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### I International Symposium on Culture of Remembrance

### Bosnia and Herzegovina



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO



### “Culture of Remembrance: Twilight or New Awakening”



International University of Sarajevo  
12—13 April, 2014 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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*Book of proceedings*

**I INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
Twilight or new Awakening“*

*Editors*

Sabahudin Hadžialić

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*“Bosnia and Herzegovina – Culture of remembrance:  
Twilight or new Awakening“*

**I MEĐUNARODNI SIMPOZIJ  
KULTURA SJEĆANJA**

*„Bosna i Hercegovina – Kultura sjećanja:  
Sumrak ili Novo buđenje“*

**И МЕЂУНАРОДНИ СИМПОЗИЈ  
КУЛТУРА СЈЕЋАЊА**

*„Босна и Херцеговина – Култура сјећања:  
Сумрак или Ново буђење“*

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**"Culture of oblivion or remembrance:  
Conversion of the city identity "**

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***Resume***

For author Jens Brockmeier, a culture memory is forming by capturing of oral narrative within memory texts and practices which are not independent, but significantly intertwined with socio-political narration or they are susceptible to such narratives. In such manner the memory narratives are created, which main texts carry main social, political and material settings of community of people who are remembering or forgetting, as well as people who are predicting, expecting or endure the outcomes of precarious cultural or political future. A picturesque example of agency of such memory narratives toward creation of culture memory is everyday consummation of new, wartimes, pro-Serbian names of streets and settlements in Banja Luka. These new memory notes had been put in place between 1992 and 1996 when authorities have erased from memory the names of 15 settlements and around 250 or half of pre-wartimes streets.

Goal of this research is to present intensity and basic contextual directions of these violent changes, through discursive analysis of street names. To point out, how much indeed a culture memory in today's' Banja Luka is built up on violent oblivion of non-Serbian ethnic or religious, as well as of leftist and multiethnic memory narratives. As well as, on fulfilling the „memory gaps“ with romantic and mythological historic and political constructs. By reading the new street names such as King Lazar Str. or Ravnogorska Str., people of today are placed in mnemonic relations toward prevailing and imposed cultural and political (re)interpretation of Banja Luka's past. It factitiously connects the value and cognitive horizons of past and presence, writes cultural memory of the city backward, and gives to the citizens a sense of belonging to the ceaseless and simulacrum chain of politically lucrative and ethnically desirable explications of historic events and conflicts. Such time-space inversion in interpretation of historic events toward past is bizarre condition for the establishment of cultural and ideological justifications of Banja Luka's presence and for the setting of people's expectations into the future. Whereas a discursive meanings and memory narratives of street names such as Vahide Maglajlić Str. or Ferhatpaše Str. don't pass the filter of selected memory frame of „Serbian Banja Luka“, so they are expelled from

the chain of desirable explications, and therefore are not allowed to be placed in the mnemonic relation with average citizen of Banja Luka.

Empirics and approach of this review wants to illuminate facts and to contribute to the answers on questions such: whether today's RS can even survive with such quantity and intensity of artificial memory narratives on which it's created and whether a new cultural remembrance which aim to reach a level of independent cultural memory of „Serbian Banja Luka“ can be built up on massive and violent oblivion and distortion of narratives?

***Key words: memory narratives, cultural memory, street names, Banja Luka***



## *Introduction*

### **Goals of research**

In this text I want to present how and why street names and names of local communities have been changed in Banja Luka between 1991 and 1995. Goal is to unriddle meaning and symbolism of this renaming. To determine which old ethno-religious, cultural and ideological identifications and identities of Banja Luka are erased, and which new identities have imposed themselves and conquer the public space of street, square, local community and city? Why these changes, even 20 years after the war, still create ethno-religious and cultural identity of the city, revising individual remembrances and cultural memory of community all the way to the breaking point of all connections between new memory narratives and old, pre-war timeflow of cultural memory of Banja Luka, to the point of unrecognizability of today's Banja Luka for almost every person who have lived here before 1992?

My aim is to present relations between timing of creation of these new street names and their duration on one side and consequences of war, ethnic cleansing and ethnic homogenization of territories of today's Republic of Srpska (here and after: RS) in today's Banja Luka and Bosnia and Herzegovina (here and after: BiH), on other side. By grasping these changes and relations I want to question whether conversion of city identity has once and for all changed or destroyed cultural pattern and memory of coexistence in one multiethnic and multi-confessional or interethnic and inter-confessional environment such as Banja Luka once was. Or perhaps there is a hope that we can in same time feel security of our existence on this land as our own land on one side and feel that humanness and tolerance toward our neighbors or other wont decrease our feelings of security, regardless of identities which we live or prefer.

The goal is also to emphasize a devastating effect of folklore quasi-ideology of Serbian pop-nationalistic elite (war-time and post-war one) on public thought, opinion and collective remembrance of citizens of Banja Luka, the remembrances in which there is less and less room for pre-war and non-Serbian, Banja Luka's narratives. War-time elite has brutally changes ethnic, religious and ideological identification and demography of this city and post-war elite has tolerated and abused these heritages of war and ethnic cleansing as well as war-time "all-Serbian" identity and look of Banja Luka, justifying it as „will of the majority“ or as „new written history“. This topic is very shyly brought into the public discourse of today's RS, while ethno-political elite and media outlets under their control stays passive or support Serbianized public identifications and identities in new-Serbian city of Banja Luka. Many media outlets, even those which consider themselves alternative, relativized these topics by considering that by now all war issues are definitive and "final" and by bringing these topics down to the questions of obeying regulations and

decisions of war-time municipal administration. As there are no interests, nor courage, nor will to pose a question of ethics of new, war-time names or will to critically re-question these war-times decisions. Same as there is no will for facing and acknowledging committed war crimes, genocides and ethnic cleansings which consequences still last. There is no will to see how much this new artificially constructed identity of today's Banja Luka is damaging the generations of young people which grew up along the side, by making their living patterns, ideological values and cultural memory autistic, extremely irrational and absolutely unusable for living in BiH and Europe. There is no will to confront auto destructive emptiness in collective memory, an emptiness which is presented to the new generations of Serbs as "their history" .

In some extent, this text represents an attempt to disclose deceptions and myths which ethno-political elite impose to the citizens, members of Serbian ethnic group. To disclose a model on which elite is abusing human emotions, already formed national feelings, war and collective remembrances, epic and mythical narratives and historical literature, in order to radicalize people to the desirable level. Level on which the answer on true question will remain unanswered: what have been done, and what still needs to be done and how much is going to cost, so that Banja Luka gets and preserve label of „monoethnic property“, so that Banja Luka becomes and remain something that it never was, a pure „new-Serbian“ city.

### **Conceptual framework**

Jeans Brockmeier said that narrative is basic nor which knit and shape a fiber of time-space continuum of cultural memory, and under narrative he means each texts or practice which tells us a certain story (context). For this author cultural memory is forming by capturing oral narrative into the memory texts and practices and they all, from morpheme and monument to computer database and film, are intertwined with or subjected to the narrativization. This author emphasizes that while memory texts can be read at the first glance, their entire narrative (text + context) can't be decoded without analysis of cultural conditions of time and space of their origin. This is because, cultural memory isn't simple psychologized pile of individual and group memories about flow of past events and uncertain future, but it is weaved out of social, ideological and material settings of the community of people who remember and forget, as well as out of expectations, predictions of outcomes and hopes which all impose to us our desired and almost certain future. In the process of forming of cultural memory, past, present and future don't have clear frontier nor are they ontological categories. So Brockmeier defines a cultural memory as multidimensional temporal process in given social, cognitive and symbolic framework of presence which can every day repetitively regenerate some cultural remembrance or enable cultural oblivion of the community, in continuous reconfiguration, selection, amalgamation and unbundling of past and present events,

