

Introductory remarks

Three years after Dayton agreement, in order to get a comprehensive picture of the state of the media in Bosnia Herzegovina today, we need to analyze how they are structured, how they function, instead of considering only their day to day activities. Here follow the basic precautions, the methodological hints, and the plan of our work.

Four Precautions due to the Bosnian political context

Let's remind that much attention must be drawn toward a series of surrounding factors that influence and shape the media field *stricto sensu*. Today, Bosnian media landscape is determined by a situation and a background, of which four elements are crucial:

- 1> The geopolitical position of the country : Bosnia Herzegovina is today surrounded by two unfriendly neighbours. Croatia and Serbia are, still now, trying to maintain and extend their political/cultural area of influence. Therefore, the tangible policies of communication performed by Croatian and Serbian TVs, Press, and radios ought to be examined in conjunction with the actual foreign policies of these two countries.
- 2> An odd and historical moment : the actual post-war situation in BiH is characterized by tremendous material damages, especially on the territory of the Federation, but also by a high economic, political and military dependence of the whole country upon help (donations, assistance, consulting, etc.) coming from abroad. Off course this financial material pressure bears effects on the state, the economy and the organisation of the means of publishing and broadcasting.
- 3> A state of "quasi-protectorate" - a two-sided relationship between Bosnian political bodies and citizens and the international community. As the

long-term presence of international organisations on the ground confirms, as their entitlements and missions develop for the sake of reconstruction, the « internationals » perform more and more radical political decisions, and some of them occur to bear a structural impact on the fate of the country ¹. Still, in the same time, these institutions and their star-representatives ², tend *nolens volens* to get involved in domestic politics. As a whole, the international community's high officials are playing as an acting member of the game played by the official Bosnian representatives. Thus most Newspapers, radios and TVs in Republika Srpska and in the Federation deal with these foreigners in their "internal affairs/policy" sections, programmes and News. Bosnian media do not only passively register the intentions of every decision made, they scrutinize and very often use the statements/moves made by the meaningful international community members of this country's unusual polity.

- 4> The Dayton peace arrangement means, still nowadays, coping with an odd divided jurisdiction of one Bosnian state in two « entities » (Republika Srpska/Federation). Yet, *de facto*, the division of the national territory into three political regions is the relevant/active one. Namely the Republika Srpska, the territory controlled by the Bosnian Army, and the so-called Herceg Bosna. Each of these fiefdoms disposes still now of its own political decisive institutions and leaders.

All these factors are to be considered *a priori* in order to get an understanding of what is happening with the Bosnian media today and find out what further developments can be expected out of the tricky present situation.

¹The flag, the monetary system, the currency designed by the internationals, of course, but also the elections and political rules, parts of the legal system, whether planned and mentioned in the Dayton agreement or not.

² Westendorp, Klein, Bullivant, etc. are TV stars, more famous now than some Bosnian politicians, according to the mentions they deserve in everyday news.

Three methodological hints to define the object.

1- One purpose of our work is to inquire on the state of the media in Bosnia Herzegovina, so our starting point considers it a whole and undivisible country. First because looking exclusively *inside* the entities does not prove relevant to identify long term/structural trends. Second, because a two or three-fold perspective conceals the dynamics that are developing across the lines, coming from the civil society, and such a narrowed point of view fatally underestimates the efforts and achievements looking forward to reintegration.

2- Besides that, our intention is to understand *how media function as a whole*. Analyzing media outlets within their output (News, programmes, paper articles) as a "*system*" consists in considering a communication system = an effective device producing and transmitting speeches, messages and information, to reach an audience.

3- Is war *the* only and radical source of changes in the actual picture ? Is it the sole explanation for the current functioning of media in Bosnia Herzegovina today ?

