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A CASE STUDY OF REPORTING OF NEWSPAPER BH DANI DURING THE WAR IN BOSNIA

Abstract

The key idea of this article is to present a case study of reporting of newspaper BH Dani that were battling the dominant ethno-nationalist style of reporting. Methodologically speaking, this project uses content analysis and the process of developing and grouping the ideas is very important. War in Bosnia is the societal and political context of this research. A number of key authors that theorized the idea of propaganda and media influence on thinking and attitudes as well as persuasion is introduced to the reader in the first part of the article. The case study goes on to show how articles in BH Dani explored cases of intolerance of Bosnian government and war forces, their war atrocities and displayed writings where the war situation is presented objectively. The article is then concluded with the recapitulation of key ideas and also its contribution to knowledge is discussed.

Keywords: journalism, BH Dani, reporting, investigation, ethno-nationalism, case study

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

Our key idea in this article is to demonstrate that during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) there were in existence media outlets that were independent, investigative and that represented a countervailing power to the mainstream ethno-nationalist reporting. Newspaper *BH Dani* [Days], formerly known as *Naši dani* [Our Days], were maintained by Senad Pećanin, who was editor-in-chief of this publication from 1992 to 2010. This journal was a part of the independent reporting scene in Bosnia. It was founded on 3rd September 1992 by Senad Pećanin, then editor in chief. It's print run was 25 000. It is said, half in jest and half in earnest, that the genuine print run was 100 000 because, for the purpose of saving funding, 4 persons read each copy of the newspaper. It is often seen as an anti-Muslim publication, because it criticizes Arab volunteers in the Civil War in former Yugoslavia. In addition to this many analysts see it as more heavily critical over the issue of corruption. Some of the notable journalists were Semezdin Mehmedinović, Aleksandar Hemon, Miljenko Jergović, Marko Vešović and Željko Cvijanović (Anon, 2018). Pećanin describes the informal operational structure of the paper: "For the operation of *BH Dani* I brought together some of my friends and associates. The key problem in the running of this newspaper was financing" (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018). Journalists used their own means of funding to make the newspaper operate, as it was rarely backed by state authorities. In our interview Senad Pećanin clarified that the print run depended on the quantity of oil needed for the electricity aggregate that they could afford.¹ *Dani*

- 1) "We paid oil 35 German marks per liter. I do recall that once a massive shortage of oil occurred even in the gray market and even funding was of no assistance. We had an issue ready to be printed, but given that we had no electric current, we had to secure oil for aggregate. An associate of the newspapers came to assist, professor of Franciscan theology by vocation in Sarajevo, brother Ljubo Lucić. We agreed to make an effort in the dawn, while the police hour was in force, so that I came before the church of St. Ante, knocked the door twice, left the barrel, evaporated and returned in half an hour. So it was: half an hour later, I collected a full barrel, 20 liters of oil and *Dani* were printed the same day. Brother Ljubo and other brethren, nuns were freezing without electric current, heating, water: and instead of turning the aggregate on and warming up a little bit in the winter, brother Ljubo stole the whole barrel and *Dani* were printed the same day" (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018).

were sold in Tito street during breaks in the war conflict: the total print run, between 3 to 6 thousand copies, would be sold in a matter of hours. Inhabitants would make wallpapers from the copies of this newspaper, and they would stick it to the walls of their rooms.

The context of the operation of this publication had been war torn Yugoslavia. In spite of economic and political problems, intensification of international conflicts and the new socio-structural crisis of reproduction of societal relations of state socialism during the 1980s, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had looked in the eyes of the Western politicians and the media as a state that had been best positioned-in comparison with other states of the socialist bloc-joining the queue for societal transformation and entering the process of enlargement of 'United Europe'. French newspaper *Libération* of 4th April 1991, predicts that "it is clear that European community wants a stable Yugoslavia as member".

Western countries have attentively monitored the speed and results of economic reforms that the government of Yugoslavia had achieved. The Federal Government got full support, among many, of France for the effort and direction of changes. The then prime minister Ante Marković had visited France in 1991, where socialist president François Mitterrand accepted him cordially, assuring him that Yugoslavia can count on French assistance in conducting social reforms and "maintenance of stability of state through respect for minorities". Mitterrand added: "We wish to see the success of your efforts and we will assist. We cannot be indifferent to what is happening in this part of Europe. We will do everything to contribute to your success" (*Le Monde*, 25th of May 1991).