experiences, knowledge, causes, consequences and desired outcomes.<sup>9</sup> The most picturesque example of regeneration of cultural remembrance and example of agency of narratives is everyday consummation and meaningful experience of street names and names of local communities which connect citizens and institutions with dominant ideological, political and cultural settings and reinterpretations of our reality and past which inevitable are standing behind these names. In the case of street names and names of local communities this agency is much more comprehensive, more frequent and massive than in the cases of some other memorabilia. Names of streets, squares or local communities are public manifestation of cultural and national identity of citizens, ethnic or religious groups, but also a test markings of dominant social, political and economical processes and discourses in given community. They are public and formal symbols in which citizens and groups recognize themselves and through which they remember, memorize or forget. So story that these names are telling us, together with social context of their origin and duration is one of narratives in formation of cultural memory of our community. These names are memory notes on columns, envelopes, memos and walls of public and private houses of our city. They radiate not only simple and meaningless name of street but a variety of cultural symbols. Name of some person or some event has its own ethnic, or religious, or historical and political, or ideological, or cultural symbolism. Biography, national or religious identity, profession, ideology, historical or political role, life of person which name carry some street, or school, or local community suddenly are pouring into the public space of our presence and become part of street, address, walker, square, community or our communication. The very choice of community or elite to name part of public space with certain name or event or ideas, is telling us how ruling elite wants to shape collective remembrances, what is important to them and what isn't. Also it is telling us why something isn't important. Usually the "story" which these names are telling is complementary with other memory texts which elite or community put into the monuments, school books, theater plays, museums or state celebrations and holidays. Uncomplementary memory content is often ignored, out of ethically right or wrong reasons. Very quickly a variety of symbolic memory notes on walls and complementary memory narratives in given social, political and historical context of one community start to build a network of desirable and undesirable remembrance. Citizens in public space start to identify with all or with parts of these memory symbols, and their prior knowledge, understandings, reinterpretations and expectations together with their dominant ethno-religious, ideological or value settings, start to convert these symbols in valuable remembrances which then become narratives of dominant cultural memory. This transposition is more direct as memory texts and symbols are direct too. Meaningful and valuable experience of street name put public in certain

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<sup>9</sup> Brockmeier, Jens. *Remembering and Forgetting: Narrative as Cultural Memory*, Culture Psychology 2002 8: 15

relation with desirable or expected or imposed ideological or political reinterpretation of past and future of community.

Experiencing name or event from street names or names of local communities, artificially converge values and cognitive horizons of past and presence and thus write culture memory to citizens in reverse order from our presence to our past. This time-space inversion in reinterpretation of historical events towards the past, instead from the past, is almost unavoidable and condition for establishing of ideological and political explanations of our presence or some part of our reality, regardless how rational or irrational this explanation sounds. By consuming these memory narratives hidden in our street names we suddenly acquire certain cultural and political feeling that we all are nothing else but a part of continuous and unbroken chain of historical and political events which all deterministically and inexorably lead generations of people all the way to our present reality precisely as it looks like today, in which precisely me, a person of precisely such and such ethnic or religious or ideological identity or orientation, should live in place where I live now and should be a dominant ethno-political subject in that space, and not someone else. This inversion is therefore legitimizing and use memory narratives as its agency. In some community this timespace inversion in given memory timespace is almost unnoticeable, but in others it is extremely visible, all the way to the absurdity. This inversion in reading of memory narrative from presence toward past is possible because way that people perceive time and remembrances has nothing to do what's so ever with more rational concept of physical timeflow. Our perception of time flow is always open for more or less irrational memory concepts or interventions, out of ideological or other social or political reasons, which all have roots in practicing of social or political power of community or elite. Physical timeflow imply temporally linear, one-dimensional model of forming and interpreting of events in causal direction from cause toward consequence, from past toward future, from the state of lower entropy toward the state of higher entropy, in the direction of increasing of volume of entropy, or in another words from the state of smaller chaos toward the state of greater chaos. The other way around would represent a miracle. But human consciousness produces its own, so called physiological arrow of timeflow. In such psychological perception of timeflow, there is a certain deflection from the principle of entropy and physical timeflow, because human mind and impulses of memory are focused as well as open toward constant evocation and reinterpretation of the past. Our remembrance is suddenly free from the laws of entropy and free to interpret events from consequences toward causes, to chose most adequate and most desirable instead most probable cause(s) which are explaining our reality today and here, regardless whether these chosen causes are logical, or complex, or complete, or objective enough to cause our complex reality now. Because of such characteristics of human remembrance, not even absolute absence of

consciousness about physical timeflow (like absence of clock, calendar, shifts between night and day or starlit sky) wouldn't influence the way of creation of our psychological perception about timeflow. This absence wouldn't change the way we are remembering or the way in which our consciousness about ephemerality, repeatability or predictability of events is created. Only formats of remembering would probably be slightly different. Even if physical time would flow opposite to physical arrow of time of our existing cognitive world, from the future toward past in the direction of decrease of entropy, the universality and timelessness of human remembrance would make that in our trip toward "past" we remember "future" (a state of greater entropy) same as now we remember "past" (a state of lower entropy), thus mixing horizons of presence and past events, again without obligation to stick to the principles of entropy. Our individual remembrance isn't completely rationalized, naturalized and logical, because while learning we adopt and inherent dominant memory narrative through which we gain cultural meanings and enter in symbolic flow of remembrances of our community. Our personal remembrances are becoming more and more collectivized and important role in that process plays repetitive and emotional experiences, evocations and reinterpretations of most important and thus selected personal, family, communal, historical, political, cultural and ideological symbols. Whoever governs these symbols or this selection, influence and governs collectivization, values and contents of our memories. In every community there is a certain selection of values, ideological and cultural contents that are desirable or suitable to experience, evoke and remember from those which are desirable to forget. Contents and their selection are more or less rational, archived and artificial, depending of community.

Thus, individual remembrance becomes mix of cerebral operation of remembering and forgetting and selected memory framework of given community or culture, and cannot operate outside of this framework. This selection of remembrances that won't be forget and will become prevailing or official cultural memory Brockmeier calls a mnemonic selection of symbolic memory framework of given group, which can be re-questioned and deconstruct, but cannot be denied or ignored. This framework has a function of amalgamation of individual experiences, expectations projections and hopes in one symbolic memory space of presence, which person can call her/his culture where she/he belongs. That's how culture memory becomes a value, meaningful, ideological and cognitive continuum of community or culture.<sup>10</sup> And Dewey emphasizes that cultural memory acts laterally, giving to the great number of individuals on one territory already shaped meaningful, ideological, value and cognitive memory apparatus and code, as source of sense and feelings of communion. But also it acts longitudinally, giving to present community resistance on time and

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<sup>10</sup> Brockmeier, Jens. *Remembering and Forgetting: Narrative as Cultural Memory*, Culture Psychology 2002 8: 15

layers of history, but also a power to predict, hope and creation of safety and future<sup>11</sup>. This Dewey's laterality and longitudinality of cultural memory is most visible in times of turbulent social and political changes which occur in various communities, cultures and historic moments. It is often the case that such changes are first and best seen in changes of official names of cities, local communities, streets and squares. These names are the most convenient mean for that, because their changes are public, swiftly implemented, produce effects immediately, have long-range and long-term effects and they are hard to correct. Changes of these names often signify certain U-turn, the cut in the timeflow of one cultural memory and its revision, but also a desire for swift change of cultural identity and creation of new flow of cultural memory. If these name changes produce some effects, then timeflow of cultural memory is converted and revised forever, but if they don't, then new timeflow of cultural memory will have a competition in old timeflow of remembrances in public or cultural space. From these, apparently small, changes one can read a scope and direction of changes, their ideological orientation, characteristics, intensity, starting intentions and motives. In that sense, changes can reveal which ideological, social or political discourses stands in the roots of mnemonic selection of desirable and undesirable narratives.

