Sarajevo's Ambivalent Memoryscape: Spatial stories of peace and conflict

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Abstract:

This article focuses on Sarajevo's memoryscape to investigate the ambiguous nature of artefacts of commemoration. Suggesting that memorials impact upon the ways in which people relate to the past and future, the article suggests that they represent important platforms on which different versions of peace and social justice are implicitly narrated and discussed. Depending on the artist/designer, the location, the shape, the audience and the surrounding socio-political discourses, memorials inspire and transform stories of war and peace. The controversies around the Sarajevo roses or monuments dedicated to the international community in Sarajevo mirror controversial societal debates around the nature and politics of peace(building). Conflict and contestation can thus be read through closer investigation of the maps of meaning underpinning the commemoration of certain events. Due to their ambiguous nature, monuments can be used as a platform for the constant transformation of discourses of peace into conflict, and vice versa.

Keywords: memory, space, stories, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo, ambivalence, peacebuilding, monuments, memoryscape

Introduction

Sarajevo is often considered a cosmopolitan city and, as many other post-conflict cities claim, on the way to modernity. Uncountable shopping malls are mushrooming every year, re-locating the centres and peripheries of the city and creating an impression of a smooth transition from the shambles of war towards a more prosperous future. In a way, an implicit notion of neo-liberal progress through the modernisation and marketization of the city can be read into Sarajevo's architecture, which has, however, recently been contested as a result of citizens' protests against the poor living standards in the country (Jansen, 2014). When taking a closer look, it becomes obvious that the city is not only shaped by what it aims to be like in the future, but also by an increasing visibility of its past. Not least the debates about the centenary of World War 1, in which Sarajevo plays a particular role through the assassination of Franz Ferdinand on the famous Latinska Cuprija (Latin Bridge), are an illustration of the striking importance of how cities commemorate their history in relation to peace and conflict. We can find an emerging memoryscape by taking a closer look at the urban planning of the city as well as the ways in which people relate to and behave around crucial sites, monuments, squares and bridges (cf. Budruk et al., 2008). Practices of commemoration indeed relate to various moments in Sarajevo's past, including the two world wars, the Cold War as well as what is often referred to as the "recent war", relating to the atrocities committed in the early 1990s and, more specifically, the siege of Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995. At the same time, such sites of commemoration are not just neutral spaces, but they

become part of wider socio-political discourses and reflect the extent to which memory is contested through its continuous reactivation and discursive transformation (Steiner Editor and Zelizer, 1995).

Against this background, this article investigates the eclectic and controversial nature of Sarajevo's memoryscape, arguing that the very controversies around spaces of commemoration are at the basis of their ambivalence of meaning. Their significance is thus not clear, but various sets of actors contextually establish and continuously challenge it through the narratives they construct. Through these unsecured meanings of memoryscapes, the latter can act as transformers of societal discourses and platforms of dialogue. Stories are able to reinforce dominant narratives, but can also embody resistance and agency through attempts to challenge such narratives. The flexible nature of stories thus potentially transforms narratives of peace and peacebuilding into discourses and stories around conflict, but also opens a potential of re-configuring narratives of enmity into discourses around the potentials of peace. In the context of post-war Sarajevo, the reading of the city's memoryscape allows for an analysis of the interplay between different social groups, and also between actors considered 'local' and 'international'. Indeed, a close reading of monuments reflects the extent to which the design of the peace process is driven by a multiplicity of actors whose interests can be spatially read. In that respect, the monuments analysed in this article are of interest given they reflect underlying power dynamics as inherent in the peacebuilding project. They represent contestations about who should own and design the peace, locally and internationally (cf. Kappler, 2014). Making a strong reference to the *spatial* notion of memory through narration, this article therefore looks at the manifestation of stories of commemoration in space. The article will suggest that memory has to be integral part of local and international peacebuilding as stories of commemoration project contested, but essential visions of how the past impacts upon the type and nature of peace that is to be constructed. Practices of commemoration embody conflicts about the roots of the conflict itself as well as associated social roles and responsibilities of those in post-war contexts. If we understand peacebuilding as a practice aiming at the reconfiguration of social roles, peacebuilding practices, both local and international, have to engage with such contested roles embedded in commemoration in order to fully grasp the basis on which the transformation of social relations can take place. Memory, as a mediator of social relations, can play an important role in the ways in which societies relate to the past and build peace on this basis. This is not to reduce memory to what is geographically visible, but to use the visible as one way of accessing public imaginations. It is an attempt to read conflict, agency and power as spatial, discursive practices. At the same time, this article suggests that we should not consider memory as a purely localised practice, but to acknowledge its internationalisation in the emergence of complex networks between local, national and international memory agents.