Stability and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, as an expression of promoting its interests, had been the position that, during the beginning of the last decade of the last century, had been upheld by creditors from international funds. So, International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the debtor logic of easier control over centralized state, gave a condition to the government of Ante Marković, before giving the new loan, to enforce voting on 11 amendments across republics that would be a guarantee of austerity and would be applied without exception in all parts of the unified state. Hence, it looked as all the conditions had been fulfilled for peaceful and successful transformation of the 'communist Yugoslavia'.

Nonetheless, shortly thereafter, destructive and unstoppable war was being waged across former Yugoslavia. Multidimensional, social, economic, political, cultural, moral crisis and crisis of thought produced the destruction of old and creation of new values and norms and was embodied in war. Of course, Yugoslavia had not been either the first or the last state that witnessed the destiny of disintegration in Europe, but its destruction surprised many, and the causes and effects of this process are a matter of controversy. The Bosnian conflict was the bloodiest and most brutal of all the Yugoslav civil wars. According to the most important data hitherto published, published by *Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo* (IDC), the total number of murdered is 100 000, including warriors and civilians (40-55 000 civilians) and this number comprises 65,8% Bosniaks², 25.6% Serbs and 8.01% Croats. On the other, Bosniaks amounted to 83.3% of the total number of victims (Bakić, 2014 : 544-573). The Siege of Sarajevo was the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare. A total of 14 385 people were killed during the siege, including 5 445 civilians (Results of the Research on Human Losses in 91-95; Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo, 2007).

Nationalist Bosnian *Party of Democratic Action* (SDA) of Alija Izetbegović was handicapped in relation with other two nationalist parties the victors of the first elections in BiH. Namely, the *Serb Democratic Party* (SDS) of Radovan Karadžić, relied on Slobodan Milošević, Serbia and the *Yugoslav People's Army* (JNA), whilst *Croatian Democratic Union* (HDZ) on Tuđman, Croatia and Catholic Church. "This is the exact reason, and not because the Bosniak nationalism was less malign than Serbian and Croatian, The Party of Democratic Action was not the deciding force that had thrown Bosnia into the civil war" (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018). Nonetheless, very quickly, this party relinquished the principle of free constitution of state, accepting the principle of ethno-nationalist community, which was the scheme for the ethnic division and coming bloody catastrophe. Very quickly practical and active symbiosis of SDA with Islamic

2) The sharp distinction between Bosnians, denoting all inhabitants of the state regardless of ethnicity and confession, and Bosniaks, reserved to Muslims, should be introduced here.

community occurred, while religious radicalization of Muslims in BiH was used for Bosniak nationalism.

The next section looks briefly at the outline of methodology for this project.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF METHODOLOGY

We analyzed the archive of BH Dani from 1992 to 1995 and did a semi-structured interview with Senad Pećanin, then editor in chief of this publication. Methodologically speaking, it uses archival research. This project should best be likened to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is an effort to systematically describe and analyze qualitative data. The key issue is to fit the data into a scheme or a frame. This method implies coding and selecting the material. This may also involve eliminating superfluous material (Schreier, 2012: 170). Within the context of interpretive social science and historical analysis, this research technique has been used for ‘finding out’ motivation and hidden agenda of some organizations by qualitatively and analyzing the frequency and use of words such as ‘traitor’, ‘war monger’, and so on and by so doing researching motivation.

When it comes to qualitative content analysis, an interesting example may be found in an insightful volume *Scientific popular and informative texts*, edited by Vuk Milatović. Luj Adamič criticized the regime of 6th January dictatorship back in 1929, established by king Alexander Karadjordjević. His scripture ‘Natives return’ is an essay of a writer reporting from diaspora, and his analysis was written with the aid of material such as newspapers and other media information (Milatović 2008). Although not explicitly stated, this might easily have been titled qualitative content analysis. Milić (1996) also argues convincingly that qualitative analysis was a method for throwing light on Nazi policy by reading documents such as newspapers and media outputs. Linked to this, this will be a research technique used herein. Several Serbian social science researchers have written about the benefits of content analysis as a methodological tool in the social sciences (cf. Fajgelj, 2005; Gredelj, 1986; Grubačić, 2006; Ilić, 2016; Kaljević, 1972).

