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Editorial

The question of absence of transparency of media ownership still remains one of the top priority issues regarding the EU integration process for Bosnia and Herzegovina¹. Lack of legislative in the field of media ownership regulation widens additional space to hidden (and often to apparent and obvious) political and economic influences and impacts imposed against media houses which by default results in an unprofessional media contents, clientelism – based approaches in the process of selection of crucial topics for reporting and finally, it results in distrust in media houses by general public.

The solution of media ownership transparency issue, including the issues of information pluralism and transparent financing process of media houses in BiH, through passing of appropriate set of laws has been in focus of the “Media and Public Reputation” (origin. “Mediji i javni ugled”) project, that was presented to BiH public on 18 Nov 2016 in Sarajevo. The project’s goal was to present the protection of freedom of expression, transparent financing of media houses from public funds (budget sources) and the implementation of European standards in this particular field. Project was launched by the Consortium consisting of the following organizations: BH Journalists Association, Press Council of BiH, Media Centre and JaBiHEU (a local NGO), along with financial assistance provided by the European Union.

*This E-Bulletin edition is the very first edition of special serial of BHN online bulletin implemented through the “Media and Public Reputation” (origin. “Mediji i javni ugled”) project, also representing a contribution to public debate regarding the transparency of media ownership and upholding and encouraging the passing of set of laws aimed to advance media field and information market in BiH. We shall, through the serial of five editions, publish and post opinions provided by experts, including the analysis of the representatives of academic community in BiH, media representatives, legal experts (solicitors) and certain public figures as well. First special edition of E-bulletin shall consists of texts / articles provided by **Sejn Husejnefendić**, higher assistant professor with the University of Tuzla (Faculty of Philosophy / Journalism Department); **Belma Buljubasic**, docent with the University of Sarajevo (Faculty of Political Studies / Journalism Department); **Andjela Kupresanin – Vukelic**, higher assistant professor with the University of Banjaluka (Faculty of Political Studies / Journalism Department) and **Radenko Udovicic**, director of Media Plan Institute.*

Arman Fazlic, E-journalist Editor



The content of this newsletter does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the E-journalist newsletter lies entirely with the authors and BH Journalists Association.

Events

25 July 2017

Doha: BH journalists at the International Conference: "Freedom of Expression: Facing up the Threats"

20 July 2017

EU assists BiH in promoting and protecting human rights in media

18 July 2017

Journalist Academy 2017: Media should impose pressure upon local courts in order to have them execute court proceedings / processes, regarding the war crimes

17 July 2017

Journalist Academy 2017: Factography representing the foundation on confronting the past and journalists are expected to promote humanity through the implementation of professional ethics

16 July 2017

Prof. Dr. Enes Osmančević: Journalism in BiH directed towards power centers rather than general public

11 July 2017

BH Journalists at the Third Civil Society Forum in Trieste, Italy

20 June 2017

Sarajevo International Conference: Public Services must not shut down

Press releases

30 Aug 2017

Special report by the Institution of Ombudsman on journalists' right in BiH supported

28 Aug 2017

Regional journalist's association condemning assaults on journalists in Slavonski Brod (Croatia), Skopje (Macedonia) and Partes (Kosovo)

25 Aug 2017

Protest against Dragan Mektić, Minister of Security

20 Aug 2017

Regional journalist's association condemning assaults on Olluria, an investigative reporting journalist and his fiancée

8 Aug 2017

Regional journalist's association encouraging the arresting of the person who had been threatening Dragan Bursac, a freelance journalist

4 Aug 2017

BHJA Association Steering Board: Supporting the RTV tax fees payment system through electricity bills

Other side of the media

By: Radenko Udovičić

Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the first place, entity, ethnically and then politically deeply divided country. This also applies to media field in BiH. As a result of such social background, political clientelism has become dominant in media field in BiH. It is somehow based on some kind of auto censorship by the owners / entrepreneurs, editors and journalists. Auto censorship significantly derives from individual views and opinions claiming that the general public attitude of one's people is correct, which is often untrue. Such opinion in journalism could be reflected (through unprofessional work) through media production processes, including information selection, highlighting certain issues confirming the opinions of these groups, negative and denying comments towards those that are, according to conviction of dominant ethnic policy, being considered as opponents. These methods have been easy to identify and, (as oppose to another manipulative dismembering defined as defamation, particularly incorrect information) they can hardly be processed pursuant to regulations or media self-regulation. This is exactly why many media houses in BiH claim to be objective because they for instance, allow everyone to have their own opinion. Of course they do, but allow everyone to have their opinion in what way and what kind of context?

Another reason for political clientelism occurrence is interest based on pure materialism.