### **Changes of street names and names of local communities**

As we are distancing from the darkness of the war, ethnic cleansing, genocide and violent homogenization of the Serbs in one political territory within today's Bosnia, memories on the reality of these events is fading away rapidly. We are forgetting all the depravities and perversions of those times, irrationalities, criminal and profiteering backgrounds of the conflict. We are forgetting its political lucrateness for the regimes of those days, in first instance for the regimes in Belgrade, Pale and Knin and then for the regime in Zagreb. Post-war ethnic division of Bosnia is easily accepted as "necessary state of mind", as "normality" after the bloodshed, something as "vis maior". Citizens, deeply saturated with scenes of violence, blood, deaths and fear, as hypnotized have accepted "the state as it is", along with slogan "it is good as long as there are no war" and with beginners' courses of neoliberal and wild west cowboys' privatization, democracy and consumerist culture. Political elite in RS, don't even want to start thinking to relax public space of Banja Luka, or to do "a cultural restoration" and bring back to the city an inter-ethnic character and openness city used to have. They are doing quite opposite, constantly resending messages of hate and intolerance, reviving old/new divisions, evoking individual and group war remembrances and pains and inflaming new generations with old/new "Serbian patriotism", irrational and empty in its core. New new-Serbian symbols in the public space from the monuments, street names and institutional sings all the way to the graffiti and signs of popular culture, though some made during the war still

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<sup>11</sup> Dewey, John (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan

serve to the new Serbian elite in “new-Serbian Banja Luka” and RS. They serve to reproduce irrational memory narratives and political messages which constantly reclaim the Serb possession of Banja Luka and other parts of Bosnia, occupied by mononational and homogenized RS. That’s way they are not to be touched or to be re-questioned. These symbols are there to reproduce oblivion and some “brand new remembrance”. These symbols are there simply to exist until some new conflict.

That’s way street names, names of schools or local community can be observed as memory texts and their contextual messages can be understood as memory narratives selected and put into the public and official space of ethnically cleansed and new-Serbian Banja Luka. In their existence these memory narratives are acting as witnesses of violence, violence that have cleansed Banja Luka biologically and culturally. But as time goes by, they are slowly becoming witnesses of absence. Next stop for them is to become witnesses of neoliberal and consensual “normality”. The small invisible monuments that mark the end of inter-ethnic and egalitarian multicultural life in Banja Luka, and the beginning of uncertain future of today’s “new-Serbian” Banja Luka.

#### *Names of Banja Luka's local communities*

In municipality of Banja Luka during 1992-1995 war and aggression on BiH, RS war elite had changed names 15 out of prewar 58 or 57 today’s local communities (26%), thus erasing from public space and memory of Banja Luka ¼ of its urban toponyms, 50 or 100 year old. The most significant cleansing had happened in the center of the city<sup>12</sup>, where half of the local city communities (8 out of 17 prewar or 12 today’s local communities) lost its old and got a new „Serbianized“ name. Around 1/3 of local communities of city periphery (3 out of 10 prewar or 11 today’s local communities) had been renamed in the same manner. In rural areas of Banja Luka elite changed names of 4 out of 31 prewar local communities. In this way RS war elite changed name of local community „Mejdan“ into „Obilićevo“, Budžak“ into „Lazarevo“, „Čaire“ and „Hiseti“ into „Kočićevo Vijeće“, „Gornji Šeher“ into „Srpske Toplice“, „Šargovac“ into „Srpski Milanovac“, „Ivanjska“ into „Potkozarje“, etc.

These changes happened during war and aggression on BiH in several occasions between March 1992 and December 1995, but most intense actions of RS elite in this sense were between February and October 1994. During this 8 month war elite had adopted 6 decisions with which they renamed 11 local communities<sup>13</sup>. For each local community, process of renaming went through two stages. First stage was an organization of referendum of citizens which had been living on the

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<sup>12</sup> According to the criteria from article 5 of still valid Decision on organization of the territory of City of Banja Luka, Official Gazzete of Banja Luka No. 9/2003

<sup>13</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources nder bulletpoint number 8

territory of targeted local communities. Second stage was adopting the declarative decision in the local assembly which declares the name changing, constituted by citizens' votes on referendum. Sole fact that RS and Banja Luka war elite had organized referendums about „Serbianization“ of official urban toponyms, in the conditions of aggression, war and ethnic cleansing of Banja Luka and territories held by RS army, in the time of war psychosis and fear which overwhelmed Banja Luka's still multiethnic local communities, sounds surrealistic, ridiculous and absurd. In fact those referendums and decisions represent parody, simulation and ethnicization of democracy and pure cynicism of RS war elite, but also they represent a manipulation with citizens of Serb ethno-religious identity. Who went and voted on these referendums? Much of voters of non-Serbian ethno-religious identity, who didn't succeed to left Banja Luka as city held by new Serb ethno-exclusivist and ethno-fascistic government, simply couldn't get, let alone express their opinions on such referendums. They had been living in constant fear for their lives and families with very limited freedom of movement and communication and with seriously threatened and endangered biological and economic existence. Even more, some of these citizens hadn't been living on their pre war addresses, neighborhoods and local communities, but hiding in other parts of the town where people didn't know them. International organization called these cases „floaters“<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the great almost unilateral majority of voters on these referendums were citizens of Serb ethno-religious identity, women by large cause men were recruited into the army and on battlefields. Later these referendums' results were processed by commissions constitute by Serb members only and declarative decisions were made by local assembly of City of Banja Luka in which Serb members were constituting almost absolute majority. Citizens of non-Serb ethno-religious identity weren't political subjects, or free or safe citizens in “new-Serbian” Banja Luka.

RS war elite focused their attention on the local communities of the city center and old urban area as symbolic conquest of the political center of power and decision making. What is even more interesting, they had been focus to change the names of those local communities in which citizens of non-Serb ethno-religious identity where majority in relation to the Serbs, according to the 1991 census. Thus, collected data shows that in city center where war elite had renamed half of local communities lived some 94,000 citizens (53% non-Serbs and 47% Serbs) and in city periphery where they had renamed 1/3 of local communities lived some 44,000 citizens (45% non-Serbs and 55% Serbs). Renaming were the least present in rural areas in which 57,000 citizens lived (32% non-Serbs and 68% Serbs) and where they had renamed just 1/10 of local communities. Correlation between the scope of renaming and ethno-religious structure of city

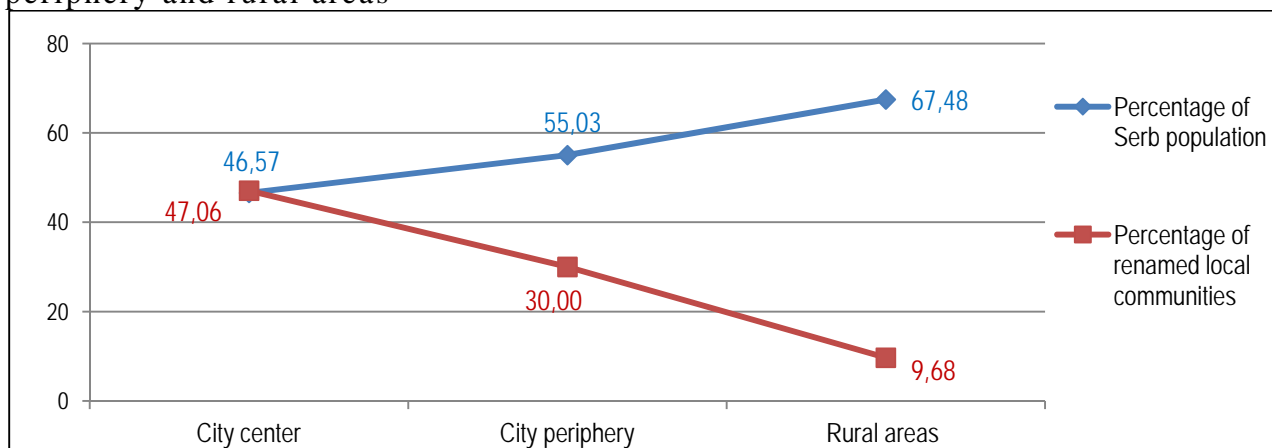
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<sup>14</sup> It is estimated that during the war there were 228 families in Banja Luka who had to leave their homes and find shelters in basements, lumberrooms or under the bridges. These people were called „floaters“ – refugees in their own city, Source: [http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Publikacije/articles/Banja\\_Luka\\_-\\_Povratak\\_u\\_aparthejd.html](http://gfbv.ba/index.php/Publikacije/articles/Banja_Luka_-_Povratak_u_aparthejd.html)



center, periphery and rural areas, gives an impression that changes were most frequent in the city center and those local communities in which number of non-Serb population was bigger than number of Serbs (see Graph 1). That was obviously case with local communities “Mejdan”, “Hiseti”, “Čaire” and “Budžak 1”.

