



**MONITORING MEDIA COVERAGE DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR
THE GENERAL ELECTIONS 2018**

-FINAL REPORT-

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OPENING REMARKS

Media monitoring during the election campaign for General Elections in 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized with the intention to determine *whether and to what extent the media contributes to citizens to make a choice by being well informed*, and whether and to what extent the media provide citizens with information that will enable them to base their choice of political parties and candidates on the arguments and objectives presented to them through the media.

There are several reasons why it is important to monitor the way the media outlets report during the election campaign. As we pointed out in media monitoring 2016, the influence of the media on voters, or the ability of media manipulation and influence on the outcome of elections is only one of them, and the most obvious one. Numerous political subjects have realised that, and they have set up a number of new media outlets, mostly online (web portals), since 2016. These have been used for political purposes, and aimed at achieving electoral success. A glance at those media outlets shows that they are about biased, inflammatory, provoking texts, aimed at discrediting political opponents, publishing the scandals connected to them etc. It encourages apathy of citizens and at the same time increases confusion and communication noise. We could say that people are swamped with information but insufficiently informed. Therefore, the monitoring was aimed to show *whether media report in favor of (or for the benefit of) political subjects or in favour of (or for the benefit of) citizens, and whether and to what extent public interest is the key guide of their reporting*.

In addition to a general conclusion about the role of the media in the election campaign for General Elections in 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the general conclusion about the correspondence of media coverage in accordance with professional standards, the monitoring is focused on specific aspects of the pre-electoral reporting, related to privilege of already elected candidates/public office holders in media reporting (their eventual greater presence in the media compared to those who have not been elected), presence/absence of inappropriate speech in the media, and (under) representation of female candidates in the media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The topic of research

The topic of the research refers to the presence of the public interest in reporting on political subjects and candidates during the election campaign. Namely, given the fact that the citizens get most of their knowledge from the actors of the political scene from the media, we have wondered how the media help citizens to understand the political campaign better; and how to, among variety of candidates, elect those who will fulfill their expectations in the best way, regarding political officials who are candidates and expect the support of voters. We have tried to identify trends in media coverage of elections referred to respect of professional standards, and in particular, when dealing with respecting the principle of impartiality in reporting.

In this context, the topic of the research in the broadest sense is a fair, balanced and professional media coverage during the election campaign.

The subject of research

The subject of the research in a broader sense is the media reporting during the election campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the General Elections in 2018. More specifically, the subjects of the research are media products that treat political subjects (stories in the media regarding the elections).

Research questions and general hypothesis

Although we have set up several research questions during the election campaign for the Local Elections in 2016 instead of setting general hypothesis and elaborating specific hypotheses, the results of the media monitoring during that campaign provided us with sufficient arguments to decide about setting up the general hypothesis in this monitoring:

During the election campaign in 2018, media outlets in Bosnia and Herzegovina are used more for manipulative purposes rather than for the informative purposes, because they fail to provide citizens with fair, balanced and professionally created information, created in

accordance with journalistic standards and norms, information that would give citizens the basis for informed decision-making in the election.

The general hypothesis is based on spotting trends in media coverage during the campaign in 2016, and also on identifying trends in the media in BiH at the beginning of the second half of 2018, when the "campaign before the campaign" in BH media started.

We tried to answer a number of important *research questions* within this monitoring:

- Do the media have enough reporting on the election campaign (ie, what is the quantity of election content compared to the informative content in the media¹)?
- Are the political officials equally represented and treated in the media (fair access to channels of communication with citizens, balanced and impartial reporting to everyone, nonfavouring particular officials)?
- Are there examples of privilege of already elected candidates/public office holders in the media coverage (their eventual greater presence in the media compared to those who have not been elected officials)?
- Are there examples of privilege of the new political subjects/candidates in the media coverage?
- Whether, and to what extent, inappropriate speech is present in the media during the election campaign (and who are its holders: journalists or others (nonmedia) actors)²?
- Is there an (under)representation of female candidates in the media?
- Whether and in what way the public broadcasters fulfill their social role in informing the public objectively during the election campaign?

¹ During the monitoring in 2016, we analyzed the quantity of election content in the total content of the media, but in this monitoring, we decided to analyze quantity of election content in the informative media content, since it reflects the actual presence of election reporting in the media more authentically. The total content of the media, especially newspapers, including numerous contents which can not be connected with election coverage in any case, such as adverts, obituaries, jet-set sections, sports, etc. But when compared with the quantity of programmes on election reporting, they can give a wrong picture about the under-representation of this topic in the media. So it seemed more meaningful to compare the quantity of informative political content within the election content. But in any case, possible presence of political subjects and candidates in non-informative content has also been registered for the purpose of manipulation (in the sports section, culture section, etc.)

² During the monitoring in 2016 we also analysed the presence of hate speech in the media. However, due to the fact that hate speech, at least the direct one that calls for violence, is less present, and inappropriate language, such as discrediting political opponents by using inappropriate terms, insults, discrimination against individuals and groups, etc, we have decided to analyze something that we call "inappropriate speech" which includes all forms of public speech expressing the low level of political and communication politeness.

Scientific and social objectives of the research

Scientific objective of the research/monitoring is to reach the objective indicators of the level of professionalism and respect for journalistic standards in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the election campaign using quantitative and qualitative method of content analysis, and discursive and contextual analysis, as well as check the extent to which a set of recommendations for media coverage during the election campaign that we presented during the 2016 monitoring was met with success in terms of raising standards of media reporting, adding possible recommendations.

Social objective of the research/monitoring is to appeal to raise the professionalism and quality of journalistic reporting, pointing to disregard of professional standards and norms by the media, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of professional reporting in election campaigns, not only in the media community and among professional actors (reporters and editors), but also among citizens (indirectly raising the level of media literacy and political literacy of the general public/citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Research methods

Quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis were used to gather indicators of the presence of election contents compared to the number of informative contents in the media, indicators of the level of objectivity, impartiality and compliance with standards, as well as indicators of a fair, balanced and professional media coverage during the election campaign.

Discursive and contextual case analysis

Instead of analyzing individual media outlets and the level of their professionalism, this research/monitoring was aimed at insight into media scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Discursive analyse of media articles and reports has been used for that purpose. This analysis has been used in order to attempt to have an insight into types of narratives that dominate in the media regarding the media coverage of the election, and which type of unprofessional

media coverage was mostly present (bias, favouring political officials who are already at the governing positions, hate speech, under-representation of female candidates, etc.)

For the purpose of greater objectifying individual media "cases", these have been analyzed in the broader context of the media, which implies that contextual analysis is an analysis of media products in the context of professional and ethical media standards, legal framework and social norms. Monitors have extracted the cases of violation of journalistic standards, and the authors of the report analyzed them in a separate section of this report.

The inductive method is, in broad terms of methodology, used to draw general conclusions and make recommendations.

Variables

Variables used by monitors for analysing relations between the media and political subjects are:

- The total amount of informative content in the media
- The amount of content related to General Elections
- Genre in which political official appears
- Authorship
- The position in which the political official appears in the media (as already elected official, as a candidate or as a representative of a new political party)
- Bias media coverage of political subjects
- The right of a political official to reply (respecting the criteria of the opponents in the media)
- Number of sources in media content
- Presence/absence of inappropriate speech
- The holder of inappropriate speech (journalist, political official or someone else)
- To whom an inappropriate speech is directed (to other political officials, to a certain group in society, to an individual from the public)
- Presence/absence of female candidates in media content
- How female candidates were treated by the media

Sample/corpus

Sample includes 30 different media outlets (print media (daily newspapers), electronic media (public RTV service broadcaster, private and public radio and TV broadcasters) and online media (news portals)) that broadcast in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina (both entities).³

Corpus includes different media products for different types of the media. Monitoring has been conducted over informative content in daily newspapers, extracting and analysing content about elections to gain a deeper insight. However, central informative programmes (Dnevnik at 19:30 (time depending on the broadcaster), and shows about elections (talk shows) have been monitored on the radio and TV programmes.

Monitoring does not include chronicles about elections on TV, due to the fact that past experience has shown that they are of a "typical" character, which implies that they include reporting on promotional gatherings of the political parties and conveying political messages in almost the same way in most of the media outlets. Therefore, including these into the corpus of the research would "blur" an image; in other words it would significantly increase the number of the analyzed contents and content quantity in a total volume content in the media, and this type of a "sterile" way of reporting is assumed to give a false image of neutrality and objectivity of the media outlets.⁴

The time and the place of the research

Monitoring was conducted in the period from September 7th, 2018 (the official start of the election campaign) to October 10th, 2018.

