the effort of the International Community. Yet the urban zone remained divided, the symbolic border remaining where the physical one existed during and after the war. It is the city's new main street called Bulevar ('Boulevard'), originally a railroad during the Austro-Hungarian period that separated the new part of the city from the old one (Bollens, 2007, pp. 174–189; Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247).

Deindustrialization and demographic decline, along with political, institutional and administrative disorder, characterize the post-socialist period after the war in Mostar. Ethnic tensions and divisions continued within the re-united institutional framework and have remained sources of political competition, one manifestation of which has been in antagonistic discourses on memorialization of some public spaces (Bollens, 2007, pp. 174–189), such as the case of the monument destroyed in 2013 with which I began this article.

These contemporary political and social tensions reflect competing dominant Bosniak and

Croat narratives of the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and the political tensions and armed conflicts within Mostar. While the first armed conflict in 1992 in Mostar was between the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) on one side, and the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) and Croatian Defense Council (HVO) on the other, after the JNA was defeated the city entered another conflict. In the western part of Mostar HVO was deployed, while in the eastern part, the ARBiH regrouped its troops. From 1993 to 1994 these two armies fought on a front line that was partly on the river Neretva, and mostly within the urban core that was and still is a contested area (Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 136–139).

This so-called ‘Central Zone’ has gone through several development phases, remaining an unresolved area, specifically in terms of religious objects and monuments that were planned or proposed for the city center. Soon after the war ended, the front line became a border between Istočni Mostar (Bosniak) and Zapadni Mostar (Croat), two cities that existed formally until 2004 (Bollens, 2007, pp. 170–200; Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 256–337). As noted earlier, the ex-front line then became the *de facto* border between two urban areas in the administrative sense, then a symbolic (but very persistent) border that mainly exists as a space marker of Croat and Bosniak, but not Serb ethnic identity. The population that defines itself as ‘Other’, i.e. those who do not want to identify as Croats, Bosniaks or Serbs is not affected by this symbolic border (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247). However, members of all ethnic communities in Mostar recognize the border as the line which divides jurisdictions over public health systems, transportation, electricity, and different availability of some goods and services on each side. In that sense, the city is ethnically still divided into different Bosniak and Croat administrative units, while the main political institutional framework is unified: the parliament, court, and mayor’s office. The extent of the ethno-territorial division is reflected through different dominant attitudes, thoughts and social practices (perceptions) on each side

regarding urban history, the city’s current political position and its future development. Thus, material structures, such as monuments, tell identity-based stories about the intertemporal relations of communities in Mostar, but also different current orientations among Croats and Bosniaks. Ethnographic examples of this division drawing on local voices from each ethnic community are available elsewhere (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247), but discussing them would exceed the scope of this article.

Monuments may be built to contest state power, not only to establish and legitimize it, which is visible on the example of Estonia. One part of the population commemorates WWII and its aftermath as positive and heroic, while the other part thinks this era is marked by two occupying regimes (Smith, 2008, pp. 419–420). In that sense, individual/personal memory is not only a subjective processing of the experience, but it is also based on the social/collective memory (re) created in each generation, that is, every 30 years (Asman, 2011, pp. 24, 27). The anthropological approach to individual and collective memory includes people’s practices and cultural forms, rituals or monuments of remembrance. Through monuments specific images of the past are not strictly linearly materialized, but represented as a ‘continuous past’ that can inhabit present and future or embrace both of them. In other words, monuments are specific forms that bring certain community members together and provide them with a sense of belonging (Macdonald, 2013, pp. 12, 16, 166–167).

Consideration of all monuments in Mostar (Fig. 1) is quite important because it goes side by side with processes of ethnic identification, but also identity-building on the regional and local levels (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247). Monuments tend to serve the needs of communities not just as instruments that construct or solidify peoples’ collective identities, but as tools that enable a vertical path between the past and the present, a sense of continuity and a sense of place. In that sense, Fig. 3 chronologically shows decades in which monuments were built. Furthermore, monuments can remind communities about some of their important members from the past,

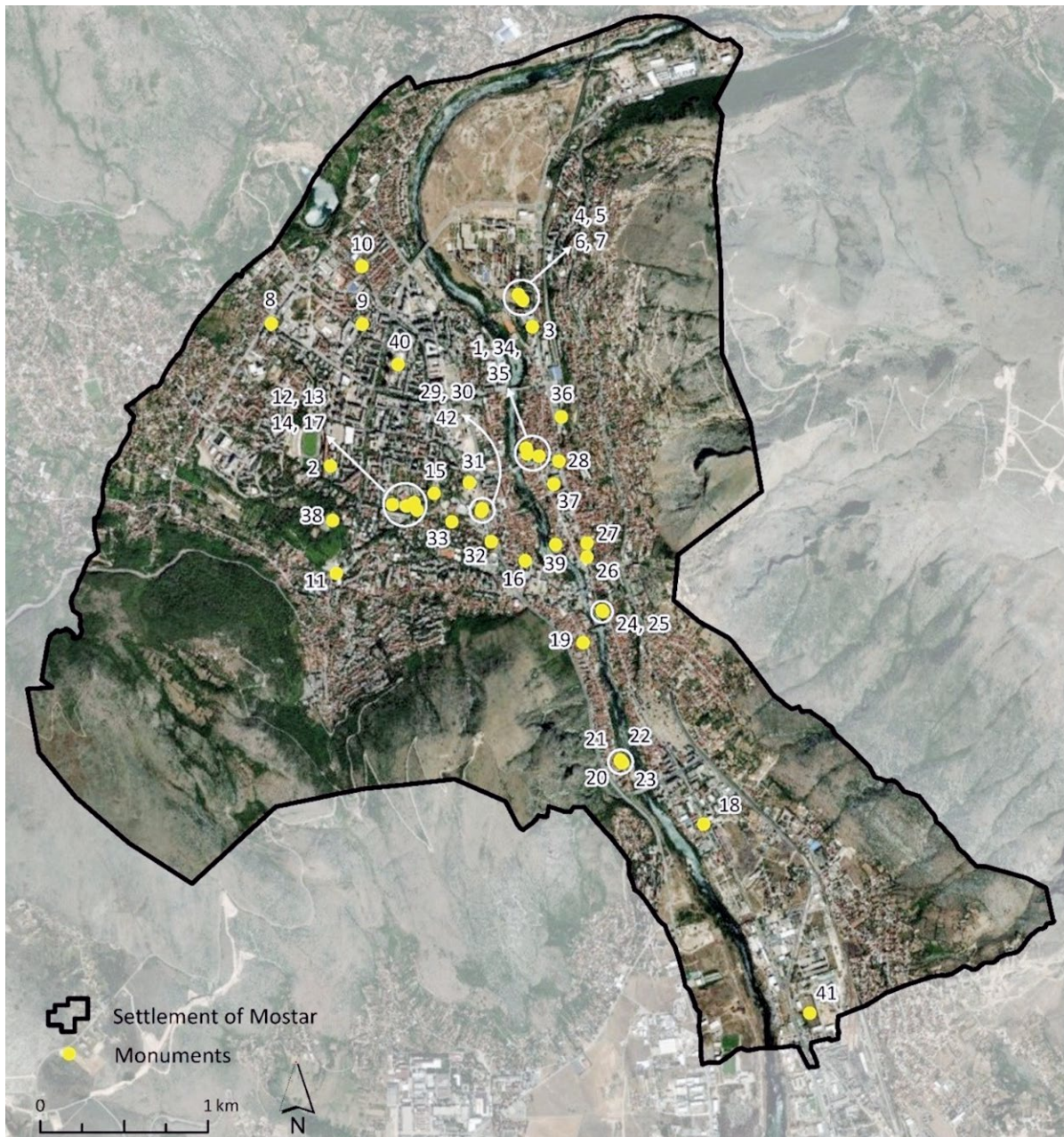


FIGURE 1 Map showing primary locations of all monuments

which constitutes the collective memory as an integral part of a common identity in the present (Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 36–37). On the other hand, monuments can remind community members about differentiations, how their collective memory is not the same as someone's else (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247). Memorial sites are places where different ideologies and political orientations may meet, but due to politicization oppose each other, so analysing competing monuments enables further understanding of space and people's practices within a space (Nikolic, 2008, pp. 93–103).