Main political, economical and social features of BiH are indeed straightforward consequences of the war. Still, the history of the conflict can not provide by itself the explanation for the dynamics of all the transformations the media sector underwent in BiH since the 1990s. Moreover the events of the 1992-1996 period are not able to deliver a satisfying clue about current trends, practices and happenings in Bosnian media nowadays. Some institutionnal features, some working habits, owe today to the praxis of the socialist era. Thus to grasp the actual mechanics of media in Bosnia, a necessary step is to qualify the connections between media and politics. In this field, Titist inheritages are not only noticeable, they are often obvious. So it seems reasonable, to

begin with, to dwell on the legacies of the Yugoslav information system, before we sort the radical changes that occurred through the war in the media sphere.

Plan

Part I : Our examination introduces (Chapter 1) with a brief sight of the features of Bosnian media system, and the role played by media in the country during Tito era (Chapter 2). Then we are able to highlight the changes the Bosnian system of information underwent in the course of the war (chapters 3, 4 and 5).

Part II : Thereafter, (chapters 6 and 7), we will be dealing with the topical matter of this study : the overall mechanics of Bosnian media system. Out of this, we will identify (chapters 8 and 9) *the rules according to which media work* in Bosnia Herzegovina, the *communication policies* currently ran through media by political bodies, specifying some aims, tools, and results.

CHAPTER 1

MEDIA IN BIH – GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND UNDERSTANDING : A SYSTEM WITH SPECIFIC FEATURES

Section I : Understanding media as a system : General definitions

I. Media can be defined as following³ :

*A tool-technique (or a set of techniques) of :

- production of messages (speech, information)
- (instant) transmission of messages by a channel (cable, hertzian waves...) to a terminal (receiver, screen)

*the output of this technique

*the organisation/agent that produces and/or treats the messages

This definition allows us to consider the whole channel of mediatic production, into the general communication scheme (a sender, a medium, a message, a receiver).

II. Media are a news industry

The significant flow of information to which people are exposed today in (eastern and western) industrialized countries, induces to see media outlets as goods that are consumed. In the era of Mass Media, and in the frame of many recent communication analyses⁴, media agents are seen as firms producing, among others, a crucial immaterial output : news. In this special industry, the goods

³in Le langage des médias, Yves Lavoine, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, septembre 1997.

⁴Le Discours d'information médiatique, Patrick Charaudeau- Communication et Médias de masse, Michèle Martin.XX

the consumers -the audience- get are not always paid for directly, nor their demand is explicitly formulated. Still, here is an economic sphere composed of agents and companies that share the same aim, perform the same activities, and adress all a final demand - a un/specified audience in the population.

Section II : Media system and news production in Bosnia

I - Description : general and specific features of media agents in BiH

News industry in Bosnia makes a cogent system combining *usual media outlets and agents*, the same as in every industrial country, along with *specific tools*, all taking part in the process of production and circulation of information.

A. Bosnian media and news industry - Usual features

1. First fact : each kind of media is an information-producer and diffuser, each in its own way.

Contrary to a solid cliché according to which TV News are the only significant source of information, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, everyone of these agents (radio, printed press, TV, News agencies) is relevant as far as news are concerned.

First, their use by the consumers differs in quality and quantity, even if all these devices may be simultaneously used, that is to say in the same day. Second, the rhythm by which information is produced and displayed is different for each media : the morning press/the evening news/the more continuous radio news (several times a day) . Last but not least: TV, Radio, Printed press and news agencies *work with each other* . There is no isolated/autonomous production of information by a media agent, or a type of media.

2. Main media and trends in News in BiH

*As in most countries, TV prime time news are indeed the first and dominant source of information for most of the people, regardless their location on the territory. The evening 19:30 is widely watched everywhere throughout Bosnia Herzegovina. In Republika Srpska as in the Federation, prime time TV news are the prior way to get informed, where the national state TVs get the main audience.

*Radio is widely listened. Although it stands for the second source of information for most of the people, its significance can not be questioned. Today it remains the most widespread media, in some cases ⁵ it is still the only one available, especially in remote areas. During the war, radio was the first and only unceasingly working source of information. Today Radio News are surpassed by TV prime time, considering the audiences reached, and the informative role of radio is lessened, as witnessed the share of entertainment/musical programmes played by most of the stations. Still, in the course of the day, radios play an specially flexible and uncompleted source, for it is able to broadcast news in *real time*, more frequently than TV (special flashes, etc.).

