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Wise, NA and Mulec, I (2014) Semblances of 'War Tourism' in Sarajevo, Post-2005. American Journal of Tourism Management, 3 (1B). pp. 1-9. ISSN 2326-0645

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Semblances of ‘War Tourism’ in Sarajevo, Post-2005

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Abstract War creates negative place images, so cities, regions and countries often attempt to (re) create an image after tragic events. In some cases, post-war, a place will use the recent events as a way of educating tourists. After turbulent events cities often attempt to create a new image and fade memories of war and focus on the future as a means of removing the negative imaginations associating a place with its past. Sarajevo has often been referred to as a ‘War Tourism’ destination and this paper critically assesses the city in relation to destination image of war tourism since 2005. After the war ended, people associated Sarajevo with war, so the city strategically attempted to embrace this part of their recent history as a way of educating visitors about what really happened and not only what was presented to the outside world through the media. The purpose of the following commentary is to revisit the focus of tourism in Sarajevo ten years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords until present day. Newspaper content from international (English language) newspapers were used to excavate content on articles discussing, Sarajevo, war and tourism. The analysis section acknowledges that emphasis is still put on ‘war tourism in Sarajevo.’ As the discussion section will highlight, post-conflict, destinations can be conceptualized as being ‘permanent’ or ‘temporary’ war tourism destinations. It is important to recognize future directions concerning how tourism managers want to replace and fade memories of war in an attempt to revert back to the city’s former image-as an ideal place where different groups resided together.

Keywords War Tourism, Image, Memory, Sarajevo

“Sarajevo was famous in another war. On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in the city, lighting the fuse for the First World War” (*The Halifax Daily News* 7 April 2007).

“Most people forget that Sarajevo hosted the Winter Olympics in 1984” (*Sunday Telegraph* 10 June 2007).

1. Introduction

When Tito was president of the Republic of Yugoslavia until 1980, then the ten years following his death up to 1991 to the breakout of war in Sarajevo-this city was perceived as an ideal place to live where different ethnic and religious groups cohabited. However, after the atrocities of war that devastated the image of Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995, ‘war tourism’ became a phrase commonly used to describe the city. This was also the case when attempting to market the destination and attract visitors. The quote at the start of this paper makes reference to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 which sparked World War I-making reference to the legacy of such events associated with the city. This paper will focus on the impact

of the War in Bosnia during the early-1990s that left devastating effects on the city of Sarajevo. On the 14th of December 1995, the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in Paris marking the end of the Bosnian War. Sarajevo is the administrative capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The city was greatly impacted by the war, especially between 1992 and 1995 when the city was surrounded and bombarded for 1,000 days. Once the Peace Treaty was signed, people began associating Sarajevo with war, so the city strategically attempted to embrace this part of their recent history as a way of educating visitors about what really happened and not only what was presented through the media.

After turbulent events cities often attempt to create a new image and fade memories of war by focusing on the future as a means of removing the negative imaginations associating a place with its past. However, the Bosnian city of Sarajevo took a different approach to branding the city (and country) as a destination in the decade following the conflict. Several years after the war, an article in *The Japan Times* (13 January 1999) described Sarajevo:

“Things have changed, however since Dec. 14, 1995, when the hostilities ended with the signing of the Dayton Accords, Sarajevo has been recovering. It is a gradual process, because repair costs are so high and the damage was so extensive. Ninety percent of the glass in the city’s buildings was destroyed. Bullet holes are everywhere,

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Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/tourism>

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pock-marking buildings, fences, cars and homes. The city’s few high-rise...loom like ghostly, darkened, burned-out shell. Unexploded mines are still a threat in some heavily damaged areas ... [later adding, quoting a woman from the Sarajevo tourism office] although many of the museums have been damaged or destroyed, you should see and enjoy the large open-air museum that is Sarajevo.”

Another article released several years later in *The Sunday Times* (13 June 2004) continued to discuss the impact of war on the city, positioning images of before and after:

“Twenty years ago, it was host to the bold and beautiful at the 1984 Winter Olympics. Ten years later it was the devil’s playground, where Serbs and Croats, Christians and Muslims slaughtered each other ... [the county was, quoting Paddy Ashdown] one of the last tourist destinations in Europe.”