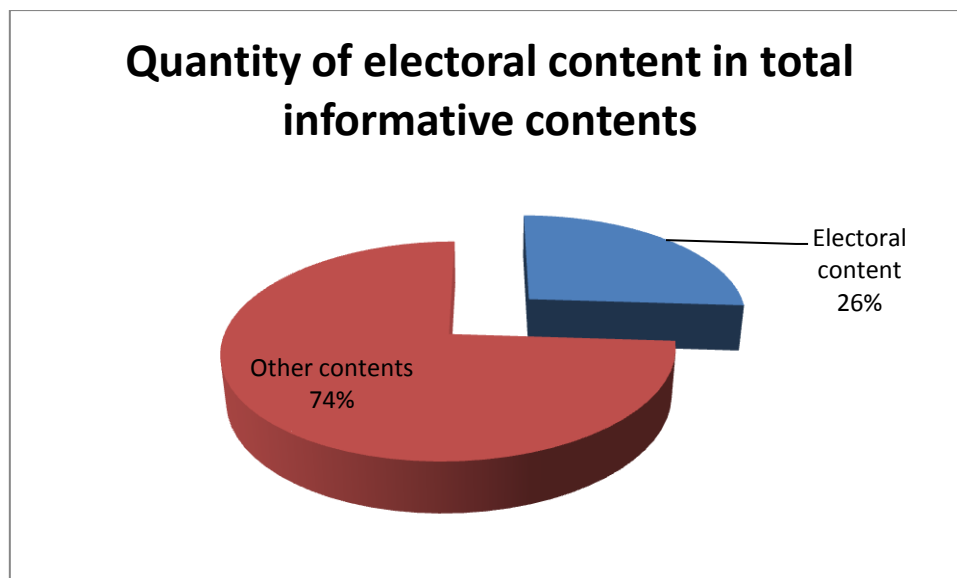
³ A list of monitored media is added to this report

⁴ The same approach was used in monitoring in 2016 and it was proved to be adequate

GENERAL RESULTS OF MONITORING - MEDIA REPORTING DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN 2018 (September 7th to October 10th, 2018)⁵

Quantity and quality of reporting during the election campaign

The first research question in this monitoring is if the media outlets have enough reporting on election campaign (in other words, what is the quantity of election content compared to informative content in the media?). The results of the monitoring give us arguments to claim that the answer to this question is negative. In fact, out of 27068 of analyzed contents in the media recorded during the election campaign, there were 6916 contents about elections. *There was 26% of content about elections out of total number of informative content.* (Graph 1.)



Graph 1. Quantity of electoral content in total informative content

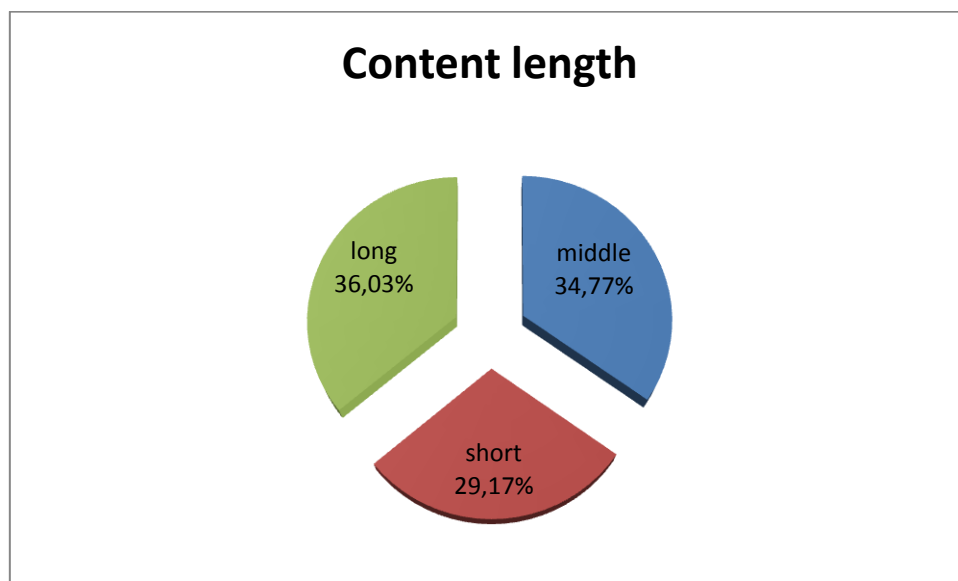
On public broadcasters, this percentage ranged from 14,53% (BHT) to 14,97% (Radio Federacije), 15,93% (BH Radio 1), 18,74% (FTV), RTRS had 34,39% of electoral content, and Radio RS had 48,73%. It could be said that *one part of the public broadcasting system (RTRS and Radio RS) reported significantly more than other parts of that system (FTV, BHT; Radio Federacije and BH Radio 1), whose percentage of reporting was lower than the general average.*

⁵ The results presented in this report relate to the period up to 10.10.2018, and in this sense, some indicators are different from those presented at the press conference/presentation of monitoring results (which covered the period up to 05.10.2018).

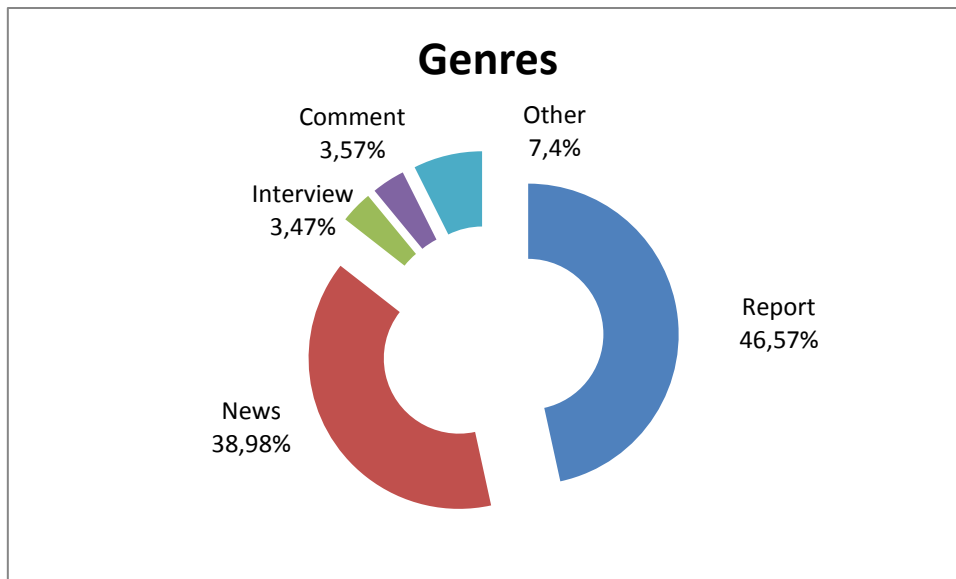
Furthermore, we can say that *the media limited their reporting on the mere transfer of the activities of political officials, without deeper analysis, research, thematic reporting and the like.*

The length of the content varied: 34.77% of the content was mainly medium-lengthed, and 29.17% were short-lengthed. 36.03% were longer-lengthed content (Graph 2). But when we look at this contents by genres, we can notice that the form of reports dominates (46.57%), then news (38.98%), while there was only 3.47% of the interviews and 3.57% of comments (7.4% refers to the other genres, such as reporting live, etc.) - Graph 3.