SEDIMENTATIONS AND EROSIONS OF MONUMENTS REFLECTING DIFFERENT ETHNIC NARRATIVES IN MOSTAR

Different ethno-national narratives demonstrate the extent to which the Croat and Bosniak communities have different views, not only regarding the recent past, but also towards their future orientation. Instead of having the pedagogical function of stimulation of a dialogue, monuments are main instruments for fortifying divisions (Sokol, 2014, pp. 105–126). Since

the 1992–1994 war ended in Mostar, the main question within the urban zone has been the one regarding the use of public spaces. While Croats perceive Mostar as their ‘capital city’ (*stolni grad*) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniaks see Mostar and its public space as a whole as part of their specific cultural heritage, especially the old town from the Ottoman period which is internationally protected (Narang Suri, 2009, p. 236). Furthermore, UNESCO agrees with the Bosniak opinion about the city’s historical area, recognizing its importance primarily to their community, rather than to others, and emphasizing a multiculturalism which has not been present much in the city since the war 1992–1994.³

Generally speaking, monuments in all parts of the former country have become important since the breakup of Yugoslavia because, as Andrew Lawler has emphasized, they ‘are used as focal gathering and social manifestation sites by the local community’ (Lawler, 2013, p. 2). And yet, it is a setting in which various communities try to fulfil their own needs. Previous research in Mostar between 2017 and 2019 (Dražeta, 2021) based on the analysis of different attitudes, thoughts and social practices (perceptions) regarding urban history, the city’s current political position and its future development, showed striking differences between Croats and Bosniaks. While Croatian ethnic community members in Mostar think they should have their own ‘capital city’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with monuments dedicated only to the 1990s war, Bosniaks think the 1992–1994 war memorials need to stand with the socialist monuments. The symbolic border within the urban zone thus not only divides, but protects people’s perceptions tied with two political and ideological territories in a formally unified city.

Of course, members of Mostar’s major communities interact in many ways, in domains of everyday life and basic social interactions. People walk and spend time everywhere without any re-

strictions and check points. The interaction between Croats and Bosniaks include a wide scope of economic practices. For example, Croats buy certain goods in markets in the eastern (dominantly Bosniak) part of the city during Catholic religious holidays, and the opposite – Bosniaks go to Croatian supermarkets and stores during Muslim religious festivals. On the other hand, the two nations vote overwhelmingly for radically different political options, and perceive Mostar in different ways regarding its general history and some specific periods, for instance the medieval one and the 1990s war. Furthermore, the border is not an obstacle for the two communities to interact in schools, with professional and generational solidarity among teachers and students, despite the official ethnic separation reflected through the concept of ‘two schools under one roof’ (two different school programs in Croat and Bosnian languages; (Hromadžić, 2015).

According to informants’ statements, Croats and Bosniaks do not intermarry in Mostar and rarely have emotional relationships during adolescence. The official statistics confirm this ethnographic data, showing that more than 95% of all marriages in Mostar and its surroundings are ethnically homogenous – Croat men marrying Croat women, and Bosniak men marrying Bosniak women (Kremić, 2021). Two Mostar football clubs are symbols of the two major ethnic communities – Velež is supported by Bosniaks and Zrinjski by Croats. Although football fans have had many fights, this is not a representative sample of Mostar population and these clashes do not prevent people of different nations to spend their leisure in the same places. Restaurants, bars, shopping malls, state and city institutions, touristic spots, and many other places are non-segregated. Although there are two ‘ethnic’ theatres in the city (Croatian National Theatre and the Bosniak-dominant National Theatre), they cooperate through institutional and informal connections, which resulted in one joint performance about problems in post-war Mostar. Yet the institutional division of the city, lack of intermarriage, different cultural memory (hence future orientation), voting preferences, and residence patterns (two ethnic parts) still limit full scale interaction

³ As UNESCO claims, the area around Old Bridge in Mostar ‘is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities’ (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2005).

and deeper contacts. Local voices from each community in Mostar can be found in detail elsewhere (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 117–247) and their further listing exceeds the scope of this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Monuments of Mostar during the Austro-Hungarian rule and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia

The only memorial that still testifies to Austro-Hungarian rule is dedicated to soldiers of the

new Empire who died during the military intervention after which Bosnia came under Vienna's authority. It is called *Austrijsko vojno groblje* (Austrian military cemetery) and is located at what was the south entrance to the city (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, ID 41), nowadays the southmost part of the urban zone (Bišće Polje). The memorial complex consists of numerous gravestones and two chapels on the northern and southern parts of the graveyard, but now it has high fences to prevent entrance. Not only Austro-Hungarian soldiers from the 1878 occupation and World War I are buried in this cemetery, but also the Empire officials who