*Printed press is far less used as a source of information (the highest circulation rate is 45 000 copies a day - Dnevni Avaz). Yet, figures of footprints or sales are objectionable in one respect : they don't picture the real readership. For instance, for each sold copy of a daily Newspaper stand several readers⁶, either at home, at work, or in cafés, etc.

Since the war, the number of newspapers has exploded. Now the Federation enjoys three or four « nationwide » Bosnian Daily Newspapers (Dnevni Avaz, Vecernje Novine, Oslobodjneje, *Hrvatska Rijec*⁷),

⁵Refugees, displaced persons, in unsolved housing situation, for example are still rather listeners than watchers.

⁶ On the average, 3 or 4 XX.

⁷This new daily newspaper came up in april 1998. It is too early to assess its real coverage on the territory.

instead of the sole *Oslobodjenje*. In the Republika Srpska, dailies have blossomed as well (e.g. : *Nezavisne Novine*, *Glas Srpski*). Many newcomers are magazines, and some of them already vanished out of the Bosnian market, proving very short-lasting (two or three issues). A great deal of the new magazines belong to the category of specialized press, addressing veterans, or cool youngsters, or businessmen, or professors, etc. and most of them focus on entertainment, not on news (*Zena 21*, *Lica*, *Republika*, etc). But the growing number of publishing houses, the increasing figures of sold books, and the more frequent issuing of *Slobodna Bosna*, *Dani*, *Glas Srpski*, *Svijet*, etc. put together with the dynamic growth rates of newspapers diffusion in Bosnia do confirm a still-alive interest of the people for the *written thing*. The interest for written news was a feature of the prewar situation in the whole former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia Herzegovina.

It is a commonplace to say that printed press is more relevant a medium for debate, comments and analysis, than for mere news diffusion. This is very true for BiH daily printed press, where a more important space (in terms of pages) is dedicated to analysis and comments on events, than in radio or TV News programmes.

Still, in Bosnia-Herzegovina the press often initiates the debate, thanks to editorials and star chronicle writers. Some particular newspapers do open the discussions : *Dani*, *Svijet*, *Reporter*, *Novi Prelom*, *Oslobodjenje*, *Slobodna Bosna*. Their readers expect this provocative-inquiry stance from them.

On information *stricto sensu*, moreover, Bosnian press plays a special role : very often, its journalists not only open investigations, they also make the event. *Dnevni Avaz*, *Oslobodjenje*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, some dailies are especially relevant on that respect, because of their big readership. Weeklies are also in BiH very present in everyday life (in many cafés, at work, at home, in the neighbourhood), and their sections cover a wide range of matters (more than TV

or Dailies newspapers). Culture and entertainment make a significant part of all informative magazines (Dani, Slobodna Bosna, Svijet, Reporter, Novi Prelom, Nin, Globus, Tjednik) and by tradition, cultural topics are definitely crucial arguments for attracting readers in this area.

B. Bosnian media and news industry - Striking specific features

1. First Oddity : The deep and constant interference of political life and events into the cultural sphere and into ordinary life.

Culture is politicized, private life as well, these typical blends are features of the Bosnian society and they reflect in media's speech. It shows in the tone, the topics and their treatment in TV as in radio News. In the printed press it is easier to evidence.

Obviously, in any generalist newspaper, the organisation of the sections and the importance given to the events are not strictly governed by the usual hierarchy (1 Politics-2 Economics-3 Culture-4 Society, city life and Neighbourhood -5 Entertainment). Instead, quite often, these - arbitrary- categories mix inside the columns and pages of Bosnian newspapers, either according to the relative importance of an event or its manifold significance. For instance, by the second week of march, General Talić's death and burial was *the* event in all the Bosnian/ Bosniac News printed press. The General's personality, the role he played during the siege of Sarajevo, the symbolic meaning of his fight were treated in "politics", « Culture » as well as in "everyday- Sarajevo canton" concerns, in Oslobodjenje, Svijet, Dani.