In terms of research methodology, apart from an analysis of written sources, the stories and narratives presented in this article were mainly gathered through observational techniques (Watson and Till, 2010) as well as interviews and conversations with people from and based in Sarajevo. Such conversations took place in both formal and informal settings and by no means represent the full repository of stories around any given monuments. Instead, my ambition was to uncover the key aspects around which certain memory artefacts are contested, and thus to gather competing stories from a variety of sources. This is based on the assumption that we can never obtain and research a full repository of stories as it is continuously changing. It is against this background that an analysis of particularly pressing and popular stories around monuments can shed light on the political controversies of memory *at the time*. Interviews with key actors in the public sphere, such as civil society

activists, journalists, urban designers, or 'memory entrepreneurs' more generally (cf. Conway, 2008), therefore highlight the controversies circulating in the political sphere at a given moment in time.

Power, Stories and Ambivalent Memoryscapes

Memoryscapes can be said to be particular clusters of spaces and locales which have a particular significance in the ways in which people relate to and narrate the past. Butler (2006) refers to them as "landscape interpreted and imagined using the memories of others", while Phillips and Reyes refer to memoryscapes as landscapes of memorial practices, often transgressing national boundaries and situated in a globalised frame of reference (Phillips and Reyes, 2011: 2). They see a memoryscape "as a complex and vibrant plane upon which memories emerge, are contested, transform, encounter other memories, mutate, and multiply" Phillips and Reyes, 2011: 14). Like spaces in more general terms, which, according to Massey (2005: 9) are a "product of interrelations", memoryscapes are relational, given they acquire their meanings through social discourses and practices. Such practices are not only the product of relations between people acting around those artefacts of memory, but also of the relations between people and the site in question itself. Indeed, as Tuan (1974: 4) has suggested, through topophilia, we can discover an 'affective bond between people and place or setting'. In this context, it is important to note that spaces always carry meaning through the inscription and reconfiguration of identities in space (Grodach, 2002).

There are a number of factors in the respective artefact of memory itself, which inspire the type of narratives that develop around them. These include

- Design: It is in the power of the designer to make the selection of events depicted, their specificity, their weighting, their arrangement and so forth. The designer of the monument, usually in cooperation with the funder, is thus a powerful actor in setting the tone for a particular narrative of commemoration (cf. Young, 1992).
- Location and size: The location of an artefact, often decided upon by the municipality or city administration, determines the audience, the visibility and the relation to the city as a whole. In this respect, the decision to place a monument in a more hidden corner of a city may impede its power, while a central location might trigger controversies in the city, particularly in post-conflict contexts. In a similar vein, the size of a particular monument can be read as an indicator of its potential to create controversies as well as its impact upon public discourses (cf. Leib, 2002).
- Timing: The timing of the placement of a monument, for instance, can be crucial. If an artefact is placed when public debates around commemoration are at their peak, they may have a particularly strong impact.
- Memorial practices: The ways in which people behave around monuments can be viewed as crucial for their meaning in a wider context. Do people notice the historical meaning of a site, or do they ignore it? Do they talk about it? Do they avoid the place? These are exemplary questions, which are relevant for the ways in which contestations around the meanings of monuments play out and translate into socio-political discourse and practice. In this context, Halbwachs (1997) highlights the collective experience of remembrance, which only adopts its full meaning in the process during the course of which historical events are publicly commemorated, in diverse shapes and forms.