In addition to this, the second methodological procedure employed in this research is interviewing – one of the most frequently used data collection methods in contemporary sociological research (Milic, 1996: 387). Semi-structured interview is a mode of interview in which the researcher leads the respondent to communicate numerous, detailed and quality information on the subjects related to the research, with very little influence, and therefore with guarantees of absence of bias in the direction of good scientificity. Moreover, interviews conducted with several respondents can be conducted in a systematic manner that also contributes to good scientificity. The absence of bias and the systematic character are possible despite the fact that, seen from the outside and in particular by the respondent, the interview appears to be conducted as a conversation (Romelaer, 2005: 101).

The next section looks briefly at the milieu of this particular research and this is the image of War torn Bosnia.

HOW MEDIA HAVE PREPARED THE WAR CONFLICT IN BOSNIA?

An interesting working paper gives a clear message that modern era has brought the stronger influence of mass media on human psyche. Influencing thinking and attitudes has become a key technique. There is often a slanted view of reality (Vukajlović and Čosić, 2 n.d.). Senad Pećanin, editor of BH Dani, has clearly pointed out that “the *Party of Democratic Action* had clearly influenced thinking with its propaganda“ (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2017).

Mihajlo Marković, late Serbian philosopher, calls on Carl Schmitt, the controversial German lawyer and political philosopher, who argued strongly that it is the essence of political action the division on partisans and enemies, whereby ‘the fight goes on until the enemy is ultimately destroyed’ (Marković, 1965: 14). In addition to this political battle is distinguished by not paying attention to any moral principles and is ‘merciless’ (*Ibidem*). This ‘theoretical architecture’, can be a useful analytical tool to help us explain us how merciless and immoral was the struggle between Serbs and Muslims. This was the context in which the Newspaper

BH Dani operated and they worked as *Deus ex machina*, trying to add some objectivity to the context that was stained by national pathos. Each position in social theory need to be backed by theoretical architecture, before analyzing empirical material, and ultimately returning to theory.

Bertrand Russel expounded the same view of political conflict and its ‘immorality’ and ‘intrinsically’ slanted view in *Power: A Radical notion* (Marković, 1965: 14). Copious citation of the political authors cited above can assist us in understanding the milieu within which journalists of BH Dani operated. Indeed, these journalists were genuine ‘trailblazers’ in that they were trying to develop a new idea of journalism within an increasingly discouraging context.

Chomsky (2003: 5) scores on this point effectively that no government can be developed without having the people under it as the “confused herd of passive observers”. Within his intellectual syllogism, the American linguist and political writer often uses the notion of “manufacturing consent” when describing the perpetuation of government. Importantly, this is achieved with the aid of the putative “expert sources”. Agential aid to work through this process is obtained from cultural managers. Chomsky should be congratulated for observing that media often have the role to be economical with the truth. In developed democracies, the people is most effectively controlled with the control of sources. Some media are used only by the well-to-do classes like high quality newspapers (Posavec, 2003). Media product will always reflect the partisan political interest of those who sell it. Posavec also uses to notion of “illiterate and boring non-experts” to denote those to whom propaganda is directed.

Propaganda can have a particularly powerful effect when it is supported by intellectuals and when there is no countervailing power to it (...) The role of propaganda in a democracy is the role of scourge in a totalitarian system (Chomsky, 2003). Manipulation of the media should be avoided at all costs (Vukajlović and Ćosić, 4 n.d.). Truth and objectivity will not prevail in such cases at the cost of patriotism (*Ibidem*). Proponents of the media have actively sought to foment the spirit of conflict within the former Yugoslav state. Psychological factor is equally important in the war

context as military. Media have prepared for the war by facilitating the development of mythically founded nationalism. Croatian national television has become the key tool of the new nationalist government. Scapegoating of Croats and blaming of Serbs for internal problems in Croatia have become a daily practice. The accompanying photos of bodies torn apart have been an essential part of this partisan journalism. The sources are very rarely listed and in such cases the authors are anonymized (Perković, 2015). This was the *locus* where we can play the activity of newspaper BH dani within the media scene at that time.

Sonja Biserko (2002), president of the Helsinki Committee Serbia, puts forward the argument that the media have been the propaganda Service of the regime during the Civil War in former Yugoslavia. Indeed, journalists have had social and political mission. Media space had been regulated by the Law on Information (1978). Each state had its own Radio and Television, publisher and so on. These media echoed the political climate of each state. The media have not only been nationally orientated, by acting as precipitating factor for the development of the War conflict. With the death of Tito and liberalization, some of the media have taken a different turn with their objective reporting. Instrumentalization of the media has taken place in such a climate.