The first tourism office was opened after the war in 1996, showing that tourism has been on the minds of Bosnians since the end of the conflict. Post-war tourism, also referred to as ‘dark tourism’ [1], puts much emphasis on the memory of a place. Concerning memory and the scaring of the landscape in Sarajevo, semblances of war remain; unexploded mines, bullet holes, bombed out buildings and the infamous ‘Red Roses’ are common sights in the city (although it must be noted that these are fading in the landscape). Wise argued that the city of Sarajevo “displays a landscape of war-marked memorials” [2]. Such context is supported in *The Globe and Mail* (10 January 2001):

“...bomb pits...mark scars of an almost four-year siege (May 2, 1992 to Feb. 26, 1996)...Known as the Roses of Sarajevo, the red splotches now serve as miniature makeshift war monuments. For the foreign visitor in Sarajevo today strolling through the city’s lively downtown core, every red splotch underfoot serves as an eerie reminder of the horrors this place has seen in the years since its 1984 Winter Olympic heyday. The Roses are, in effect, Sarajevo’s memory of the war made manifest.”

Moreover, the bus station in Sarajevo is described in *Budapest Sun* (16 November 2000) as “charred and pockmarked by shellfire.” The tunnel dug under Sarajevo’s airport that assisted communications and helped move people and supplies in and out of the city during the siege has also become a popular tourism attraction—currently open as a museum.

Despite these discussions noted after the Bosnian War, the purpose of the following commentary is to revisit the focus of tourism in Sarajevo from ten years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords to present day. This paper interprets the extent, or semblance, if any, of war tourism today. The narratives discussed below published since 2005 still make reference to ‘war tourism,’ but it is important to critically discuss the scope and context for which such discussions continue. To support the following sections, relevant theory

from the academic literature focusing on destination image and memory support discourses pertinent to representations of war tourism in Sarajevo and offer insight into the future directions of the destination. This commentary begins by discussing the literature on destination image and memory to frame the conceptual directions of the paper. The following section outlines the method before moving to the analysis of the media content focusing on images concerning Sarajevo as a destination pertinent to associations/representations of war tourism. The subsequent section offers insight on the future directions of the destination based on the image and imaginations of Sarajevo discussed just prior. The image of the city has transitioned and tourism managers want to again emphasize the city’s vibrant lifestyle, as semblances of war fade from the discourse and associations of Sarajevo.

2. Destination Image and Memory

War greatly impacts the perception of places. Destination image is important to acknowledge in this commentary and has been the focus of much academic research in the field of tourism. Image and memory are complementary because it is past memories that make people aware of a place’s image and reputation. Images are often presented to viewers through the media as textual or visual discourses, offering subjective imaginations of places and destinations. Landscape scenes are often presented, and such visuals are crucial because they leave lasting impressions. Conceptually, this is made evident by Clouser, who suggests: “the power of a landscape can be seen in its ability to mold thoughts, evoke memories and emotions, reinforce and create ideologies, and to relay to the world the values and priorities of a place” [3]. The media covered the Bosnian War in the early-1990s, creating a lasting remembrance and war because synonymous with Bosnia.

Destination image is a popular topic of inquiry among tourism academics and is aligns with place perception, awareness and knowledge of tourism destinations [4]. Today, destination images are increasingly becoming associated as brands [5]. To become a successful and competitive tourism destination, destination managers must strategically promote specific features and identities that distinguish one place from another. Milman and Pizam suggest that a destination’s image is promoted vis-à-vis what awareness tourists have of a place [6]. Furthermore, to acknowledge Keller’s conceptualizations [7], it is argued that for a specific tourism destination to be successful tourists must have a well-known awareness of the destination and the place must possess a positive image [8].

In many cases awareness is dependent upon a place’s image, or the imagination of how people perceive a place [9]. In this regard, an image represents a vision (or an imagination) that may have been constructed during some point in the past [10]. Places are also dependent upon positive perceptions, whilst negative visions can potentially burden a places reputation [11], but not in all cases.

Impressions refer to attractions, uniqueness, the physical environment, accommodations, safety, public management, and user facilities, each intended to develop ‘imagescapes’ [12]. Aligned with this regard, Hernández-Lobato *et al.* suggest that a “tourism destination image is a mental schema developed by a tourist on the basis of impressions” [13]. It is also the mental schema involved in producing touristic knowledge alongside branding a place’s image to generate a distinctive imagination [14].