However, this is not to argue that once a meaning of a place is established, it is static of fixed. Instead, I want to argue that, although there is a tendency of hegemonic narratives to reinforce themselves, memoryscapes are subject to continuous challenge by surrounding discourses and stories. Places do inspire specific narratives, but these adapt to changing external circumstances and the users and audiences operating in those. They act as channels, platforms and transformers of narratives as well as canvasses on which social discourses can be inscribed. This is opposed to the notion of monuments as didactic elements, which teach the audience about history rather than opening up channels of contestation (Young, 1992: 274).Viewing monuments as platforms for the construction of stories and narratives helps understand the relations of power and resistance associated with memorial practice. As Ewick and Silbey (2003: 1329) argue, stories are a way of extending the spatial and temporal validity of individual accounts into collective discourses through a shared narrative. In that sense, stories communicate the politics of peace in that they reflect a form of social action on the one hand (Austin, 1962), and are inherently dialogical on the other hand (Steinberg, 1999). The narratives developing around the meaning of artefacts of memory thus represent a microcosm of the wider politics of peace in that they reflect underlying needs, grievances and otherwise unarticulated political agendas. Stories reflect the everydayness of monuments through their re-presentation in discourse. They are an attempt to reclaim informal agency in a seemingly formalised peacebuilding landscape. De Certeau (1984: 68) refers to this form of agency as the "tales of the unrecognized", pointing to the agency of 'ordinary people' to construct their own counter-narratives to official discourses. Changes in memory narratives as transformations in stories are manifestations of meaning-making, often characterised by "unresolved ambiguities", thus open to continuous challenge and modification (Ewick and Silbey, 2003: 1344). Young, for instance, points to this ambiguity in referring to the case study of German monuments to the Holocaust, highlighting the contested and ambiguous nature of German memory (Young, 1992). In this context, Young casts light on the emergence of counter-monuments, challenging official and often state-sponsored artefacts of commemoration (Young, 1992). This can be seen as an attempt to transform the nature and representation of memory for social purposes. To speak in Latour's terms, monuments can be considered mediators, which are potentially transformative in nature (Latour, 2007). Latour (2007: 39) suggests that mediators "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning of the elements they are supposed to carry," so the meaning a designer inscribes onto a monument is not necessarily the same as the meaning diverse audiences that encounter the monument will narrate. It is exactly this transformative potential of monuments as mediators that allows for narrative ambiguity to develop. Ambiguity can indeed be said to be an inherent element of many stories which resist closure and therefore leave open the possibility of divergent interpretation (Davis, 2002: 13).

Monuments themselves are never fully in the position to provide full closure of narratives around them and are therefore subject to continuous ambiguous interpretation on the part of their audiences. In this respect, the meanings of a monument can never be fully controlled from higher levels of hierarchy, but instead are subject to constant challenge, modification and resistance. Interpretations of meaning are time- and context dependent. In that sense, the changing dynamics of the surrounding environment of the monument, such as changing dynamics in conflict lines, impact upon how the ambivalent messages of the monument are interpreted for discourses of present and future. Stories are strategic in terms of how they inspire certain narratives through tactics of omission, selection, choice of language and so forth. This is what Davis (2002: 12) calls "emplotment" as an attempt to construct particular relationships between events and a wider community. In that sense, stories can reinforce hegemonic discourses through the perpetuation of dominant narratives (Davis, 2002: 25). At

the same time, stories have the often overlooked potential to challenge those very narratives in terms of subverting them (also termed 'subversive stories' (Ewick and Silbey, 1995)). We can thus read peacebuilding agency through an investigation of stories around memoryscapes, in the light of which elements of commemoration are emphasised, which elements are excluded or silenced and which plots are constructed to convey particular political and social messages.

Against this background, the meanings that memoryscapes take on are by no means fully and unambiguously inscribed in the site itself, but determined by a number of contextual factors, which impact upon the ways in which societies relate to them through their stories. The fact that memoryscapes become part of a socio-political controversial and fluid landscape in turn results in multiple discursive meanings. In that sense, memoryscapes hold public memory narratives on the one hand, but crucially, they also offer the potential of overcoming engrained narratives through a reinterpretation of history. In this context, de Certeau (1984: 85) suggests that "[m]emory mediates spatial transformations. In the mode of the "right point in time" (kairos), it produces a founding rupture or break." Not least to the ambivalent nature and therefore the multiple layers of meaning, which can be attached to and detached from memoryscapes, can they be used to reinforce antagonistic narratives, or alternatively to challenge those in favour or more converging narratives.

