

***Sarajevo: A Bosnian Kaleidoscope*. By Fran Markowitz.
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Pronunciation Guide. Glossary. Notes. References. Index.
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Fran Markowitz's *Sarajevo: A Bosnian Kaleidoscope* is an ethnographic study of the modern city which foregrounds the multiple, overlapping histories and their shifting interpretations that shape how residents of Sarajevo today define themselves as persons and members of different communities. Seeking to break with conventions that represent Bosnia and its capital city as a bridge or mosaic (e.g. Andrić 1977, Sells 1996, Bougarel et al. 2007), Markowitz instead offers a suggestive new metaphor of the kaleidoscope: a device capable of conveying "the fluid and dynamic variety of Sarajevo" and revealing "dozens of never stable, always interrelated patterns" (Markowitz 2010, 4). Markowitz additionally suggests these patterns are not endless, but shaped and constrained by historical heritage, governmental technologies and everyday practices that have gained new interpretations and forms since the 1990s war. In the eight chapters that compose this book, the author investigates whether Sarajevo is (still) a place that offers opportunities for hybrid subjectivities and multiple forms of belonging, regardless and in spite of the postwar state-building practices that tend to "demand unequivocal national distinctions and unwavering loyalties" (5).

Written on the basis of ethnographic research conducted during a series of short trips between 1997 and 2008, and one six month long research stay in 2004, the book begins with two largely descriptive chapters, the first of which stages the scope of inquiry and provides a short introduction to the city's recent history. In the second chapter, Markowitz takes a walk through the city's center, participating in a ubiquitous daily practice that she understands to be both a form of place- and self-making. Noting with equal interest the city's interlaced architectural styles and the ways its inhabitants evaluate and develop attachments to different sites of memory, Markowitz moves beyond emphasis on reported speech and invites us to consider sounds and sights of a city. In the five subsequent chapters, she sets out to explore the city's complex social and political dynamics, with the aim of discovering how postwar processes of state formation have impacted its multiethnic character.

Granting attention to compounded historical legacies, Markowitz in particular explores the contentious history of the national question in Yugoslavia, and its effect on multiethnic Bosnia, the land that escapes the narrow definitions of nation-states based in the late-nineteenth century paradigms. She devotes much of the third chapter to history of national recognition of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), the largest ethnic group in both Bosnia and Sarajevo, but moves on

in later parts of the chapter onto contemporary, rival national claims of Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. This discussion is followed by one of book's most provocative chapters entitled "Census and Sensibility: Confirming the Constitution" (p 77-90). By studying the pre- and post-war practices of population counting, Markowitz tries to understand the relationship between proscribed identities promoted by the state and everyday practices and forms of self-definition of Sarajevo's inhabitants. She consequently argues that because the Dayton Agreement inscribed the national categories of Serb, Croat and Bosniak into law and technologies of governance, it pushed previously slippery forms of identification into fixed categories, forcing people to first and foremost define themselves as members of one of the three ethnic groups. Consequently, a Czech Sarajevan described in the chapter is directed by the "census"-taker to proclaim herself a Croat, because Czechs and Croats are both Catholics! Markowitz continues to explore the effects of such narrowing of options for identification on the categories of people that do not belong neatly in the B-C-S scheme, including Jews, Gypsies, Slovenes, children of mixed marriages, and those belonging to the ambiguous category of "Ostali" (Others). The following three chapters are devoted to the analysis of the position of these constitutionally invisible groups and their everyday negotiations. Finally, the last two chapters ruminate on the possibility of constituting a new multiethnic, pluralist and "hybrid" Bosnia and the various strategies used by contemporary Sarajevans to evade and destabilize the narrow ethnonational identities proscribed by Dayton.

Markowitz is to be admired for seeking to produce a more nuanced interpretation of Sarajevo's interethnic dynamics, overlapping histories and the narrated identities of its inhabitants. The attention she gives to multiple heritages within which Sarajevans construct and describe their lives, including the often-ignored legacy of Yugoslav socialism, is a welcome compliment to the new generation of area studies. The fact she intends to cast light on minorities whose presence in the city is overshadowed by relations between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs must also be praised. Yet, Markowitz's work also invites a series of questions about the presuppositions guiding the project and its methodology. The author spends most of her time with members of educated, urban middle classes and cultural elites, without visibly taking into account how this pool of informants (who are only too eager to produce stories about Sarajevo's interlaced historical legacies which she elicits from them) is shaping her own analysis of Sarajevo. Consequently, in this ethnography of a post-war city, there is surprisingly little said about emergent social struggles or demographic shifts. Marginal to the overall project are the new economic realities and forms of social exclusion that also shape the patterns of identification and the lives of modern Sarajevans. One wonders: where are the other patterns in this Bosnian kaleidoscope, patters produced by non-ethnic and non-confessional forms of differentiation?