BiH media show blatantly that politics, culture and daily life are thoroughly intertwined in the area. Some peculiar symptoms of this intermingling of

politics in people's ordinary life are worth noticing.

2. Second oddity: Iconographic symbols, great happenings, informal ways of news circulation are media outlets.

Certainly they are media of a special kind, but in Bosnia Herzegovina they play a significant functions : information as well as political warfare.

a. First special media : Images and iconographic symbols

* Images and iconographic symbols are far from being solely passive illustrations of a speech printed or broadcast on TV. In the Bosnian and former Yugoslavian context, pictures occur in citizens' life as *complete signs* : as such they take a significant part in the overall flow of information reaching the people. For example, the portraits of Karadzic spread over the Republika Srpska; in the Federation the portraits of Talijan, the banners advertising the Ajvatovic days (religious-cultural muslim festival), the arms of croatia hung on every wall or shop in Herceg Bosna, all these symbols convey information if not news, besides the classical media. Citizens are exposed to powerful symbols, signs and meaningful representations everyday : banknotes designs, flags designs, posters put in the streets, logos, symbols and graffiti, all these items may indeed be received by the public as political messages, especially when used in a systematic or violent way, moreover in some cases they even *inform as immediate news*.

NB : In the former Yugoslavia, the people and their political leaders were keen on using a lot of visual signs, regularly if not daily. Symbols, portraits, visible and impressive slogans⁸ made altogether a

⁸ A post second world war hit : « Smrt Fasizmu, Sloboda Narodu » = Death to Fascism, Freedom for the People, lasted roughly ten years the same way. « Tit je Nas, Mi smo Titovi » = We are Tito's (crew), Tito is ours, sung in pioneers meetings, at school, etc.

special kind of iconography of crucial importance in political communication : « Bratstvo i Jedinstvo » (Brotherhood and Unity) makes the most long-lasting and widespread slogan in Tito's Yugoslavia. It was used everywhere : TV, radio, newspapers, speeches in meetings of the YCL, it was painted or stuck on street walls..

Posters, but also medals and portraits of Tito were commonly used as ornaments in public administrations, offices, shops. Tito's portrait was often hung at home *spontaneously*⁹ by many people. These habits are typical and deeply rooted in Yugoslavian polis, so this is the reason why we consider some of the pictures displayed, visible and widespread in streets, public places and everyday life in BiH today, as part of our object.

* Some pictures are today influential : For instance, « Ne dirajte ga, on znaci Mir » = Don't touch him, he means peace » under Karadzic's picture, this poster spread in most of the streets and roads of Republika Srpska one night in october 1997. This kind of campaigns of visual signs have a more lasting effect than preelections posters put in the streets, because the people are constantly or repeatedly exposed to these signs. sometimes even citizens get involved in their diffusion. Because these symbolic messages target efficiently some weak points of the audience - their authors know well the market they have to reach. Portraits, pictures, symbols, graffitis and wall inscriptions are thus part of the Bosnian media system, they are still very present today, moreover they are striking and remembered by the people. Besides that, never-ending high level negociations around the symbols to put on Bosnian currency, flag and plates should suffice to prove how

⁹Hanging Tito on one's wall used to be a voluntarily claimed support for the leader, not a compulsory rule reserved to public places and official institutions. In Bosnia today, Tito is still present in many homes, contrary to what happened in Serbia and Croatia.

relevant these visual symbols are in the system of information. They work as media agents sending uninterruptedly messages of a structural or permanent impact. The symbols put on the flags or the currency used give out a crucial information to everybody, they assert the political projects actually supported by the (local, international) authorities regarding the future of the country. Antinomic political projects oppose in the disputes involving representatives of the Republika Srpska, the leaders of the Federation, the Office of the High Representative : While the final designs of the Bosnian flag, of the common currency (the Convertible Mark) remind the integrity of the territory, the symbols put forward by the leaders of the Republika Srpska for the banknotes and the flag are a straightforward message insisting on the distinct destiny of the Serbs, they aim at the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina : they represent Serb « heroes » and assert Serb past, the Serb People, and in the same time they totally blackout Bosnian identity and Bosnia as a country.