The power constellations inherent in the shaping of memory and memorialisation are constantly changing, yet I argue that power distributions in the political space can be read through memoryscapes on which they leave their traces. Those memoryscapes are visualisations (of many other representations) of socio-political conflict, and therefore spatial configurations of power at different levels. Lived memory is one way of accessing and understanding prevailing power dynamics in their ability to privilege certain layers of meaning over others, while silencing particular sets of memory if they risk challenging dominant narratives. In this context, it must not be forgotten that memory never develops in isolation, but is always tied to institutions and practices, such as the state, external intervention, social activism, underground resistance and so forth. If we read memory, we read a context of domination, acceptance, co-optation and resistance. This may happen in subtle terms (Scott, 1990) and often not be explicitly visible to the external observer, or even the affected people themselves.

Memory and Peacebuilding in Sarajevo

Peacebuilding is widely considered as a highly structured model for addressing conflict. As conceptualised by the United Nations (UN), it is the effort to rebuild "the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife" and to build "bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Given the comprehensive nature of peacebuilding operations as well as the fact that it addresses not only elites, but particularly grassroots actors and societies, a wide variety of actors are implicated in its operation on the ground. Bosnia-Herzegovina[1] is perhaps one of the cases with the strongest presence of international peacebuilding organisations present on the ground.

After a violent war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with Sarajevo being under siege from 1992-1996, isolated from outside supplies and subject to massive shelling and bombing, peacebuilding did not only have to deal with the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure of the city, but

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[1] In this paper also referred to as Bosnia or BiH.

mainly had to engage in rebuilding relationships between the different ethnic groups in the city (cf. Belloni, 2001). Sarajevo had long been known as a mixed city in the larger context of Yugoslavia (cf. Gallagher, 1997: 71) and was now having to face physical and social segregation between Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. A large presence of international institutions, including a High Representative (nominated by international actors), the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Bank and increasingly led by the European Union (EU), has, in cooperation with a variety of non-governmental organisations, brought about various approaches to dealing with the traumatising past the city had to go through. However, the question of guilt and responsibility has never been fully closed, while there is still disagreement between the different ethnic groups about the ways in which the past should be dealt with (journalist, personal interview, Sarajevo, 2013). This is linked to debates around the release of former war criminal Momcilo Krajisnik, which was celebrated by some and feared by others, or the arrest of Jovan Divjak in 2011. Again, Divjak, one of the principal military commanders in the defence of Sarajevo, is celebrated as a hero in the city of Sarajevo, but viewed as a war criminal by many Serbs from outside the city (Chottin and Izambert, 2010: 82). Such debates reflect the extent to which peacebuilding so far has been unable to overcome narrative divisions in Bosnian society, while such divisions are reproduced in Sarajevo, a microcosm of such divisions. Indeed, the urban landscape of Sarajevo is scarred from the war, and traces of violence are visible in almost all parts of the city. In addition, despite a number of international returnee projects that were meant to facilitate people's return to their houses, Sarajevo has not returned to its urban landscape to the extent to which it was mixed before the war, while 'structural discrimination' is still prevalent (Stefansson, 2004 : 176).

In that respect, the ways in which people should commemorate the atrocities committed and experienced in the early 1990s are still being discussed in both public and semi-public spheres. Lovrenović (1994), for instance, reminds us of the symbolic and emotional nature of spatial memory by pointing to the role of the Sarajevo library as the soul of the city. He illustrates the trauma associated with its burning, and "the barbaric hatred of memory" (Lovrenović, 1994) which continuously and persistently reminds citizens of the trauma. Naef (2011: 238) uses war tours as an example to highlight the fact that Sarajevo's traumascape suggests a re-experience of the violence of the past across time by those surrounded by its historical traces. In that sense, the city of Sarajevo serves as a spatial manifestation through which trauma can be continuously re-triggered, while 'memory entrepreneurs' reinforce particular narratives to Sarajevans and/or external visitors. Also pointing to the visualisation of memory, Bell (2009) refers to the city as a gallery space (particularly in the context of its winter festival, 'Sarajevska Zima'), while the city has also become associated with the notion of violence or what is sometimes referred to as 'urbicide' (Coward, 2009). The nature of the city is therefore heavily politically contested, in terms of how its history is spatially implemented and transformed, but also in terms of how narratives are spun towards particular audiences. Bell (2009: 137) points to the agency of artists who have long tried to challenge Sarajevo's reputation as a war city only and have therefore been engaging in the restatement of urban identity. This represents a move from a perspective of violence and fear towards a spatial identity of creativity and arts. History and memory are therefore always politicised through the interaction of not only local conflict parties, but also national and international urban planners as well as city administrators, politicians, artists as well as social movements. An architect, for instance, suggested that "the spatial extension of politics is town planning" and "identity is built via architecture" (Mensur Demir, 2013, personal interview). The physical places within cityscapes are therefore key to understanding unresolved issues of conflict, notions of responsibility, complicity and victimhood. Conflict can be seen as