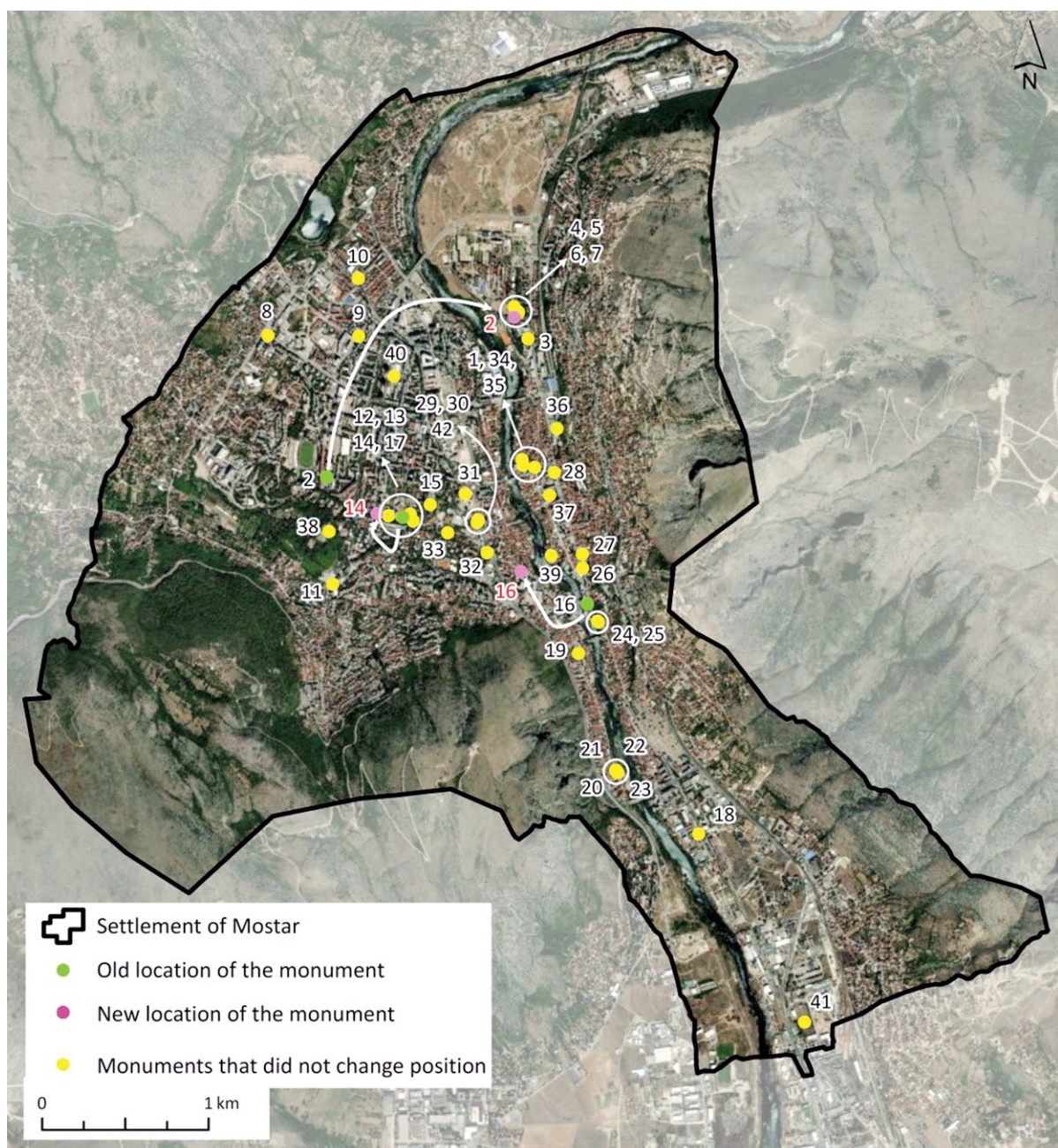


FIGURE 2 Map showing primary and secondary locations of all monuments

spent their work careers in Mostar. Other tombstones that can be found within this complex belong to royal Yugoslav soldiers from the April war of 1941, Yugoslav partisan soldiers from the World War II, Italian and Wehrmacht/German soldiers killed in Herzegovina and Dalmatia, as well as some local civilians. During the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia, this cemetery was renamed as *Novo vojničko groblje* (New Military Cemetery) (Šutalo, 2014). After the formation of the second, socialist Yugoslavia, many gravestones were devastated and the burial of the last soldier of the Yugoslav People's Army

there was in 1952 (Inat, 2021). The location of the graveyard is on the very border between Croat and Bosniak parts of the city, at what was the front line between their two armies, HVO and ARBiH, during the Croat-Bosniak war 1993–1994.

A new tendency among Bosniaks and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards revitalization of the Austro-Hungarian cultural layer is seen in their changing attitudes towards World War I memorials after the end of Yugoslavia. In 2014 in Sarajevo an ultimately unsuccessful initiative for placing a monument to Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie occurred as a reaction to the monu-

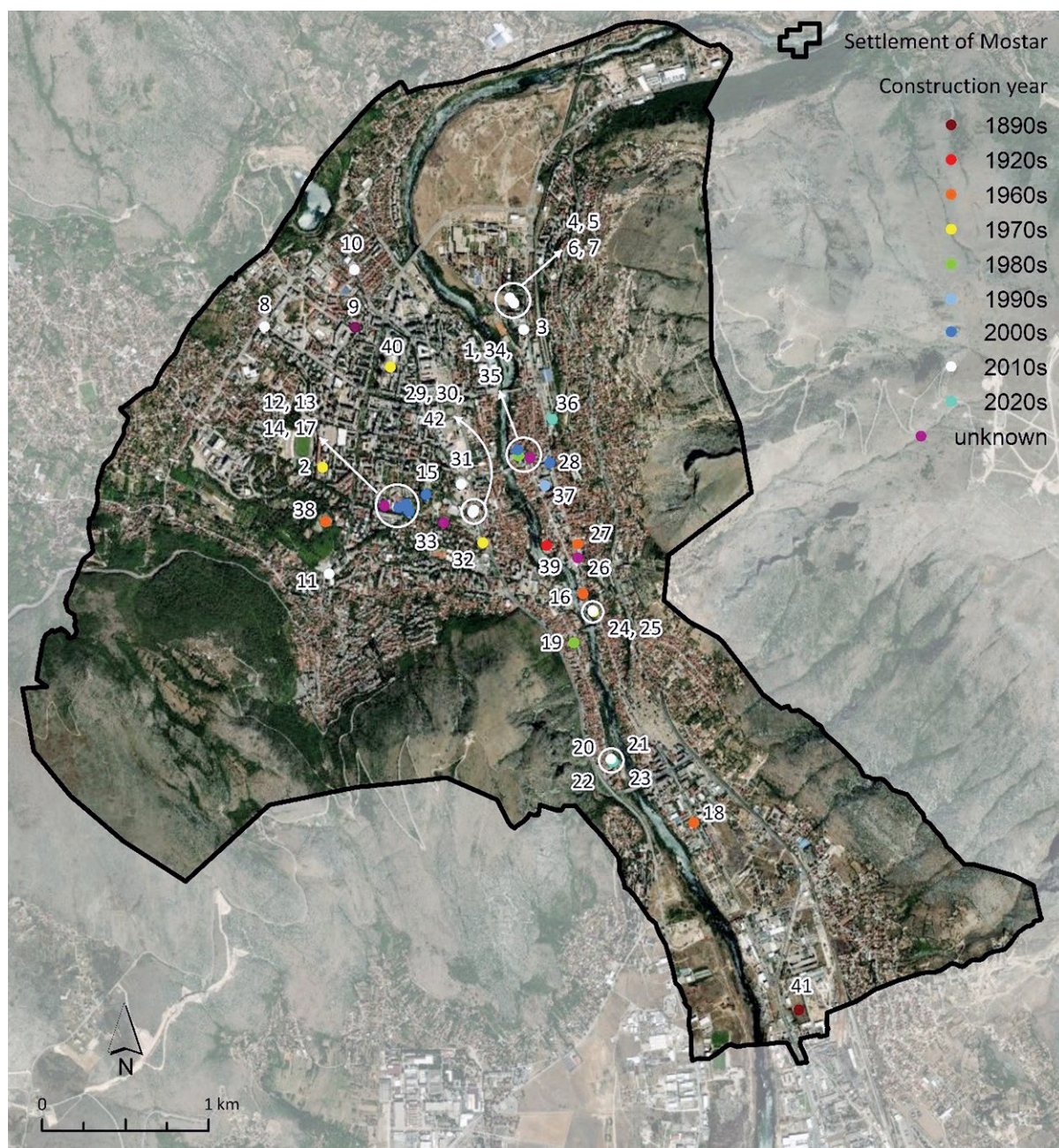


FIGURE 3 Map showing decades when the monuments were built

ment erected the same year in east Sarajevo dedicated to Gavrilo Princip, who assassinated the royal couple (Dražeta, 2021, p. 73). Thus, the centenary of the assassination sparked contradictory commemorations from Bosniaks and Serbs – as had the assassination itself, a century earlier. Criticism of negligence regarding the Austrian cemetery in Mostar was thus part of a narrative based on perceiving the epoch at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century as the ‘golden age’ of modernization and urbanization (Puljić, 2021). Yet as already noted, this ‘Austrian military cemetery’ actually has sediments of the Yugoslav states before, during, and after World War II, since royal and communist soldiers were buried along with members of two fascist armies – German and Italian. People had been buried at this location probably until Mostar got its first public cemetery during socialism, and not only because of political reasons by which the Austro-Hungarian cultural layer was seen as imperial and colonial. Being on the border between Bosniak and Croat parts of the city means this cultural layer has been renovated because of a larger dominant narrative, but since it is located on the edge of the city, it is not as indicative of local rivalries as are some other monuments that lie on the symbolic border.