* The same way, logos, symbols and colors put in the decor of TV prime time news are trying to suggest a frame of thought to the people. In the main official TVs broadcasting in Bosnia- Herzegovina today - TVBiH, TVHB, SRT, RTS, HRT, the house's logos are messages¹⁰ that inform on a political background situation/stance. HRT shows a meteorological map including Herceg Bosna as part of Croatia, TVBIH logo insists on the integrity of the territory (the triangle shapes the map of Bosnia) and simultaneously, on the Moslem/ Bosniac identity of Bosnia (the green color), as well as it reminds the color of SDA's banners, flags, logo and posters. The same way, SRT's colors are those of the flag of the Serbs (colors shared by the flag of the SRJ, Yugoslavia, and of the Republika Srpska). The main TV stations broadcasting on the territory of BiH

¹⁰Signs don't belong to News, but they are pieces of information of special relevance, according to semiotic analyses.

today claim straightforwardly the polity they stick to, besides the speech they diffuse in their News.

b. A second feature of Bosnian mediatic oddities : the "Carsija" or the world of comments.

* In the News production and broadcasting industry, one oughts to understand the very political role played by the " Carsija". This typically urban and Bosnian phenomenon consists in a set of informal channels of information and communication : eye-to-eye talks, chats in cafés, the whole **process of building rumours** is of high relevance in Bosnia Herzegovina. The « Carsija-media » holds three functions : source, reaction and repercussion to/of a news item. It proves highly complementary to the News told on TV or to the printed press comments, especially in breaking and making events in domestic policy.

* Rumours on Carl Bildt¹¹, rumours on Biljana Plavsic¹², perfid attacks against Raif Dizdarevic, or Zdravko Grebo¹³ come through this special circuit, even when the gossips are relayed or counterattacked through more usual media devices (right to answer on TV, in the papers, etc). By essence, nobody can check the information nor identify its source with absolute certainty, but the informal circuit of the rumour is very significant device of information in that it forms strong and lasting representations in public opinion. Street rumours about the commercial-dubious activities of Alija Izetbegovic's son have grown up so much lately (1998) in Bosnia, that the president had to react in the press (Interviews in Avaz-TVBiH)

¹¹ Supposed to have had an overwhelming -thrilling and long lasting love affair with a hot serb journalist from Pale during the time of his mandate in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹² "She is a witch!" or "She is a hore", or "She is involved in filthy businesses with X or Y, she has got a full account in Switzerland", "She was bought up by the Yankees", etc.

¹³ Both of those important personalities in politics, especially before the war, are for a couple of months informally prosecuted for alleged betrayal of Bosnia o Bosniaks today. The former is being accused of taking part i Milosevic and the central committee plan of aggression against Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the latter has to answer the rumour that he was -and thus still is - a member of the KOS, the Yugoslav secret police, of which the hierarchy and structure are now still working but for Belgrade, in Milosevic's Yugoslavia.

and got forced to mention publicly the content of the scandal. It is proved that most of the people ¹⁴ trust chats or comments with somebody they know personally : this person plays either as a reliable first source of information, or as a secondary device that confirms the data already known.

* Let's remind that Bosnian *polis* is characterized by a special proximity between the citizens and their rulers and « elite ». Politicians, journalists, writers, intellectuals or show-business stars are commonly addressed to in a very casual way, by the rank and file, the ordinary man. This happens on TV, in the street, in special occasions, in cafés. In such a sociological context, street rumour plays its part as an influential information mechanism : inside political circles, among ordinary people, and between the former and the latter groups. Even if the Bosnian Serbs would not name this « Carsija », in the Republika Srpska informal talks/rumour are a relevant circuit producing and broadcasting information, as deeply integrated in the normal media system, as it is into the Federation.

c. Third specific Bosnian medium: Mobilizing mass events and happenings.