Public broadcasters had a higher number of long-lengthed content, especially FTV (87.31%) and RTRS (63.58%), but a dominant genre was the news (77.71% of the content on RTRS was the news, and 47.76% on FTV), so we can conclude that *even public broadcasters does not differ in terms of approaches and genres.*



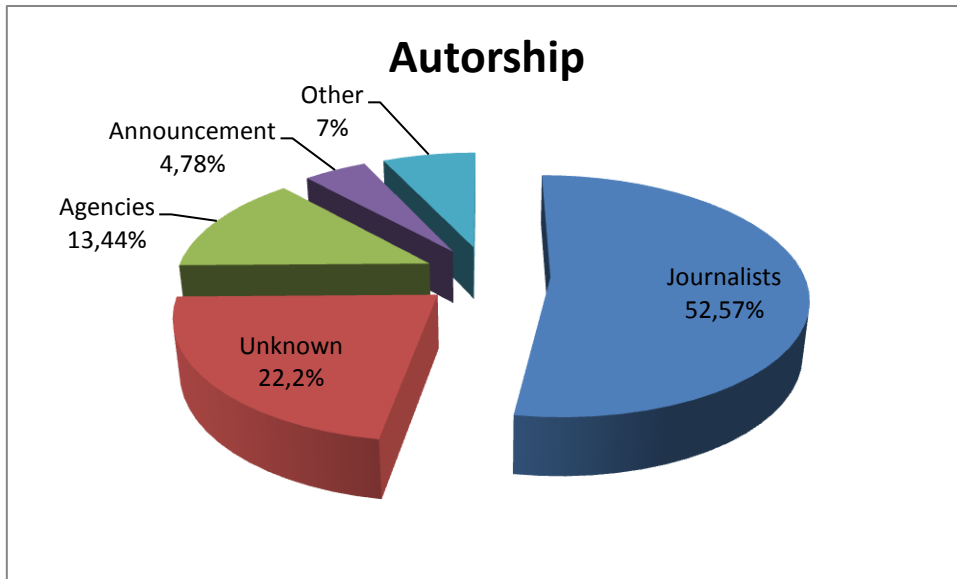
Graph 2: Length of the electoral content



Graph 3: Genres in the electoral content

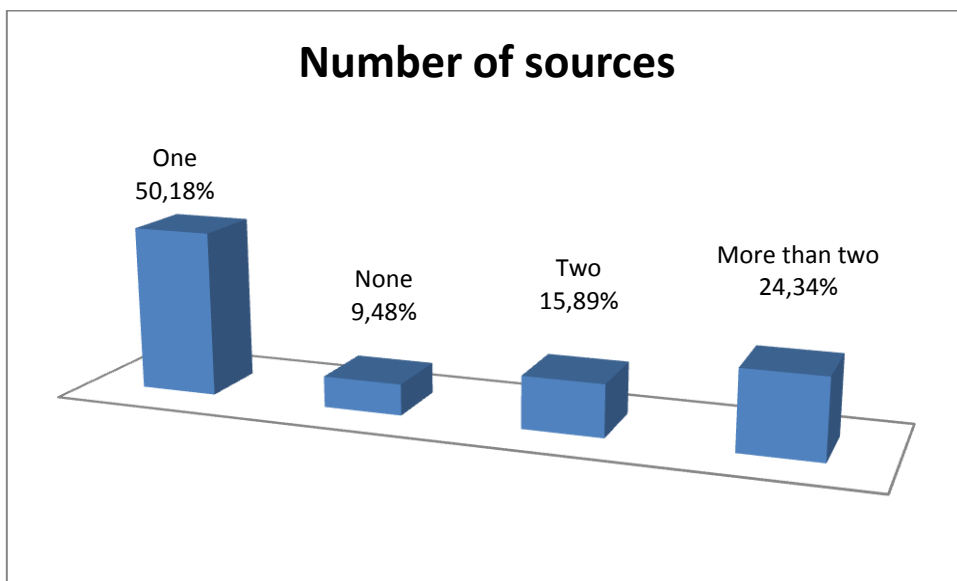
In 52.57% of the content journalists are indicated as the authors, or the content is signed by the full name of the journalist, while there was 22.20% of unsigned content, or those whose authorship is not possible to recognise even from the content. There was 13.44% of cases where the media outlets broadcasted agency news, and 4.78% of the announcements of political officials (Graph 4). However, it is important to note that when we cross this variable with genres variable, which shows the dominance of news and reports, it is questionable how much of the content signed by journalists in the news and reports was actually authorial content, and how much they broadcasted contents and/or announcements of other agencies without specifying uploading agency, signing themselves with their own names or initials. *Therefore, we can say that the quantitative analysis shows the dominance of journalistic authorship, but we can not say for certain that it is an authorial journalistic content created as a result of journalistic research. On the contrary, it seems more likely that the contents that do not involve serious research effort were signed by names and surnames of journalists.*

The thing that highlights public broadcasters in this segment is the fact that journalists are the authors of the largest number of electoral content in all parts of the public broadcasting system (BHT - 84,48%, RTRS - 92.93%, FTV - 97.76%, Radio Federacije - 96.61%, Radio RS - 100%, BH Radio 1 - 92.75%).



Graph 4: Autorship of electoral content

These contents have been created mainly based on a single source (in 50.18% of cases), while 9.48% of the recorded cases had no source or the source that a journalist used to write a story was not specified. Two sources were used in only 15.89% of the stories, and more than two sources were used in 24.34% of the stories (Graph 5).



Graph 5: Number of sources in electoral content

Public broadcasters mostly used two or more than two sources (RTRS - 75%, FTV - 69.4%, BHT - 64.65%, BH radio 1 - 76.815, Radio RS - 94.82%, Radio Federacije - 62.71%), and that makes them slightly different from the other media in this segment.

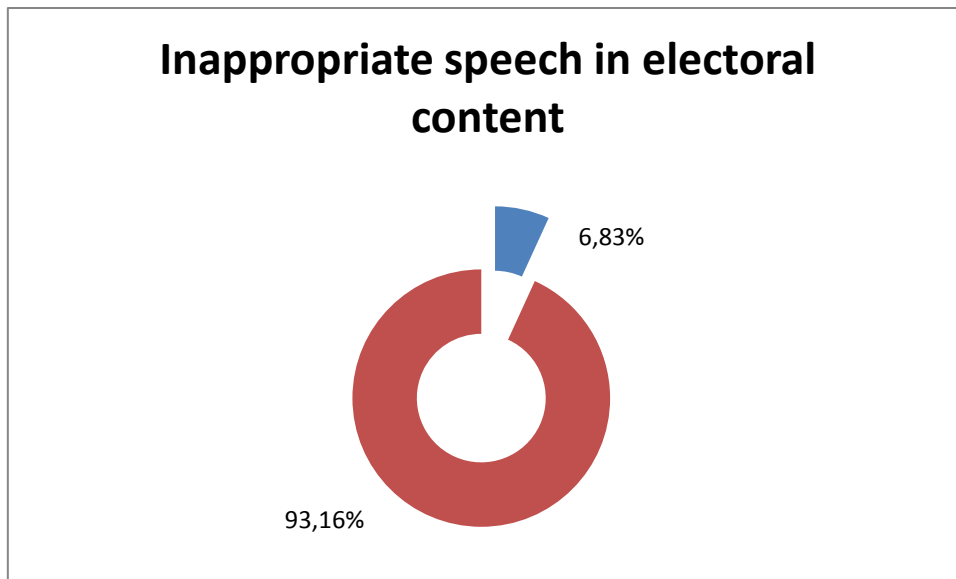
This kind of journalistic approach to the treatment of electoral topics once again confirms the thesis that *it was mainly about the covering activities (statements, events, etc.) of political subjects. In other words, the agenda was actually created by political officials, and the media outlets just followed it.*

Also, since there were no serious thematic stories and analytical reporting (which would include, for example, that the media analyzed the programmes of political officials in various areas or key outstanding issues of BH reality), journalists apparently considered that there was no need to include more actors or sources in the story.

In general, based on the monitoring indicators, we can say that the media outlets did not adequately fulfill their public role and social responsibility, and did not provide the citizens with enough quality content on the basis of which they could make an informed choice at polling stations. It is about both the quantitative part of electoral content in the total informative content in the monitored media outlets, as well as the quality of these contents, which were mainly in the form of news and reports, based on the minimum number of sources. Public broadcasters did not have much better approach compared to private media outlets, except for the fact that they preferred that stories were created by their own journalists in much greater percentage than other media broadcasters, they did not take over announcements from the agencies or PRs, and they used two or more than two sources in much higher percentage than the private media outlets.

Presence of inappropriate speech in electoral reporting

Regarding the presence of inappropriate speech in the media content, we have recorded its decrease, especially decrease of direct hate speech. Monitors have recorded 2% of cases of insults and 4% of cases of allusions, but also 25 cases of threats were recorded. In total, inappropriate speech was present in 6.83% of electoral content (Graph 6).