The only sedimentation from the period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia was a monument dedicated to King Peter I Karađorđević (Fig. 3, ID 39). He had participated in the uprising in 1875–1878 in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Ottoman rule under the pseudonym Petar Mrkonjić in order to be closer to the common people, who regarded him as a ‘relentless fighter’ (Jezernik, 2021, pp. 111–113). The exact name of the monument was not found during the research, but only a photograph where we can notice the years inscribed on the pedestal. The first year, 1875, marked the beginning of the uprising, while the second year (1918) noted the end of World War I and the formation of the new Yugoslav kingdom, headed by King Peter. Similar monuments to the leader of the ‘liberators’ (*oslobodioci*) were built on many key places across the newly formed state. A representative example is a monument to King Peter I in Varcar Vakuf in Western Bosnia, erected in 1925 on the 50th an-

niversary of the 1875 uprising. On this occasion, the town changed its name to Mrkonjić Grad (Jezernik, 2021, p. 133).

Although after the First World I the royal Yugoslav authorities intended to mark the central place in Mostar with a new monument, the regime of the Independent State of Croatia destroyed King Peter’s in 1941. It was never rebuilt during the socialist era. The monument was located at the very centre of the Ottoman urban zone (eastern part), in the *Mejdan* (square) neighbourhood, where one of the oldest mosques (Sinan-pašina) was built at the end of the 15th century. This mosque was demolished in 1949, early in the socialist era, but was rebuilt by the Bosniak community during the second decade of the 21st century (Puce, 2021). Many Bosniaks and Croats in Mostar do not consider royal Yugoslav heritage as an important part of the city’s history and memorialization, which is one of the reasons why it was very difficult to find the only sedimentation from the period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia. However, some members of two communities think that the new wave of modernization during the interwar period in Mostar stopped abruptly (World War II), which explains why there is no other physical trace of that era.

Monuments of Mostar during socialist Yugoslavia

Ten monuments from the period of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1991) are depicted on Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. They mostly reflect state secularism, in which religious practice was not forbidden, but the dominance of any religion was less intensive than in the previous epochs (Hayden & Katić, 2023, p. 144). Hence national heroes from Mostar area were celebrated as individuals who sacrificed themselves for freedom, which is similar to the anti-imperial narrative from the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the political idioms that led to the formation of the joint South Slavic state (Ribić, 2015, pp. 33–44).

It is notable that partisan monuments are well treated in the Bosniak-dominated eastern part of the city, while in the western part they are tar-

gets of constant vandalism, as the example of the cemetery *Partizansko spomen groblje* ('Partisan Memorial Cemetery') shows (Lawler, 2013, p. 43). This is the most important monument from the socialist period, located on the hill Biskupova Glavica at the edge of Bijeli Brijeg neighborhood in Mostar's western part (ID 38). The complex, which consists of over 800 memorial plaques, mosaics, a fountain, and other monumental objects, was damaged during the 1992–1994 war, and then vandalized after the armed conflicts ended. It was restored and opened again in 2005 (Bosna i Hercegovina – Komisija/Povjerenstvo za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika, 2006), but it was vandalized several times during the 2010s (Lawler, 2013, pp. 42–69), and with the greatest devastation in 2022 (Behram & Kešmer, 2022; Niebyl, 2016). References now to this memorial complex are made mainly by Bosniak politicians. Some of them stand for 'pro-Bosnian' politics in which all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should declare themselves as Bosnians and Herzegovinians of three religions (Islam, Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity). These politicians use elements of the Yugoslav heritage, especially *Partizansko groblje in Mostar*, to proclaim the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and compare it with socialist Yugoslavia as a social state model. Yet this idealized picture of the socialist past was not, as many authors claim, a 'tradition of tolerance betrayed,' since there is compelling evidence of previous sedimentations and erosions, in which three ethno-religious communities had periods of social distancing (Hayden & Katić, 2023, pp. 119–121).

This is not the only example of instrumentalizing socialist heritage in Mostar. The monument Spomenik ilegalcu (ID 32) is located in the street Bulevar, which was the front line during the Croat-Bosniak 1993–1994 armed conflict, and is now the symbolic border that divides Mostar into Croat and Bosniak parts. The monument is dedicated to illegal workers who helped the partisan movement during the World War II in Mostar. Hence the monument is locally known as *Tajna ruka* ('Hidden Hand'), because it commemorates people who secretly helped the socialist revolution. Associations whose members

are mainly Bosniak bring flowers and hold yearly small festivities in front of the monument to emphasize the 'anti-fascist' character of Mostar. This memorial had three historical and social layers. The first one was a bench constructed in 1949–1951, which still exists across the road. The second one was a 'pillar' memorial, possibly created in 1955, but it no longer exists, since the third one replaced it in 1976, which is a fountain. The fountain was damaged during the war in the 1990s and reconstructed in 2010 (Lawler, 2024).

Similar political rituals by which the socialist emphasis on 'brotherhood and unity' is being tied with 'pro-Bosnian' state unity are being held under auspices of Bosniak political parties and associations in front of other monuments in Mostar. A monument to Džemal Bijedić, a very prominent and important Muslim/Bosnian socialist politician from Bosnia and Herzegovina, was erected in front of the Mostar University building (western part; Fig. 1, ID 2) (Muzej Hercegovine Mostar, 2021). Although destroyed in 1992, in 2005 it was made again and erected in front of the new Džemal Bijedić University on the location of Sjeverni logor (eastern part; Fig. 2, ID 2), one of the four Austro-Hungarian military barracks. Naming the new university after this famous socialist Muslim politician distinguishes the Bosniak majority University from the Croat-dominated University of Mostar (also the University of Mostar during socialism). Fig. 2 clearly shows how a monument to Džemal Bijedić symbolically 'crossed' the border, although it was physically destroyed. This map also demonstrates how Bosniak heritage encompasses the socialist Yugoslav material culture. Bosniaks in Mostar consider Bosnian and Herzegovinian statehood to be an integral part of the ex-Yugoslav state and support erection of monuments which merge socialist and post-socialist periods. Another example in which symbols of socialist Yugoslavia and Bosniaks/Bosnia and Herzegovina are erected together is a plateau in Donja Mahala (eastern part) next to the elementary school. A monument to the national hero/partisan Mustafa Ćemalović-Ćimba, killed in 1943, was created in 1985 (ID 19), and his bust was restored and returned to its original place in 2021, after the renovation of the whole public area (Lawler, 2024), in which socialist and

post-socialist sedimentations can be clearly seen.