* In the former Yugoslavia, some cultural (or subcultural) happenings, great concerts, important football matches, even best-seller books or cult movies and all the fuss about it, occurred to be highly mediatized events. Because they were loaded with a strong symbolic content, these special items functioned in the same time as media. For instance, the 1984 Olympic games played as a instantaneous communication mechanism by sending fast socio-politic messages to the mass, with a very effective

¹⁴ This is not especially a Bosnian or Balkanic oddity, explains the mechanism of trusting an information, through the surroundings of the receivers. People are much more prone to remember and thus believe in one fact once it is commented and talked about by their neighbours, relatives, colleagues, whether watching TV together, or talking about it afterwards. In Bosnia Pr. Nuhic asserts the very ancient but very significant role played by the carsija in informing public opinion, on the side of the power, and as a way to feel the political climate and the popularity of the leaders and their decision among the mass, this through efficient informal channels and "civil servants" called XX.

and lasting effect in the mind of the audience. Of course the success of this very particular communication process relies on the intensity of the media-event, on the meaning of the messages, and on the degree of commitment of the audience in this moment of fever. In 1991, in Maksimir, a football match (Croatia -Serbia) was a special moment in the eve of the war in Yugoslavia : songs (« Tamo Daleko »)with a special political meaning were meant to upbring a conflictual fever in the massive audience.

Street demonstrations, " radna akcija"¹⁵, more or less spontaneous petitions were periodically organised in socialist Yugoslavia. In the toolbox used by the party leaders for mass mobilisation, these procedures played a similar role to cultural-sport happenings. They used to bear a more straightforward political/ideological content, they used to play recurrent slogans and songs reminding : Brotherhood and Unity, Yugoslavism, building socialism in a joint effort¹⁶, crucial dates and heroism of the resistance to Fascism, and, of course, Tito's personality and role.

* There is here indeed an invention : mass mobilisation events used a wide spectrum of different -political, cultural, social, sport -opportunities. As each of these group events was somehow relayed, supported and often set up by Yugoslav state media, they were meant to serve the purposes of a general public communication policy. These repeated happenings take part in the long-run legitimacy device managed by the Yugoslav leaders. Their main long-term aim is legible by the themes that recurred in all of these mass meetings, since the fifties till the eighties : reinforce the fervour for Yugoslavism.

¹⁵ »Work action » : a organised collective effort where « volunteers », mainly youngsters join together to rebuild a road, a bridge, to clean up a forrest. No wage to pay this contribution to the good of the society.

¹⁶Nema odmora dok traje obnova! = No rest till we are rebuilding

The common characteristic of these procedures is the collective fever generated. There, in the fervour (being together), lies the instrument that succeeds in getting messages to the mind of the public. These immediate « media » are diffusing messages through an emotional bind. Collective meetings and joint actions certainly *do not give out information* , but the communication scheme that inserts into them stays remarkably efficient in that *it works like information* : the speech/slogans displayed are taken as such, believed in by an audience who does not question the core content of the event. Although this communication to the collective body works only intermittently, it acts like a medium of strong/violent influence, since the messages sent are well-remembered by the collective body and recalled later on through TV, papers, etc. Whenever some of these happenings used to take place on a local scale, a strong echo was given through papers, radios and TVs to the "collective impulse" shown. So, even when the real mobilisation of the people was not always impressive, while the collective happening took place, considering the number of participants and their degree of sincere commitment, media managed to make a date out of the planned event.

* No need to emphasize here the powerful influence of the meetings organised by Milosevic in Serbia at the end of the eighties. These mass meetings perpetuate an old yugoslav mobilisation habit, while perfecting the titoist scheme in a systematic use of a roughly same pattern (see following).

- A speech is told to a mass of people, and conveys simple ideological messages: as from 1988, in Serbia, "the advent of the serbian people", smoothly replaced "brotherhood and unity" feeling.
- Easy ideas (slogans) are spread and repeated in a very intense way and a very short time, during the event.

- The mobilisation of great amounts of people ¹⁷ was organized thanks to RTS, Politika, along with firms workers committees and local sections of the YCL of Serbia.

- All the huge one-day meetings that blossomed between 1989 and 1991 were relayed throughout Serbia by Serb TV, radios, Newspapers.