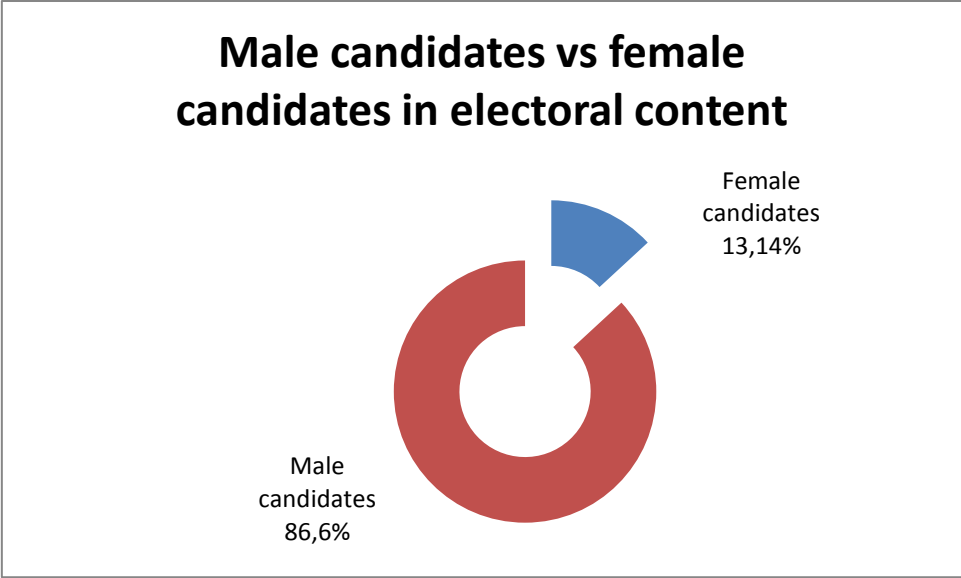
Graph 6: Quantity of inappropriate speech in electoral content

In 81,81% of cases, holders of inappropriate speech were not journalists, but other actors of political communication, mainly political candidates and representatives of the parties. That speech was focused on discrediting political opponents, much less than on inappropriate language towards journalists. What remains a problem, and what the previous monitoring indicated, is the fact that many of the media outlets had broadcasted inappropriate speech, not only without making any distances and warnings about its unacceptability, but highlighted it (in headlines, captions, announcements), for the purpose of sensationalism.

Therefore, inappropriate speech has been reduced in a quantitative way, but in qualitative terms, intensity of that kind of speech remained almost unchanged. Holders of that speech were not journalists, but it was used for the purpose of sensationalism.

Treating female candidates during election campaign reporting

Female candidates were present in electoral content in the percentage of 13,14% (Graph 7). In 21,23% of electoral content a female candidate was mentioned in a positive context, in 4,18% cases that context was negative, and in 74,58% of the content the fact that a female candidate was on electoral list was not mentioned at all.



Graph 7: Quantity of reporting on female candidates in a total of election-related content

Respecting the fact that media outlets can not affect democracy within a party and the parties' decisions on whether to put more women candidates on electoral lists, media outlets can report on candidates who are on the lists, and make them more visible.

MEDIA REPORTING ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS

The frequency of appearance of political subjects in the media during the election campaign

Number of appearances	Quantity of appearance for all political parties	Name of the party
1210	22%	SDA
723	13%	SNSD
704	13%	HDZ
425	8%	SDP
404	7%	SBB
390	7%	SDS
382	7%	PDP
235	4%	DNS
280	5%	DF
195	3%	Savez za pobjedu

Table 1: Quantity of appearances of political subjects - parties

During the election campaign, out of 6916 of total electoral content, 13233 appearances of political parties, individual candidates and new political options have been recorded. Appearance of political parties was recorded in a way that each reporting on a party or its candidate for National Assembly of RS, Parliament of FBiH, Cantonal Assembly or Parliamentary Assembly of BH, was taken into account as appearance of a political party that candidate belongs to. Appearance of candidates for individual positions (candidates for the President of RS and candidates for the Presidency of BiH), have been recorded separately, which means that they were not taken into account when recording on appearance of political parties.

In 6916 of the electoral content, it was noted that a great part of the media coverage is occupied by the governing political parties in the entities. According to the quantity of appearance, SDA takes the first place, SNSD is immediately after, and HDZ is in the third place.

Number of appearances	Quantity of a total number of appearances for each individual candidate	Name of a candidate
1881	29%	Milorad Dodik -- SNSD
782	12%	Dragan Čović -- HDZ
725	11%	Željka Cvijanović -- SNSD
608	10%	Mladen Ivanić -- PDP
466	7%	Vukota Govedarica -- SDS

559	9%	Željko Komšić -- DF
412	6%	Šefik Džaferović -- SDA
307	5%	Denis Bećirović -- SDP
299	5%	Fahrudin Radončić -- SBB
118	2%	Diana Zelenika -- HDZ 1990

Table 2: Number of appearances of a political officials – candidates for individual positions

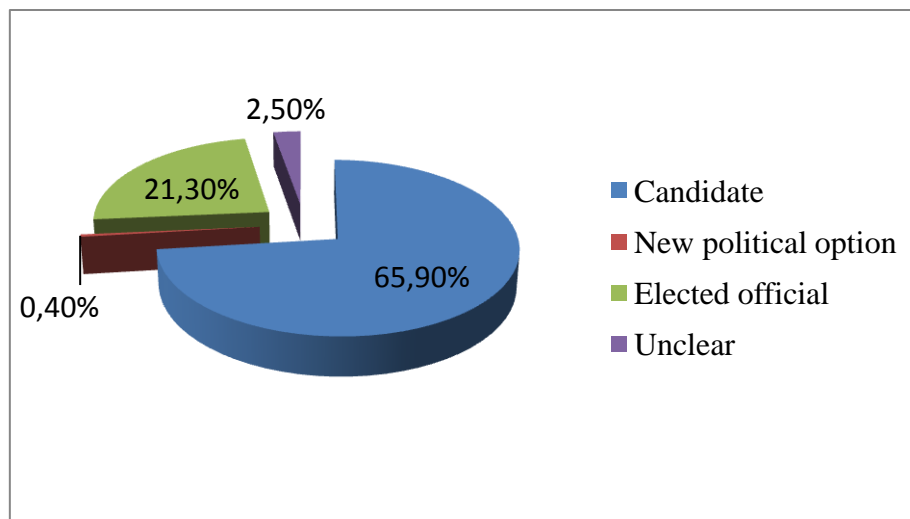
When we observe the candidates for individual positions (for The President of RS and for the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the first place, according to the number of appearances, takes Milorad Dodik, a candidate for the Serbian member of Presidency of BiH, with 1881 appearances. Dragan Čović, a candidate for the Croatia member of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina takes the second place with 782 appearances. Željka Cvijanović, a candidate for the President of RS, takes the third place. Given that the monitoring also covered independent candidates and new political options and movements, a tendency that they rarely occurred was noticeable during the monitoring. As a matter of fact, they almost do not exist as a subject of reporting in the election campaign.

The results on appearance of individual candidates in the media show that certain political officials had a privileged position. Milorad Dodik had a disproportionately larger number of media appearances comparing to the other two candidates on the list. He also had much more media appearances than each of his party colleagues (SNSD as the party appeared 723 times). Also, among the political parties, SDA had 22% of media appearance compared to all other political parties (1210 appearances), while for instance, SDA candidate for the Bosniak member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina had three times fewer appearances.

It will be important to consider all appearances in the context of the *Position of the political subject in the media* variable, because it will tell us more about the way in which space for the candidates in elections is given.

A position in which political subject appears

It is possible to determine whether there is favouritism for already elected candidates / public office holders in media reporting by investigating and detecting the roles in which candidates in elections occur during the election campaign. By measuring the frequency of positions in which the candidates appear (elected official, candidate, new political option, unclear), can be determined in which of the roles candidates most frequently appeared, and this is the way we can conclude whether there was any misuse of media coverage in the campaign.



Graph 8: Quantity of a total number of appearances, according to the position in which political entity appears

The results of the research show that in most cases candidates appear in the position of the candidate for the elections in electoral content, while a little more than 20% of the appearance is reporting on elected officials or public function holders. Considering the fact that the offer on the political "scene" in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not changed for years, and that the same political subjects continuously come one after the other, changing positions through election cycles, it can be expected that a significant part of reporting is on already elected officials. As the results suggest that privilege of the elected officials when compared to privilege of the candidates is not prominent (except on private television broadcasters), at the same time, we recognize that elected officials are more dominant compared to the new political options and independent candidates, who are underprivileged and neglected, which makes equal participation in the election contest impossible to them.