The memorial complex in Musala Square has a plaque dedicated to national heroes Drago Palavestra and Alija Rizikalo (ID 1), respectively Serb and Muslim partisans hanged in Musala Park in 1943. The other part of the complex contains busts of Muslim and Serb partisans Hasan Zahirović Laca and Mladen Balorda (ID 1), who were also shot in 1943. The plaque and monument were raised in 1982 and 1985, damaged over time and renovated in 2004. They are located in eastern part of the urban zone, along with another monument that commemorates friendship between the people of Kuwait and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ID 34), which will be explained further in the next section.

Four busts dedicated to famous Serb and Muslim poets and writers from Mostar – Aleksa Šantić, Osman Đikić, Svetozar Ćorović and Hamza Humo – are in front of the National Theatre (ID 27) next to the military cemetery ‘Šehitluci’⁴ in the neighbourhood Brankovac (eastern part). These were probably erected during the 1960s, but were removed during the 1990s war, and then in 2004 ‘quietly returned to their pre-war pedestals’ (Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 318–321). There is no information on what happened to these busts during the war, but we might presume they were removed by local authorities in order not to be damaged or destroyed during military clashes in 1990s. Since these busts are dedicated to individuals of a different ethnic background (Serbian and Bosniak), they were erected again in order to re-enforce the ‘pro-Bosnian’ political narrative with its nominal multiculturalism. A monument dedicated to the national hero Safet Mujić, (ID 18) a partisan doctor killed in 1942 and after whom the Cantonal Hospital is named, was erected in 1961 in Južni logor.

However, not all monuments reflect Partisan and World War II folklore, but also the regional one. In that sense, the monument *stećak*⁵ in front

of the cultural centre (ID 16) in the eastern part of Mostar is reminiscence of this form of medieval tombstones. Because in modernized forms they are used mostly by Bosniaks, less by Croats, and nominally by Serbs, *stećci* can be treated as the common heritage (Mihajlović, 2018, pp. 677–690). However, in Mostar they can also be treated as exclusively either Bosniak or Croat heritage. A *stećak* monument in front of the cultural centre Mostar was moved in 1963 from Troskot (Mostarsko blato, around 10 kilometres western from the city) to be in front of the Museum of Herzegovina, and then to the present-day location in Stari Grad (Old Town) after the war in 1996 (Grebović et al., 2002). It was first brought from its original location in front of the museum by local socialist authorities to serve as a marker of a common Yugoslav/Bosnian cultural heritage from the medieval period (Fig. 1, ID 16). The second migration of the monument indicates that the formerly common heritage became Bosniak, because the original tombstone was erected in front of the cultural centre in the Bosniak part of the city by local authorities of Istočni Mostar right after the war (Fig. 2, ID 16). Fig. 2 visually shows the migration of the *stećak* monument and helps us understand its complex route from the pre-war location to the post-war one.

The Serb poet Aleksa Šantić also is being nominally celebrated by all three nations, although Serb/Montenegrin forces destroyed Šantić’s monument in 1992 and Croatian authorities renamed his street (Gunzburger Makaš, 2007, pp. 316–324). For their part, Bosniaks added another monument dedicated to Emina, Šantić’s Muslim unrequited love (ID 25), in order to emphasize ‘joint life’ in Mostar. As one media report states, Emina was respected by all nations in Mostar and ‘everyone considered her as their own’ [community member/heritage] (Jelin-Dizdar, 2010).

Such idealizing of inter-ethnic relations from the past is something emphasized mainly by politicians and other people who support the ‘pro-Bosnian’ political narrative. The monument to Aleksa Šantić is located in eastern part of the urban zone (ID 24). The monument was built in 1974, but a discussion about the location of the monument occurred several years before. A local group of ex-

⁴ This complex is a double cemetery where *šehidi* from Mostar who were killed in one of the many Ottoman-Habsburg wars in 18th century and the 1992–1994 war were buried (Kurt, 2023b).

⁵ Singular of ‘*stećci*’ monumental medieval tombstones which can be found mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

perts, an artist, a politician, an official, and a journalist, agreed the monument should be in the part of the city in which Šantić lived and had his daily routines – the neighbourhood Luke. The monument was destroyed by joint Serbian/Montenegrin JNA/VRS forces during the war in 1992, remade by the original Serbian sculptor from Belgrade and placed in 2002 at the same place, near Šantić's house. Not many years later, a new post-socialist sedimentation arose, Šantićeve večeri poezije (Šantić Poetry Nights). This manifestation tends to gather poets, writers, and artists of all ethnic communities who respect Šantić, and was revived as a Serbian Mostarian sedimentation by a local Orthodox Christian priest and Serbian Educational-Cultural Association 'Prosvjeta' (Krulj, 2019).

The last socialist monument is dedicated to a donkey, as a gratitude to this 'noble animal'. According to the local legend, a donkey helped people in Mostar to build their first water supply system several hundred years ago by transporting gold for construction works. Hence a donkey represents a symbol of Herzegovina as a region, but is linked to Dalmatia (present-day Croatia) and the wider Mediterranean, where this hard-working animal is associated with common people, peasants, who struggled all their life (Špago & Vrančić, 2021). The monument was erected the same year as the one to Šantić (1974), in the western part of Mostar (the neighbourhood Centar I, ID 40), and remained in the same place during and after the war. One of reason why the monument was not devastated is most likely because of its non-Oriental, Mediterranean significance in which Herzegovina and Dalmatia are considered as a single Croatian Homeland.

Monuments of the post-socialist period: present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina

The post-socialist era in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the end of the 1992–1995 war, has seen the development of monuments that serve as markers of symbolic borders between Bosniaks and Croats in the city. Almost all of them can be traced according to their function, while shape and design remain in the background. Thirty monuments from the post-socialist peri-

od are shown on Fig. 3. The monuments reflecting Bosniak/Croat narratives are indicated on Fig. 4. The differences in attitudes towards monuments and memorialization of public space between Mostarian Bosniaks and Croats are the same as differences between Bosniaks and Croats from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina who settled in Mostar during the war. On the other hand, regional cultural similarities between local Bosniaks and Croats exist as stereotypes, notions and humour towards Bosniak and Croat populations who came during the 1990s war (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 143–157, 181–191).

As parallelism continues to be part of everyday life, so it is with monuments dedicated to the two armies from the 1992–1994 war. They are either dedicated to *šehidi* (Martyrs of Islam) of the overwhelmingly Bosniak ARBiH or to *branitelji* (defenders) of the overwhelmingly Croat HVO. ARBiH defended BiH, while HVO defended the Croat Homeland (*Domovina*); these two categories are discussed further below. Generally, HVO monuments have known authors, but ARBiH memorials do not. What is common to the sites dedicated to both armies is that they were mostly financed by local associations. Some of the monuments are dedicated to the fighters and/or killed civilians from a particular neighbourhood, such as Donja Mahala and Carina in Bosniak-majority eastern part (ID 21; ID 35), or Rudnik and Cim in the western part with the Croat majority (ID 10; ID 8). The only monument dedicated to *borci* (fighters) of the overwhelmingly Serb-majority Vojska Republike Srpske with the majority (VRS) from Mostar and its surroundings in the Neretva Valley area is located in Istočni Mostar municipality in Republika Srpska, in the village of Zijemlje. This location was part of Mostar municipality during socialist Yugoslavia, but during the 1992–1995 war became part of what was then called Srpski Mostar (Serb Mostar), which was renamed Istočni Mostar in 2005.