There has been much research focusing on post-war tourism since 2000 assessing how war, conflict, and violence have directly affected the image of tourism destinations [15]. War casts a negative image on destinations and often times create images of fear, deterring people from visiting a destination [16]. Wise and Mulec note: “Often difficult for destinations to overcome, post-war, is the continued presence of negative images of war and conflict present images of concern and insecurity” [17]. Subsequent to this thought, war changes how tourism managers approach how they brand a destination in the future and make use of existing or altered tourism facilities and infrastructures.

As noted above, in many instances destinations may attempt to (re) create an image to change perceptions of a destination and move beyond the memory of war, as was argued in the case of Dubrovnik, Croatia to make the destination more appealing to tourists [18]. The other option is for destinations to include the impacts of war into tourism agendas. Such approaches are referred to as ‘war tourism’ or dark tourism [19]. Such forms of tourism involve the significances of constructed monuments, storied places or manifested memorials as part of the narrative (Figure 1). Moreover, such landscape features represent the remembrance of tragic events first hand [20]. In reference to destination image and post-war tourism, Wise suggested a conceptual three-fold typology for interpreting the directions destinations take after a conflict: landscape remembrance, fading memory and replacing memory [21]. The first conceptualization is relevant to this focus of this study because the tourism agendas in Sarajevo designate reflections of war, visions of the past-this is especially evident in several of the images displayed and discussed in the following section. Based on this particular understanding, scenes in the landscape convey images of war, allowing visitors to reminisce past imaginations of a particular place. Therefore, landscape remembrance, or such associated war-tourism approaches, results from not fully redeveloping or restoring a destination to what it was, or may have been, prior to the conflict. War tourism continues or extends the narrative of the particular conflict, and becomes an essential part of a places tourism agenda and branding technique. Wise also notes that this offers tourist’s insight into the past and in many cases further educates them about the war or

conflict [22].



Figure 1. Memorial dedicated to the Bosnian War and siege in Sarajevo, 1992–1995, located outside Veliki Park (photo by lead author)

3. Note on Method

The data used in the subsequent analysis came from newspaper articles from various international (English language) newspapers. According to Dittmer, who details the significance of representation, much meaning is embedded in textual content and requires critical analysis [23]. Moreover, Wise and Mulec note, textual content is a form of media communication that presents images of places and events, producing knowledge for consumption and interpretation [24]. When attempting to understand representations of places and events, aligned to the focus of this study, Ellingson suggests identifying patterns/shifts in narratives over time [25]. The purposes of media content analyses are to categorize emerged representations scattered amongst numerous resources [26]. When analyzing textual content, researchers should also pay particular attention to context, because context is a major part of the broader/more complex nature of narratives [27].

To assess Sarajevo for the purpose of this research, the following section looks at newspaper content published after 2005. To collect/organize data for this study, the search engine LexisNexis Academic was used to extract archived full-text international (English language) newspaper articles. An initial search of Sarajevo and war yielded a high number of results so to narrow the search, a search for tourism within the results reduced the number of articles. After assessing the content, 12 articles (from 2005 to 2012) focusing on Sarajevo, war, tourism along with integrated contexts of destination image and were significant to a particular understanding applicable to tourism management were used for this analysis. Moreover, each article’s narrative had to focus on tourism in Sarajevo and include some discussion of the war. Only articles providing a specific/focused storyline on Sarajevo were included. Table 1 overviews the articles included in the next section. Images are also included throughout to support and reinforce the discussion.

