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SARAJEVO IN THE PROCRUSTEAN BED: "SIEGE" OF A DIVIDED CITY

Resume

In this paper author aims to explain how constructed narratives condition the use of certain notions examining the (mis)use of the notion "siege" in the case of Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. Conceptual analysis of the notion "siege" enables identification of essential features of this notion, which then in effect determine its logical scope and reach of usage. By analyzing the case of Sarajevo, the author proves that events in this city did not reflect essential features of the notion "siege." Therefore war-time Sarajevo does not fall in the logical reach of that notion, but rather of a "divided city." In conclusion, the author explains that mainstream media, academia, and many officials have been insisting on using the notion "siege." It is the only notion that fits the preconstructed narrative aiming to explain the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: Siege, Sarajevo, Divided City, Narrative, War

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INTRODUCTION

Regardless of how advanced and sophisticated human civilization has become, it seems that man, in his fundamental "raw" essence, is destined to live in perpetual ontological dread. This ever-present *Angst,* to speak in Heideggerian terms, is caused by the overwhelming complexity and perplexing intricacies of reality and uncertainty of the world we live in and which we do not fully understand. Our consciousness simply yearn for realization of causality in nature and explain ability of phenomena and processes we experience, as we continually strive to understand reality. This understanding enables minimal predictability and thus elimination, or at least mitigation, of the terrible uncertainty, restlessness and anxiety of not knowing what and why is and will be happening around us and to us. In order to live normal and healthy lives, we humans necessarily require precisely predictability and certainty of reality and we do everything in our power to produce them – we use natural sciences to investigate, explain and predict the natural world and social sciences to do the same to humans and our societies. But, one of the most important things we do in our pursuit of "normality" is that we construct our own realities and create this "invisible ontology" (Searle 1995, 3). In his seminal work, *The Construction of Social Reality,* John Searle introduces the notion of "invisible ontology" and explains how one form of "reality" is actually generated – we construct *institutional facts* based on what he refers to as "collective intentionality" (Searle 1995, 23). *Simpliciter,* we all[1] just agree something is a fact of reality and then further function on that assumption. In practice, we "constitute institutional facts by applying constitutive rules to 'raw material', brute facts" (Cekić 2013, 241). Only when we have our institutional facts, can we apply *regulative rules*[2] to activities concerning institutions, which are basically "nothing else but systems of constitutive rules" (Mladenović 2009, 191).

In recent decades, the concept of narrative has been increasingly present in social sciences, as many authors recognized its pivotal role in constructing and understanding our complex political reality. In our

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[1]   Not *all* people have to agree – Searle sees every fact as institutional if "two or more people have collective intentionality" (Mladenović 2009, 191).

[2]   Unlike constitutive rules which create an institutional fact, regulative rules set boundaries in institutions created in such a manner (Cekić 2013, 242).

attempts to bring chaos of our everyday existence to some order[3], we "rely on narrative as a way of understanding the world and endowing it with meaning" (Shenhav 2006, 246). Constructed narratives we "impose on reality" and use to make sense of the world are "examples of institutional facts according to Searle" (Carriger 2010, 53), meaning that they have no ontological objectivity[4]. The very notion of narrative has been used with different meanings in recent history, but it is dominantly used in political philosophy and political science today in the sense of political narrative, i.e., a "story" constructed to explain complex and layered social and political events. In short, narrative represents "an effective means of simplifying complex situations into chains of events" (Shenhav 2006, 246), or "a representational structure in which past, present, and future events have a meaning" as it "serves an explanatory function for events" (Neisser 2015, 27). Narrative consists of three elements: first being "events, characters, and background", second being "events in sequence" and finally "causality" (Shenhav 2006, 251). As collective intentionality is necessary for construction of narratives, it is only natural and expected that words, terms and notions we use to denote and describe events, characters and backgrounds in order to create a sequence of events and identify causality are of the highest order of significance. It is precisely the language we use that "enables the greatest level of complexity in… collective intentionality" (Vidanović 2009, 1160) as it is the most important element of all institutional facts and "essentially constitutive in institutional reality" (Searle 1995, 59). Language we decide to use directly constructs our reality, and our choice of words is often directly caused and conditioned by the "narrative pattern" we impose on reality. We chose the words we use to describe events and characters in such a way that they "fit" the pattern that explains causality, making sure not to make a dangerous "mistake" that would question the narrative used to explain confusing and convoluted "brute" reality we do not fully understand. In many cases, the process of "fitting" events into a preconstructed pattern by cunningly naming them is Procrustean[5] in nature – arbitrary, forceful, and violent.