Graph 1: Correlation between the ethno-religious composition (percentage of Serb population) and the scope of renaming of local communities in city center, periphery and rural areas<sup>15</sup>



Also, there were local communities which fulfilled these criteria, but still kept their old pre-war names, such as Borik 1 and 2 (58% of non-Serbs), 3 (55% of non-Serbs) and 4 (61% of non-Serbs) or Centar 1 (51% of non-Serbs) and 2 (55% non-Serbs). This implies that ethno-religious structure and central position of local communities weren't only motivation criteria of renaming.

Slightly careful analysis shows that this additional criterion was an etymological root of the word in the official name of local community. Thus, RS war elite decided to keep the names which are carried by the words that have Slavic or Serbian origin, or that have been perceived as domestic, “Serbian” words (“Centar”, “Borik”, Vrbanja”, “Nova Varoš”, “Rosulje”, “Starčevica”, “Paprikovac”, “Petričevac”, “Lauš”, etc). On other side they have changed names which were carried by the words that have etymological origin in Turkish, or Arabic or Old Persian languages, but which had became “natural”, domestic and everyday words in Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian languages. Such words weren't perceived by RS elite as “Serbian or patriotic enough” so they have been cleansed from the public space. This is a case with following names of local communities:

- Local community „Čaire“ – contain word „čair“ which origin lay down in the Turkish word „çayır“, which stands for a) a meadow which is being mowed, or b) an hayfields, or a pasture<sup>16</sup>
- Local community „Hiseti“ – contain word „hiset“ which origin lay down in the Arabic word „hisar“, which stands for a) a castle, or fortress, or fortified town, and b) word of Arabic and Turkish origin „hisarnik“ stands for small town;<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 6, 8, 9 and 15

<sup>16</sup> Source: <http://hjp.srce.hr/index.php?show=main>

- Local community „Mejdan“ – contain word „mejdan“ which origin lay down in the Turkish word „meydan“ and/or Arabic word „mäydän“, which stands for a) a bigger empty space in the city of the oriental type, or a field, or a square and b) a cattle fair; or additionally a wide field, a fair place, a market place, a place of battle, a duel;<sup>18</sup>
- Local community „Budžak“ – contain word „budžak“ which origin lay down in the Turkish word „bucak“, which stands for a) a hidden corner, or a hidden place in the house, or b) a place where you can find anything and everything [he hide himself in „budžak“]<sup>19</sup>
- Local community „Gornji Šeher“ – contain word „šeher“ which origin lay down in the Turkish word „şehir“ and/or Persian word „šehr“, which stands for a city, or a big town<sup>20</sup>

Similar destiny hit local community „Ivanjska“ which name has origin in the name of Christian saint „Sveti Ivo“ or „Sveti Ivan“ (Saint John the Baptist), the most celebrated saint among Bosnian Catholics. This name was erased and new pure geographical name „Potkozarje“ was introduced. Also, local community „Šargovac“ which name most probably come from the word for the oriental string instrument „šargija“ or „šarkija“ (similar to the long-necked mandolin) and as such has origin in Arabic word „Sarqiy“ (in Turkish „garki“). This name was also erased and new name „Srpski Milanovac“ was imposed to public space. Both local communities populated by majority of Bosnian Croats/Catholics. All above described examples of cultural cleansing are ethnically or religiously based, but there was a one local community which renaming was purely ideologically motivated. That was a case of local community „Bulevar Revolucije“ (Boulevard of Revolution), which „lost“ word „Revolucije“ and now carry the simple ideologically neutral and cartographic name „Bulevar“ (Boulevard), accordingly to the dogma of neoliberal political (quasi)correctness and proclaimed ideological (quasi)neutrality.

### *Names of Banja Luka's streets*

As in a case of local communities, RS war lords did massive renaming of street names in Banja Luka. Elite had decided which old street names, names of persons, events and other symbolic toponyms weren't desirable, acceptable and justifiable enough for the new political reality of Banja Luka, RS and BIH. And which were. Thus, they have erased names more than half of streets in Banja Luka, some 244 street names had been lost forever (or 53% of all streets). They have erased street names on several levels of meanings, but most obvious cleansing was on the level of binary

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Vujaklija, M. “ Foreign words and expressions Lexicon ” Prosveta, Beograd 1980

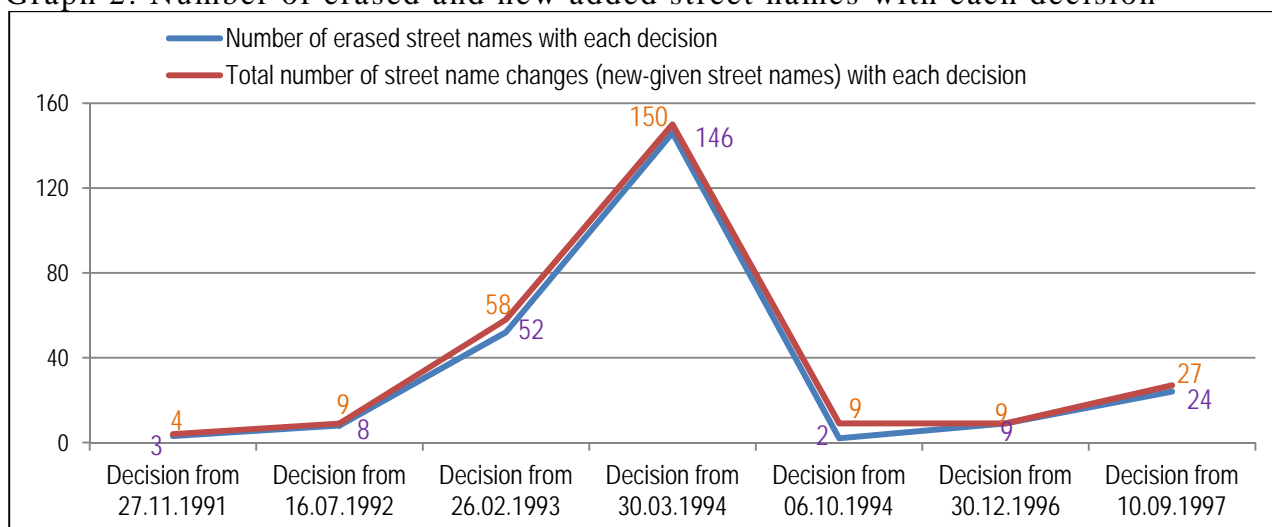
<sup>18</sup> Source: <http://hjp.srce.hr/index.php?show=main>; Additional source: Vujaklija, M. “Foreign words and expressions Lexicon” Prosveta, Beograd 1980

<sup>19</sup> Source: <http://hjp.srce.hr/index.php?show=main>; Additional source: Vujaklija, M. “ Foreign words and expressions Lexicon” Prosveta, Beograd 1980

<sup>20</sup> Source: <http://hjp.srce.hr/index.php?show=main>; Additional source: Vujaklija, M. “Foreign words and expressions Lexicon” Prosveta, Beograd 1980

opposition of “non-Serbian – Serbian” street names, identifications, representations and memory narratives in public space. Elite did all this in 7 decisions between November 1991 and September 1997, but most intense street renaming happened during the war and ethnic cleansing of Banja Luka between July 1992 and October 1994. Just in two swift decisions in February and March 1994 Serbian war lords had erased almost 200 old street names. In first and second post-war decision RS elite have continued to erase 9 and 27 street names (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Number of erased and new added street names with each decision<sup>21</sup>