Type of the media	Elected official	Candidate	New political option	Unclear
Public TV Broadcasters	549	550	4	16
Public Radio Broadcaster	128	451	8	1
News Portals	974	5564	102	112
Private TV Broadcaster	1068	860	11	96
Print Media	746	1910	10	114

Table 3: Position in which political official appears in relation to the type of the media

Summarised information about all political subjects show un-favoritism of elected officials, however there are cases of favoritism in some cases. The following table shows the cases of candidates who appeared in almost equal number as elected officials and as candidates:

Political officials	Elected official	Candidate
Dragan Čović – HDZ	187	401
Milorad Dodik – SNSD	672	784
Željka Cvijanović – SNSD	243	318

Table 4: Extracted examples of positions on which political officials appeared – candidates for individual positions

Among all political entities, Milorad Dodik, as an elected official, had most appearances -901, and 871 appearances as a candidate. On the other hand, new political option that appeared most often was Narod i pravda, with 31 appearances.

Type of the media	Elected official	Candidate	Representative of the new political option	Unclear	
Print Media	255	324	0	38	SNSD
Public TV Broadcasters	85	290	0	7	SNSD
News Portals	277	1054	0	35	SNSD
Public Radio Broadcaster	44	160	0	0	SNSD
Private TV Broadcasters	524	216	0	55	SNSD
Public TV Broadcasters	20	37	0	2	HDZ
Private TV Broadcasters	54	55	0	3	HDZ
Print Media	125	245	0	20	HDZ
News Portals	116	766	0	18	HDZ
Public Radio Broadcaster	8	32	0	0	HDZ
Public Radio Broadcaster	11	40	0	0	SDA
Public TV Broadcasters	122	59	0	1	SDA
Print Media	86	235	0	19	SDA
Private TV	96	82	0	4	SDA

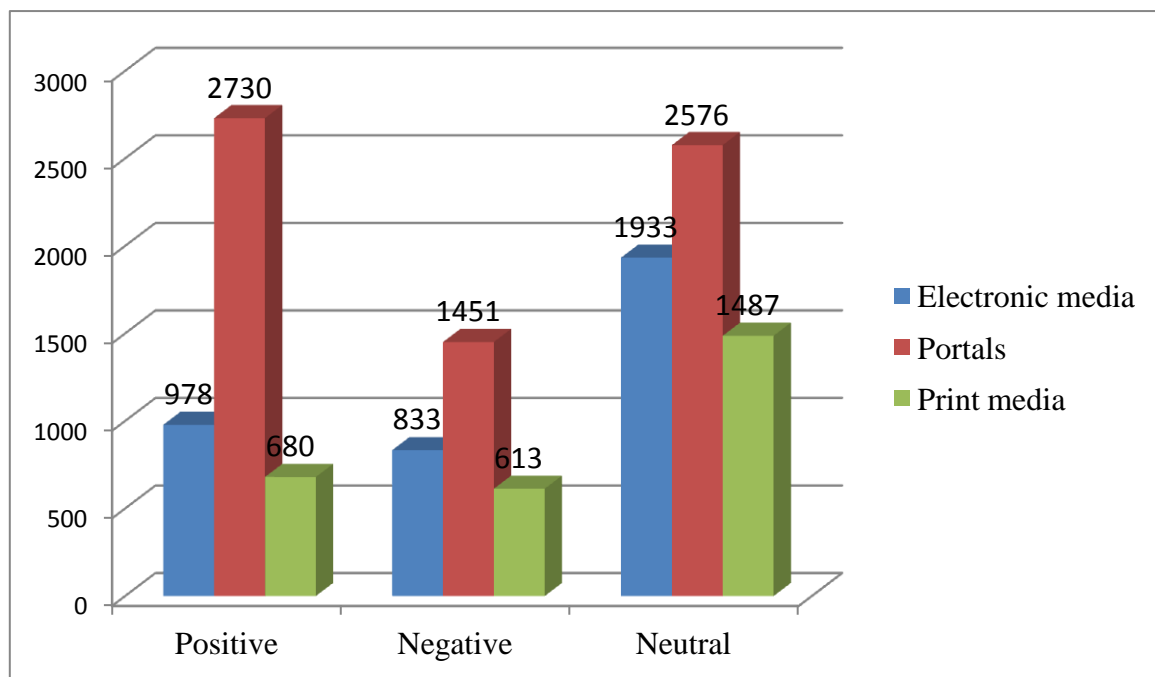
Broadcasters

News Portals	92	883	0	12	SDA
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Table 5: Extracted examples of the positions on which political subjects – political parties appeared

The context in which political subjects were present

While the mere presence in the media is the first indicator of the possible (non)privilege or (non)sympathy of the media for a particular political subject, the context in which political subjects will appear also allows us to understand whether there is a bias in reporting. Observing the type of the media, reporting news portal is characterized by the highest (40%) positive context in which political subjects appeared. Negative context in reporting was present in all types of the media: 22% appearances of political subjects in the electronic media; 21% appearances on the news portals and 22% appearance in the print media.



Graph 9: The context of reporting considering the type of the media

When we look at the political parties, especially those that had the highest number of appearances in the electoral content, it is noticeable that SNSD was most reported in a negative context, and SDA and HDZ in a neutral context. As most electoral contents were at news portals, this pattern had an influence on stronger pointing out that this type of media had most reporting on above mentioned parties of all media outlets in negative, but also in a positive context. In addition to the portals, the print media had a significant coverage in a

negative context about SNSD and SDA, and reporting on HDZ in the print media was twice more positive than negative.

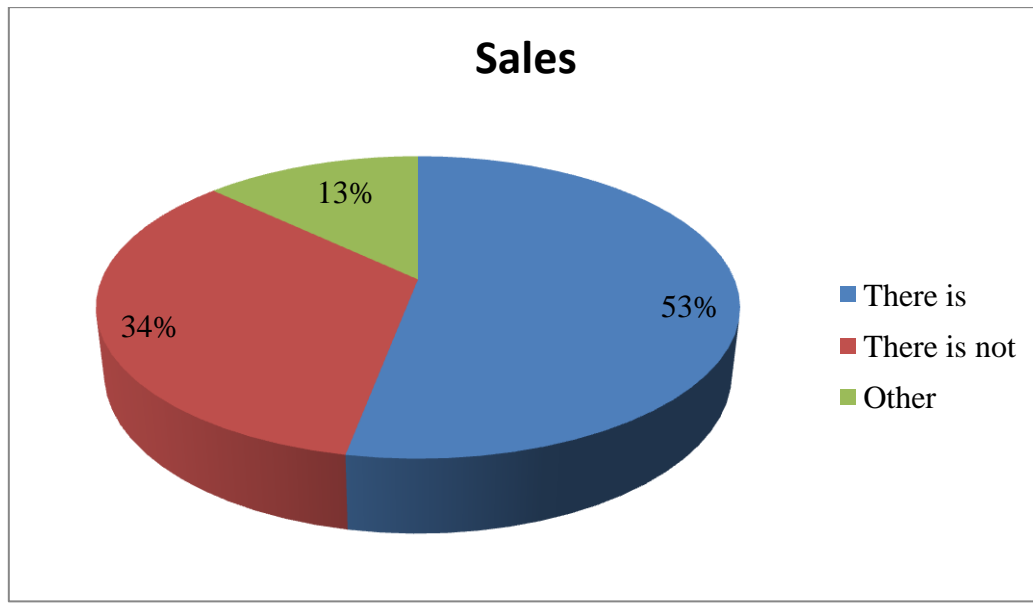
Party	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Type of the media
SNSD				
SNSD	97	191	329	Print Media
SNSD	195	75	112	Public TV broadcasters
SNSD	286	527	553	News Portals
SNSD	104	23	77	Public Radio Broadcaster
SNSD	278	188	329	Private TV broadcasters
Total	960	1004	1400	
SDA				
SDA	2	14	35	Public Radio broadcaster
SDA	93	23	68	Public TV broadcasters
SDA	64	131	145	Print Media
SDA	34	49	99	Private TV broadcasters
SDA	458	161	368	News Portals
Total	651	378	715	
HDZ				
HDZ	8	15	36	Public TV Broadcasters
HDZ	12	23	77	Private TV broadcasters
HDZ	142	65	183	Print Media
HDZ	374	268	258	News Portals
HDZ	6	4	30	Public Radio Broadcaster
Total	542	375	584	

Table 6: Reporting context of the media about three most present political parties considering the type of the media

The right of reply

During our monitoring of objective, fair and impartial reporting on political candidates, respecting the right of reply was one of the basic principles that we checked. In the research that was focused on reporting of all political subjects, even in 34% of cases, a political official was not given the right of reply.