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[3]   More in (Mileham 2022, 7–26).

[4]   It truly seems that Searle's ideas are based on fundamental assumptions of postmodernism and Lyotard's rejection of metanarratives (Vidanović 2009, 1164).

[5]   The proverbial "Procrustean bed" is described in the myth of Theseus, and it symbolizes arbitrary and violent fitting of reality into preconceived and preconstructed patterns.

SIEGE OF SARAJEVO

Never is reality so unclear, obscure, and ambiguous as it is in war, in a state of affairs characterized by unpredictability, uncertainty, and the proverbial "fog"[6]. By its very definition, an essential attribute of war is the lack of control of both the present and the future, as "we have no *normative control* of the future" (Babić 2018, 174–226) meaning no predictability and no certainty. We cannot end it when we want to, even if we started it, nor can we *know* who will win the war – we are all, so to speak, "stuck" in a state of unbounded freedom, uncontrollable chaos, and accelerated entropy. Even when it seems that one side has full control, von Clausewitz warns of what he dubbed *friction*, a concept that "more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper… Countless minor incidents – the kind you can never really foresee –combine to lower the general level of performance" (von Clausewitz 2007, 66) and with it, predictability. Perhaps this unparalleled level of outmost confusion and uncertainty, combined with the pace at which chaotic events unfold, is the primary reason why we so desperately try to construct rigid narratives in war and endow unintelligible reality with some meaning?

Notions and words we chose to describe phenomena in the discourse of war are crucial for constructing and perpetuating narratives and "facts". The prime task of philosophy is to analyze and parse key notions we use in order to resolve any conceptual confusion and prevent potential misuse which can, as we explained, directly aid in generating false "realities". These "realities" can be extremely dangerous in the long run. The task in front of us is to analyze the (mis)use of the notion *siege* in the context of events that unfolded in Sarajevo, during the war in Yugoslavia. The situation in Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995 is widely described as "the longest siege in modern history" by the overwhelming majority of media, political institutions, and experts especially in the west. But what exactly does the word *siege* means, and can it be used to accurately describe what went on in Sarajevo in the 1990s? Are there perhaps other notions which better "capture the reality" of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina in that period? If so, why do we avoid using them and insist on calling it a siege?

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[6]   "Fog of war" is a notion used to describe a complete lack of certainty by the famous von Clausewitz, who defined war as "the realm of uncertainty… the realm of chance" (von Clausewitz 2007, 47).