The key political idea was resolving the Serbian national question. The importance of media in preparing for the war was in the identification of the crisis and identifying its main agents and actions. *Politika* has been the strongest agent in strengthening this agenda. This newspaper was publishing falsified accounts with a view to bashing political opponents. Some media have been instrumental in creating the downfall of the Yugoslav Federation. Historical revisionism, fomenting the spirit of conflict and ethnic stereotypes have been part of the daily routine. Particular attention had been paid to Serbian diaspora living in Bosnia and Croatia. For example, dehumanization of the enemy and self-victimization had been one of the key propaganda techniques of nationalist media manipulation in Serbia. Academician Matija Bećković referred to Serbs in Bosnia as “remnants of the slaughtered people“.

In some instances, propaganda has a key role in conducting war (Vertovšek and Andrić, 2015 : 970). Key author that backs

up with evidence this stream of thinking is Marshall McLuhan. Newspapers are sometimes key medium for the transmission, since they can present tables, graphs and comparative analyses. War propaganda is more directed towards the enemy. Propaganda must have an effect on the policy-making of the enemy (*Ibidem*). Propaganda always has the aim to promote the 'hidden agenda'. Media pollsters³ confirm this central storyline by arguing forcefully that only 20% of the survey participants believe that media are objective, only 30% believe that these raise what could appropriately be labeled as 'essential' topics, and when it comes to the desired future profession for their offspring, only 4% circle the term journalist (Šajkaš, 2007: 6). This certainly backs up with evidence the main argument.

Media technology have enabled reporting on the war conflict in real time (...) Journalists impact the formation of the public opinion with their style of reporting. The public image depends on what the journalist have reported, omitted and interpreted (Čerina, 2012). The time for reporting on war has shortened substantially. Croatian writer highlights control over information as an important component, claiming that whoever establishes control over information will prevail in the war (...) Media war is a very important characteristic of war in general and the journalists have an important role to play. It is the commitment of every journalist to adhere to the precepts of war ethics. The law, morals, good taste, truthfulness, and accuracy are some of the key characteristics of war ethics (*Ibidem* : 102-103). These characteristics have clearly been sidelined during the war in Bosnia.

Omission, magnifying, and blowing out of proportion are particularly unwanted techniques from the point of view of ethics within journalism. Reporting on war can be viewed as a show, as a specific kind of reality show (*Ibidem* : 103). Some studies highlight that the topic of the influence of media on the war conflict has been under-investigated (...) Communist heritage has played an important role in this process (Šajkaš, 2007: 1). Dukić (2013) puts forward the argument, in an interesting text on an Internet portal, that the key strategy during the Yugoslav civil war has been

3) Media pollsters are those that conduct surveys of the public opinion, like marketing agencies or those researching voting behavior.

belittling of the political and war opponents. In addition to these, she lists absurd arguments used in propaganda that bracelets were made of human fingers to give vent to the aggression.

The role of media acting as a precipitating factor for the development of war conflict in former Yugoslavia needs to be thoroughly examined by researchers (Šajkaš, 2007: 2). Demonization of the 'other' has been one of the key roles of the media (...) Inventing news has been one of the key activities during the war conflict (*Ibidem*). The media in Bosnia have perpetuated this picture. Instinctive images of war reporting are available more than ever (Čerina, 2012 : 106). In some situations the military has control over the available information. Ethics of journalists highlights that, with a view to safeguarding human dignity, it is necessary to avoid posting pictures of wounded and injured (*Ibidem*, 2012: 109). Some media in Bosnia have gone even further, since they have posted pictures of wounded in hospitals, pictures of graveyards and even obituaries, as well as families in grief, shedding tears over the death of their beloved, thus preparing a level field for the aggressive conflict.

