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Project: Free media for free society
Research and survey topic: Local media – quality of media contents and information for citizens, plurality opinions and diversity of information sources

MONITORING OF LOCAL MEDIA CONTENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

FINAL RESULTS REPORT

According to collected monitoring information, the report was made by prof. Dr. Lejla Turcilo



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Sarajevo, October 2020/2021

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT AND RESEARCH AND SURVEY RESULTS

Investigative project “Monitoring of local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina” is purposed and aimed to acquire new scientific cognitions, based on empirical evidence, in regard with whether and to what extent local media (printed press, electronic and online media) represent public interests, that is, whether these fulfil social role of local media organs. The research and survey covers the topics and themes that local media deal with; whether they investigate these topics through authors’ works or whether they present them publically, based on press releases issued by local media and other social parties involved, including the information on how many sources they use in their reports and how these sources are treated (is everyone equal or are there any preferences) and to what extent is plurality opinion represented in contents they release.

During the initial investigation stage (2020) 617 contents from 14 local media houses (four printed press, ten TV stations, eleven radio stations and nine internet web sites) were subjects to monitoring process. The investigation results outlined the following:

- Local media mostly deal with local politics, sharing the views by local officials and other political parties in local communities
- Themes and topics considered as public interests do exist in local media, although the ways these issues and topics are treated, they do not help the public to receive quality - based information accordingly
- Local media mostly base their contents on limited number of sources, that is, they base them on the number of collocutors involved (mostly one or eventually two of them are included)
- In cases where media have more collocutors in their contents, these collocutors usually share the same views and express consensus about given themes, topics, issues or questions that are subjects to analysis and there is no juxtaposition between the collocutors
- Collocutors involved in discussions are commonly equal, however the percentage of contents where, by using a non – selective or *copy – paste* methods (being shared by local officials) is not to be underestimated, that is, local official authorities press releases. This leaves an impression that local media are almost responsible for sharing the contents that local officials reveal and release in public
- Naturally, there are exceptions in terms of affirmative and positive samples of local media which are responsible and have higher level of professionalism, in regard with others, but generally we could say that, in terms of plurality opinions, obeying and fulfilling public interests, internet web sites take the lowest possible position



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According to research and survey results, recommendations for media houses are created in specific way and these relate to more investigative stories (in regard with themes and topics) in respect with general public interest (local infrastructure (utilities), public education and health, environment and culture) and again, they relate to less sharing of views by local officials, regarding current affairs, including the providing of large number of authors' contents in media, based on larger number of sources, where different views and opinions are presented, that is, where plurality opinions are presented.

During the second research and survey stage (2021), 331 contents from 20 local media houses (three printed press, seven TV stations, seven radio stations and three internet web sites) were subjects to monitoring process. The research and survey results outlined the following:

- Local media deal with local politics (during the second stage) sharing the views by local officials and other political parties in local communities; second topics and themes that they deal with include public health (which displays a change compared to 2020), but this is mostly related to sharing the number of infected, vaccinated and deceased people during the COVID – 19 pandemics, and is less related to common public health issues
- Second research and survey stage confirm that issues and topics (considered as public interests) do exist in local media, although the ways these issues and topics are treated, do not help the public to receive quality – based information accordingly
- This research and survey stage also proves that local media mostly base their contents on three or more than three collocutors, so we may confirm the thesis derived from first research and survey stage, defining that local media mostly base their contents on a limited number of sources, that is, they base it on a limited number of collocutors (mostly one or eventually two collocutors).
- When media have more collocutors as part of their contents, these collocutors commonly agree on and share the same views about given themes, topics, issues or questions that are subjects to analysis and there is no juxtaposition between collocutors, which was the case during first research and survey stage
- Collocutors involved in discussions are commonly equal and during the second research and survey stage and this displayed certain progress comparing to initial research and survey stage



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Based on longitudinal analysis, that is, according to comparisons of the two monitoring processes, we may conclude the following:

- Unfortunately, local media failed to place public interest as their top priority, because the percentage of themes and topics, considered as public interest, has decreased
- More attention is paid, in relation with public education and health, culture and environmental protection issues, however more attention is also paid to public health issues, mostly due to pandemic, although this also concerns summarised and rough pandemic coverage, rather than genuine and quality – based reporting, with the purpose of satisfying the necessity of information and in regard with public enquiries that would help them obtain better orientation in the communities they live in. Therefore, we may say that, as far as treating certain themes and topics is concerned, thematic and investigative stories have not just emerged, instead we faced rather mere “coverage” of daily affairs.
- Stories involve more collocutors then during the initial investigation stage, but due to the fact that collocutors are not selected (pursuant to their diversity and gender balanced basis) and mutually share different views and opinions (nor had those opinions ever confronted in public space), we might say that this recommendation was not fully applied either, (including the recommendation that would enable plurality opinions, in a sense that journalists would not create (*on a priori* basis) their views and approach specific subject they have been reporting on), so consequently, their pre – defined attitude shall not comprise of “creating and tailoring” of opposed collocutors views. Instead, they would rather consult different collocutors and in objective way; display their arguments too and all to the benefit of public interests.
- *Copy – paste* method as dominant local media approach is still present



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METHODOLOGIC INVESTIGATION FRAMEWORK

Introductory remarks

Quality informing is crucial for citizens, their lives, but (even more) for their participation within democratic society. In this sense, media responsibility, in regard with ensuring and enabling reliable, checked, accurate and unbiased information, is crucial in every society; particularly in societies with relatively low level of political culture, democratic tradition and media literacy, in which manipulative media power emerges, along with associated elite on large level.