The Notion of Siege and Sarajevo

Sieges are often considered to be an "'archaic' or 'medieval' method of warfare" (Nijs 2020, 681), in which walled fortresses are encircled and continuously attacked by an invading army. This is well reflected in the reputable *Encyclopedia of Land Forces and Warfare*, which defines a siege as "a battle over a castle or a fortified town" (Margiotta 2000, 941). No wonder that historians "unambiguously recognize the importance, indeed the central role, played by siege warfare… during the Middle Ages" (Bachrach 1994, 119), i.e., when decisive battles were fought over fortified castles. At first glance, it may seem that such a method of warfare in not of much importance today, when we no longer fight at high walls and across drawbridges. However, as Fox explains, sieges "command a central position in the wars of the post-Cold War era" (Fox 2021, 18), and are far from being an obsolete method of warfare. It is therefore very odd, to say the least, that we "lack a definition of this concept under IHL" (Nijs 2020, 682), or under any other significant authority, which makes defining a siege very difficult and complicated. As Hampson remarks, "sieges are like an elephant: 'you know it when you see it, but you have a problem defining it'" (Hill, Hampson and Watts 2015, 91). Perhaps this explains why there are no definitions of siege in the latest *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (2021) of the US DoD, nor in the latest *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions* (2020). The only places that offer any type of a definition of a siege are dictionaries[7]. Even though there are slight differences in definitions among dictionaries, we can offer a meta-definition that encompasses common elements of all definitions of siege by which siege represents *a method of warfare in which enemy forces completely surround a city and its inhabitants, cutting them off entirely, using the weapon of starvation and exhaustion in an attempt to conquer the city.* As Nijs asserts, "the essence of a siege lies in the encirclement… and subsequent isolation of the enemy forces by cutting their channels of supply and reinforcement with a view of inducing the enemy into submission by means of starvation" (Nijs 2020, 682). Such a definition enables us to identify the essential features of the notion of siege, and then determine the logical scope and reach of this notion[8].

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[7]   As this paper is written in English, we searched for a definition in the most respectable English dictionaries - *Cambridge Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary, Merriam Webster Dictionary and Collins Dictionary.*

[8]   Logic dictates that only once we know the essential features of a notion, can we identify objects that fall in its reach. (Petrović 2011, 17–23).

Definition of a siege clearly indicates certain essential features of this phenomena in war, *three* being the most obvious. First, siege implies that the besieging forces must come from somewhere outside of the city, usually from far away, and place the city and its inhabitants under siege. If we examine the most famous sieges in history, from Troy and Masada to Constantinople, Vera Cruz, and Leningrad, we can see that they represent precisely such situations in which invading armies came from their own cities and countries and besieged the city and the people who live their normal, everyday lives. People living in the city thus have no *prima facie* responsibility for the siege – they are simply living their lives in their homes which are being besieged by enemy combatants. This creates a clear asymmetry in which those who are in the city are engaged only in defense of their homes, while the besiegers are attackers. Second, the inherent "instruments" of siege are starvation and exhaustion of city defenders and inhabitants. This means actively blocking all routes in and out of the city (on the ground, above the ground and *beneath the ground*), cutting off all and any supply of food, water, gas, medicine, etc. to the city, indefinitely. This requires that the entire city must be severed off from the rest of the territory controlled by its own army and troops, usually by quite a distance. If this isn't the case, then we cannot speak of a city siege *per se,* rather of a city on the first line of battle. Third, the end goal of a siege is to enter and conquer the city. The only reason why cities are placed under sieges, regardless of their duration, is to bring them into submission and take control of the city. Let us now examine the presence of these essential features of siege in the case of Sarajevo.

Besiegers come from somewhere

Modern day Sarajevo is unquestionably a Bosniak[9] city, with over 83% of its population being Bosniak. Given the fact that the last census was undertaken in 2013, the percentage is probably even higher today. But it was never so in history. Sarajevo was always a distinctly multicultural

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[9]   The term Muslim was officially used in former Yugoslavia to denote citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who belonged to Islam. It signified both religious and ethnic identity. It wasn't before 1993 that the term *Bosniaks* was introduced to replace the term Muslims. We shall use these two notions interchangeably, depending on the period we discuss, as all documents written before the mid-90s only mention Muslims.

urban area, with large Muslim and Serb populations, along with substantial number of Croats, Jews, later Yugoslavians, etc. According to the last census before the war started (1991), around 49% of Sarajevo's population was Muslim, around 30% Serbian, over 10% Yugoslavian, and around 7% Croatian. The majority of those who declared as Yugoslavs were ethnically Serbian, meaning that the Serb population in pre-war Sarajevo was roughly between 35 and 40%. In a city in which two dominant ethnical groups, Serbs and Muslims, were very close in numbers, it is extremely difficult to imagine a situation in which the entirety of such a city is besieged by compatriots of an ethic group representing almost 40% of the city population! Why would Serbs besiege other Serbs in a civil war fought predominantly between Serbs and Muslims!? The very naïve and romanticized assumption that Serbs in Sarajevo stood with their Muslim neighbors and fought non-Sarajevo Serbs (!?)[10] is conspicuously refuted by the fact that in 1995 only 0,5% of ARBiH forces in Sarajevo were Serbs (Ajnadžić 2002, 123) – the level of statistical mistake.