visualised in artefacts of commemoration, and peacebuilding ambitions have to engage with the controversial discourses surrounding monuments, museums and other spaces of memory. Young has suggested that "[b]oth a monument and its significance are constructed in particular times and places, contingent on the political, historical, and aesthetic realities of the moment." (Young, 1999: 3). Understanding monuments therefore means understanding the social configurations surrounding it, as well as the implications for dealing with conflict.

This is the background against which we can read the contested narratives that we encounter in the city of Sarajevo, not only through monuments themselves, but also through surrounding discourses such as the narratives that city guides develop when doing war tours for tourists (Naef, 2011: 240). Not least the physical reconstruction of the city itself after the war can be considered an aggregate of political choices, in terms of which buildings were prioritised, which markers of the war were left and which ones were removed or dislocated. It is almost as if city planners constructed the city as an open museum, with a strong identity in relation to the war. The latter is now increasingly becoming a resource for the generation of income (in the context of dark tourism, which is, however, mainly restricted to Sarajevo and Mostar), reflecting the ambivalence between the trauma of the past and (economic) hopes for the future in itself.

Against this background, the following section will look at a few stories and artefacts of commemoration in Sarajevo, a city which is laden with meaning in terms of its history and the ways in which people relate to it. Most adults living in the city still have close and brutal memories of the destruction of their city from a rather open and tolerant environment into a segregated society during the war and the associated siege of the city. Films like "Sjećaš li se Sarajeva?" ("Do you remember Sarajevo?"), featuring live footage from the war, or "Unutra" ("Inside"), addressing the way in which a victim of extreme violence is dealing with the past in his own way, are just two examples highlighting the complexities of commemoration in the country. Such challenges are also visible in spatial practice. Therefore conflicts around its memoryscape have become part of the everyday, not least due to the obvious presence of artefacts of commemoration in city life and their constant reactivation in the light of debates around just post-war orders. Discussions around those orders have not been concluded or closed, with the visions of a variety of peacebuilding actors, both international organisations and local social movements or grassroots actors, clearly deviating from each other (Kappler, 2013).

Sarajevo's Memoryscape in Stories

Indeed when walking through Sarajevo, the material 'presence of the past' is striking (cf. Domanska, 2006). A walker will cross bridges (cf. Bjőrkdahl and Mannergren-Selimović, 2013), walk over Sarajevo roses, stop at cemeteries and pause in a park, which will surely have a few monuments. When asking Sarajevans about their city, there will be certain monuments that most will know (the above mentioned Latin Bridge, for instance), whereas others are fairly unknown (the 'spomenik' in front of the Historical Museum commemorating the victims of different wars may be one example). This is not least a question of the identity of the citizen, religious, gender, generation, residence and so forth, which can all be read on the city's memoryscape. In the context of identity of the beholder, Nicolas Moll illustrates in detail the competing memory narratives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, often organised along the lines of ethnicity, but also along non-nationalistic dividing lines (Moll, 2013). However, while Moll points to the different locales and ways of commemorating between the different

nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I want to argue that even within one object/artefact of commemoration, we can trace competing narratives and expressions of agency. The object of commemoration itself carries the ambivalence, which makes interaction and discussion around it possible, while at the same time always implying a risk of conflict and competition. The power relations at play around monuments thus determine the ways in which they translate their meanings into wider society. At the same time, artefacts of commemoration are not just a collective phenomenon, but at the same time tie into individual perceptions of place and accounts thereof. An architect who is based in Sarajevo, for instance, suggested that space (yards and streets) are extensions of one's own flat, thus pointing to the connections between private and public spaces (Mensur Demir, 2013, personal interview).

One important point of contention, which can be read in urban space, is the role of the international community in the peacebuilding process, in terms of how involved international actors should be and whether they should be thanked or condemned. This question ties in with wider debates critiquing the inclination of international peacebuilding actors in Bosnia to override local or national actors. Kostić has indicated a tendency of Bosniaks to approve more of international intervention (mainly through the Office of the High Representative) in general terms, whereas Bosnian Serbs and Croats tend to feel more oppressed by international intervention (Kostić, 2007). However, it has also been suggested that the domination of external agencies over local and national affairs has caused resentment among civil society more generally as a result of their lack of space to find local solutions to issues of segregation affecting all sections of society (cf. Belloni, 2001).