In cases of competing border claims between the Croat and Bosniak territories, the monuments become contested, as shown in the example of the monument to ARBiH fighters and defenders of Mostar and the state of BiH with

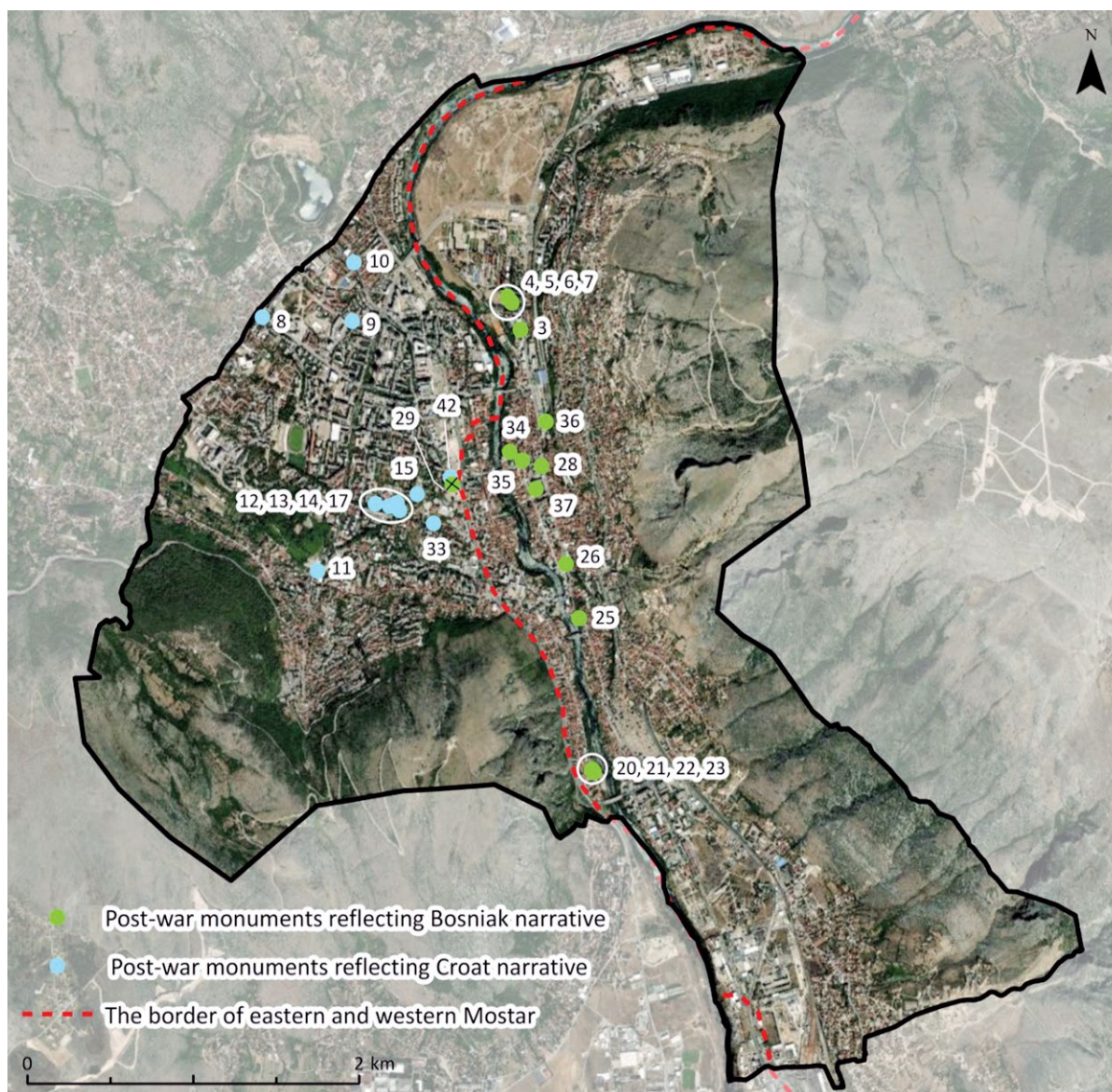


FIGURE 4 Map showing locations of all post-war monuments

which this article began (ID 29). This memorial in the form of a great white lily, the Bosniak national symbol, was erected in 2012 on the Croat part of the main road Bulevar and next to Španski/Španjolski trg (Spanish Square) (Al Jazeera Media Network, 2013) but severely damaged in an explosion in 2013. The memorial was probably targeted because it is perceived as unacceptable heritage within the official narrative of Herzegovinian Croats, who think it was their organization and logistics that led to the defence Mostar in 1992 against Serbs, not the Bosniak ones. Right next to the damaged ARBiH monument stands a HVO memorial in the form of a stećak replica (ID 42), erected in the same year as its Bosniak counterpart, in 2012, a few months

earlier before the Bosniak one. The Croat stone monument replaced a wooden cross that was raised in 1996 in honour of eight HVO soldiers who died in this place. Although it is on Croat territory, the new stone memorial was targeted at in 2012 not long after it was erected. This 'war of monuments' in front of the Mostar City Hall (shown on Fig. 4) launched public discussion on whether urban planning permits for both monuments were issued, and whether the location near Spanish Square on the symbolic border between the parts of the city with the Croat majority and the Bosniak majority is the right place for having this type of monument (Šutalo, 2012).

Right next to these two opposing monuments there are two memorials that have never been

damaged. They are dedicated to fallen fighters and civilians of other ethnic communities than those living in Mostar, who either lost their lives during the 1992–1994 war or made contributions to the city's post-war rebuilding. The most visible one is located at Španjolski trg in front of Mostar Gymnasium on Bulevar, the main street (ID 31). This monument was erected by city authorities and dedicated by the Croat mayor, the Bosniak member of the Presidency of BiH, international community representatives and the Spanish king, in 2012 in the honour of 21 soldiers who died as members of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on behalf of the 20th anniversary of Spanish troops' arrival to the country (Bljesak.info, 2012b). The square, which is basically an Austro-Hungarian sedimentation (Gymnasium) was upgraded by the post-socialist sedimentation which tells a similar story about foreign soldiers who intervened in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries. Another such memorial, located nearby in front of the Mostar City Hall, was also raised in 2012 in honour of Hungarian soldiers who participated in Mostar's Old Bridge reconstruction from 1997 until 1999 (ID 30) (Bljesak.info, 2012a). A 1999 monument to three Italian journalists killed in 1994 in the eastern part of the city (ID 37) is in the form of two plaques in the neighbourhood Carina (Redakcija federalna.ba, 2022a). This monument is not as visible as the other two nearby, since it is located in the backyard of a residential building block.