If one conforms to majority public opinion, that is, influential political and economic factors, the media itself or their owners (or if there is public media house, their manager, and indirectly the editors as well) may find this beneficiary. This has been noted for the period of last few years concerning three services as part of the Public RTV Broadcasting System in BiH. According to monitoring implemented by Media Plan Institute, RTRS as public broadcaster of Republic of Srpska, produced program which has been openly biased and aimed to the benefit of ruling governing political coalition, or to be more precise, biased towards the strongest political party. That is, to some extent, common sense, because the ruling elite consider RTRS as state – building element and they should operate accordingly. Ruling and opposition political parties in the Federation of BiH have never treated public services as their own heir; instead, public services have been considered as the danger jeopardizing their positions as a result of reports based on critical views. Negative audit reports followed consequently, rejection of project technical assistance targeted for new facilities and centers, hidden pressures imposed against members of executive and board of directors (especially those, whose appointing had been politically based). During these games, neither directors nor chief editors could complete their mandates at the end as innocent and objective people. When certain political party expresses its dissatisfaction with public service reporting, it becomes ready to destroy it completely and this later becomes absolute destructive operation with no political common sense and logic present. If something fails, no governing official can restore it and the price is usually paid by the two public services with head offices in Sarajevo. Due to political discrepancies between ethnically segregated political parties, there is no legal way on collecting the RTV Tax Fees, and the solution to this problem is far away, which may eventually cause complete cessation of public broadcasting based on principles during the period of last 15 years.

Private media houses have been significantly exposed to political clientelism during the selection of advertisement by public institutions, public companies and political parties. It's obvious that benefits are usually allocated to those belonging to "their own ethnic community", and further, the "suitable" person is sought. "Dnevni avaz", daily newspaper has for years been receiving enormous financial means funds from public advertisers. After Fahrudin Radoncic had formed his political party, significant amount of these means simply disappeared and somehow vanished. While I was a member of RTV FBiH Board of Directors, this media house was constantly forced to make balance between the "SDA" and "SDP" biased companies in order to keep marketing contracts, essential to their business sustainability. There were cases when BH Telecom refused to continue and extend their cooperation, refusing to sign contract, because of critically based reports broadcasted in "60 Minutes" TV program. Or, otherwise, the TV editor once hesitated to announce report before the contract had been signed. Basically, these kinds of economic pressures on media houses in BiH are often politically motivated. Still,

Self censorship is bound with deep existing ethnic and political preferences. Specific favoritism is not characteristic for three constitutional ethnic groups, but also for the idea of so called Bosnianism, which is particularly advocated by the civil society. Intolerance towards differences and diversities, specific approaches towards the state of BiH, which at first seems more acceptable than ethnic options (including self-censorship) is present in such profiled media houses. The solution to this problem may be feasible by warming total ethnic and national and political confrontations in BiH which is not the case at the moment.

Media on media

2 Sep 2017

[RTRS Management refusing to implement CRA decision](#)

28 Aug 2017

[Institution of BiH Ombudsman Report: Situation in media worse than in previous period](#)

22 Aug 2017

[ECPMF providing legal aid to journalists working in Europe](#)

16 Aug 2017

[Milinović: RTRS supporting the idea on making a movie about Radovan Karadzic](#)

16 Aug 2017

[Independent Workers Union / Syndicate of BHRT: Board of directors failed to fulfill their promises; the situation is disastrous](#)

30 July 2017

[EBU Report: Public broadcasting services facing the "perfect storm"](#)

29 July 2017

[Council of Europe encouraging member countries to identify "whistleblowers' rights"](#)

23 June 2017

[Press Council: Owners of many media houses in BiH remain unknown](#)

Vacancies

Colombia University provides Dart Ochberg scholarships allowing all interested applicants to attend seminars about journalism issues. Scholarship program shall commence on 15 Jan until 20 Jan 2018 taking place in New York City. **Deadline for application is 22 Sep 2017.**

[Details](#)

General Consulate of Republic of Serbia in Banjaluka announces the beginning of new stage of applying for practical work program for all interested regional journalists. The program shall gather members of the Serb community, working in Serb – based media houses, including organizations or associations. **Deadline for application is 1 Oct 2017.**

[Details](#)

Content developer/marketing text writer required. **Deadline for application is 1 Oct 2017.**

[Details](#)

Novi Vidici Foundation from Sarajevo announces the post for positions of cameraman and technical editor in the Foundation. **Deadline for application is 20 Sep 2017.**

[Details](#)

there are, more or less, clear economic pressures imposed, in terms of insisting of support or at least insisting on critics' absence. Commercial companies do not only conduct this through so called "advertisement blackmailing", but they also often target journalists that are, due to very low monthly earnings they make, accept to (for insignificant money amounts on honorary basis) write articles / texts or simply make reports based on promotional elements. This can hardly be identified and also difficult to prove.