Another important fact is very often neglected and ignored in the narrative of the "siege" of Sarajevo. Namely, when presenting the "siege", Bosniaks and the western media focus solely on the four city municipalities which were controlled by the Muslims during the war – Stari Grad, Centar, Novo Sarajevo and Novi Grad[11]. However, Sarajevo had six more city municipalities in 1991 – Hadžići, Ilidža, Ilijaš, Pale, Trnovo, and Vogošća, making a total of ten city municipalities[12]. Why weren't the remaining six municipalities under siege? The said municipalities were in fact controlled and populated by Serbs and Serbian forces. When the fighting started in Sarajevo, in the beginning of April 1991, Serbs and Muslims formed defensive lines around urban/suburban territories they lived in, and *de facto* divided the city into Serbian-controlled and Muslim-controlled areas. Serbs were forced to flee from their homes in

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[10]   This idea has been heavily exploited for the sake of creating an "civilized urban vs. barbaric rural" background to the story, not only in political but in every other context. Ristić even preposterously asserts that violence of Serbs besieging Sarajevo "did not target one particular ethnicity but rather the mixing of ethnicities in Sarajevo's public space" (Ristić, 2014, 354).

[11]   Some of these municipalities weren't even fully controlled by Muslims – Serbs held the Grbavica settlement in Novo Sarajevo, virtually the urban center of the city, for the entirety of war.

[12]   It should be noted that population was mixed even within city municipalities in Sarajevo, and that there was no ethnic segregation of city quarters in Sarajevo. Nor anywhere in Yugoslavian cities for that matter.

Muslim-controlled areas, and *vice versa*. So, in reality, the Muslim-controlled areas in Sarajevo were "besieged" by Sarajevo Serbs who took control of their own territories within their own city! Sarajevo, or even only the Muslim-controlled municipalities, were therefore not besieged by "others", combatants who came from their own homes and cities; rather, the "City of Sarajevo was divided along ethnic lines" (Concluding Report 2020, 701) and a stalemate ensued in the following years, characterized by constant fighting, bloodshed, and many war crimes committed by both sides. Interestingly, many areas Serb-controlled areas were in fact pressured not only from withing the city, i.e., from Muslim-controlled municipalities, but also from the rear, by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Corps of ARBiH, meaning that there were actually "two encirclement rings" with ARBiH holding "most of important geographical features in the wider area of Sarajevo… and tactically dominating hills and elevations" (Concluding Report 2020, 696; 699). Of course, Sarajevo Serbs received aid from Serbs from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Sarajevo Muslims were aided by Muslims from outside of Sarajevo, as it happens in every war. But, the fact that during the entire war in Sarajevo "only 280 out of the 7,178 Serb war victims did not have residence in Sarajevo" (Concluding Report 2020, 696) indicated that the overwhelming majority of those "besieging" and fighting against Sarajevo Muslims were in fact Sarajevo Serbs.

Instrument of starvation and exhaustion

Every definition of siege includes the presumption of intent to starve and exhaust the besieged party into submission and surrender, making siege a "'kneel or starve' strategy" (Czuperski et al. 2017, 12). Time plays a crucial role in sieges, as the longer they last the scarcer resources become inside the city, forcing its inhabitants and defenders to surrender. Naturally, food and water represent key supplies and necessities in a siege scenario, followed by medicine and then energy sources, etc. This would imply that one of the central, strategic, goals of any siege must be to completely cut off water, food, and medicine supply to the city in order to starve and exhaust the population. However, regardless of the undoubtedly cruel and extremely harsh conditions which characterize each and every urban environment caught up in civil war, there seems to be no such goal in the case of Sarajevo. Already in June of 1992, Serb forces who controlled the Butmir airport in Sarajevo handed it over