The only exemplary models of journalism in BiH were the journalists of media in Sarajevo. With *BH Dani*, there were *Oslobodjenje* and *Večernji list*, and some journalists that worked in *RTV Sarajevo*. What separated Sarajevo and other parts of BiH under control of Army of BiH under the control of Radovan Karadžić (Leader of Bosnian Serbs) and Mate Boban (Leader of Bosnian Croats) were brave media: these key media were not supporting the cause of nationalism. This is recognized in the world and due to this circumstance Sarajevo had become the symbol of the battle for Freedom. On the other, there were media that worked for Alija Izetbegović: "The least scrupulous were newspapers ran by the Bosniak regime: *Voice of Muslims* and *Lilly*, and then *Bošnjački avaz*. There were filled with nationalism, religious indoctrination and heavy, dangerous attack on those Bosnians that opposed the ruling military and religious hierarchy" (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018). The profession of journalists has a prominently social role (...) Critically oriented intellectual needs to inform himself from various sources (Čerina, 2012). This section has argued that media have worked purposefully to prepare the playing field for the War in Bosnia.

The central storyline of this essay is that newspapers *BH Dani* have turned out as objective reporters on the war conflict in Bosnia within the climate of biased and partisan anti-Serb media in war torn Bosnia, whilst maintaining some of the partisan and biased element in their operation. This is confirmed by excerpts of contents of these newspapers and some direct quotations from the archive that we have researched. Propaganda had been powerful in Bosnian media. An interesting source (Anon, 2017) rightly argues that the methods they used to deceive the readers/viewers have been particularly powerful. In addition to this, John Sray has authored a book titled “Selling Bosnian propaganda to Americans: buyers beware“, which additionally depicts the misconceptions and lack of the integrity of those employed in the then mainstream media.

Independent media have played a crucial role in throwing light on the war conflict (Šajkaš, 2007 : 6). State controlled media continually backed the discourse of the genocidal tendencies of Chetniks (*Ibidem* : 3). Vague memory reports of eye witnesses and truth explained mythically have been the only sources of truth (...) Normal techniques used have been scapegoating, blowing out of proportion and the sense of martyrdom and victimization (Šajkaš, 2007 : 4). ‘Public intellectuals’ and other key figures have been used to maintain this agenda. The media have prepared the public opinion for the war by running documentaries with a view to dissolving ‘brotherhood and unity’ and developing the feeling of conflict among the ethnic groups (...) B92 have developed a playing field for the conflict by running videos of slaughter of Serbs during the war action *Storm* (sr. Oluja) (Šajkaš, 2007 : 5). BH Dani have presented a countervailing power in some instances to this trend.

To back up with evidence the central storyline of this research article, Šajkaš gives the convincing argument in his interesting research paper that magazine *BH Dani*, have raised the issue of murders committed during the conflict by the BiH Army, murder of Croatian civilians or the lamentable destiny of the Serbians during the siege of Sarajevo. These media also investigated the criminal past of some of the Bosnian war heroes (Šajkaš, 2007 : 3). There have clearly been attempts to create some sort of investigative journalism in a climate of anti-Serb sentiment.

An insightful article in *BH Dani* debunks the myth of the well-intentioned BiH government during the War by saying that the old in Bosnia could well be defined as an underclass⁴ with characteristics of extreme poverty (...) Politics of the war is criticized vehemently because of the effect on the vulnerable and the old (Duraković, 1993 : 58). In some instances, *BH Dani* reported on economy. To back up with evidence this stream of thinking, Senad Pećanin, then editor of BiH Dani, confirmed that administrative hurdles existed for the unhindered operation of this newspaper: “Our journalists were the only ones in Bosnia who were having trouble getting accreditation for Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina“ (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018).

In the edition of *BH Dani* for 1995, and the archive that we researched, there are reports of the members of the BH Army that were reportedly stealing, plundering and operating under the influence of drugs (Hrasnica, 1995 : 7). One of the tasks of this newspaper had been ‘uncovering’ unpleasant truths.

BH Dani in some instances depict Serbs as cooperative. Indeed, some of the research articles in this newspaper argue convincingly that the War Conflict is nearing its end and that some of the Serbian leaders, even Milošević, wish to contribute to the end of the struggle (BH Dani, 1993: 19). The position of these media is sometimes those of independent and investigative observers.

Hypocrisy of the Bosnian Government is criticized in instances where they spend aid from Western financial institutions on ill-defined purposes (BH Dani, 1993). They divert funds where these could have easily been spent on humanitarian aid. There is a Catch 22 situation where aid is used according to the principle ‘something for nothing’. This interesting article in the newspaper that is exposed to critical investigation accuses Bosnian government and politicians for embezzlement of funds obtained from aid agencies. Conception and planning is lacking and commoners cannot influence the politicians to change their scheme. Bosnian state and its intellectuals are distinguished by lack of professionalism and political astuteness (Čamo, 1993: 41).