This silence is especially disappointing in light of the claims made in the introduction, where Markowitz promises to break with convention in her analysis and representation of Sarajevo. The intriguing image of kaleidoscope seems to foreshadow a novel form of theorization of the very problem of representation of the city whose recent history has been so heavily mediated and documented. Yet the author's use of such term remains underdeveloped,

and her own metaphor, in the end, bears uncanny resemblance to the older frame of mosaic. Her focus on the question of identity, and in that, identities defined primarily through ethnic, national and confessional categories, such as Bosniak, Slovene or Jewish, actually reinforces many of such older narratives and tropes, which define Sarajevo as a European Jerusalem or a meeting point of East and West. The changing cultural patterns Markowitz is interested in, despite her open-ended research questions, emerge as familiar and routine. Portrayed as a beautiful, heroic and cosmopolitan place, Markowitz's Sarajevo offers no space for Eastern Bosnian refugees, émigrés from Sandžak, Chinese entrepreneurs, single mothers or Turkish students, who now form the landscape of this transforming city.

Moreover, certain sections of the book raise questions about whether it is possible in this day and age to cast one's net so wide and endeavor to write this kind of urban ethnography. For example, even though Markowitz attempts to address the plight of Roma (Gypsies), her ethnographic archive contains merely a few impressionistic observations: seeing and speculating about a group of Roma men who stand aside in the central street in Sarajevo (36) and learning second-hand the story of a Roma boy who begs in front of a convenience store with the permission of the female cashiers (104). The Slovenes fare even worse, being represented through analysis of an interview with a director of a local cultural organization. Although the author conducts a few interviews with Serbs living on the outskirts of the city, in what is today known as Eastern Sarajevo, she discusses solely the moments from her interviews that testify to the radical nationalism and rampant paranoia among her interlocutors there. Meanwhile, she says little about the fact many Serbs from these neighborhoods work, shop and socialize in Sarajevo proper, ride the public transportation and use many of the city's services. And although Markowitz does mention the unique legacies of Yugoslav socialism, she only really engages with the doctrine of socialist multinationalism, while remaining unspecific about other socialist era values and practices that affect the lives of the people with whom she spoke.

Markowitz also leaves this reader wanting for more critical engagement with the ways in which discourses on unitary Bosnia, Bosnian hybridity and multicultural Sarajevo fold into many Bosniak nationalist narratives. A possible reason for this lack is her trusting use of nationalist Bosniak historiography and the concomitant scarcity of engagement with recent interventions on the link between multiculturalism and nationalism (for most recent examples, see Hajdarpašić 2008; Helms 2008, also Helms forthcoming; Jansen 2008). Moreover, the romantic tone which permeates some sections, such as the one on "Mirth and Melancholy" (Chapter I), where the author admires the city's spirit and different architectural styles, or in "Practicing Bosnian Hybridity" (Conclusion), where she celebrates the symbolism of Bosnian coffee (*bosanska kafa*) & Bosnian stew (*bosanski lonac*), raises questions about Markowitz's own politics of ethnographic representation. Her ethnographic account says little about the relations of power, authority and claims of authenticity involved in conjuring these images. Instead, she repeatedly invokes the category of "hybridity," which flattens rather than enriches her anthropological analysis.

One senses that much of the book's shortcomings emerge out of noble intentions: to

problematize the narratives that reify ethnic violence and conflict. Yet in adapting the very categories and languages that are used to construct such images of Bosnia, and soliciting narratives that merely confirm the author's expectations, Markowitz ultimately paints Sarajevo as a place where the one thing that matters above all is how one defines herself in ethnonational terms. Yet for many among the Western audiences, burdened by assumptions about Sarajevo and Bosnia as places of eternal ethnic strife, this book may prove to be a useful introduction to the complexities and contradictions in the city's interethnic relations and modes of self-identification of its inhabitants.

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