Such debates have also played into the ways in which public memory has been framed in the interactions between local and international actors. Moll (2013: 16), for instance, has highlighted the ways in which international actors have interfered in the discourses around the massacre in Srebrenica and the ways in which it is commemorated. A famous example mirroring this debate is a prominent monument is the so-called food can monument behind the Historical Museum, with the inscription saying "Spomenik Medjunarodnoj Zajednici" ("Monument for the International Community").The can, designed by Nebojša Šeric Shoba and erected in 2007, is designed after the food cans which were given to Sarajevans during the siege and which, as people claim, not even their dogs would touch as the meat was old and decayed. Against this background, the dominant narrative around the can monument highlights the perceived arrogance of the international community in their intervention during the siege of Sarajevo and is a powerful reminder of the recent war. It ties in with wider debates around the duration of the siege of Sarajevo of around four years, during the course of which people suffered not only from the violence of bomb shelling and sniper attacks, but also had to deal with a humanitarian emergency, such as the lack of food and water supplies. The inability of the international community to help end the siege, linked with very limited financial and logistical support, indeed led to widespread frustrations about the role of the West in the conflict. Given the size of the can monument, it can be viewed as strongly connected to public memory and influential on the latter. The monument can be read as a public representation of the individual stories of many Sarajevans who experienced hardship during the war. The can thus reflects a narrative widely shared in public networks in the city around the failure of intervention. We also have to read the monument in the absence of a joint history or memory of the city. As the director of the Historical Museum in Sarajevo (which, amongst others, hosts an exhibition on the siege) suggested: "We don't know how to remember the siege as a city" (Elma Hašimbegović, 2013, personal interview). In that respect, the monument of the food can is an illustration of a strong urban network in which the story of the failure of the West to support can be read as well as a way in which society deals with this traumatic memory through dark humour (see also Sheftel, 2012).

At the same time, public memory must not be seen as linear or easy to grasp. Instead, discourses and practices of commemoration are not merely formal, but very often informal and in mutual conflict. On a discursive level, Boyarin (1994: x) refers to the phenomenon of reframing memory to advocate a current issue as the 'rhetorics of memory'. Those are not always made explicit or openly accessible in the public sphere, but can be seen as coded on the platforms of monuments in their attempt to make a statement in favour of a specific version of peace or conflict. Through the implicit inscription of discourse onto monuments, ambiguity is possible and expressed in a coded way. On the above-mentioned food can, the competing rhetorics of memory can be seen as inscribed through the graffiti on the can, which have increasingly demolished the monument but through which users are reclaiming the monument as a platform on which they can make their voices heard instead of leaving the story to the designer alone. This can not only be through graffiti, but also through the physical destruction of monuments, which is a process which can tell us about the ways in which people relate to a monument and the story it tells. The destruction of a monument in itself can thus be read as an attempt to challenge its story and thus as an expression of agency. In her analysis of attacks against a monument in Peru, Milton suggests that, rather than representing acts of 'vandalism', we need to understand such attacks as narratives contrasting official accounts of a particular event (Milton, 2011: 192). In that sense, memorial defacement "is an important element in the ongoing memorial process (Milton, 2011: 201), pointing to the ever-present possibility of stories to be challenged from within societies.

This is particularly obvious with a monument which tells the contrasting story to the story of the food can above. The Ambassadorial Avenue on the pedestrian area leading along the Miljacka river represents a monument which is more openly controversial and contested than the narrative the food can implies. This avenue has a number of stones at the sides, each of them carrying the name of what can be considered important international individuals in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including heads of international organisations and diplomats. According to the municipality, this is to pay tribute to their contributions to Bosnia, particularly in the post-war context. The narrative this is intended to tell is a story around the international contributions to peace in Bosnia. It is a publicly visible 'thank you' to international diplomats, among them former High Representatives such as Christian Schwarz Schilling or Wolfgang Petritsch. The ambivalence of the story lies in the fact that these stones have also been used to publicly mock such international efforts, which seem to have created superficial successes, whilst failing to resolve the underlying causes of conflict. In fact, the municipality is aware of the fact that members of the public have tended to interpret the avenue in a more cynical way. The website of the municipality, for instance, complains about destroyed plaques, graffiti, sprays and so forth on the stones (Stari Grad, 2013). It can therefore be argued that these memory artefacts act as Latourian mediators in that the message, which the Old Town municipality intended to send in the first place (a 'thank you' to international players in Bosnia) is received locally as an ambivalent message and is partly transformed into a rather cynical way of looking at international contributions to peace and peacebuilding. Hence, instead of resorting to a formalised process of complaint, some actors are using those monuments as platforms on which they can challenge the meanings that those had originally aimed to send.