to the peacekeepers, i.e., United Nations Protection Forces (UNPRO-FOR) in order to establish an aerobridge with a sole purpose of delivering humanitarian aid. This aerobridge was in operation until the end of war, enabling constant influx of food, medicine, and other supplies to Muslim controlled parts of Sarajevo. Just to put things into perspective, in the period from June 1992 till the end of war, there were "12,951 UN air flights into the city… bringing 160,677 tons of humanitarian supplies (144,827 tons of food and the rest non-food items such as medical supplies)" (Andreas 2008, 39). In addition, the humanitarian aid was also delivered via roads, crossing Serb controlled territory, which amounted to more than 150 tons of humanitarian aid, on average, delivered daily to Muslim controlled parts of Sarajevo! As a result, according to the official UN Report presented to the Security Council on May 27th 1994, "no one appears to have died during the siege from starvation, dehydration or freezing" (UN Report 1994, 48) meaning that starvation was in fact not used as a method of warfare. Throughout the "siege", "food storages were never fully emptied… gas and water were delivered… and Sarajevo had sufficient electricity" (Rouz 2011, 100; 307).

   But the operating aerobridge also enabled "the influx of foreign journalists into the city" which in effect transformed Sarajevo into "a global media spectacle" (Andreas 2008, 39). Muslim officials perfectly understood the mechanisms of the fourth-generation of warfare[13], in which "worldwide moral controversy consequently becomes a key theatre of war" (Schulte 2012, 99) and relied on manipulation with humanitarian aid, *inter alia,* in order to create such controversy by "playing the 'victim'", as UNPROFOR Civil Affair officer Philip Corwin phrased it (Corwin 2000, 216). Not only was roughly one fifth of the civilian-intended aid distributed to the Muslim Army, but the humanitarian aid was also often deliberately stopped by the Muslim Army in order to "let the city run out of stuff, drive up the prices, and then have the aid sent in" (Andreas 2008, 45). UNPROFOR Commander, British General Michael Rose, writes of many instances in which Muslim army and officials directly impeded humanitarian aid in order to portray the city as besieged to the international press – Muslims stopped the delivery of coal before the winter, rejected electricity passing through "Serbian transmission lines", directly opened fire on UN planes landing on Butmir,

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[13]   Bosnian Serbs, on the other hand, never truly understood the power of the *CNN Effect,* and were "practically the only people on earth uninterested in mugging for CNN cameras" (Schindler 2007, 8).

even poured out purified water into the river, instead of giving it to cit-
izens, etc. – they did everything they could to "maintain the image of
Sarajevo under siege in the eyes of the world" (Rouz 2001, 93; 100; 207).
At the same time, weapons and ammunition were regularly smuggled
into Muslim controlled parts of Sarajevo "in UN humanitarian aid con-
tainers with false bottoms", in shipments containing "communication
systems, detonators, weapons, explosives, anti-armor rockets, hand gre-
nades, rocket-propelled grenades, and bullets" (Andreas 2008, 54–55).
According to ARBiH General Halilović, Muslims "delivered ammuni-
tion from Visoko in oxygen bottles from humanitarian agencies" along
with "weapons, ammunition, and spare parts in humanitarian aid con-
tainers" (Lučarević 2000, 89–110).