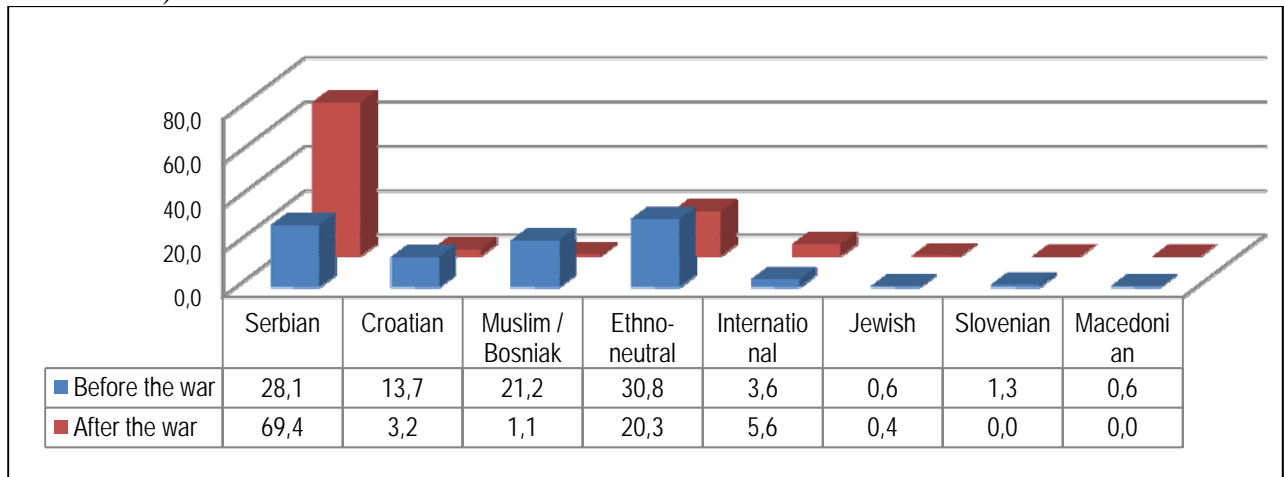
Culture cleansings of unsuitable street names happened at several levels of meanings.

1) First, at the level of (un)suitable ethno-religious or national identifications, representations and memory narratives of street names in public space. RS elite erased undesirable ethno-religious, national and cultural identities and memory narratives. Most frequently erased street names at this level were names of persons and narratives which were perceived as Muslims and Croats. Out of 467 streets before the war, there were some 21,2% (or 99) street names which had carried the name of persons who were perceived as Muslims. After the war only 1,1% (or 5) such old street names had survived. Also, there were 13,7% (or 64) street names which had carried the name of persons who were perceived as Croats, while after the war only 3,2% (or 15) such old street names had survived. Slovenian and Macedonian (1,3% or 6 and 0,6% or 3 before the war) ethnic or national identifications in street names were completely erased during these cleansings, while Jewish identifications decreased from 0,6% (or 3) to 0,4% (or 2). On other hand, number of street names which carry the names of persons and narratives which are perceived as Serbs almost tripled during the war. Before the war there were some 28,1% (or 131) “as Serbian perceived”

<sup>21</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 7 and 10

street names, and after the war 69,4% (or 324) street names carry old or new-Serbian identifications and memory narratives (see Graph 3)

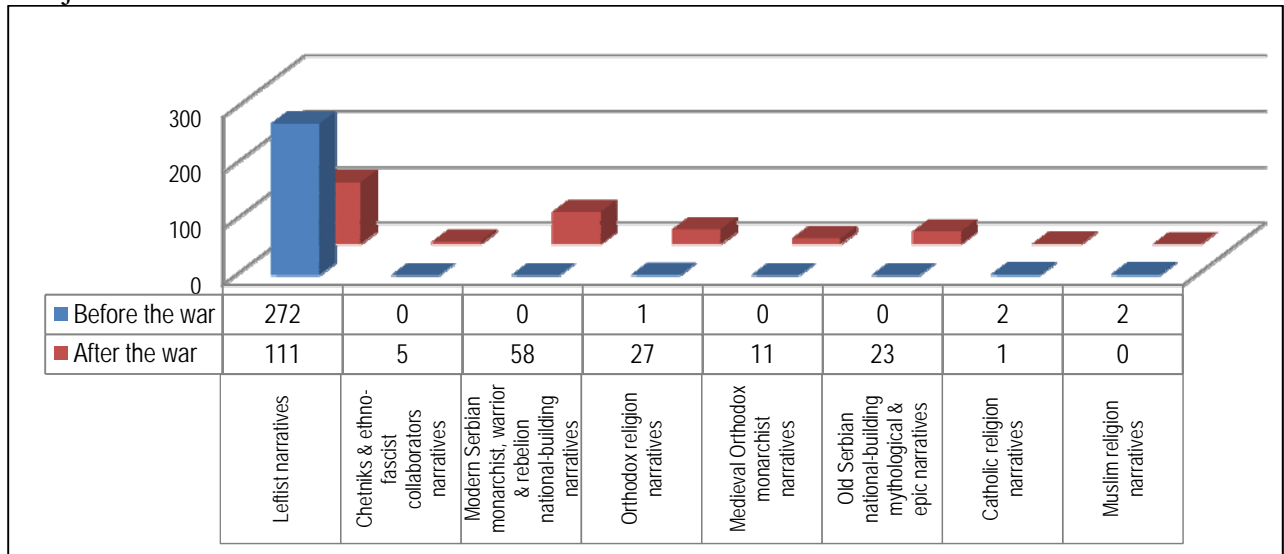
Graph 3: Participation of different ethnic identifications and representations that could be percept in the street names of Banja Luka before and after the war (in % out of 467)<sup>22</sup>



2) Second, at the level of ideological identifications, representations and memory narratives in the public space. Under the oblivion attack of RS elite were undesirable historical, ideological and political identifications and memory narratives related to the communist revolution, communism, socialism, liberation war and anti-fascistic struggle in WWII. Within this group of leftist street names all Yugoslavian, AVNOJ's and ZAVNOBIH's memory narratives were erased from the Banja Luka's street names, despite very popular images and metanarratives, present among majority of Serbs and Serbian elite, which depict Serbs as most numerous victims of fascism, members of Partisan and anti-fascistic forces in WWII or Serbs as only nation who truly wanted Yugoslavia, created it and tried the most to protected and preserve it during 90s!?! Out of 467 streets before the war, there were in total 272 leftist street names (or 58,2%) which carried the names of communists, youth from SKOJ, revolutionaries and freedom fighters, Partisans' heroes and units, political events and thus had explicit ideological color of leftism, communism and revolution, supranational Yugoslavianhood or supranational identifications of BIH (see Graph 4). RS war lords had erased more than half of them, so after the war remained some 111 (or 23,8%) leftist street names, mainly names of Partisan's fighters who are perceived as Serbs and few Croats.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Decisions specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 7 and 10

Graph 4: Number of street names with explicit ideological and/or religion identifications and representations that could be percept in the street names of Banja Luka before and after the war<sup>23</sup>



It is interesting to see with what new ideological identifications, narratives and meanings RS elite replaced the old street names. Before the war most visible street names with explicit ideological narratives were those leftist one, but within them one could find different and balanced ethnic or national identifications and representations. Paradoxically, after the war street names became ideologically more diverse in their explicit ideological or religion identifications and narratives, within all those “democratically diverse” ideological narratives one could find a total domination of only one ethnic or religion identification and representation. The Serbian and Orthodox ones! Other ethnicities or religions are kept on the level of “democratic incident”. Beside 111 (or 23,8%) leftist street names from prewar era, RS war lords had poured into the public space some 125 (or 26,8%) brand new and explicit ideological identifications and narratives, mainly out of the hot soup of Serbian national-building romanticism and enlightenment, old and new-Serbian mythologies, Serb-Orthodox essentialism and clerical nationalism.