Table 1. Font Specifications for A4 Papers

Date	Newspaper	Article Title
10 June 2005	<i>Australian Financial Review</i>	An Elegant City Eclipses its Scars
17 July 2005	<i>Sunday Herald Sun</i>	Sarajevo has kept its Heart Pumping
26 Mar. 2006	<i>The Sun Herald</i>	Rising from the Ashes
11 Nov. 2006	<i>The Guardian</i>	Back from the Brink: When the Peacekeepers Moved Out, Backpackers Moved in. Sarajevo has History, Culture, Great Clubs and Drinks for Under £1.50
7 Apr. 2007	<i>The Halifax Daily News</i>	Sarajevo Slowly Rebuilds
10 June 2007	<i>Sunday Telegraph</i>	Vibrant Sarajevo Regains its Glory
17 June 2007	<i>Sunday Mail</i>	Sarajevo Awaits Tourism Revival
8 Sept. 2007	<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	The Balkans’ New Beauty; Sipping Turkish Coffee in Sarajevo while both Muslim call to Prayer and Church Bells Ring Out, Travellers to this Rising Destination are Discovering a City in Transition
16 Aug. 2008	<i>Nanaimo Daily News</i>	Passage Led many to Escape, Survive; No Funding yet for Memorial Museum
2 Oct. 2010	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	War Zone Tourism – Should we go?; Visiting Sarajevo is both humbling and strangely uplifting
15 Nov. 2011	<i>DPA (Berlin)</i>	Sarajevo Regains its Multicultural Feel
3 July 2012	<i>Stars and Stripes</i>	Sarajevo: Moving Forward Even as Scars of War Remain

4. Sarajevo, Image and War Tourism

Bevan writes that war destroys memories [28], but in some regards it can be argued that war creates another layer of memory. To this regard, Wise’s notion of ‘landscape remembrance’ [29] and Foote’s ‘designation,’ suggests “something “important” has happened there” [30]. In the articles used in this commentary written between 2005 and 2008, highlight a period of image transition for Sarajevo. From one perspective, *The Guardian* (11 November 2006) discusses how tourists are “still put off by its long-gone “war-torn” reputation.” From another perspective, *The Sun Herald* (26 March 2006) made apparent:

“Ten years after the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 ended the war, this famously picturesque city of 388,000 people, now the capital of Bosnia [and] Herzegovina, has slowly begun to lure tourists again. In 2004 Paddy Ashdown, a former British MP and the country’s then-top civilian peace administrator, even toured Europe touting Bosnia [and] Herzegovina as the continent’s last great undiscovered tourism destination.”

We get a sense of how the discourse is changing. The article above discussed how Sarajevo was undesirable following the war, and now a decade later, Sarajevo is now being referred to as an undiscovered destination worth the visit. Despite the discussion of war negatively impacting a place’s image, the discourse of war, tourism and Sarajevo has taken a different approach to show how the city is integrating the conflict into the city’s tourism management plan. *The Australian Financial Review* (10 June 2005) made this apparent by noting:

“A decade after the end of a bitter siege, Sarajevo is humming with new life...In most cities it would be unusual to gaze out of a cafe window and see walls pockmarked with bullet holes. But not in Sarajevo. And although the fighting finished 10 years ago many other reminders of the war remain, none more poignant than the Sarajevo roses which dot the pavements. They are not flowers, but rather a tribute set in the concrete to those killed by mortar fire: a gruesomely appropriate red plastic compound fills in the craters that were made by exploding shells.”

The images in Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 show these scenes and how visitors are reminded of the conflict. In each of these images it can be argued that the war is remembered and continues to be communicated to visitors as an attempt to create a distinguishable destination, or a war tourism niche. Cooper looks at battlefields, and it is important to assess sites of war as not only memorials but attractions [31], as such sites of devastation or scars of war often capture the attention of the gazing tourist [32].

Despite framing the context of the war in Sarajevo’s touristed landscape, the article abruptly transitions its focus to describe the current condition of the city beneath the façade of war’s scars and describes the city’s multi-cultural ambiance (Figure 6). Between the images presented in Figures 2 through 5 and the images in Figure 6, visitors are presented with layers of meaning; one being the memories of war and conflict and the other apparent scenes of a cosmopolitan revival suggesting youthful and new cultural lifestyles ten years after the war. Figure 6 shows a vibrant city centre, but some areas just adjacent the city centre still show signs that depict the legacy of war in the landscape (e.g. Figure 5).



Figure 2. Welcome to Sarajevo Sign for the 1984 Winter Olympics outside the train station with noticeable bullet holes (photo by lead author)



Figure 3. Bullet holes and the scars of war noticeable in the façades of buildings (photos by lead author)



Figure 4. A 'Red Rose' marks the pavement (photo by lead author)



Figure 5. Buildings that were burnt out and never restored along the Miljacka River (photo by lead author)



Figure 6. Elements of cosmopolitanism in central Sarajevo along the Ferhadija (photos by lead author)

There has been much communicated about Sarajevo that positions how war remains a central component of the discourse, for instance:

“Sarajevo’s scars remain to remind us of what lies beneath the surface” (*The Australian Financial Review* 10 June 2005).