The famous "Tunnel of Salvation" or "Tunnel of Hope" further ac-
centuates the sheer absurdity of the claim of existence of a "siege" aiming
to starve and exhaust the defenders. Built in 1993 under the code name
"object T", the tunnel ran under the Butmir airport and connected the
Muslim controlled parts of Sarajevo with the territory controlled by the
remaining Muslim forces. Its main purpose was to enable distribution
of military supplies into Muslim territory in Sarajevo, including com-
batants. According to Muslim sources, more than 3.000 people used the
tunnel daily, with "1,150,000 soldiers and civilians… and 100,000 tons
of weapons, ammunition, and food" (Concluding Report 2020, 707–708)
being moved in and out of Sarajevo during its existence. Interestingly,
the tunnel was only around 700 meters long, meaning that the distance
between the "besieged" Muslim parts of Sarajevo and the "free" terri-
tory controlled by ARBiH was less than *one kilometer*! The tunnel was
operational throughout the duration of the war, serving as "a route for
constant trafficking of all sorts of things" (Rouz 2001, 238). Not only
was starvation never an option in Sarajevo, the Muslim-controlled parts
were directly linked to the remaining Muslim territory from 1993 till
the end of war, meaning that their territory within the city wasn't even
"encircled" and "sealed off", in the true sense of the word, but was con-
nected to their remaining forces which were *only 700 meters* away!

Conquering the city

What is the final goal and the entire purpose of any city siege?
As a method of warfare, siege is instrumental – it serves to force the
besieged party into submission, into surrender which would allow the

besiegers to conquer the city. Taking of a city is the inherent purpose of siege – the "better" the siege, the quicker the city falls. But the official proclaimed strategic goal of Bosnian Serbs was not to "conquer" Sarajevo, rather it was "division of the city of Sarajevo into Muslim and Serb parts and the establishment of effective state authority in each part"[14], meaning defending and securing the Serbian-populated areas (city municipalities) of Sarajevo, which would eventually become Srpsko Sarajevo. Therefore, Serb forces actually never tried to conquer the entirety of the city, nor did they ever fully conquer Sarajevo "despite the fact that they could" (Rouz 2001, 307).

Serb forces and officials never used the term "siege", as it would imply that the end goal is to take control over the "besieged" territory; instead, they used the term "blockade" to describe the "military necessity to isolate the ARBiH 1st Corps", not allowing "Muslim forces to break through from Sarajevo" (Concluding Report 2020, 696–697) and engage on other battlefields which would dramatically impact the course of war. While the effort to take the city was lacking, there were no shortages of attempts of the Muslim Army to break through from Muslim controlled parts of Sarajevo and join forces with the remaining corps of ARBiH. The majority of fighting, and the unfortunate casualties that inevitably follow, was caused precisely by the efforts of the Muslim army inside of Sarajevo to break out the blockade.

SIEGE VS. DIVIDED CITY

Examination of definitions of siege allowed us to precisely determine what this method of warfare actually is, despite the conspicuous lack of military definitions of this important concept in modern-day glossaries and professional military dictionaries. By analyzing the notion of siege, we were able to identify three essential features of this notion, which in turn determine the logical reach and scope of phenomena that belong to the set of objects of this notion. Careful and detailed examination of events and circumstances in Sarajevo from 1991 to 1995 provided us with a clear conclusion that none of the three essential features of the notion of siege were indeed present during the war in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, events and circumstances in Sarajevo *did not constitute a siege*. Rather, Sarajevo represented a glaring

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[14]   This was one of the six strategic goals declared by Republika Srpska's National Assembly in May 1992 (*Official Gazette of Republika Srpska* 1992, 130).

example of a city divided along ethnic lines, caught up in gruesome ethnic and religious civil war riddled by many atrocious war crimes committed by *both sides*, just like in every civil war in history – Jerusalem, Beirut, Shanghai, Belfast, and many other cities were divided in civil wars, not under siege. Moreover, another city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely Mostar, was a divided city during the war! Despite many claims supporting such an assertion regarding Sarajevo, made by key international officials on the ground – Corwin, Gen. Rose, Bg. Gen. Hayes and Lt. Col. Frewer, Gen. Morillon, Lord Owen, etc. – the term "siege" remained uncritically and inseparably adhered to Sarajevo till date, inspiring books, movies, art exhibitions, etc.