How can we fight against these things or in other terms how to overcome them?

The answer to this question is: Very, very hard! Self censorship is bound with deep existing ethnic and political preferences. Specific favoritism is not characteristic for three constitutional ethnic groups, but also for the idea of so called Bosnianism, which is particularly advocated by the civil society. Intolerance towards differences and diversities, specific approaches towards the state of BiH, which at first seems more acceptable than ethnic options (including self – censorship) is present in such profiled media houses. The solution to this problem may be feasible by warming total ethnic and national and political confrontations in BiH which is not the case at the moment.

One of the Western – based solutions in fight against clientelism is seen through productive educational programs for journalism students, where they would be expected to show greater amount of consciousness and responsibilities, after graduating and commencing with their professional careers. However, here are some elements of such quantitative situation with this kind of education that had been posted at the Media Initiative [Analysis](#) program concerning the educational system of journalists in BiH.

As far as the number of students attending journalism studies is concerned, this department has generally flourished. Journalism department as constituent part of the Faculty of Political Studies in Sarajevo, admits over 120 students every year, with 40 of them attending lectures along with having part time jobs. Department of Journalism with the Faculty of Philosophy in East Sarajevo admits 30 students; Journalism Department and Communication Studies with the Faculty of Political Studies in Banjaluka admits 50 students, Department of Journalism with the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla admits 45 students. Mostar, is the only city in BiH with two public university centers reflecting deep diversity in this city between ethnic Croats and Bosniaks as largest and major ethnic groups there. Therefore, the Department of Journalism of Mostar Faculty of Philosophy admits 40 students, while the Department of Communications with the Faculty of Human Studies in West Mostar admits 70 students.

Furthermore, the analysis outlines that there are two private faculties – Faculty of Communication Studies in Banjaluka, admitting 100 students at the Communication Department and Department of Information and Communication with the Faculty of Social Studies in Medjugorje having a small group of 10 students. The above mentioned number of journalism faculties, that is, journalism departments, does not reflect real market demands of media and communication institutions; instead, it comes as a result of atomization of the state over entities and cantons. Additionally, it is considered as a consequence of ethnical segregation of the state. One could say that every government or every ethnic political structure actually "educate their own journalists" for their own purposes.

Therefore, every year in BiH, over 465 upcoming journalists that is, those who should become professional communicators, enroll to various faculties. 30% to 70% of them graduate on an annual level (undergraduate students) which altogether sums up to around 200 graduate students per year. According to evaluations and estimate conducted by Media Plan Institute, another 200 students from other faculties decide to have a go with journalism and PR studies, so there are over 400 those looking for job or those that may work as professional communicators. Such enormous market competition does not allow many graduates to find appropriate job. These young people, assuming they managed to find a job, usually accept jobs, regardless to their formal education, including compromises in editing offices they are eventually engaged with, or they simply serve political aims through media houses they work for. Taking into consideration that their salaries (monthly wages / earnings) would be insufficient (bear in mind that only three media houses pay their employees' wages that are considered above average, that is over BAM 827, 00 per month), Many of them shall be ready to "bias" articles and texts they post and publish, for merely BAM 100.00 for the purpose of promoting certain company that is, their PR activity.

Conclusion outlines that the progress in this field may be accomplished with greater level of tolerance and more money invested (one often causes or generates the other).

Currently, we are not in the increasing line of either. But at the end, stopping this fight could be worst of all.

Forthcoming events

- Workshop for journalists and civil society representatives from Iraq and Syria “**Journalism and its contribution to peace development, reconciliation and tolerance in societies**”, Sarajevo, 13 – 19 Sep 2017.

- **Communication training as part of Regional Platform** of the West Balkans advocating media freedoms and journalists safety, Prizren, September 2017

Free Media Help Line

Present Cases:

1. Dragan Bursac, a freelance journalist received death threats because of the text titled “Does Banjaluka celebrates Srebrenica Genocide”, posted on his face book profile. Association of BiH Journalists and Free Media Help Line reported these threats to Ministry of the Interior of Republic of Srpska. The case is since a subject to further investigation.

2. Leila Kurbegovic, TVSA female journalist, was obstructed in performing her job and professional duties assigned, during the posthumous exhibition of Mersad Berber, famous artist, held in Sarajevo City Hall (original “Vijecnica”). Her report on the above mentioned City Hall venue was censored by the TVSA editing office authorities. Free Media Help Line counseled Mrs. Lejla Kurbegovic with legal aid. FMHL sent a protesting letter - notice to TVSA general manager, including the reply regarding the violation of work ethics of Mrs. Lejla Kurbegovic. TVSA official replied by stating the Mrs. Lejla Kurbegovic shall be held responsible for violating work ethics and sanctioned accordingly.