The most frequent new discourse in official street names carry *modern Serbian monarchist, warrior & rebellion national-building narratives and ideological tastes*, marking streets with names of Serbian and Montenegrin princes, kings, generals, dukes, tribal leaders, leaders of uprisings and rebellions, demotic outlaws from last two centuries, as well as names of foreign but “friendly”, mainly Russian monarchs and generals. There are 58 (or 12,4%) such names, as: „Aleksandra I“ and „Petra II Karađorđevića“, „Careva Romanovih“, „Vojvode Radomira Putnika“, „Petra Pecije“, „Relje Krilatice“, etc. Next most common new added ideological discourse is coming from *Serb-Orthodox religion narratives* which marks the streets with names of Orthodox saints, priests, churches and temples or have international pan-Orthodox, Greek or Russian touch.

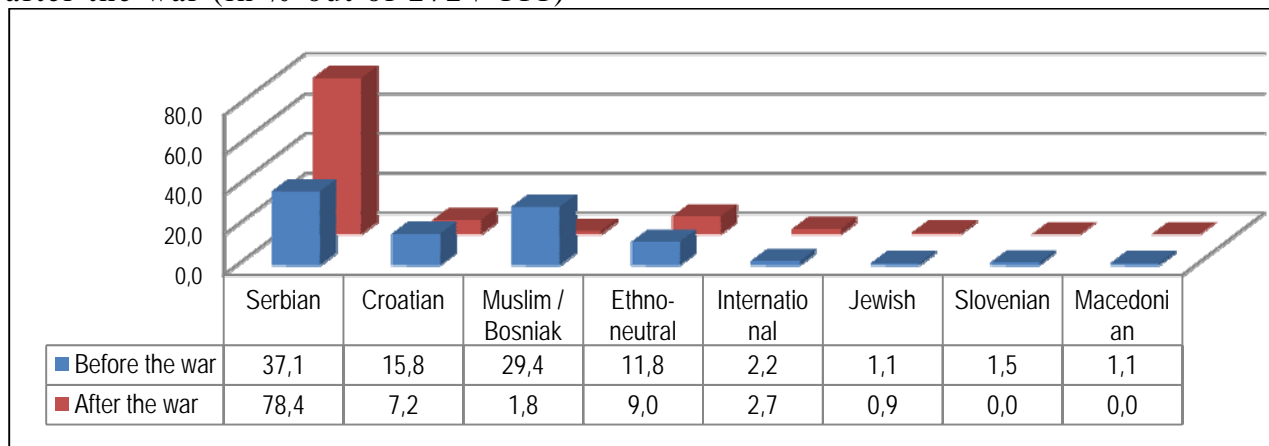
<sup>23</sup> Source: Decisions specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 7

There are 27 (or 5,8%) such names, as: „Vidovdanska“, „Vasilija Ostroškog“, „Manastira Gomionice“, „Visokih Dečana“, „Patre“, „Carigradska“, etc. Next are street names with *old Serbian national-building mythological & epic narratives* from demotic literature, later redesigned within national-building political traditions of 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, the most often names are from the Kosovo and post-Kosovo epic cycles. There are 23 (or 4,9%) such names, as: „Miloša Obilića“, „Majke Jugovića“, „Kraljevića Marka“, „Majke Jevrosime“, etc. Then there is a group of street names from *medieval Orthodox monarchist narratives*, mainly from medieval Nemanjići dynasty. There are some 11 (or 2,4%) such names, as: „Uroša Nejakog“, „Bulevar Cara Dušana“, etc. At the end of this ideological charade, RS war lords threw into the public space and memory the *Chetniks & ethno-fascist collaborators narratives*, mainly names of leaders and ideological fathers and supporters of Serbian Chetniks' movement, but also Chetniks' operatives, Nazi collaborators, Serbian ethno-fascists from Dalmatia and Bosnia. This movement was a heterogeneous compound of Serbian royal military officers (with different level of closeness to Serbian nationalistic ethno-exclusivity, ethno-fascism and sympathies toward German Nazism, Italian and Bulgarian fascism), local Serbian national and Orthodox religion leaders, nationalistic scourer-avenger leaders and groups, its helpers and sympathizers. All 4 Chetniks whose name carry streets in today's Banja Luka, were proven Chetniks' ideologists, Nazi and fascist collaborators, war criminals and proponents of Serbian pan-Slavic nationalism, Dragiša Vasić, Stevan Moljević, Vojvoda Uroš Drenović and Rade Radić. Beside these 4 names, there is also a street “Ravnogorska ulica” which marks the widely adopted name for WWII Chetniks' movement, a Movement of Ravna Gora (see Graph 4). There is no need to mentioned that Muslim religion or non-leftist Bosnian ideological narratives doesn't exist in Banja Luka's public space, and there is only one Catholic narrative, „Ivanj Franjo Jukić“.

Also, majority of Muslim and Croatian identifications and representation within the group of leftist street names were erased. Even on this level of meanings, dominant roles in street name cleansing once again had ethno-religious or national perceptions and identifications. Within this group Slovenian and Macedonian identifications were totally expelled as well as majority of Muslim, Croat and Jewish identifications (see Graph 5). Within this group of 272 leftist street names before the war, some 37,1% (or 101) street names had Serbian, some 15,8% (or 43) Croatian, some 29,4% (or 80) Muslim, some 1,5% (or 4) Slovenian, some 1,1% (or 3) Macedonian and same portion of Jewish ethno-religious or national identification. Also, there were some 11,8% (or 32) ethno-neutral and around 2,2% (or 6) international identifications. After the war, out of 111 remained leftist street names, some 78,4% (or 87) have Serbian, only 7,2% (or 8) have Croatian and just 1,8% (or 2) have Muslim ethno-religious or national identification, while there are some 9,0%

(or 10) ethno-neutral and around 2,7% (or 3) international identifications. Thus, 22 ethno-neutral and leftist street names have been erased, such as „SKOJ-a“, „AVNOJ-a“, „Bulevar Revolucije“, „ZAVNOBIH-a“, „VI Krajiške brigade NOB-a“, as well as half of international names, such as „Lenjinova“, „Bulevar Marksa i Engelsa“, etc.

Graph 5: Participation of different ethnic identifications and representations that could be percept in the group of leftist street names of Banja Luka before and after the war (in % out of 272 / 111)<sup>24</sup>



3) Third, at the level of perception about suitable and unsuitable geography. Before the war some 30,8% (or 144) of all streets in Banja Luka had some ethno-neutral, mostly a geographically related name. Within this group, some 32 streets carried the ethno-neutral and leftist names of Partisans units and important events from liberation war and revolution and some 111 streets carried the names of geographical toponyms, cities, lakes, mountains and rivers from BIH, Croatia, Serbia and entire Yugoslavia, as well as names of urban toponyms of Banja Luka. After the war, portion of these names in total number of streets have been decreased and now it is around 20,3% (or 95) of all streets in Banja Luka. Now, within this group there are only 10 ethno-neutral and leftist street names and some 83 streets have geographically related names. What is interesting here is that in same time while they draw their bloody maps of “Serbian lands” on the frontlines all over Croatia and BIH, RS war lords had been also drawing a map of “suitable“ new-Serbian and „unsuitable“ geography in the map of Banja Luka’s streets. Thus, RS elite erased “not Serbian enough“ geographical street names such as „Bihaćka“, „Mostarska“, „Travnička“, etc, probably because this geography was too Bosnian and Herzegovinian. Then they erased street names „Bosanska“, „Halilovac“, „Tabaci“, „Bana Kulina“, „Maglajlića sokak“, „Mejdan“, etc, because they probably had Bosnian historical and supranational narrative or Muslim cultural identification. Often erased street names were „Triglavska“, „Bledska“, „Pohorska“, etc, because they over the night became a part of „someone else“, a „foreign“ geography or street names such as

<sup>24</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 7 and 10

„Dalmatinska“, „Zagorska“, „Zagrebačka“, „Osječka“, etc, which apparently became part of geography of „our enemies“. On other side, RS elite kept or introduced new geographical street names which stands much better with Belgrade ethno-colonialism, Serbian ethno-religious, historical and geographical identification and perceived „Serbian soli“. That's how Banja Luka kept old street names, such as: „Kupreška“, „Moslovačka“, „Moravska“, „Kosovska“, etc, or got a new ones: „Trg Krajine“, „Plitvička“, „Ravnih Kotara“, „Kninska“, etc.