Reason behind persistent insistence on calling Sarajevo a city under siege instead of a divided city are the connotations of the notion siege, i.e., existence of the described essential features – aggressors/combatants who came from afar and laid siege upon innocent non-combatants living their normal peaceful lives, inhumanely starving them into submission in order to conquer the city. This notion perfectly fitted the constructed Manichean narrative of "good versus evil… light against darkness, of postmodernity against neo-medievalism" in which Serbs who came to Bosnia were "bent on annihilating the Muslims of Bosnia and their virtuous society" (Schindler 2007, 7–8) which was multicultural, tolerant, and enlightened. When such a narrative was "imposed upon reality" in Sarajevo, encompassing all elements of a narrative (events, characters, background, sequence of events and causality) the only practical solution truly was to call the situation a siege, as it connotes a *prima facie* asymmetry of moral, legal, and historical culpability, liability, responsibility, and guilt.

Calling it a siege allowed, and still allows, reporters, academics, and officials to make absurd assertions about Serbian snipers brought in from "shooting associations from Serbia and abroad" (Ristić 2001, 346) to kill Muslim civilians for fun, without ever mentioning the fact that snipers were used routinely by both sides and that Muslim snipers killed numerous civilians, including the „86-year-old mother of Momčilo Krajšnik" (Rouz 2001, 45). It also allows them to write about the alleged "Serb fascism" (Sontag 1994, 87) in Sarajevo while simultaneously turning a blind eye to the terror endured by Serbs who stayed in Muslim controlled parts of the city[15], not to mention statements made

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[15]   Numerous hideous crimes were committed against Serb civilians. More in (Antić & Kecmanović 2016, 310-311).

by acting Prime Minister of Bosniaks, Haris Silajdžić, that the country is "in hands of blinded Islamists" who, according to French troops on the ground, "opened fire on their own citizens" (Rouz 2001, 239; 249) in order to blame the Serbs. If it is a siege, then Serbian shelling of civilian objects and quarters of Sarajevo is something that is expected of war-mongering genocidal aggressors, and it is much easier to completely neglect the "human shields" tactics used by Muslim forces in Sarajevo, who performed artillery attacks on Serbian territory surrounding their quarters from hospitals, residential areas, UNPROFOR headquarters, and other similar locations "with the intention of attracting Serb fire, in hope that the resulting carnage would further tilt international support in their favor" (Rouz 2001, 219). Naturally, a "clear siege situation" allowed NATO, which had a mandate to provide support to neutral peacekeeping UN personnel, to directly "side with one belligerent side", according to the UNPROFOR Commander, Gen. Rose (Rouz 2001, 237). Finally, insistence on the term siege enabled all elements of the international community to simply ignore the fact that Serbs were ethnically cleansed from a city in which they represented almost 40% of population when the war began[16]. None of this would be possible if, instead of illogically and unfoundedly calling it a siege, the situation in Sarajevo was simply called exactly what it was – a divided city. What tremendous power a single word has!

CONCLUSION

Words we use serve not only to describe our reality, but also to generate it by constructing social and institutional facts. Regulative rules we use are essentially value-impotent and morally insignificant if the reality they aim to regulate is constructed using corrupted constitutive rules. Therefore, in our construction of institutional facts and narratives we ought to be extremely cautious and careful regarding the words and notions we chose to use, especially in our attempts to make sense of phenomena which are notoriously deprived of it – many such phenomena are found in war. Nevertheless, our choice of words when describing events and processes in war cannot be neither arbitrary not ideologically-fueled; rather, we must logically examine the meaning of

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[16]   Serb population in Sarajevo plummeted from 35-45% before the war, to 3,2% in the entire Sarajevo Canton according to the 2013 Census data. In the late XIX century, Sarajevo had a dominant Serb majority, of over 70%!.

every notion and only then define the set of objects which belong to its reach and scope.

The deliberate misuse of the notion of siege in Sarajevo serves the purpose of perpetuating a Procrustean narrative of the war in Bosnia, into which actuality must be violently forced by all means and at all costs. This morose simplification of the intricate circumstances and extremely complex context of ethnic violence in Bosnia, burdened by centuries of common history, serves not only to grotesquely distort political and historical reality but also to hinder hopes for genuine post-war reconciliation and lasting peace[17]. To fully understand this assertion, we would have to undergo another lengthy notion analysis. In this analysis, we would have to compare the difference in meaning and subtle connotations between the notions of *forgiveness* and *reconciliation* – a siege stipulates the former, where as a divided city implies and facilitates the latter. But, that's a subject for different paper, albeit very akin to this one.