4) Underclass is a term from political sociology and denotes those that are extremely poor, coterminous with lumpenproletariat.

In some instances, this newspaper made the Government of Bosnia somehow take criticism. An interesting source cites a trustworthy opinion poll that paints a grim picture of the policy of Alija Izetbegović. Namely, as many as 26% of the population think that his policy has been bad, 11% regard it as catastrophic, whilst 42% argue that it has been realistic. Grouped together, it means that 37 percent regard his policy as bad. Pie charts are used to depict this statistics. Criticism of Bosnian authorities is weaving through this writing. The work of Sefer Halilović has been more heavily criticized with over 50% of negative answers. In some instances this publication shows Serbs as being willing to cooperate and negotiate (Anon, 1993 : 10).

Senad Pećanin, should be congratulated for observing that Alija Izetbegović could hardly be depicted as an astute politician and his short sighted policy worked against the political interest of Bosnians. Bosnian government somehow wants to deceive its inhabitants. His policy is calling into question the very survival of Bosnian Muslims (Pećanin, 1993a: 21). Rade Trbojević is cited as one of the rare examples of those who practiced 'objective' journalism during the Siege of Sarajevo. Most of other journalists were tasked only with the demonization of Chetniks. His family was under threat because of these efforts. In this particular case, professional curiosity prevailed over fear (...) Lack of professionalism of regime journalists is exposed to critical scrutiny (Zaimović, 1993 : 30).

Machiavellianism and short-sightedness, as well as the desire of power is made explicit in an interview with Fikret Abdić, a Bosnian politician (...) Mistakes of Bosnian politicians are exposed to the readers and are embodied in deaths and persecutions of innocent civilians (...) Politicians are surrounded by cronies and relatives and their lack of ability for self-criticism is conspicuous (...) Refusal of Ejup Ganić to negotiate corroborates this argument (...) During the siege of Sarajevo, the lack of empathy and human dignity were apparent to an intelligent observer (Jurišić, 1993).

Poverty is also increasing substantially. Moreover, politicians should be blamed for this state-of-affairs and especially for their mismanagement of funds (...) There is a sharp dichotomous distinction on military and civil sector. Bribery is widespread as an

option (Hafner 1993: 50). Some analyses depict Bosnian authorities as 'subservient', serving the interests of Western politicians (...) This interesting article heavily criticizes Bosnian Muslims that are trying to create an Islamic state in Bosnia (...) Bosnian politicians were putting forward an agenda that has been 'childlike', naively believing the promises of Western politicians (...) This analysis warns that Bosnian authorities should be blamed for the present warlike state of affairs in this former Yugoslav state (Mehmedović, 1993: 22). An analysis goes in depth by arguing persuasively that some Bosnian soldiers transgressed the rules of their profession on many occasions, committed many unlawful acts and were prosecuted on Courts in the country (Hrasnica, 1993: 27).

What is more, during the siege of Sarajevo, Bosnian authorities have shown scorn and contempt and have displayed very little political maturity. Serbs have been depicted as peasants. In many aspects Bosnian politicians have been answerable for some of the crimes committed during the war (...) This analyst argues forcefully that Bosnian authorities have been traitors of their own people (Lovrenović, 1993 : 32). Predrag Lucić puts forward the argument that the storyline according to which the relations between Croats and Muslims, the war allies, is intrinsically ideological. The war strategy of Bosnian authorities is short-sighted in many aspects (Lucić 1993: 54-55). This analyst also argues convincingly that Bosnian media in many aspects conduct an ideological policy and that many politicians are massively hypocritical, while the journalists supporting them are distinguished by sheer sycophancy (*Ibidem*).

Senad Pećanin criticizes Bosnian government by saying that they spread the mentality of the victim and expected to take advantage of this policy (...) Pećanin argues convincingly that the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina has murdered and prosecuted innocent Croatian civilians and any normal human being with interest of Bosnia at heart cannot stand these developments with equanimity (...) There is a genuine *Golgotha* at the blocked city of Sarajevo (...) Izetbegović is distinguished by conceit and panic fear of losing power (Pećanin, 1993*b*).

Finally, some of the points in this paper is also to show instances where *BH Dani* backed up the mainstream national reporting.