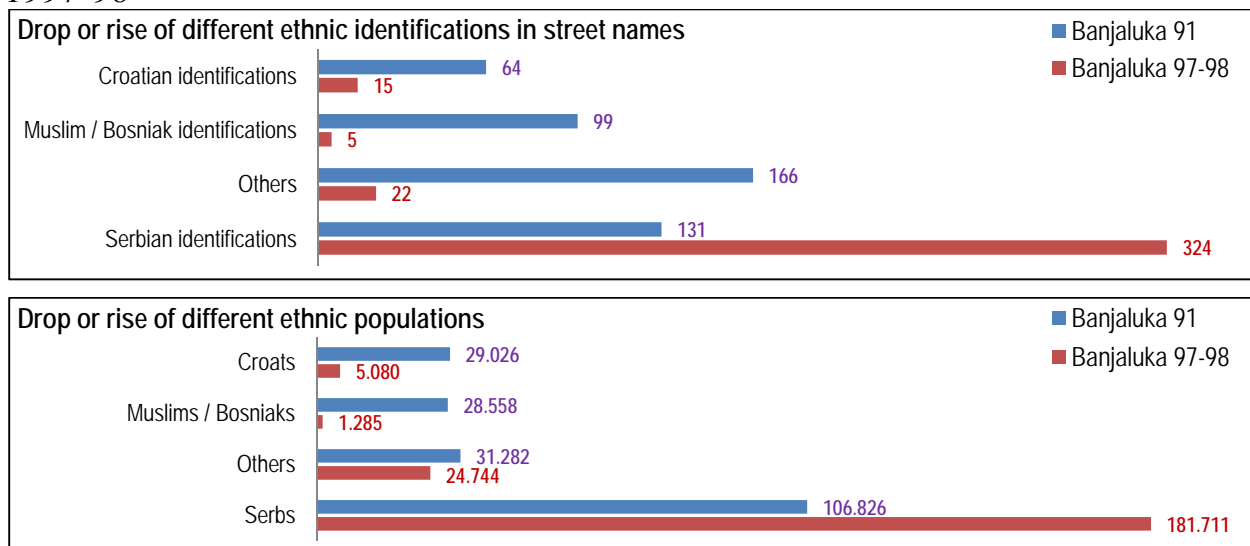
### *Instead of Conclusion*

Such incredible massiveness in cultural cleansing of official public names of local communities and streets implies that for Serbian elite was very important to deconstruct public space, cultural identity and multiethnic memory of Banja Luka with oblivion and selective remembrance. And then to completely conquer and occupy them with new-Serbian ethno-religious and nationalistic pan-Serbian identities and identifications, as well as Orthodox religion, monarchist and epic-mythical images and meanings which should serve to the elite to tailor quasi-statehood narrative construct of RS. Of course decisive battle was fought for the city center as political center of decision-making. In that sense all new street names and names of local communities created in war goes in direction of revision, distortion and „Serbianization“ of cultural identity and memory of Banja Luka, in direction of single-minded, mono-national collectivization of public space toward all-Serbian Orthodox religion and political congregation in which there is no room for differences. Such „Serbianization“ of public space is most often justified by the elite with demographic arguments. According to one such arguments elite emphasizes that in 1991 Serbs have made majority population in entire municipality of Banja Luka. According to other, during the war Banja Luka was additionally inhabited with Serb refugees and displaced population from Croatia and other parts of BIH, and number of non-Serb population was decreasing due to the „spontaneous emigrations“, as Serbian elite like to qualify ethnic cleansing of the city during the war. With such arguments elite wants to present that street names have been „spontaneously“ renamed as demographic picture of Banja Luka was also „spontaneously“ changing. But, such „spontaneity“ contains certain illogicalities. First, it is true that Serbs were majority in entire municipality, but in city center numbers are talking different story as less than one half of citizens had declared as Serbs. Comparison of the ethno-religious identifications in street names and factual ethnic composition of city center and entire municipality before the war shows strong correlation between these two numbers and implies that pre-war communist government had strived to balance local national demographic with national identifications in official political space of Banja Luka. When it comes to the second arguments, which emphasize immigration of Serb refugees and displaced persons and „spontaneous emigrations“ of non-Serbs out of Banja Luka, arguments clearly show



that non-Serbs were banished and finally almost completely cleansed from the city between April 1992 and December 1995, as well as that significant number of Serb population inhabited city between May 1991 and December 1995 mainly from other parts of BIH, and less from Croatia. But, arguments shows that such change of demographic features during these 4 or 5 years wasn't sole and independent initiator and motive for such massive street renaming and conversion of city cultural identity, because in the time of largest renaming at the beginning of 1993 and 1994, numbers of incoming Serb refugees and banished non-Serbs weren't in such proportion to justify complete erasing of non-Serbian identifications in public space. In those days Banja Luka city still wasn't urban center with significant Serb majority as it will become one and half year later, in winter 1995/96 when final demographic and political „solutions“ reach its today's point of ethnic purity. And beyond that, there is no „spontaneity“ what so ever in the fact that only in two municipal decisions war elite erased almost 200 street names which were perceived as non-Serbian or not Serbian enough, and introduced more than 200 new-Serbian street names. This example talks more about clear intention, a conscious desire to conquest the city, a violent political construction of new cultural identity and revision of pre-war memory of public space of Banja Luka. In summer and autumn 1995 Banja Luka had received a significant number of refugees and displaced Serbs from territories of West Bosnian municipalities and Croatia. About in same time, Banja Luka experienced a final massive wave of prosecution of non-Serb population, with significant help of international organizations, religious communities and security elite of RS. This was in a way, a politically agreed, severe inhumane „exchange“ of population as political continuation of brutal and criminal military campaign of ethnic cleansing, which differ from prosecutions and cleansings on the beginning of war, only by stronger presence of international humanitarian organizations. Even methods and techniques remained the same, despite international presence: demolition of religious objects, intimidations, beatings and brutal evictions of non-Serbs out of their homes, tortures, arrests and certain number of murders and disappearances, largely not investigated and prosecuted to this very day. That's way nobody can honestly state that in time of these massive renaming Banja Luka was an ethnically pure Serb city. It become that after winter 1995/96. You can say that by doing ethno-religious and ideological cleansings of street names RS war lords had constructed something that will become an exact demographic reality on the field, some year or two after (see Graph 6).

Graph 6: Change of ethnic composition of Banja Luka and change of ethno-religious identifications in the street names of Banja Luka between 1991 and 1997-98<sup>25</sup>



The first post-war estimations of ethnic composition of BIH and newly formed entities, published by group of ICTY court experts in 2003 had concluded that between 1991 and 1997-98 number of Muslim population had decreased for 95,5% and number of Croat population for 82,5% on the sample of 43 post-dayton municipalities in RS (including Banja Luka). Amazingly, when above mentioned percentages are compared with percentages of downsizings of number of street names with Muslim or Croat ethno-religious identifications in Banja Luka between 1992 and 1995, you come to very disturbing conclusion that they match completely. Number of street names with Muslim ethno-religious identification had dropped for 94,9% (and Muslim population for 95,5%) and those with Croatian ethno-religious identification for 76,6,0% (and Croat population for 82,5%). In same time number of street names with Serbian ethno-religious identification in street names had increased for 147,3% (and Serb population for 70,1%).