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[17]   More on this "mechanism" in (Stanar 2021, 39-43).

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САРАЈЕВО У ПРОКРУСТОВОЈ ПОСТЕЉИ: „ОПСАДА" ПОДЕЉЕНОГ ГРАДА

Сажетак

Описујући стварност, људи се по правилу ослањају на чињенице, тј. тврдње које претендују на истинитост. Међутим, нису све чињенице једнаке. Институционалне чињенице представљају посебну категорију чињенице којима се, ослањајући се на колективну интенционалност, описује „невидљива онтологија", тј. реалност конструисана од стране човека. У овој конструкцији стварности, према Серлу, кључну улогу игра језик, тј. *појмови* које користимо. У протекле две деценије, све је чешће у употреби концепт наратива, који представља пример институционалне чињенице којом се реалност настоји симплификовати, објаснити и повезати у логички след догађаја. У конструисан „калуп" наратива се потом „утискује" реалност, а у том, често насилном, процесу централну улогу игра избор речи, тј. појмова које користимо да означимо објекте и феномене. Тако креиран наратив постаје пословична Прокрустова постеља у којој се реалности секу ноге или се истеже до пуцања управо коришћењем појмова који су у складу са наративом, без обзира на то да ли они заиста одговарају стварности. Пример коришћења појма „опсада", којим се описује стање у Сарајеву од 1992. до 1995. године, на одличан начин илуструје насиље наратива над стварношћу и истином.

Анализом појма „опсада" можемо дефинисати битне ознаке тог појма – они који опседају нужно долазе од негде; опсада се нужно ослања на инструменте изгладњивања и исцрпљивања; циљ опсаде је нужно да освоји град. Само они феномени у стварности

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који имају ове ознаке, тј. карактеристике заправо спадају у досег појма „опсада”, те је његово коришћење за друге феномене заправо злоупотреба. Анализом стања у Сарајеву током рата у Босни и Херцеговини, можемо непогрешиво установити да ни једна битна ознака појма „опсада” није постојала у реалности ситуације на терену. Они који су „опседали” Сарајево нису „дошли од негде” да опседају мирно становништво граде – они су заправо и сами били становници града Сарајева, само оних градских општина које нису имале муслиманску већину, будући да је град Сарајево имао готово 40% српског становништва, према попису из 1991. године. Чињеница да према документима Уједињених нација, нико у Сарајеву није умро од глади, жеђи или смрзавања током целокупног трајања „опсаде” јасно показује да изгладњивање становништва није био нити циљ нити тактика Срба који су „опседали” Сарајево. Додату тежину овог аргументу дају подаци о стотинама тона хуманитарне помоћи свих врста које су током целог рата пристизале у Сарајево под благословом Срба и преко територије коју су контролисали Срби. Коначно, иако су према сведочењима највиших УНПРОФОР официра Срби без проблема могли да заузму целокупно Сарајево, они то никада нису урадили, будући да војни циљ није била опсада и заузимање града, већ војна блокада Првог корпуса Армије БиХ.

Инсистирање мејнстрим медија, академских кругова и политичких званичника, нарочито на западу, да ситуацију у Сарајеву описују појмом „опсада” уместо одговарајућим појмом етнички „подељеног града” који је захваћен крвавим грађанским ратом, осликава појмовно насиље над стварношћу и омогућава потпуно негирање стварних чињеница које нису у складу са креираним наративом по којем су Срби агресори у Босни и Херцеговини. Разлог овог насиља јесу конотације значења појма „опсада”, којим се делегитимише било какво насиље Срба, док се свако насиље према Србима *prima facie* оправдава.

Кључне речи: опсада, Сарајево, подељени град, наратив, рат