In the former Austro-Hungarian military barracks Sjeverni logor, near Džemal Bijedić University of Mostar in the northmost part of the urban zone, there are four ARBH monuments, which can be analysed as parts of one complex with multiple layers. The first is a plaque, dedicated in 2011 to the commander of the 1st Mostar brigade, Midhat Hujdur Hujka (ID 3), who died with his brothers in arms during combat around Sjeverni logor in 1993 (STAV, 2020). The second layer is dedicated to the 441st motorized brigade from Mostar and the 4th light brigade from Konjic on one side of the grey mar-

ble tombstone, and to the 4th Muslim brigade, raised in Mostar, on the other (ID 4; ID 7). This monument's first side was created in 2017 (Udruženje Četvrta muslimanska slavna brigada, 2017), while the other side was inscribed in 2018 (STAV, 2020). The third monument was erected in 2014 and is dedicated to *šehidi* from the eastern Herzegovinian town of Gacko who died during the defence of Mostar and Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995 (ID 5). Next to these is the fourth one, raised in 2019 to *šehidi* from another town in eastern Herzegovina, Nevesinje (ID 6) (STAV, 2020). The monuments Gacko and Nevesinje were built in the form of *türbe*, Ottoman style tombs, and are located apart from other ARBH memorials within university property. In order to legitimize their positions, political elites of Mostarian Bosniaks from the socialist era instrumentalized their compatriots from the 1992–1994 war (Bjelaković & Strazzari, 1999, p. 92). However, intra-group divisions are still present between Bosniaks who came from eastern Herzegovina (Gacko and Nevesinje) and Bosniaks who already lived in Mostar (Dražeta, 2021, pp. 181–191). This is also the case with other separate war memorials to Bosniak fighters from and out of Mostar.

Donja Mahala neighbourhood, like Sjeverni logor, also has four local ARBH monuments which create one complex. The initiative for making these memorials came from the local association of citizens, *Sinovi Mahale* (Sons of the Mahala). The first monument, a drinking fountain, was made in 2010, and dedicated to *šehidi* who served in the army and police (ID 20) (Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, Medžlis islamske zajednice Mostar, 2010). The second one was dedicated in 2023 to the same fighters (ID 21), has a white lily on the top as a Bosniak national symbol (Bljesak.info, 2023). The third monument, placed in 2022, is in the form of two plaques commemorating the Bosniak national hero Midhat Hujdur Hujka and his fighters and 4th corps of the ARBiH (ID 22) (Mostarski.info, 2022). While the term national hero (*narodni heroj*) was extensively used regard to Partisans in WW2, it has not been used often in memorialization of the 1990s war. A memo-

rial room forms the fourth monument in Donja Mahala (ID 23). It was opened in 2018 as 'a room of memory for younger generations, not a room of hate' (Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, Muftijstvo mostarsko, 2019).

These monuments in Donja Mahala illustrate the memorialization of urban space in some Bosniak-majority Mostar neighbourhoods, where the post-socialist sedimentation is completely oriented towards memorialization of the 1992–1994 war. In the same neighbourhood, not far away from these ARBH monuments, there is a socialist sedimentation, a monument to the national hero Mustafa Ćemalović Ćimba (ID 19). This sedimentation is being overlain with the post-socialist symbols of Bosniaks and of Bosnia and Herzegovina, reflecting the efforts of post-Yugoslavia Bosniak political elites to promote 'pro-Bosnian' politics, a unitary state of Bosnia, as an ideological successor of 'brotherhood and unity' from the Yugoslav era.

Another example of socialist and post-socialist intersedimentation can be found in the neighbourhood of Carina in eastern Mostar, where the local ARBH monument, a plaque, was placed in 2006 in the wall of the socialist department store 'Razvitak'. It was the place where the national heroes Ahmet Hadžić Ahmo and Salko Repak Braco in June 1992 raised the flag of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ID 28) (Mostar.live, 2023), used by Bosniaks during the war. Again, extensive use the term national hero brings WWII and 1990s war traditions together. The second local ARBiH monument in Carina, to six lilies and to šehidi (martyrs) instead of national heroes, is a few blocks away from Razvitak facility, but there is no year of its placement (ID 35), nor any sedimentation from the socialist era.

In the eastern part of the city there are two monuments hidden from central positions within the locations where they were erected. The first is dedicated to members of the pan-Islamist organization 'Mladi muslimani' (Young Muslims), who were killed in the war. The memorial is located in the corner of military cemetery Šehitluci in the neighbourhood Brankovac (ID 26), but its year of erection is unknown. How-

ever, the monument was built on a less visible place where Ottoman and post-socialist sedimentations are located (double military cemetery), since many controversies are tied with this Islamicist organization.

The second nearly hidden monument commemorates the friendship between the people of Kuwait and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was built in 2001. It is located in the corner of Musala Park (ID 34), and manifests a post-socialist sedimentation that intertwines with the existing socialist one, which includes plaque to national heroes Drago Palavestra and Alija Rizikalo and busts of partisans Hasan Zahirović Laca and Mladen Balorda (ID 1). Creating a Kuwait-Bosnian friendship monument emphasizes the role which Kuwait had in reconstruction of many mosques and other religious objects throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war. Such religiously-oriented post-socialist sedimentation was given less visible place than the nearby socialist ones, which are part of the socialist secularscape.

The central HVO monument to Mostar's 'branitelji' who died during the war is located at Rondo Square (western part, ID 12) and was opened in 2004. A reconstruction took place in 2017, when a fountain was added (Bljesak.info, 2017b). This monument manifests a post-socialist sedimentation that replaced the old socialist one. The socialist-era youth centre (Dom omladine) after the war became the Hrvatski dom (Croatian Cultural Centre) 'Herceg Stjepan Kosača', while Rondo was given a Croat prefix and now it is called *Trg hrvatskih velikana (Rondo)* (Croatian Great Men Square (Rondo)). In front of the centre there are two more monuments dedicated to notable historical figures that the Croat ethnic community treats as its own members. The one on the right side of Hrvatski dom was dedicated in 2005 to the medieval Queen Katarina Kosača (ID 13). She is perceived as Bosnian ruler but also as part of the Croat cultural tradition. The second monument, also placed in 2005 but on the left side of the centre, is dedicated to the medieval poet Marko Marulić (Fig. 1, ID 14). In 2017 his plaque was moved behind Mostar's public utility company (Fig. 2, ID

14), although it was stated that the monument 'is safe and undergone conservation work' (Bljesak.info, 2017a). Fig. 2 clearly demonstrates this monument's migration. A stećci replica (ID 17) located behind the cultural centre Kosača has no information about its significance, neither the year of foundation. It was certainly erected after the 1992–1994 war to complete Croat sedimentation and erosion of the socialist secular-scape in the space around Rondo square, which has remained a gathering place, but mainly for members of the Croat ethnic community. Croats in Mostar do not consider socialist heritage as the most important one, leaving it to erode and replace it with the post-socialist sedimentation (the 1990s war monuments).

In the nearby neighbourhood of Balinovac next to the Mostar Cathedral (western part) another HVO monument was raised in 2017, commemorating 'branitelji' from the 4th battalion 'Tihomir Mišić' (ID 11). The main relief on the white marble monument is of angels who hold a warrior (Hercegovina.info, 2017). Although it not in a central place in the city, this large-scale monument is widely visible, next to the city's main Roman Catholic church. This is also the case of a large metal cross dedicated to 'branitelji' and civilians killed in Vukovar (Croatia) in 1991 (ID 9), located in western part of the city at Zgoni neighbourhood. In 2019 a new cross replaced an earlier wooden one that had become damaged over time (Bljesak.info, 2019). There is no information on when the older cross was erected, but it was certainly done after the war as a visual representation of unity between Croats from Herzegovina (Mostar) with Croats of Sr(ij)em (Vukovar), Croatia who died in 1991.