“Rising from the ashes...where history is never buried” (*The Sun Herald* 26 March 2006).

“While many of its buildings were destroyed, its sense of soul remains intact” (*Sunday Herald Sun* 17 July 2006).

“A day in Sarajevo can be the most interactive, inadvertent history lesson you’ll ever have” (*The Guardian* 11 November 2006).

“Things do change: war leaves and a battered city rebuilds” (*The Halifax Daily News* 7 April 2007).

“Bosnia’s capital is shrugging off its tragic past” (*Sunday Telegraph* 10 June 2007).

“The Sarajevo Tunnel Museum gives travellers a glimpse of wartime Sarajevo...Mortar-shells-turned- vases and sniper-bullets-turned-ballpoint pens also make interesting souvenirs” (*The Globe and Mail* 8 September 2007).

As observed in the above quotes, ten years later, war remains a part of the tourism narrative in Sarajevo.

While the war did detract visitors to BiH and Sarajevo, much of the narrative conveyed by journalists in their newspaper articles focused on three emerged themes: how welcoming the Bosnian people were, notions of the war’s memory in the landscape and the commodification of war paraphernalia. *The Daily Telegraph* (31 March 2007) ran a travel section special on Sarajevo that attempted to highlight undiscovered European cities:

“Sarajevo is one of them. For all sorts of reasons, mainly war related, travelers have been reluctant to go there...Now the dangers are in the past...Former war zones are great places to visit. The prices are moderate, people are really pleased to see you, and so much new history has accumulated along with the old...and the war has given them new materials to work with...they do offer finely engraved shell castings and bullets ingeniously turned into ball point pens.”

Additionally, the *Sunday Herald Sun* (17 July 2005) quotes:

“Despite everything that has happened, the people of Sarajevo somehow still reserve a smile of welcome for visitors, forgiving the world’s neglect, determined to show that its troubled years were an aberration for what remains an otherwise urbane and cultured city.”

The two quotes above put emphasis on how post-war destinations offer a combination of old and new history and are referred to as undiscovered destinations.

In building on the quote introduced above from *The Australian Financial Review* notions of memory, if only

informally intended, created and (re)created imaginations of Sarajevo during the time of war and as a destination. During the time of war the media made people around the world aware of the atrocities, but the new directions offered in the articles ten years after the conflict brought forward the imaginations of war, but attempted to (re)create these imaginations as memories that constructed the new narrative of the destination. Several articles position how memories of the war have become a part of the visitor attraction:

"In the city's buildings a few [are] still bullet-ridden and pockmarked with shell holes—one sees the reflection of the city's battered self-esteem, the vivid cartography of its recent tragic history" (*Sunday Herald Sun* 17 July 2005).

"War still shades everything—and not just the buildings scarred by machinegun fire or the half-finished repairs on others that can make it seem sometimes that the predominant colour of Sarajevo is plaster filler. The damage lingers in unexpected places, as in the people on New Year's Eve who say they cringe at the bottle rockets that crack over the Ferhadija district" (*The Sun Herald* 26 March 2006).

"Entering Sarajevo today, it looks as though the siege ended only weeks ago. The bus station is on the outskirts of town, and the walk into the centre along the Miljacka River takes you past the ruins of bombed-out buildings and caved-in homes spilling down the banks. Bullet holes dent the sidewalk, and now and then you come across a 'Sarajevo Rose' left by exploding mortar shells. Those filled with a red resin indicate a fatal hit" (*The Halifax Daily News* 7 April 2007).

"The infamous Snipers Alley, where hundreds of residents were gruesomely picked off by hilltop gunmen on their way to and from work. It is a sobering feeling strolling down the now peaceful promenade that follows the Miljacka River, seeing the bullet holes replaced with red cement (The Sarajevo Roses)" (*Sunday Telegraph* 10 June 2007).

However, it is not only the physical scars that construct the narrative of Sarajevo as a war tourism destination, locals have found employment opportunities post-war by telling their story and by creating experiences for visitors that convey what life was like during the period of war between 1992 and 1995:

"Hunching over with a 50-kilogram backpack while trudging through part of the tunnel gives you an idea of what Sarajevans went through to get supplies during the Serbian siege. We visited the tunnel with 'Sarajevo Sonny,' who was a teenager during the war and is now a tour guide. He'll tell you how he had to carry water and firewood to his home while dodging sniper bullets. Sonny's two-hour tour will also take you to the hilltops from which snipers terrorized a stretch of city streets" (*The Globe and Mail* 8 September 2007).