Among the candidates for individual positions, a candidate of SNSD Milorad Dodik was denied the right to reply in most cases (686 times). In reporting on political parties or on candidates for positions in Parliament and list leaders, in most cases SDA was denied the right to reply (472 times), and among independent candidates, most of such cases have been recorded in the appearance of Mirsad Hadžikadić (17 times) .



Graph 10: The right to reply

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS – SELECTED EXAMPLES

Qualitative aspect of research includes thematic analysis of examples that monitors highlighted as significant. Since it is difficult to analyze media outlets individually in a period of exponential growth of information (because one content can be shared quickly), the following is an overview of the analysis divided into following topics: inappropriate speech, bias media and female candidates. These three categories are mostly common in isolated examples, while in the others, a sample is insufficient for thematic analysis to be carried out.

Inappropriate speech

Inappropriate speech usually does not come from the media, but from political actors. Hate speech, as a criminal offense, was not represented in most of the media, because political actors became aware of the implications of spreading of this kind of speech. The most common forms of inappropriate speech were insults, threats and allusions.

Insults are inappropriate forms of speech in which one political actor speaks disparagingly about the other, without explicit evidence and arguments. However, this type of disrespectful speech is not hate speech, although it may be an integral part of it. Insult does not necessarily mean generalization, incitement and call for violence. The most common examples of insults are insults on personal basis. These are situations where one political actor "calls-out" the other, and afterwards the other actor adapts the same patterns of behaviour. For example, a candidate for President of the Republic of Srpska, Vukota Govedarica insulted another candidate Željka Cvijanović, stating that she is "Ustasha's (----)granddaughter" and then Željka Cvijanović called Vukota Govedarica "a coward". Thus, the publicity that the candidates received during the election campaign has created breeding ground for spreading insults in the media, especially if you take into account the impact of takeover content from unreliable portals to some national media outlets.

The threats are much more dangerous than insults because they entail the negative implications towards an individual or a social group. As a rule, the threat is contained in the hate speech, so this type of disrespectful speech is almost considered a crime. An example of a classic threat in addressing political actors is a situation in which the candidate for the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milorad Dodik, threatened the inhabitants of Gacko and pensioners: if they do not vote for SNSD, they will be sanctioned in the form of losing jobs and loss of one time financial aid for pensioners. This threat was interpreted in various

ways in a variety of media outlets: some media outlets minimized the negative effects in a way that they avoided to show the real context of the threat (RTRS, ATV), while other media outlets quoted statements of actors, with a clear critical note towards such behavior (for example, Buka or TV1). Another example of a threat is when Nebojsa Vukanović, a candidate for RSNA in addressing the public used jarring language when analyzing the behavior of Željka Cvijanović.

Allusions are the most common type of inappropriate speech, because the negative side of it is not often obvious and requires deeper analysis to determine its presence. Allusion is a form of speech in which a media outlet or political official does not speak explicitly against the others, but the statement or media content is conceived as to create a negative image. The allusion is usually a mutual venture of a biased media outlet and a political actor. For example, when the media outlet presented one's personal crime as if it was an identity of a political party. As a matter of fact, when a shoulder-launched rocket was fired at the building of "Euroherc" company in Banja Luka during the election campaign a suspect was arrested. ATV and RTRS alluded that it had been committed because the criminal is a follower of the SDS party. A framework in which a certain political party was indirectly criminalized had been created by choosing interlocutors, by recordings and journalistic interpretation, although there was no logical connection between the crime and the political actors (or more precisely, that connection could be proven in the investigation process of the competent authorities, but claiming that there was a connection after the arrest was an allusion). Another example is when certain media outlets, especially after the election day and the presentation of the preliminary results of the CEC, alluded that a candidate for the BiH Presidency Željko Komšić was not elected "legitimately". Since this form of "legitimacy" is difficult to prove because of the BiH Election Law, certain media outlets alluded that Komšić was "elected by Bosniak votes", which means that he is not a legitimate representative of the Croatian people.

Media bias

Media bias is a category which indicates that behavior of a media outlet is characterized by implicitly or explicitly favoring one aspect of the story or a political actor. Also, the bias is not only when media outlet clearly supports certain political actors, but also favoring the selection of events, selection of sources and selecting points of view. Specifically, while analysing examples, we have defined two categories of bias: mild bias, which involves implicit activities of the media, and open bias, which is easier to reveal because of its

explicitly. In other words, mild bias can occur as an unintentional mistake in the media (without having bad intentions), while the open bias is an open support for one side.

Mild bias is mostly manifested in two manners: the use of affirmative language and disproportionate representation.

The use of affirmative language represents a mild bias, because it is based on an indirect framing of the event that has no short-term effect, but may have long-term effect. For example, when, in reporting on SDA meetings, newspapers state phrases such as "tremendous applause for SDA" - that implies bias, because it is a qualification based on a value not on a description of the event. Also, when the media uses lexis such as "so-called" to talk about legally registered political actors, it is also considered a bias.

The second most common form of mild bias is unequal right to reply through the disproportional representation of all parties. This violation of impartiality arises in cases when media outlets cover all or most of the parties in the media content, but the time they receive is disproportionate - which can be used in manipulative purposes. For example, when a candidate for the BiH Presidency Fahrudin Radončić in Dnevni Avaz gets space for three statements, his opponent Šefik Džaferović gets to say one sentence; when representatives of the SNSD get a space of 2 minutes on RTRS and the opposition gets 10 seconds. Therefore, we define this form of bias as mild bias because there are cases when the media outlets inadvertently make a mistake or an event is specific in a way that one simply cannot represent everyone proportionally. However, from the viewpoint of citizens, the bias is negative, even if it is accidental (the effects are the same regardless of intent).

Direct bias is more evident and more dangerous, because it is not based on accidental or unintentional mistakes - but rather on the editorial policy which favours certain actors for political or economic reasons. Mild bias can sometimes have arguments to defend, however open bias has no excuses and it represents the most explicit violation of journalism and media responsibility. Examples show that there are three forms of open bias that are mostly present: PR department, political spin and abuse of one's position.

Promotional reports of political parties belong to the PR departments of political actors by their function, and in cases when the media takes over this function, we believe that that is the worst form of bias. This kind of bias most often occurs in pseudo-events or in events that exaggerate one's importance. Of course, although public broadcasters have specific legal

obligation, that does not amnesty the responsibility of commercial media. Manipulation by Pseudo-events was mostly present in the print media, in a way that certain people were presented in a positive manner (for example, activities of Sebija Izetbegović are characterised as "activism"). Manipulation of the effects of events occurs when a routine or ceremonial events are presented in a more important context than they actually are. For example, during the election campaign a helicopter service of the Republic of Srpska was promoted, but certain media outlets presented it as an event of crucial importance to citizens (promotional statements, one-sidedness, sound and video effects). Similarly, the visit of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov had a variety of contexts in relation to the bias of the media: for some media outlets, Lavrov visited Sarajevo and Banja Luka, for some of them he visited Banja Luka and Sarajevo, and for other media outlets he came for a visit on the invitation of the President of the RS, Milorad Dodik. However, that was the same event, but in different contexts and reasons.

Alteration of information and spinning were most evident in the case of reporting on the death of David Dragicevic and events that were associated with the protests in Krajina Square in Banja Luka. Spin is the manipulative technique of political communication in which media outlet or political actor consciously chooses a point of view, which creates the image that fits their interests (they usually chose information suitable for their interests, and other information are ignored). A similar thing happened in Sarajevo when Muriz Memić demanded justice for his son Dženan Memić. Media outlets which were undermining the significance of the two events in a way that they totally ignored them or reported unverified data about number of gathered people - were not concerned with informing, but by altering the information or spinning. On the other hand, some media outlets have taken the other side, and yet spins have occurred (exaggeration in stating the number of gathered citizens, ignoring the other side, etc.). The third group consists of the media outlets which reported on only verified information and provide citizens with a legit starting point for the adoption of attitudes and opinions about these important events.