Many HVO monuments emphasize the role of local units during the war in Mostar. One such memorial is located on the border of Mostar urban zone, between the neighbourhoods of Rudnik, Bijeli Brijeg, and Vihovići. The monument, with Glagolitic and Latin inscriptions, and combining black and white marble, was raised in 2013 to commemorate 'branitelji' who fought in the 3rd battalion from Cim neighbourhood (ID 8) (Bljesak.info, 2013). A tendency to bring Old Slavic and modern Latin inscriptions together

reveals an effort to show Croats as the oldest ethnic community in Herzegovina and the wider area. Another local HVO monument is dedicated to 'branitelji' from Rudnik (ID 10). The monument was raised in 2016 in the form of a cross imprinted in marble 'as a symbol of peace' (Crkva na kamenu, 2016), while a plaque with the names of fallen fighters from the 2nd Rudnik battalion was added in 2023.

Two monuments were also built to commemorate fallen Croat fighters and civilians who lost their lives during Mostar defence against Serb forces, in 1992 (ID 33). One of them, with no year of foundation indicated, lies in Kantarevac (Liska) cemetery near Rondo square, where the first civilian and military victims of the 1992 war between JNA/VRS and HVO/ARBH were buried together, mostly Bosniaks and Croats, but also a few Serbs. The graveyard on that place manifests many sedimentations in Mostar, since it was used from the late Ottoman through Austro-Hungarian, royal and socialist Yugoslav periods, until 1954 when the socialist authorities transformed it into a park. However, the beginning of the war in 1992 made this urban space a cemetery again. In 1997 one Bosniak civilian was shot and several were injured when Herzegovinian Croat special forces opened fire during a mass visit to this location by Bosniaks on the second day of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha (Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini, Medžlis islamske zajednice Mostar, 2011). Media reports about transforming Kantarevac cemetery into a park once again by placing a new central memorial in it to all victims of the war in Mostar led to further public disputes (Redakcija federalna.ba, 2022b).

The second joint monument in the eastern part of Mostar is dedicated to Bosniak and Croat civilians shot in Uborak and Sutina in 1992 (ID 36) by JNA troops. A plaque was created in 2021 in the Bejrut residential block at Carina neighbourhood (Bljesak.info, 2021). However, places where more than 100 civilians lost their lives in 1992 are marked with monuments in Uborak, Sutina and Zalik, Mostar's suburban and urban areas. This situation started discussion about building a new central memorial to all victims

of the 1992–1994 war in Mostar (Augustinović, 2022), as in the case of the monument at Kantarevac (Liska) cemetery. Until one single monument to all victims in Mostar is erected, these two monuments will remain the only joint Croat-Bosniak memorials in the city, regardless of the political and everyday parallelism between the two communities. The only monument to all killed in the previous war in Bosnia and Herzegovina exists in Vareš, a small town in central Bosnia.

A monument in the western part of Rondo square (Zrinjevac Park), dedicated to the late actor Bruce Lee (ID 15) was raised in 2005 with anti-nationalist intentions by the members of the association *Urbani pokret Mostar* (Urban movement Mostar). They explained that the popular martial artist and actor was not a member of any major ethnic community in Mostar and thus could be a new symbol in the divided city (Car, 2005). However, the monument was vandalized several times then restored and returned in 2013. Local Mostar residents, whether Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs, did not pay great attention to Bruce Lee memorial, and most of them think that its placement in the central city park was an effort by a small group of people. Locals also condemned vandalization of the statue but had no emotional tie with it. However, this post-socialist sedimentation in the form of a non-ethnic memorial to a non-citizen of BiH was stolen and found in pieces in the beginning of 2024, after which Lee's family decided to move the rest of the monument to Seattle, the United States, instead of returning it to the Mostar location. It can be said that the removal of the Bruce Lee monument is an act of erosion not just in material sense, but also on the symbolic level. Members of *Urbani pokret* are no longer present in the public sphere and do not try to build Mostarian local urban identity, while people's reception of the monument was not as expected, since the ethnic identity based on the division of the urban space remained the most important one, whether Croat or Bosniak. The American Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed placing a small Statue of Liberty on the place of Bruce Lee's monument, but as of late

2024 the final decision has not been made yet (Top Portal, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Mostar is not the exception compared to other post-conflict cities. In those places, material component of the memorialization has a key role in identity-building processes, e.g., 'peace walls' in Belfast (Geoghegan, 2015) and 'green line' in Nicosia (Bollens, 2001, pp. 183–187), designed to 'calm' tensions between different communities. Urban planning in Jerusalem controlled by Israeli government expropriated land in favour of 'green area zoning' and one community dominance (Bollens, 2001, pp. 178–183). The Berlin Wall divided West and East Berlin but also two different cultural memories until 1991 (Borneman, 1992). The research results show that monuments have an important role in identity-building processes as collective representations, and thus also as social sedimentations and erosions of certain communities in different historical and political contexts. In Mostar, all of the self-deafferenting yet interrelated and interdependent communities have left and are leaving 'tangible markers of their presence' (Katić & Hayden, 2024). Urban development in Mostar throughout centuries thus reflects changing patterns of ethno-religious dominance and different kinds of social sedimentation and erosion. During the Ottoman period Islam was prevalent, as was Roman Catholicism in the Austro-Hungarian and Orthodox Christianity in the royal Yugoslav era. This domination was manifested mainly in the placement and distribution of religious structures (Hayden et al., 2024). However, monuments, objects that commemorate a specific event, were not so much present in these political and social systems, in the way that they were during the socialist Yugoslavia. That state promulgated the ideology of secular brotherhood and unity and made non-sacralised monuments to the victorious past that would remind people of how different ethnic communities used to live peacefully. The 1990s war changed these unifying assumptions, so

that Bosniaks began to instrumentalize them as part of their political narrative (Bosniaks), while Croats sought to obscure them. However, both communities strive to link their heritage to religion (Hayden & Katić, 2021). Socialist secular memorials are replaced, overlain or intertwined with the post-war religiously-linked sedimentations. For Bosniaks, these include monuments dedicated to *šehidi*, fallen soldiers, and civilians who died for unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also gratitude memorials (Kuwait-Bosnian friendship). For Croats, the defenders of the Croat Homeland are always marked by Roman Catholic imagery and symbols. The example of Partizansko groblje which was vandalized several times shows that the last socialist sedimentation is almost completely replaced by the post-socialist one in which monuments are dedicated to *branitelji*, and civilians, who died for one single Croat Homeland.

Monuments from the post-socialist period in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina thus strengthen the territorialization of ethno-religious dominance of Croats and Bosniaks as two major communities in different parts of Mostar. These memorials serve as markers of symbolic borders in Mostar on the former front line, and border crossing can become contested, even dangerous. Hence memorialization of urban space in Mostar marks pathways which the Croat and Bosniak communities want to follow in the future. Sometimes these pathways meet, which the examples of monuments in the form of medieval tombstones *stećci* show. However, it is clear

that Mostar has two primary parallel cultural memories regarding socialist and post-socialist (post-war) memorials, while the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and royal Yugoslav sedimentations are still more or less visible regarding city's religious objects, infrastructure, and other forms of urban development.

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