In parallel with the food can monument above, the destruction of the stones on the alley is linked to the perception of large sections of the Bosnian population that the international community has neither managed to protect the local population from the violence of the war, nor managed to create sustainable peace up to date (cf. Kappler, 2014). In fact, the recent protests against the economic and political stalemate in Bosnia reflect not only criticism of the local political class, but also against a failed political system primarily engineered by the

international community (Jansen, 2014). The alley itself embodies this ambiguity of conflicting narratives by communicating a need of international support on the one hand, and resistance against externally-led domination on the other hand. This ambivalence is in line with Doreen Massey's call to "understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" (Massey, 2005: 9). In that sense, memory conflicts do not only extend over time as a transformation of discourse over time, but also over space through the presence of competing and overlapping stories around the meaning and significance of certain spaces of commemoration. We therefore find no coherent or homogenous network of urban actors either condemning or praising the international community, but what both monuments show is the extent to which stories within local-international networks in the city change and are subject to (spatial) debate.

In a more localised context, it is interesting to look at the phenomenon of the Sarajevo roses – a story reminiscent of the war and its lasting presence in the city. Those roses designate the places in which bombs detonated and are highlighted in a red colour. Created in 1995, they are unique to Sarajevo and are often considered to be the monument of Sarajevans themselves as they were 'made' by the people.[2] At the same time, this story and the ways in which it is to be told remains ambivalent and contested. First, there is no agreement on whether the roses symbolise a call to commemorate the atrocities during the siege in terms of a focus on the past, or whether they represent a call to move on towards a less violent future. In this context, a tour guide suggested that the roses could even be read as a symbol of moving on as people can just walk over them instead of being stopped by them (tour guide, 2013, personal interview). However, when observing people's reaction to the roses on the street, it became obvious that there is no uniform way of how people relate to them. Some people will walk over them as if they did not exist, others will deliberately avoid them and step sideward to avoid stepping on the rose. In a similar vein, some people will want to comment on the roses, while others, when approached about the roses, will refuse to talk about them and walk away. Therefore, the roses themselves trigger ambivalent reactions, with some people stepping over them, others avoiding them and others talking about them. Such ambivalent reactions are partly related to the story the roses tell, but also linked to the agents promoting those stories in urban networks. It is indeed interesting to observe that despite originally being an initiative of the municipality, they were being left to decay until they triggered debates in the media (Halilović, 2011). The initiative to revive the roses – for instance by highlighting them with a red frame[3] – was initiated through a local NGO, which then took ownership of the story around the monument, while in recent years, the roses are being taken over by the city and integrated into a more formalised discourse (confidential source, 2013, personal interview).

Again, it is not clear as to whether this is a story of peace or conflict due to the inherent ambivalence of the roses. Do they further engrain war into the urban landscape, or will they warn against renewed violence? Either way, the stories being told around the roses reflect different versions of peace (in connection with or differentiation from the past) and social justice (whose stories shall be heard in public and what does that mean in terms of dealing with the past and coming to terms with it). The questions that the roses raise are clearly linked to ownership of peace, in terms of who will control stories related to the war, as well as reflecting wider controversies around the presence of war and peace in public spaces. Such processes are further complicated and enriched through the recent digitalisation of the roses. As James (2013) suggests, the increasing use of the roses in social networking is conducive to the emergence of 'civilian countermemorials' and has reinvigorated the debate about the

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[2] Many thanks to Melina Sadiković for pointing this out.
[3] This initiative was led by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights.

ways in which the troublesome past of the city can be dealt with publicly. The roses are therefore not just passive markers of the past, but the attempt to highlight them reflects a need to keep debates open about the war and to include a much larger number of citizens in the debates around the roses. They are a spatial attempt to reinforce links and attachments between citizens in terms of commemoration, particularly among those people who witnesses the shelling of the city.