These comparisons, additionally diminish arguments that depict genocides and ethnic cleansings in BIH as „spontaneous migrations“ as well as arguments which favor theory of „spontaneous street renaming“, as „natural“ political outcomes of „spontaneous migrations“ and demographic changes. What can be stated as conclusion with high certainty is that RS and Banja Luka war lords didn't have any picture about ethnic composition, nor clear image about demographic outcomes of ethnic cleansing of Banja Luka from non-Serb population in February 1993 and March 1994 when they have undertook a massive cleansing of Muslim and Croatian

<sup>25</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 6, 7, 9, 10 and 15

ethno-religious identifications from street names. Nor elite could have this picture until end of 1995, and first post-war years. RS elite could have certain and very inconsistent information about number of banished non-Serbs and inhabited Serb population in May 1993 when Center of Security Services in Banja Luka had created a list of dislodged and inhabited citizens in Banja Luka<sup>26</sup>. Or in February 1995 when Sector for State Security of RS Ministry of Internal Affairs made a review of number and national composition of population between 1991 and 1995 on the territory under authority of Banja Luka's State Security Center<sup>27</sup>. ICTY judges' decisions in case of Radoslav Brđanin, show that RS and Banja Luka war lords knew and were informed that Muslims and Croats are been systematically terrorized, evicted, banished and murdered in the city and that their number fall down in the entire municipality rapidly, since military and political cue and Serb takeover of Banja Luka in second half of March 1992. Parts of Serbian elite in Banja Luka even took active role in creation of atmosphere of fear and terror, in murders and robberies, in agitating for ethnically based violence and its later justification and cover up, as well as in creation of conditions in which dislodging and moving of non-Serbs out of Banja Luka, especially out of city center, were *sine qua non* for their biological as well as psychological salvation.

RS elite couldn't know for sure how many people lived in Banja Luka or what was its ethnic composition, until the first few post-war elections. Only the first few post-war elections and final scores of refugees and displaced populations in BIH and in region would show a true structure and proportions of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Banja Luka and entire RS. During the war RS war lords could only guess, and they did precisely that, not in accordance to the objective data but in accordance with their marauding desires. They projected their ethno-exclusivist and ethno-fascist desires and intentions on the street and local communities renaming, committing culturocide before they finally sealed the biological and demographical fate of non-Serbs in Banja Luka. Thus, final demographic changes of ethnic composition took place some year or two after massive cleansings of Muslim and Croat ethno-religious identifications in street names.

Culturocide in Banja Luka as a form of official "cultural politic" of RS elite, preceded genocide and announced final solution of Serb-Muslim and Serb-Croat relations in this city, in a form of total cultural, political and demographic annihilation of non-Serbs. Between 1992 and 1995 Serbian political elite in Banja Luka undertook cleansing of non-Serbian identities and identifications in street names and local communities (and generally in public space) with clearly expressed intentions, desires and visions that future scope, proportion and structure of final demographic ethnic cleansing and genocide in Banja Luka follow already proclaimed cultural politic in RS. Also, culturally announced genocide projected such desirable sizes and directions of

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<sup>26</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 13

<sup>27</sup> Source: specified in the list of used literature and sources under bulletpoint number 14

ethnic, cultural and political cleansing of non-Serbs which will eventually lead to the consequences that we are observing and acknowledging right about now in 2013, in the year of the first post-war BH census. And those consequences are culturally and ethnical cleansed “new-Serbian” city of Banja Luka. This all speak in a favor of the thesis that massive “Serbianization” of public space and cleansing of all Muslim and Croat ethno-religious identities in street names during the war was:

1. The pure nationalistic and political construct and sign of irrational politic will for conquering and appropriation, without rational political or any other rational fundaments, except military and war power and criminal motives;
2. The pure projection of the final ethno-religious composition of the city and image on how future desirable political outcome of war should look like in Banja Luka, and generally BIH;
3. Indications about true initial intentions, desires, motives and probable strategies with which Serbian war lords in Belgrade and BIH started the aggression and armed conflict in BIH.

What this research had tried and hopefully succeeded to show is that Together with demographic ethnic cleansing, Banja Luka had experienced vast cultural and ideological cleansing, here portrayed in the massive renaming of official names of local communities and streets and demolition of Muslim and Catholic architectural legacies. Entire cultural remembrance of Banja Luka has been dismantled and significant parts erased, largely those that have been declared as non-Serbian or anti-Serbian and thus unsuitable. This affected that Banja Luka went true swift, bloody and painful process of conversion of its cultural identity from Bosnian-and-Herzegovinian multiethnic and inter-ethnic city into the mono-national, ethnically clean, Serbian city.

Described conversions of ethno-religious, ideological and thus cultural identity of pre-war Banja Luka formally happened in less than four years of war, simultaneously or even before real ethnic cleansing of the city, in a way predicting, some two years ahead, the outcomes of final solutions for non-Serbs in Banja Luka and RS – total annihilation of unsuitable. In this formal phase of conversion Banja Luka lost more than 30% and city center more than 55% of its pre-war citizens, non-Serbs, at least 60000 souls, as more than 100, according to more recent researches more than 300 civilians, had been murdered in terror campaigns in the city, nearby concentration camps or in slavery work on the war frontlines. Only because they were non-Serbs or not pure Serbs, the Muslims, Catholics, Croats, Bosniaks, ethnically or religiously mixed families and their members, and thus unprotected from criminals, extremists but also from entire ethno-fascist RS ethnocracy. While in same time you can feel how Banja Luka is losing, bit by bit, its well-known and centuries' old ethnic and cultural diversity, inter-ethnic and inter-confessional memory. extremely violent and ethno-fascist political homogenization of Serbs and pretended Serbian ethno-territorial and political property in BIH (or Croatia, or Kosovo) and transposing of everything that

isn't Serbian or Orthodox enough into the eternal Serb-Orthodox historical, territorial and political possession. Times after the war strongly disclose RS warlords as well post-war elites in their attempts to mask or justify genocide, culturocide and conversion of inter-ethnic into the Serbian Banja Luka, by pointing out majoritarian representation of Serbs in Banja Luka and other parts of today's RS, or political „feelings“ of Serb people or discrimination and „endangerment“ of Serbs immediately before the military operations had took place after dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia. There is no more war or alleged endangerment of Serbs, but war names of streets, schools and local communities are still there, Orthodox religion celebrations and saints within public institutions are still there, even 20 years after the war. RS and Belgrade elite are even announcing new patriotic street names which will carry the names of Serbian warlords Radovan Karadžić or Ratko Mladić. They are erecting monument of medieval monarch Stefan Nemanja in front of RS Museum in Banja Luka or opening imaginary all-Serbian city of “Andrićgrad” in the center of east Bosnian city Višegrad, severe ethnically cleansed from Muslims during the war, thus forging history and setting Serbian mythical-political fairytales as a regular bedtime reading. Simultaneously denying and depriving all citizens of BIH from the objective and archived knowledge about true political and cultural history of their towns, local communities and entire country. By doing all that they are making final brush-ups on the grand statue of genocide and culturocide in BIH, simultaneously providing for themselves political power and brand-new four-year government. And as a matter of fact, all post-war RS elites, especially today's one consider erased, denied, cut and ignored cultural memory and absence of prewar identity of Banja Luka as one of main legacy and acquisition of war. RS elite retention of post-war status quo and symbolical enumeration of Banja Luka in the list of “Serbian” cities, find the most important task in their attempt to obtain or retain political power. . That's way post-war elite doesn't want to change war names of streets or schools or try rebuild and restore cultural diversity and true memory of Banja Luka. Fight for streets or public spaces is fight for political space and power, regardless whether it is formal, like in case of street names or informal in the case of street graffiti. (Photos 1 and 2).

Photo 1



Source: Author

Photo 2



Source: Author

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