The abuse of one's position is such behavior of the media where they abuse the positions of political actors who are already elected officials, or when hiding bias of the actors by blurring possible political motivation. The first case is a general problem in which media outlet does not necessarily have bad intentions: if a road was opened by the President who is also a candidate in elections - what is that the media can do? Of course, media outlets are not amnestied from responsibility when abusing these vague boundaries so they try to qualify

everything as a candidate activity (example is RTRS which, when presenting Milorad Dodik created the impression that he is the most active as a candidate, and that is a clear example of media bias). In addition, the other case is when the representatives or officials of the political parties emphasise their university or doctoral education, and ignore political motivation. For example, Rajko Vasić represented himself as a "political analyst" at RTRS and ATV, neglecting his involvement in SNSD.

Female candidates

Examples show that women candidates are generally not sufficiently presented in the media, therefore there is not a sample large enough to enable special thematic analysis of this subsample. However, there are examples that speak of different approaches of the media when dealing with female candidates: some media outlets take a positive viewpoint, some of them treat female candidates in a neutral way, and certain number of media outlets have negative attitude.

Positive attitude is found in the examples of the two ways of promoting women as candidates: documentaries or articles about the success of women in politics (a documentary about Sanela Prašović Gadžo, candidate of SBB); and authorial texts of female candidates through leased time for speech (mainly in the print media through leased space for authorial texts). For example, Diana Zelenika who was a candidate for the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have much room to be the interlocutor, and therefore she promoted herself through authorial texts (mainly in the print media and on the portals).

We can find negative attitude towards female candidates in the contextual analysis of monitors, ie. there were not extremely negative explicit examples of the negative attitudes. However, the negative attitude is continuously present, and not present in relation to a single content. For example, the presence of Željka Cvijanović on the pictures or at the events, but without the opportunity for opinion is a classic example of negative attitude (in the video clips she is often in the background, behind Milorad Dodik, but does not get a chance for an opinion).

Neutral attitude is mostly recorded in guest appearances in the debate shows or presentations, because the media outlet gives equal space to each individual in these situations.

CONCLUSIONS

Media monitoring was carried out with the aim to determine how accurately the media provided the information on the electoral choices to citizens during the Elections in 2018, and to what extent were they providers of useful and legit information for citizens, presented in accordance with professional norms and standards, which are primarily related to objective, fair and balanced reporting on political subjects. As noted above, the *research questions* have been set with this aim, as the questions that will help us to carry out some general *conclusions about the way of the media reporting during the election period:*

- The first research question was: Do the media report enough about the election campaign (ie, what is the quantity of election content comparing to the informative content in the media)?

Monitoring results give us the right to claim that the elections were not dominant content in the media. However, we can also say that an important issue for the citizens for making informed choices at the polling stations (choices based on a sufficient number of information) was following various media, various by type (print media, radio broadcasters, TV broadcasters, portals) and by content.

- The second research question was: Are the political entities equally represented and treated in the media (fair access to channels of communication with citizens, balanced and impartial coverage to everyone, nonfavorising certain political entities)?

The results show that a significant number of media outlets based their reporting on the postulates of a fair and balanced journalistic reporting, but contents with extremely positive or extremely negative attitude towards certain political entities appear in a number of media outlets. Examples of bias when it comes to public services are mostly found on RTRS.

- The third research question was: Are there any examples of leniency towards already elected candidates/public office holders in the media coverage (their eventual greater presence in the media compared to officials who have not been elected yet)? The

fourth research question was: Are there examples of privilege of new political subjects/candidates in media reporting?

According to the research, there are examples of greater representation of candidates who are not public office holders compared to elected political officials, and almost complete invisibility of new political options and parties in the media coverage and their underrepresentation in media reporting are noticeable. Therefore, not only they were not privileged, but they even did not have equal treatment.

- The fifth research question was: Is inappropriate speech, and to what extent, present in the media during the election campaign (and who are its holders: journalists or other (nonmedia) actors)?

Monitoring showed reduced presence of inappropriate speech by the other actors of public communication, not journalists. The presence of allusions and inappropriate comparison, insulting political opponents, as well as other direct threats, show that political correctness, the culture of dialogue and the culture of conflict are still on a low level in a public space in Bosnia and Herzegovina and indicate a strong need for raising the level of discussion in the public space in election campaigns, in order to allow citizens to the democratic conditions to form their attitude on who to vote for, without raising tensions and using inappropriate speech.

- The sixth research question was: Is there an (under)representation of women / female candidates in the media?

Monitoring showed underrepresentation of women in the media in these elections. One reason for this can certainly be generally smaller number of female candidates compared to male candidates, but the fact is that male candidates were represented even more than political parties. However, this points to another phenomenon in the media and political actors relation during the campaign. This phenomenon refers to the fact that the media follow the agenda or rules imposed by political officials, so if they do not "offer" stories about their female candidates to the media, or if the female candidates are not at the top of the lists (for chief positions in municipality, for example), they are certainly less present in the media.

- The seventh research question was: Whether and how the public broadcasters fulfill their social role in objective informing the public during the election campaign?

Monitoring did not show significantly different approach of public services compared to other media. Examples of obvious bias at RTRS are of a particular concern.

Finally, the general hypothesis of this monitoring was:

Do the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the Election campaign 2018, provide citizens with sufficiently fair, balanced and professionally created information, made in accordance with journalistic standards and norms, that would be the basis for informed decision-making in the election?

In general, we can say that the *standards of a fair, objective and balanced reporting are generally complied with most of the media, and that there were no particularly obvious violations of journalistic deontology and professional principles.* The encouraging fact is the reduction of inappropriate speech, and the use of multiple data sources and biased stories in public services. The worrying thing is certainly the number of cases of advocacy reporting in some of the media outlets, or the tendency to report on some political entities with positive attitude compared to the others. In particular, this refers to existing holders of public office, who have used their positions for self-promotion, and the media covered that without significant critical reporting. Furthermore, under-representation of women is still present in the media during the election campaign, but we could say that it is, in fact, a reflection of under-representation of women in the political sphere in general. Larger cases of extremely negative misogynistic reporting have not been recorded.

In general, we can say that the media *did fulfill its informative role, but the function of education (public policy education and presentation of new political options), and function of orientation were slightly less used.*

These results were not significantly different comparing to the media monitoring during the election campaign for Local Elections in 2016, so unfortunately we can not say that significant progress in reporting on election has been made .

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE REPORTING

In accordance with aforementioned findings, we have several key recommendations for future media reporting on election campaigns:

- The media, especially public broadcast services, must show *greater interest in reporting on elections*. This is especially true for public broadcast services, but also to the commercial media outlets, because regardless of the fact that reporting on elections apart from marketing programs does not bring commercial gain to private media broadcasters, they should also, at least in part, fulfill their social, not just commercial role and pay attention to the election contents.
- During the pre-electoral reporting, all media outlets should *bring the public interest, not political subjects to the foreground, including reporting on programmes, not only on the candidates and the parties and their campaign activities*.
- When reporting on already elected officials who are in the election campaign again, media outlets *should take care not to allow manipulation and privileged position for elected officials compared to the other candidates*. Reporting on elected officials *should further use retrospective references method* (comparing earlier promises and what has been achieved).
- *Most of the media outlets should adopt a fair and balanced approach*, because it is evident that the right to reply is more an exception than the rule.
- Although the attitude towards female candidates was mostly neutral, *the number of appearances of women in the media has to be increased*.
- Inappropriate speech is generally decreasing, *but journalists should clearly and unambiguously provide the respondents with information that inappropriate speech is unacceptable in their media outlets*. In situations when other subjects use

inappropriate speech, *media outlets should convey information on the use of inappropriate speech of political officials (or other actors) to citizens, aiming public to have an insight in the level of political subjects' culture of communication. However, estimating about a way in which such content will be presented should be based on professional standards and personal deontology of a journalist (in other words: not to broadcast inappropriate speech at all costs in order to make sensationalism, but for the purposes of transparency and political education of the public, and considering political officials responsible for the unacceptable behaviour).*