3. Eldin Hadzovic, a freelance journalist, received death threats because of the text titled “Selamun Alejkum peder-efendija”, posted on his face book profile. Free Media Help Line reported these threats to Ministry of the Interior of Sarajevo Canton.

4. Suncica Sehic, TVSA female journalist, was put under pressure by Elvir Resic, TVSA general manager, after she had broadcasted a report regarding the recent water supplying problems in Sarajevo.

Investigative reporting, a luxury for BiH media houses dependant to advertising

By: *Belma Buljubašić*

In theory, we learn that information – communication system should be liberated from any political and economic impacts and pressures, which should consequently represent the guarantee for media independence. However, what does reality prove?

Media are somehow laden with various ways as journalism itself is seriously jeopardized. Besides expressed and obvious political pressures imposed on media houses, Bosnian media houses have for some time been put upon pressure by advertisers as well, due to (not) posting and (not) broadcasting media contents as instructed. Media houses have been forced to accept unfavorable compromises with the purpose of acquiring financial benefits, because employees must receive their monthly salaries/wages and make a living out of their work.

This negative trend is no exception in Bosnia and Herzegovina media market and we could easily refer to it as global trend, since many leading world authorities in the communication field (both local and regional authors) confirmed this occurrence.

Most media houses depend on advertisers, not including international TV stations having their offices in our country (such as Al Jazeera Balkans, N1 TV) or if they are directly financed from political centers, which is, again, very difficult to prove, or, on the other hand, if they receive grants allocated by international organizations. Advertising is required for all media types, including both traditional and online media. Rare printed media in Bosnia and Herzegovina can rely and count of their publishing issues as their main source of financing, because the number of viewers and readers of printed media in Bosnia and Herzegovina have rapidly decreased. Media dependability from advertisers surely represents one of the most important reasons for a reduced number of investigative articles and texts, including the decrease in professional journalism as well. The impact advertisers make on media houses also results in the loss of media credibility, because in this case, media houses usually terminate working for general public interest and refuse to publish or post contents that in any way may indicate negative occurrences of companies, firms and institutions that advertise in these media houses. Existential problems in media houses in BiH make them appear as servants to mighty financial centers.

However, in the advertising process itself, marketing agencies become key figures defining the rules of the game. If some media houses still decide to post negative articles / texts about business operations of marketing agencies, the marketing agencies consequently cancel the business contracts.

Slobodna Bosna, printed weekly magazine, popular in both BiH Entities ceased printing editions and as from 1 Jan 2016 they became an online magazine.

Suzana Mijatovic, Slobodna Bosna female journalist outlined that the problem with limited number of advertisers resulted in termination of printed issues of this rather popular weekly magazine.

“Advertisers were key financial source of this magazine”, stated Mijatovic and quoted one of many examples outlining how marketing agencies reacted to posting / publishing contents they disagreed with. “After posting several texts about the “Gibraltar” affair, where I highlighted suspicious actions taken by Neven Kulenovic, the owner of that marketing agency S.V – RSA, Neven Kulenovic with JP HT Mostar, the agreed advertisement advertising Chevrolet car brand, was suddenly withdrawn by them. Everything had already been arranged, however after posting the above mentioned text, we were informed that there would be no advertising and that was it”.

Ties between political powerful centers and agencies attempting to control media field often appear hidden. “It is difficult to prove and ascertain who has ties and bound with whom”, emphasized Suzana Mijatovic, outlining the example when certain marketing agency, (while stating why they had decided not to advertise hygienic product with Slobodna Bosna magazine), pointed out that this particular magazine was aimed mainly for male population.

“This, rather senseless reason was apparently supposed to highlight that woman read fashion magazines only, including magazines about beauty and health and that they do not read political magazines, such as ours”, cleared Mijatovic.

Investigative reporting has been depending on international grants as well. These grants, apart from providing existence for journalists, also allowed journalists to investigate about serious social problems, corruption, illegal deeds and operations etc.

Zurnal, (zurnal.ba) an online magazine, is one of the very few media houses dealing with investigative reporting. Semir Mujkic, a Zurnal journalist, stated that investigative reporting was the main reason why many companies decided not to advertise with this particular magazine.

“Largest advertisers in our country are public companies and we publish articles



Mrs. Sehic was deprived of internet use at her work office. FMHL sent a protest letter (notice) to Elvir Resic, TVSA general manager.