The reporting of *BH Dani* is somehow ambivalent. In some instances it presents information that can be interpreted as the demonization of Serbs, throwing negative light on their crucial historical eras. The central storyline is that Serbs are seen as primitive. The text goes on to make an argument, giving views of Serbian nationalist writer Dobrica Ćosić. “Serbs have entered the new epoch without their cities, houses and belongings, as those raising cattle, working in agriculture and within the military service, without university and professional philosophers as illiterate and gifted only with common sense. City, this cradle of culture, money and politics the majority of the Serbian people will get acquainted with and erect only towards the end of the nineteenth century” (Ćosić, 1992). Serbs are thus presented as backward and underdeveloped from the point of view of demographics.

Some analysts also argue convincingly that Serbs are seen as traitors in some of the media of that time. One issue of *BH Dani* cites Mirza Delibašić, a former basketball player, who was quoted as saying that he remained to live in Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia, while his family have left. He makes a clear anthropological distinction on ‘ourselves’ and ‘others’ that is to say between Bosniaks and Serbs as war mongers. In addition to this, he was quoted as saying that Bosnians are clearly seen as emerging moral victors in this War because they are adepts of virtue and love, rather than War. What is more, there is in existence another powerful emotion and that is contempt. Delibašić adds to this stream of thinking by arguing persuasively that Bosniaks will be filled with contempt towards their political and military opponents, the Serbs, towards the end of the War Conflict.

Within this ‘intellectual syllogism’ Bosniaks will feel love and this is a powerful emotion that will prevail over hatred that is quintessential of their War opponents. Expressed as a mathematical relation, and to put this point more strongly, this means that Bosniaks will emerge as 100% victors at the end of the War conflict. This ‘stream of thinking’ is interlinked with patriarchy. Indeed, this ex basketball player argues convincingly that his wife is a Bosnian and his kid is a Bosnian. The feeling of ‘conceit’ and ‘contempt’ is clearly expressed by calling Serbs ‘traitors’ and this is a powerful emotion within the War rhetoric. Indeed, this player turned analyst

argues strongly that the Bosniaks' feeling of love will surely prevail over the putative traitors, Serbs. This message of universal love is concluded by saying that Bosniaks are so generous that they love even Serbs and Croats (BH Dani, 17. 12. 1992). In addition to this there is demonization of Serbs in some instances (Lovrenović, 1994). These considerations in the newspapers are aggravated by the pictures of the War Torn Bosnia and also pictures of wounded Bosnians in the hospitals in Sarajevo.

The next section will conclude briefly the considerations given in this essay.

CONCLUSIONS

Antinationalist position of *BH Dani* in the war context from 1992 to 1995 had many problems. The media that were under control of *Party of Democratic Action* the journalists were stigmatized as Chetniks, Ustashe, communists, traitors, enemies of Islam etc. BH Dani were the only medium that openly wrote about crimes of the Army of BIH over ethnic Serbs and Croats that remained to live in Sarajevo. They were very critical of the state apparatus and military structures and inefficiency in the investigation of crimes. They were criticizing heavily, Bosnian nationalism, Islamic radicalism, military and state incompetence, robbery and war profiteering, nepotism and the discrimination of minorities. "We thought it was our professional and human duty and I am sure we did it right. We thought that that we need to 'clean in front of our doors'. Although there was sufficient reason to do this. Focusing on Serb and Croat crimes, was easy and represented an easy way to deal with problems. This was not the type of journalism we were looking to perform" (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018).

We have seen from some of our research that the basic hypotheses outlined in this research project have been confirmed. The biased nature of some of these writings is confirmed by the 'punchy' and strong language and there are also many attempts to pigeonhole and 'shoehorn' the data so that this could fit a preconceived scheme, so that critical research is lacking in some instances. *BH Dani* somehow represented 'reality check' to the unobjective

reporting of the media at that time and made a clear attempt for ethical, investigative journalism. Having said that, as analysts, we need to bear in mind the difficulty of objective reporting in a time of strong political pressure during the siege of Sarajevo. “Within our editorial board we had no difficulty in performing during the Siege of Sarajevo, in remaining journalists and at the same time Croats, Bosnians, Jews, Slovenians. To put it simply, it was normal and the only possible way to deal with the issue. It was not a difficult task at all. “ (Pećanin, personal communication, 24th August 2018). Hence the need to give more credit to the efforts of those involved in composition of publications such as *BH Dani*. In addition to this, this short research project should add to the existing body of knowledge about this topic and inform further research and investigation on this issue.

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