Against this background, it is particularly striking that the majority of internationally funded peacebuilding projects have not addressed the issue of remembrance and framing of the past, despite the fact that contemporary tensions, not only in the city, but in the country as a whole, are centred on the ways in which the past should be dealt with. The Sarajevo roses potentially offer a story which appeals to all Sarajevans independent of their ethnicity in a context in which many monuments have served as collective memory for one nationality only (Zupan, 2006: 336). Against this background, it comes at a surprise that the integration of monuments acknowledging the collective sufferings of all inhabitants of the city, such as the roses, have not played a bigger role in peacebuilding efforts as they might offer a platform on which collective suffering can be conceptualised beyond ethnic or religious divisions. Therefore, instead of just reflecting a passive or non-engaging relationship with 'dead monuments', memory is a mediating practice, in the Latourian sense. This represents a practice which can transform one thing into another and create social change. Due to their ambiguity, monuments and artefacts of memory can be reinterpreted and re-embedded in social discourses to serve as a common platform on which the past can be remembered, even if the associated narratives are not the same. De Certeau (1984: 87) has therefore suggested that memory "is linked to the expectation that something alien to the present will or must occur," pointing to the transformative potential of memory. Artefacts and practices of commemoration therefore impact on the ways in which people relate to the physical space (the 'city') as well as to one another (as inhabitants of the city).

Stories around peace and peacebuilding therefore become stories of how the past of the city should be visualised in the spaces the city offers. Peacebuilding through commemorative stories becomes an attempt to engage in dialogue with different authors and audiences of stories, to start a dialogue about how the current urban landscape can represent a space for a multiplicity of competing stories. The ambivalence of monuments in turn continues to produce multiple narratives, which ignore or speak to each other. Peace and conflict through mutual engagement and hybridisation of storylines may thus be an alternative way of reading Sarajevo's cityscape.

Conclusion

The above are just few examples of Sarajevo's rich memoryscape, which consists of a diversity of monuments, all of which offer the possibility of having diverse stories knitted around them. And while the monument itself, its design and location, impacts upon those stories, the latter can never be fully controlled and thus always bear the possibility of ambiguity. Therefore, the spaces and monuments in themselves are meaningless in isolation of the Latourian networks surrounding them and the agencies attributing meaning to them. Monuments and spaces of commemoration can therefore only be read in connection with people's psyches, traumas, perceptions as well as the social and political landscapes in which they are placed. In Sarajevo, the stories around monuments are in themselves illustrative of the wider competing discourses around conflict and peace. They mainly relate to the ways in

which the past can impact upon the future and how a just social order can be designed through accounting, or ignorance, of the past. Therefore, in order to grasp the complexity of commemoration, we need to deconstruct and analyse the multiple layers of meaning of monuments in the light of the narratives and stories produced around them. Such narratives tend to be selectively picked out by agents in the post-conflict context who in turn embed those stories in their wider political and social agendas. In Sarajevo, the politics of peace can be read through the Sarajevo roses, which highlight the extent to which the inhabitants of the city are torn between forgetting and the need to remember. On the other hand, memory artefacts such as the Ambassadorial Avenue or Šeric Shoba's food can monument highlight the extent to which peace is not exclusively a local, urban matter, but equally affects international peacebuilding practices and networks. In the ways in which they are built, both monuments paint a very different picture of the international community's role in urban war and peace, and have also been embedded in ambivalent stories in the ways in which the city remembers the war. Such ambivalent relationships between a variety of actors can thus be mapped out through a spatial reading of Sarajevo's memoryscape.

The processes of re-presenting the past through memorial practices can therefore be considered a political process, complicit in the reproduction and transformation of power relations. Seemingly mutually exclusive stories are the signs of a process of totalisation and aim to get rid of the inherent ambivalence that those memorials carry. At the same time, this inherent ambiguity of stories around monuments can be viewed more as a reflection of the politics of peace rather than a problem to be 'solved'. In fact, competing stories based on memorial practices shed light on conflict lines in society as they relate to public commemoration, but they also free creative processes on which different stories can encounter and be in mutual dialogue in the negotiation of urban future.

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