5. Emir Felic, FENA (Federal News Agency) journalist/editor. Dejan Jazvić, FENA editor-in-chief, who had been appointed as member of FENA Board of Directors, was threatening Mr. Emir Delic and two of his colleagues because they had reported illegal appointing of newly elected members of FENA Board of Directors, including Dejan Jazvic. Association of BiH Journalists and Free Media Help Line sent an enquiring letter to Federal Government officials, demanding their official statement and opinion, regarding the appointing of members of Federal News Agency Board of Directors.

6. Josip Simic-Djindjic, Dnevno.ba journalist, a local internet web site; Dragan Mektic, State Minister of Security had, during the press conference, held on 23 August 2017, publically released personal information about Mr. Simic. Association of BiH Journalists and Free Media Help Line counseled Mr. Simic with legal aid. They also sent official notice letters to Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor and Pale Police Station authorities, regarding the threats Mr. Simic had received on his face book profile page. The notice letter was also sent to State Investigation Protection Agency (SIPA) due to investigations and hearings Mr. Simic was put to in the Agency premises.

about management board members of public companies so therefore we almost always end up with no advertisements”, said Mujkic.

Mujkic outlined that he as journalists has never thought about advertisers because the editing office he has been working in, hasn't got a single paid advertisement. “Ever since Zurnal was established in 2009, we had two to three paid advertisements per single page. At present we have Google advertisements on our front page and profit out of three advertisements is negligible, therefore this kind of advertising cannot even be considered as serious business advertising, that is cannot be considered as financial source of income. I personally have never really thought about advertising since I have never worked in printed fortnight based magazine, neither has this affected my work, but on the other hand, I do believe that all journalists in BiH do think about advertisers in media houses they work for.

Frankly speaking, I would believe about advertisers if I had been working in a company that depends on “live” advertisements and commercials, rather than working in a company financed by outer donations”, Mujkic recalls his journalist career focusing on media he has been working for.

This kind of relationship by advertisers towards media houses may reinforce and strengthen both censorship and auto – censorship; simply because journalists (both male and female) are aware that their existence may be jeopardized should they “instigate” unwanted issues regarding advertisers and their business.

Semir Mujkic also agrees with claims that the relationship towards media strongly reinforces censorship claiming the following:” I do not claim that journalists think about advertisers in such way and complete their articles at the same time, but we are still aware that today, economic impact by advertisers on media is most efficient way of censorship, that is, most efficient blackmailing way imposed against any media house. I do appreciate the work of my colleagues and media staff in BiH that try hard to survive in the market and do their work professionally, since biggest advertisers in our country are indeed public companies being under direct control of political parties and managers and managing board members of those companies represent largest source of inspiration for investigative reports and journalist texts and articles”

This kind of advertising business can also be considered as blackmailing. It works something like the following:”If you play our rules, we shall advertise with your house. A sample outlined by Mujkic does indeed portrait this kind of relationship: “We never had advertisement about any public company and we are most likely not to have any in the near future, because we have been writing and publishing texts and articles about them, that is, about their management”.

Federal Government was still a major shareholder of one of those companies while we were conducting such investigative affairs and this company was interested to Zurnal journalists and people from marketing department, whose names are not so important at the moment, but the practice is important, so they consequently offered to advertise through Zurnal.

We should have, I suppose, read between the lines and accept the fact that we would eventually get advertisement contract if we stop with the above mentioned investigation.

We refused to reject advertisement offer, but we also refused to stop with the investigation. We have been writing about this company and yet we never received the official advertisement offer”.

The existence of web sites dealing with investigative reporting is important for community in this region. However, according to Mujkic, this seems to be a luxury that Zurnal can afford, considering that they do not depend on advertisers; instead their finances derive from foreign donations. The question remains: What will happen with investigative reporting and editing offices of media houses truly willing to do professional journalism on one hand, but refusing to accept new forms jeopardizing public opinion on the other hand, making them additionally and at the same time, non – political and incapable of any active political engagement or reasoning.

Although we all often hear stories about media houses serving their audience which usually results in tabloid contents and sensationalism, rather than investigative reporting, such generalizing is rather foolish, because part of our community still wants to read and view serious contents. Besides, media assignments include raising public awareness about political issues and posting serious informative and educational topics. This major attitude by media representatives appear as having grade 1 teachers, whose pupils prefer playing games, rather than studying and allowing them to stay outside the playground, because they like playing and teachers thus must fulfill their wishes.

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The State and the Media

State – level interrupting advisability through political parallelism context, including commercial media instrumentalization.

By: Anđela Kuprešanin Vukelić

State interrupting syntagm in media field does not necessarily include negative connotations. Certain state role, in comparison with media field, is in fact accepted, desirable and even considered required, in terms of preventing negative and rather outlined modern phenomena, such as uncontrolled media ownership over media houses, uncontrolled foreign and global finance investments, unbalanced license granting for operations and inadequate mechanisms used to sanction socially irresponsible media houses. For each of the above mentioned occurrences / appearances, the state disposes of mechanisms through which their negative effects (such as violating media liberties and freedoms, unequal and insufficient competition and unsustainable socially responsible media houses) may repulse or to some extent, ease many of the above listed occurrences. In this context, the role of the state, acting as a regulator or legislator, is indeed crucial. Necessity of this state role derives from several factors.