* Today in Bosnia, many mass happenings take place : The U2 concert (september 1997), Djordje Balasevic's concert (february 1998). Indexi in Banja Luka (May 1998), Football and Basketball Matches (Croatia-Bosnia), etc.

Actually some of these events may still today be classified in this special category of emotional straightforward media. Although they don't always show the expected impact, they are meant to bring up a collective fervour, and are thus designed and loaded with a political content. In the summer 1996, the Muslim Olympic games, Jusuf Islam (Cat Stevens)'s concert were part of the SDA election/ mobilisation campaign¹⁸. In june 1997 and 1998, Ajvatovic was a several days collective cultural celebration organised by the SDA-regime to insist on the Muslim aspect of Bosnian traditions. This involves events in many towns of the Federation and mobilizes all Bosniac-Bosnian actors, singers available.

On the other hand, street demonstrations or orchestrated strikes (in SRT Pale, october 1997) are still able to create an event out of nothing. By the same techniques as mentioned previously : to make a crucial information out of the demonstration, the main TV, the newspapers (in this case, SRT itself and Glas Srpski) cover, relay and echo these street happenings in their news and headlines. This is an attempt to blow up the real impact and the audience of the messages sent, in this case, the meaning told

¹⁷one million attendants in 1990, in Kosovo Polje

¹⁸Many state buses brought for free a great number of people from various areas - Srebrenica, Vares, ...- to Sarajevo, in order to attend these events and the SDA big meeting during the elections campaign;

in the news was roughly : « We Serbs, still resist Yankee occupation ».

Section III : Bosnian media system, overall functioning and organisation

I. Basic functions of media agents and main vertical channels

In every system, media tend to react to each other, playing respectively the role of *the source* and *the means* of broadcast. This is a commonplace, if Newsagencies play an increasing core of source, the printed press uses the information brought up by TV News, but TV uses as well information opened by newspapers, radios, while frequently, Newsagencies monitor and feedback data taken from radio, TV and printed News.

The main agents (the most used and reaching the most widespread audience) still work around three poles sharing information in the following way :

Newsagencies -> Dailies <-> TV Prime times.

The main actors of the circuits working on each political territory in BiH are organized as following :

* ONASA/BHPress- Oslobodjenje/Avaz- TVBiH News on the Bosnian army controlled territory

* SRNA-SRT Pale- Glas Srpski/Srpsko Oslobodjenje in eastern Republika Srpska

* Tanjug/Beta- SRT Banja Luka- Banja Lucke Novine/Glas Srpski, in the northern part of the Republika Srpska

* Hina/Habena-Slobodna Dalmatia-HTV Mostar/TVHB in Herceg Bosna

II. Communication channels in BiH are chains of reaction

A. Basic media channels

All the media mentioned supra (TV, radio, papers, as well as the « *Carsija* », signs and pictures, happenings and celebrations), work in mutual interconnection when producing information and broadcasting news.

Street talks, cultural events, campaigns of pictures, collective demonstrations mix together with the usual media (TVs, radio, Newsagencies, papers) in BiH.

Taking into account this oddity, the main channels fuelling information to the audience are designed as following :

B. Informal media's insertion in the News circuit

1. The rough scheme :

News on TV/radio/papers (call for a meeting)-> Happening (demonstration-celebration-...)-> News on the event, on its meaning, the impact-> public opinion feedback -> News

2. The Carsija may be a powerful means of rebroadcasting, since it works like an echo-box. The public image of a person is shaped by the comments that fix the suggestions made in the papers, or on TV.

E.g. : Sefer Halilovic¹⁹ published a book about amoral bargains that happened during the war. Alija Izetbegovic is alleged to have negotiated with the leaders of Pale, Gorazde against Srebrenica. The

¹⁹A famous Bosnian general of the Armija.

gossip that spread in Sarajevo in november 1997, when the book was issued, consisted to interpret these revelations as the bitter gesture of a general fired and dismissed in postwar time, after loyal service. The origin of this story was mainly Dnevni Avaz's campaign of insidious attacks, comments, and perfid interviews that immediately followed the successful sales of Halilovic's book.