The focus from the above articles generates imaginations

of the landscape. Such context of awareness relates to Wise's (2011) notion of landscape remembrance, and how memories of war remain through discussions of war's scarring, such as: bullet holes noticeable in façade, the 'Red Roses' symbolizing where mortar shells had been tragic and burnt out buildings/edifices.

Whilst complementary to the discussions of memory, Journalists also focused on the remnants of the war for sale in bazaars—merchants acquired war paraphernalia to sell as mementoes of the conflict (see Figure 7). The following articles discuss war paraphernalia in the local bazaars:

"Inside the shops...coppersmiths hammer flower-print designs into vases made from discharged artillery shells found on the hilltops that surround the city. Others remove gun powder from unused sniper bullets and replace it with springs and ink cartridges, turning once-lethal ammunition into souvenir pens" (*The Globe and Mail* 8 September 2007).

Artefacts, such as war paraphernalia, have become a part of the new tourism narrative and attraction. In some ways this refers to the commodification of the war materials, but as discussed in article above, such souvenirs became an inherent part of the visitor experience—as tourists made their way through Sarajevo's Baščaršija (Bazaar).



Figure 7. Bazaar District in Sarajevo where it is common to find war paraphernalia (photo by lead author)

Many of the articles discuss the scars of war, and although these remain as memories of the siege, the Tunnel Museum was often discussed as a specific war tourism attraction. Although controversial, the designation of the museum did create some tension, but it was argued it would create another experience for tourists, as described in the *Naniamo Daily News* (16 August 2008):

"It should be reconstructed to remember those times and show Bosnians and the world how we lived, how we survived," said Ismet Hadzic, a general during the war who ran one half of the tunnel. "If the city rebuilds it, it would become the premier tourist destination in the city."

Moreover, by designating the tunnel a tourism attraction, the same article made comparisons to similar attractions around the world:

“Like Vietnam’s Cu Chi tunnels or the Anne Frank House Museum in Amsterdam, the tunnel that helped ordinary people survive in Sarajevo through more than 1,000 days under siege embodies the local spirit of resistance” (*Naniamo Daily News* 16 August 2008).

Following the war and once Sarajevo’s international airport was rebuilt most of the tunnel was lost. However, 25 meters did remain intact and one-year following the war where this intact stretch remains (Figure 8), the family whose home where the tunnel enters opened the ‘Tunnel Museum’ (*Naniamo Daily News* 16 August 2008). The tunnel museum relates to two of Foote’s conceptualizations, sanctification and designation [28]. It is an attraction that brings visitors into the experiences of war and survival during the siege of the city. It is clearly a designated site where goods and supplies (i.e. food and ammunition) were brought from the free Bosnian territory into the city that was surrounded. In another regard, this site can be interpreted as sanctification, because it is a site of remembrance that has a lasting meaning to locals and to visitors who seek such attractions.



Figure 8. Images from the Tunnel Museum (photos by lead author)

Another tourism attraction associated with war that journalists often described worth briefly considering here is the Holiday Inn (Figure 9). “Sarajevo must surely be the only city in the world where a Holiday Inn attracts camera-clad visitors” (*Sunday Mail* 17 June 2007). The Holiday Inn was also discussed as a tourism attraction in the city because this is where much of the war and siege of the city was reported from, just outside “what used to be the infamous Snipers’ Alley” (*The Australian Financial Review*

10 June 2005). This hotel was also a recognized landmark during the 1984 Winter Olympic Games which put Sarajevo into a positive spotlight before it was the base for reporters communicating the war to international audiences.