Namely, the structure of modern media systems has become more complex in terms of production sub-system, that is, media complex mostly consisting of numerous and diverse media houses, towards both communication techniques upon which they have been based (printed media, radio, television, online media) and ownership over media (public, private, civil media) and also towards the manner of managing and their financing. Furthermore, the structure of modern media systems have been additionally made complicated by ever – growing social subjects that, either directly or indirectly and (more or less) had impact on media financing issues and this certainly made these subjects identified as media system ageneses (governing officials, political parties, entrepreneurs, advertisers, religious communities, non – governmental organizations etc). Interests of these ageneses may significantly jeopardize the autonomy of professional communicators (media managers, editors and journalists) and they consequently require particular legal aid as well. Also, the justification of the state role acting as regulator in modern media systems derives from a complete exposure to media markets in commercial processes, including privatization and media capital concentration, which is often, through overtaking or joining or even mutual investing, somehow linked with the capital from other industry fields.

However, passing quality set of laws and applicable legal regulations (in practical journalism), including the creation of efficient mechanisms to imposing sanctions, should these regulations be violated, is required at the state level in order to have completely justified role of the state acting as regulator for this specific issue. Also these legal regulations should be harmonized and conformed to international documents, including universal principles containing (more or less) the media sphere. Media hyper production, including media contents, as one of the most dominating marks of modern media systems, requires greater control level over media houses, although this kind of control does not necessarily include the violation of media autonomy, particularly if controlling is aimed towards valuable dimension of media houses, in terms of their community adequacy and advisability, responsibility and expediency. Hyper production of media contents and total number of media houses are not necessarily sufficient in order to obtain and accomplish media freedoms and liberties, neither have they represented relevant level of democracy of individual media systems,

On the contrary, these occurrences often result in violation of media autonomy and professional communicators; because they are often forced to accept compromises with the above mentioned ageneses in order to sustain in significantly degraded media market.

This trend also often results in advocating and promoting powerful individuals or organizations biased against general public interest. Also, one of the undesirable and negative trends, caused by the massive existence of media houses, is quality decline of media contents, in terms of unjustified outlined short, easy, funny, entertaining and useless and, in a sense of genuine values, unacceptable media products.

Applicable normative framework, based on quality content, composed of norms at various responsibility levels (including legal and ethical norms) and norms passed on different levels (including international level norms, national or norms passed at individual organization levels) represents one of the most important pre condition in preventing political parallelism in media systems, including commercial media instrumentalisation. Both of these appearances could be treated as phenomenon in modern media systems, considering that their ever – increasing existence, including the factors that significantly violate media freedoms and liberties and professional communicators. Their importance is perhaps best outlined through the fact that analyzing modern media systems, with the purpose of identifying their nature and

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One of the inevitable assumptions for establishing and sustainability of free and socially responsible media houses, that is, media houses biased towards public interest in the first place, as oppose to interests of individuals or particular organizations, is passing and revising systematic legal sets of laws, primarily related to regulation of media system, commencing with the regulation of assumptions upon which it is in fact created and established and upon which it is based, to regulate the outcome of their existence that is, to public communication advocated by media houses.

character, requires the determination of political parallelism level and measures in which media houses are commercially instrumentalised as part of this process. In one of the most significant comparative studies of media systems whose authors are Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, political parallelism was defined as the level and nature bound between media and political parties and in wider context, as measure in which media system sustain political segregation of a community (2004: 21). As most significant indicators of the political parallelism level represented in various media systems, these two authors outlined the following:

- Media contents, that is, to what extent do different media houses sustain with various political orientations through contents they broadcast;
- Organizational ties between media and political parties or other types of organizations that are often bound with political parties, such as media financing by political organizations;
- Tendencies of professional communicators engaged with media organizations in order to be active in political life at the same time;
- Engaging media staff whose political views are not confronting with political orientation of their employers, that is, media organization;
- Biased media audience, which shall include the tendency of having the followers of different political parties use media that suit their political orientation;
- Journalist role orientation and practice from upholding journalism to journalism mainly aimed to information providing;
- Regulatory bodies isolation level from any political influence;
- Model of organizing and managing the public service (Hallin/Mancini, 2004: 28-32).

Some of the above mentioned forms of political media instrumentalisation may be regulated legally¹ and thus make contribution to their sanctions and acquiring inner pluralism as part of any individual media house or organization.