C. A relevant chain of reaction : creating events

In the process of event production *ex nihilo*, the communication channel working involves *all* the means circulating information.

1. *When a rumour works like a source of information* :
E.g. : Dnevni Avaz puts (28th of May 1998) a list of candidates involved in the Social democrat coalition, according to unquoted sources. The information turns out to be pure speculation, then the newspaper has to deny the assertion (30th of May 1998). But the « information » published by Dnevni Avaz happened to undermine opportunely the negotiations of the SDP with independent candidates, in this preelectoral period.

Glas Srpski displayed many « information » during april and may 1998, on alleged shelters and bunkers, or trips of Karadzic, in and out of the Republika Srpska.

2. *The case of « spontaneous meetings »* : Serbs in Dobrinja (district of Sarajevo) build a wall to protest against their reintegration into Sarajevo (february-march 1998). Here the mechanism is designed:

1. Happenings in the street (source) --->
2. News (Radio-TV-Papers/agencies) --->
3. Repercussion in the neighbourhood (tensions between the members of the communities, hostile gestures, etc.)

NB : The basic features of the Bosnian media system and news industry are noticeable and relevant on the whole territory. Although there exist some nuances, the Republika Srpska and the Federation prove the main channels of communication we described do work alike. Moreover, they function in according to a same pattern in the whole area (Croatia and Serbia).

Section IV : Preliminary conclusions and methodological remarks on Bosnian media system

1 - Although their influence proceeds in different ways, *all* Bosnian media agents are relevant and influential: TV, radio, Newspapers, agencies, the Carsija circuit, street happenings, visual symbol campaigns we mentioned supra are to be considered as significant producers-broadcasters of information in Bosnia Herzegovina.

2 - As far as News are concerned, media form a Network : media units in Bosnia produce and broadcast information, each with their own personal tone, staff, policy and interests, but they do work as intertwined agents, sending and receiving information from each other. No one media mentioned works apart, in producing/echoing/using information, even when this is not done in a formalized cooperation. Even accross the territories controlled by the three nationalist parties, where cooperations between media are still the rare case, they all use information and sources from the « other side ». E.g. : TVBiH may mention some news put by Glas Srpski

or SRT Banja Luka, although the questions usually raised by the Federation newspapers prove more topical in TVBiH prime time News. Inter-territories connections are the most developed between News agencies, although the main ones still don't form a solid and constant network (ONASA works with BETA and HINA, occasionally, not with Habena or SRNA).

3 -Media make a complete system of communication :
each unit that produces and broadcasts information is
a sender/receiver inserted in a channel. Information
fuelled and repeated through these circuits makes a
chain of *reaction*.

Two main channels of communication are evidenced in that respect. Of high efficiency in terms of fast mutual repercussion, echo, counterreaction effects on a given news, the significant Bosnian channels of media are the following :

- TV - « *carsija* » comments - Newspapers - government statements

- Newspapers - TV - « *Carsija* » comments - government statements.

4- Two different bodies of the Bosnian media system take part in the functioning of these channels of communication/reaction:

1- **informal links, other media** (Bosnian oddities) :
Carsija - Images - Happenings

2- **mass media** : main Newspapers-TVs-radios /News agencies.

Both of these bodies of media are to be considered because of psychological mobilisation, the special role instilled to information in Bosnia still now, in postwar times. We choose to regard as an object of this study the informal communication procedures as well as mass media, since both of these fields are relevant in several respects: they adress the greatest amount of people; they slowly shape the frame of mind of the mass, they are part of an action-reaction device, and they have a major impact on public opinion. To show how propaganda works in Bosnia today, we examine the most persuasive weapons in the particular process of creation of events. Into the two bodies of Bosnian media system, we focus our observations on the information material shown by the main Tvs, the main Newspapers, and the rumours (« *Carsija* »), and the mass street happenings procedures of communication. Thereafter in this study we do not deal extensively with Radios programmes and news, nor with pictures and symbols.