- Media outlets should *use information, analyses and interlocutors from the NGO sector more often*, because this can help them to fulfill not only informative role (which candidate or party has been presented, and in which manner), but also the orientation and educational role (political education of the public, inform public about the election process, principles and rules, voting, etc.).
- *The purpose of the media in election campaigns is to provide citizens with sufficient amount of reliable and high quality information, based on which citizens can make so-called "informed choice" on election day, and therefore media coverage should be based not only on 5W and monitoring of political officials in their election activities but also on thematic reporting, program analysis and competence of candidates, noting that balanced reporting is necessary in that case as well.*
- In order to achieve the realization of at least some of these recommendations, at this point it seems sensible to suggest editorial boards of the media to, despite the limited opportunities (in terms of human and financial resources), *try to invest in further education and training of part of their staff for reporting on election.*

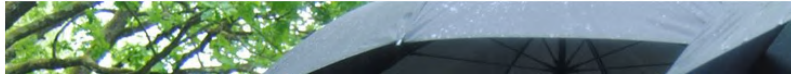
Most of these recommendations were presented after the media monitoring in 2016, but unfortunately the media outlets have not applied them substantially.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIA REPORTING

МИЛОРАД ДОДИК: ЈАВНА ЈЕ ТАЈНА ДА ОПОЗИЦИЈА СПРЕМА „ДЕШАВАЊЕ УЛИЦЕ“ НАКОН ИЗБОРА

Предсједник Републике Српске и кандидат за члана предсједништва из Српске у Предсједништву БиХ, дао је интервју новинској агенцији Срна, у којем коментарише опозицију, гласање путем поште, те истиче да кампању гради на резултатима, а не на подвалама.

ПОДИЈЕЛИ ОВО:



НАТИНИ ЧЕЊЕ

НАЈЧИТАНИЈЕ

1 7 30 ∞

Босић: Нећемо ићи на консултације

Нини Букејловић испитују Бошњаштво, да би јој дали или узели компензациони мандат

Уторак, 06.11.2018.

VREMENSKA PROGNOZA

STANJE NA PUTEVIMA

KURSNA LISTA

POŠALJI VIJEST

SEARCH SOCIAL MEDIA

BiH svijet ekonomija crna hronika sport magazin lifestyle tehnomag više...

FAKTOR

SNAGA NARODA

"Ovo je početak devete pobjede SDA, nastavak borbe za cjelovitu BiH"

Objavljeno: 07.09.2018. u 21:48 Autor: E. G. i M. A.

12

Idemo uz Božiju pomoć i snagom naroda u devetu pobjedu. SDA je najjača politička stranka u BiH i pobjednik ovih izbora, ako Bog da, rekao je Izetbegović na početku skupa



Najnovije Najčitaniје

INZKO U NEW YORKU
Visoki predstavnik u BiH podnosi izvještaj Vijeću sigurnosti UN-a

MUP HNK
U Mostaru "digli" dva "golfa", jedan nađen zapaljen za drugim se traга

NAKON DVA I PO MJESECA
Novinar Vladimir Kovačević ne vjeruje da će se ikada otkriti nalogodavci

BEZ MINUTAŽE
Trener Dynama objasnio zašto je Dujević ostao na klupi

LIGA PRVAKA
Barca večeras u Milanu, PSG u grotlu San Paola



Predsjednik SNSD-a Milorad Dodik i kandidat te stranke za Predsjedništvo BiH, pored toga što predizbornu kampanju vodi vrijeđanjem, ismijavanjem drugih kandidata, ili pričanjem viceva, odlučio je da pripijete i narodu.

Tako je Dodik stranačku tribinu u Gacku iskoristio da zaprijeti svima koji na izborima budu glasali za kandidate Saveza za pobjedu.

- Nemojte slučajno da neko ko je zaposlen u Gacku glasa za Govedaricu i SDS. Izbacit ćemo ga s posla - izjavio je Dodik, na što je dobio gromoglasan aplauz i smijeh stranačkih kolega i ostalih prisutnih.

- A vas molim, koga vi vidite da glasa, a da radi, samo mi javite. Ja ću ga izbaciti, ne treba vam. Direktore, nemoj mi biti tako ozbiljan, ja ti otvoreno kažem, neću da ih gledam tamo - dodao je Dodik.

Na bini je uz Dodika stajala i aktuelna premijerka RS-a Željka Cvijanović.



PRAVO
MJESTO
ZA VAŠU
REKLAMU



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Dodik: Nisam spreman da djelujem protiv Dejtona i Ustava

Politika Autor: Tanjug 27.09.2018. 08:41

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RAT PROTIVKANDIDATA U RS-U

Govedarica: Ne može ustaška unuka biti predsjednica, Cvijanović: Ti si dezertjer i kukavica

Objavljeno: 15.09.2018. u 19:10

Kandidat SDS-a za predsjednika Republike Srpske Vukota Govedarica rekao je da Željka Cvijanović ne može biti na čelu ovog entiteta jer je "ustaška unuka"



Najnovije Najčitanije

INZKO U NEW YORKU

Visoki predstavnik u BiH podnosi izvještaj Vijeću sigurnosti UN-a

MUP HNK

U Mostaru "digli" dva "golfa", jedan naden zapaljen za drugim se traži

NAKON DVA I PO MJESECA

Novinar Vladimir Kovačević ne vjeruje da će se ikada otkriti nalogodavci

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Trener Dynama objasnio zašto je Duljević ostao na klupi

LIGA PRVAKA

Barca večeras u Milanu, PSG u grotu San Paola



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Pretraga

BIH • REGION • SVIJET • SPORT • KULTURA I ZABAVA • EKONOMIJA • KOLUMNJE • BLOGOVI • RADIO BUKA • BUKA TV • BUKA KARIKATURE • BUKA STRIPOVI

BiH / Buka desk / Izbori 2018

Kampanja i političari: Kako je izgledao prvi dan na društvenim mrežama

Predizborna kampanja zvanično je počela jučer, a kandidati i kandidatkinje na društvenim mrežama postali su veoma aktivni.

RADIO SARAJEVO / 08. Septembar 2018

PODIJELI: f t



Buka preporuka

BANJALUKA / Više od dva mjeseca pokušaja ubistva novinara Vlasta Kovačevića: Novinari poručuju Borićemo se za naša prava
Buka Desk | Maja Isović Dobrijevi

Desk / Rambo Amadeus gostuj Sarajevu i u Bihacu: Dobra svir humanitarno sakupljanje odjeće za migrante

LIST OF MONITORED MEDIA OUTLETS

	Print media
1	Oslobođenje
2	Dnevni avaz
3	Dnevni list
4	Nezavisne novine
5	Večernji list
	Portals
1	Klix
2	Srpskainfo
3	Buka
4	Faktor.ba
5	Stav
6	Dnevnik
7	Bljesak
8	Radiosarajevo
9	Vijesti.ba
10	Frontal RS
	Electronic media
1	BHT
2	BHR1
3	FTV
4	Radio Federacije
5	RTRS
6	Radio RS
7	BN
8	ATV
9	Hayat
10	TV1
11	Radio Brčko District

12	RTV USK
13	K3
14	TV SA
15	Naša TV

LIST OF POLITICAL SUBJECTS

Political parties: SNSD, DNS, SP, SDS, PDP, NDP,SDA, SBB, SDP, DF, NS, HDZ, HDZ 1990, Ujedinjena Srpska, Pokret Uspješna Srpska – dr Zlatko Maksimović, Pokret Restart Srpska, Nezavisni blok.

Independent candidates: Ćamil Duraković, Mladen Nikolić, Aleksandar Đorić, Ivana Bubić, Dragica Josipović, Igor Matić, Anđelko Menjić, Darko Miletić, Igor Gašević, Muhamed Viteškić, Igor Jovanović, Željka Mičić, Obrad Lalić, Jovan Stevanović, Duško Košpić, Vojin Pavlović, Slobodan Pavlović, Emir Kaldžo, Bojan Era, Faris Karić, Dragomir Pandurević, Burim Dećaj, Marko Zagorac, Dino Marić, Željko Perić, Dobrislav Todić, Anto Kasalo, Edin Baščaušević, Vidoje Maslač, Velimir Glibić, Slavko Dragičević, Gordana Kršić, Petar Radić, Slavko Sekulić.

Candidates for individual positions: Šefik Džaferović, Denis Bećirović, Dragan Čović, Diana Zelenika, Fahrudin Radončić, Senad Šepić, Mladen Ivanić, Milorad Dodik, Željko Komšić, Željka Cvijanović, Boriša Faletar, Vukota Govedarica, Ćamil Duraković, Ramiz Salkić, Admir Čavka, Josip Jerković.

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PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST PRELIMINARY REPORT



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