Namely, Hallin and Mancini used internal pluralism for the purpose of marking media houses attempting to avoid institutional ties and bounds with political groups thus prevailing their neutrality and remaining “balanced” in content the disseminate.

On the other hand, less desirable form is outer pluralism (in context of repression against political parallelism) defined by the authors as “pluralism accomplished at media system in full through the existence of several media houses or organizations reflecting views by different groups or tendencies in a community” (As above: 29). For systems defining this type of pluralism one could say that they contain high level of political parallelism as well.

Apart from political parties, with de-regulation processes, commercializing and media privatizing, entrepreneurs and capital owners appear as dominating ageneses in media systems and they are often connected with political elites, including advertisers. One of the results of these processes includes the forming of many private media houses which, according to financing and functioning manners, conform to profit and commercial model, which, at the same time, includes the conditioning of their economic sustainability to incomes provided by the advertisers. The pressure they impose upon editing policies of media houses may be outlined through media markets characterizing disproportional relationship between number of media houses and the scale of media market, non – transparent and unequal forms of subventions of media houses provided by the state officials, but also inadequate legal media protection and aid, including professional communicators from outer pressures².

Discovering and establishing the balance between satisfying the public interest and preserving the reputation on one hand, and, accomplishing economic media sustainability on the other hand, represents at present, one of the most significant requests set up before managers running media organizations. Depending on a level of political parallelism representation and commercial media instrumentalisation, harmoniously joint with other indicators of nature and characters of media system, results in configuration of different media system models. Although, typologies of media system

¹ For instance, establishing professional model of public service against government model of parliamentary or proportional representation and “corporative”; forming regulatory bodies organized as independent agencies whose management is appointed primarily according to their competences, experience and skills for this particular field against regulatory bodies that operate under dominating influence by political parties pursuant to their own interests which is accomplished through appointing of management but based on their political preferences; banning any engagement and involvement of highly ranked politicians in media sector and vice versa.

² Forms of media commercial instrumentalisation vary from very outlined and direct ones, such as setting up the conditions by advertisers allowing media where they advertise their products or services do not place their contents that might eventually jeopardize selling of their products or services they provide, to more indirect forms of impacts by advertisers on the selection of media contents and their broadcasting

models are numerous and diverse, it is obvious that media systems with highlighted trends of media political influence or their determination mainly in profit making, do not belong to models with the domination of free and socially responsible media houses. One of the inevitable assumptions for establishing and sustainability of free and socially responsible media houses, that is, media houses biased towards public interest in the first place, as oppose to interests of individuals or particular organizations, is passing and revising systematic legal sets of laws, primarily related to regulation of media system, commencing with the regulation of assumptions upon which it is in fact created and established and upon which it is based, to regulate the outcome of their existence that is, to public communication advocated by media houses. Systematic set of laws regulate “public communication as social relationship, followed by technical presumptions of system functioning, conditions for media functioning, international relationship in public communicating, professional communicators interacting and other social subjects, degree of eventual public communication commercializing etc” (Miletic 2014: 12). Their content and the level of their effective implementation represent significant parameters for defining the nature and character of particular media system.

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Media between politics and market; remaining fair and objective or carrying on with business?

By: Šejn Husejnefendić

Objective and fair journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina faces many challenges. Some of these include an increasing trend of media financing; that is, financing deriving from public sources – or to be more precise, financing from municipal, city, town and cantonal budget funds. This kind of trend has negative consequences not only on reputation of media house, but also jeopardizes objectivity and produces biasing of media houses that often (while searching for financial means and sustainability (survival) on media scene) must turn their eyes blind, in terms of professional reporting, regarding the work of those that provided them with financial subvention. Small media houses have been put under particular pressure, because of their rather modest material and technical possibilities and limited human resources which, in tough fight with bigger media houses, have no chance to attract the attention of bigger and more powerful advertisers.

During the period of last 5 years, city of Tuzla allocated BAM 305.000.00 from their budget funds to media subjects from Tuzla region. As far as the city governing officials are concerned, this practice proved successful that, according to unofficial sources, has not (at least not in larger scale) been considered as subject to critics in media, because critics usually derived from visitors' comments openly outlining obliterating certain facts, information spinning and disowning of public, regarding the questions considered as public interests. Although editors and media entrepreneurs refuse to admit any type of pressure imposed against them by the governing officials who finance their media houses, one could raise the following question regarding this specific issue: Is it possible to make significant money profit in (media) market without making media houses to make favors in return? Just to remind the viewers, the 2012 survey having involved eight local web sites (most popular ones at the time of this survey) in Tuzla region, displayed that five of them had applied for financial grants or taken place in public invitations for media houses co-financing, with half of these actually receiving these kinds of funds at the end. Editors and journalists admitted then that their editing policies had been under pressure (more or less) by the local political officials. Half of the above mentioned web sites also admitted that they had been repeatedly put under pressure regarding posted media contents while three (3) web sites had to remove or re-correct contents they had previously posted.