Figure 9. The infamous Holiday Inn, Sarajevo from Zmaja od Bosne, or what was referred to as sniper alley (photo by lead author)

5. Conceptualizing Future Directions

The creation of a war tourism destination in the period following a war is often temporary. Nevertheless, the branding of a war tourism destination can assist generating tourism flows that were abruptly stopped due to the imminent danger and scarce security of war and conflict. In several cases, life returns to normal and the memories of war fade from the discourse; however, some associations and imaginations can remain. To this regard, post-conflict, destinations can be conceptualized as being ‘permanent’ or ‘temporary’ war tourism destinations. It can be observed that the majority of war destinations are only temporary following peace treaties or conflict resolutions. Memories of war in particular destinations tend to fade after several years, as is the case in Sarajevo, especially post-2005. Only some war tourism destinations are permanent, such as Gettysburg in Pennsylvania (USA) or Normandy in France where significant war’s occurred and myths are embedded in the narratives of these places. Given more recent examples where wars have lasted more than a decade, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, when these countries attempt to develop a tourism industry, war may play a significant part in the role of tourism for the first decade based on how these places have been consumed, similar to the case of Sarajevo in the mid-1990s.

Destination managers and city planners in Sarajevo have invested much time into redeveloping the city to transform the city’s image. Memories of war have been replaced in the landscape and preserved in (closed) tourist attractions such

as museums or dedicated memorials, discussed below. Ten years following the war, the discourse began to change. Nick Hawton, a Balkans correspondent for the BBC stated: “Sarajevo and Bosnia are definitely not the Sarajevo and Bosnia people think of” (*The Sun Herald* 26 March 2006). Wise and Mulec (2012) looked at transitions in Dubrovnik, Croatia to analyse the extent of how war affected the city’s destination image. What they determined with key transitional points observed in the discourse concerning the unmaking, remaking and restoration of Dubrovnik’s tourism image. For the purpose of this commentary, in more recent articles, post-2010, the content has begun to move beyond the transitional period displayed in the discourse of Sarajevo’s tourism image and assess future directions.

Despite much discussion of Sarajevo as a war tourism destination, several journalists also made readers aware that there are still some unsettling feelings and tensions remaining. Some of the tension was over how to commemorate, designate or memorialize specific sites. In light of these tensions, much more emphasis has been put on inherited resources and features such as multiculturalism and Sarajevo’s natural setting in the Bjelasnica Mountains. Locals continue to tell stories and reveal their memories of the Bosnian War and siege of the city. In recent years “countless guides offer tours of the main battleground” (*DPA Berlin* 15 November 2011). Other articles suggest that “Sarajevo is a city to wonder, not tour” (*Stars and Stripes* 3 July 2012). This article is building on articles in the previous section that discuss the semblances of landscape remembrance. Nevertheless, although each approach represents a contrasting perspective, this shows that destinations post-war do attract tourists’ and fulfil curiosities of a place after tragic events. During ‘transitional periods,’ places attempt to recreate the (previous) pre-war image. Destination managers then need to decide whether to become, or construct an identity as a permanent war tourism destination/attraction, or restrict memories of the past and war to enclosed places such as museums, historical parks or cemeteries.

The guidance offered in the articles presented and assessed in this commentary critically discuss semblances of war tourism and Sarajevo’s image. It is argued that the city’s nascent tourism management agenda focuses on creating a new image, or better said, a new old image. As observed in Figure 6, the city centre is transitioning and regenerating to revert back to its cosmopolitan identity, to an image that Sarajevo had for decades following World War II—a vibrant place, or destination, with a peaceful atmosphere enriched through its multicultural ambiance.

6. Conclusions

Even today “it is impossible to visit cities such as Sarajevo and not be confronted by the legacy of war” (*The Daily Telegraph* 2 October 2010). It has also been noted that war did not destroy the city’s elegance nor is the city overrun by

tourists. In 2007, the World Travel and Tourism Council estimated only 12 percent of BiH’s economy was directly linked to tourism and that war sites were among the more popular attractions (cited in the *Naniamo Daily News* 16 August 2008). Today this is changing. The city’s Tourism Authorities want to develop different types of tourism in Sarajevo, including MICE, cultural touring, events, youth, sport and SPA tourism, among other opportunities including a city-break destination. Images and memories of the war between 1992 and 1995 are fading, and what remains are becoming restricted to certain areas just outside the city centre. More formal memorials have been constructed and artefacts are kept in specialized museum(s) dedicated to the ones who really enjoy the dark part of the city’s history—for war tourists. In conclusion, semblances of war tourism in Sarajevo are rapidly fading and images of the city are being replaced by its ascending cosmopolitan lifestyle with only some attractions and scars in the landscape hinting at the tragic memories of the past.

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