Who gives the money to whom, how much money is being given and why some people simply give public money away?

During 2016, the city of Tuzla allocated BAM 50.000.00 (in total) to media houses located in Tuzla region. Media houses that had already been receiving financial means from public funds (for the period of last 3 years) also received more than half of this amount. RTV Slon receiving BAM 15.000,00 is on top of this list, along with two local web sites – String d.o.o. (Ltd); Tuzlarije receiving BAM 7.000, 00 and tuzlanski.ba (local web site) receiving BAM 9.000,00. These three media houses were subject to most significant public subvention program in 2015, only RTV7 was, in terms of received financial means, the second most



Legalized corruption (in terms of public support to media houses through allocation of financial aids grants, public bids and invitations for help) through which all governing levels wish to “help objective, fair and professional media reporting”, presented difficulties to media houses work and operations they practice. Governing official authorities, paying certain media houses (legal payment through public invitations for bid or financial aid grants) for “objective, fair and professional” reporting, have direct benefits through these “funding”, because by allocating these financial aid means, they basically make the media houses remain silent (when they shouldn’t be) or the governing authorities at least manage to dull media critical views.

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aided media houses in Tuzla region. Last year, web sites received around half of the total amount from planned financial budget funds through public bid process, while this year, web sites received around BAM 30.000,00 from public budget funds, out of the total BAM 50.000,00 amount. This fact clearly indicated the significance of information and news – based web sites that have still been considered as dominating information providing sources, as far as Tuzla citizens are concerned (if not by their significance but definitely according to number of visits and pages regarding current affairs on these sites). Public money – legally allocated and distributed (and deriving from Tuzla budget funds) to information and news based local web sites, displayed inappropriate case of practice (which is not even considered) as new occurrence in Bosnia and Herzegovina media field. This particular practice is (in media field in BiH) and by all means – often referred to as – legitimate corruption. Editors, journalists and other staff working in media houses entitled to receive the above mentioned financial aid have not even considered this “receiving” as anything contrary to fundamental ethical principles of journalism.

Consequently, a local web site editor (identity well known to the author of this article), who received financial means, (during the public bid for financial allocation/distribution of money to media houses) stated that during these hard times in BiH (in terms of business sustainability), it would be “no shame to serve a regime and that the market was very tough so everyone has been forced to find their own way in order to prevail and sustain, so using all means available would consequently be allowed at the end”.

How to solve this problem?

Legalized corruption (in terms of public support to media houses through allocation of financial aids grants, public bids and invitations for help) through which all governing levels wish to “help objective, fair and professional media reporting”, presented difficulties to media houses work and operations they practice. Governing official authorities, paying certain media houses (legal payment through public invitations for bid or financial aid grants) for “objective, fair and professional” reporting, have direct benefits through these “funding”, because by allocating these financial aid means, they basically make the media houses remain silent (when they shouldn’t be) or the governing authorities at least manage to dull media critical views. If we put this in certain context, along with profiling of media houses (web sites in the first place), including rather complex and turbulent media situation defined by insufficient media capital (but also defined by specific media market in BiH), it is then hard to speak about independent media houses. Media houses may preserve their sovereignty and reject impacts and influences (imposed against them by the governing official authorities at all levels), at the initial work stage, while these new media houses remain working in a non – corrupted manner. We could talk about media independence and healthy media policy only if the capital, that is, funds necessary for proper work, derive and come from abroad (such as Al Jazeera Broadcasting Network) where for instance, this particular media houses does not need to apply for financial means and public funds allocation.

Many media houses unfortunately have no opportunity to be financed in such way and this is why we gradually shrink down to some kind of media darkness. Media changes must be produced from the inside (from media houses) and this includes critical masses willing to sacrifice in short terms, in order to create a long – term results producing thus media benefits, based on re-actualized and re-affirmed role they have in a society. Naturally, public money may remain as financial aspect for media houses, which does not necessarily have to be considered as bad decision. Legal framework on media or creation of new media politics could help if it contained guidelines which would, through very transparent work (through the analysis of independent observers) monitor and supervise how reporting, critical analysis and fair and objective work, correlate with financing from certain governing levels. If media managed to sustain their objectiveness and fairness, their professional work would not be jeopardized by the fact (including immanent pressures) that they indeed receive financial aid from certain governing levels (which again sounds special in the first place). The model which is in use at present, could and may have some bright future, since public would be provided with information, although their work is financed from public budget funds.