Ever since the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have been witnessing all these processes; from low political culture level, that has been manifested publicly (and among other things), including an increased scope of hate speech, particularly during the pre – election campaign (see monitoring of media during the election campaigns, available at: <http://www.bhnovinari.ba>), all the way to low media literacy level (see reports regarding media literacy and research and survey results conducted by the Institute for Social Research of Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN), available at <http://www.fpn.unsa.ba>).

Researches and surveys also show that close ties between media entrepreneurs and political and economy powerful figures (see research on media scene in BiH, available at <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQtM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDYyUy&rID=Mzc5NDM3>), provides limited space for alternative views and opinions in BiH media houses (see “Media and shrinking space in BiH; silenced alternative voices”, available at <https://ba.boell.org/bs/2017/12/06/mediji-i-shrinking-space-u-bih-utisani-alternativni-glasovi>), including the manipulation with facts and an increased number of false news in media, as a result of internal problems that journalists have been facing in their editing offices (poor and inadequate working status disputable and problematic editing policies biased towards political and powerful figures, Etc), and outer pressures (threats, censures, auto censures, Etc). (See “Alternative facts and post – truth in BiH: who (truly) creates media agenda”, available at https://safejournalists.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ko-stvarno-kreira-agendu-medija_BHS.pdf).

All of the above listed problems of public and media sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly make negative impact on public rights to be provided with quality – based information. Public interest is changed with particular interests of powerful figures that are supported by media, whose actions and deeds are also justified and plurality opinion is, in great number of media houses, replaced with like – minded attitudes, pursuant to media agenda and those that have ties with such media houses.

What is the role of local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the processes of quality – based public informing and to what extent they may contribute in creating diverse information, including opinions, views and available sources/aspects for citizens of BiH?



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In theory, local media should act as bounding element between local governing officials and citizens and should also appear as forum by which citizens may address problems and questions to their local communities, so these problems and question could eventually be solved.

In practice, there are 81 local public broadcasters in BiH (12 TV stations, 62 radio stations and seven TV stations that broadcast through other electronic and communication networks) (their work and their relationship towards public interest can be seen in “Public local media between public interest and financial dependence” publication available at https://media.ba/sites/default/files/javni_lokalni_mediji_izmedu_javnog_interesa_i_finansijske_ovisnosti_final_za_stampu.pdf). It actually concerns municipal, city, town and cantonal broadcasters. However, apart from these, there are vast numbers of internet web sites that deal with questions related to certain local communities, where some of them are actually supported and/or partially financed by local governing officials. How much do actually these media satisfy and fulfil public and citizens needs to get informed, in terms of quality – based, unbiased information and how much space do they dispose of, that is, to what extent they provide space to promiscuous and varied opinions and views, including parties involved, themes and topics included, are just some of many questions that this research and survey shall attempt to reply and respond to.

Research and survey problems

Research and survey problems relate to quality of media contents that local media create and place, that is, they relate to professional level of local media including pluralism and promiscuous and varied opinions and views that are through them shared around. In its widest sense, research and survey problems relate to the questions on how much local media actually work for public interests (benefits) and whether the out – media braid and combination of circumstances in local communities (ties, bounds and/or financial dependability from local governing officials, pressures imposed by powerful local figures Etc) and local media inner problems (sub – capacity in terms of human and technical resources, financial dependability problems, educational degree and level and motivation of employees Etc), altogether make an impact and also influence the quality of information that general public is provided with.

Research and survey subject

Research and survey subject, in its wide meaning, is actually plurality opinion, views and information in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As far as its narrow sense is concerned, these are media contents that include themes and topics as important to local communities, their objectiveness, diversity and quality.

These media contents have been contextualised into wider communication framework in local communities, with the purpose of defining and determining their contribution, but also in providing general public with quality – based informing.



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Research and survey questions

Instead of establishing classic general and devastating hypothesis, we decided to develop wide and basic investigative questions in this particular research and survey report, and these should serve as the framework for quantitative and qualitative media contents analysis, including media context of local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These investigative questions relate to the following:

- Obeying professional standards in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Creating contents in local media, according to professional principles of unbiased views and plurality opinions
- Quality of local media reporting regarding the topics and themes considered as general public interests

Scientific and social research goals

General goal of this research and survey is to ensure and provide the implementation of standards by Press Council of BiH and Communication Regulatory Agency to local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and also, to promote media pluralism and work, aimed to public interests in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Scientific goal of this research and survey, by applying quantitative and qualitative method of content analysis, and by including discourse and contextual analysis, is to obtain objective indicators regarding quality - based of information, plurality opinion, promiscuous and varied sources in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to outline and point out to specific causes and consequences of local media work in public and in local communities.

Social goal of this research and survey, by alluding to level of professional standard obeying and local media principles, is to appeal to increasing professional and quality of journalists' reports in local communities, and also to provide recommendation for media themselves, but also to local governing officials, civil society and citizens in local communities, in regard with the ways upon which they can make an impact in terms of raising professional level and media diversity and plurality. Recommendations for media shall be developed during the first research and survey stage, while the recommendation for other parties involved shall be developed during second research and survey stage.

Specific goals of this research and survey include the following:

- Analyse to what degree public interests reflect in local media contents, throughout the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regarding the topics and themes that are subjects to reporting (local politics, infrastructure (utilities), economy and employment, public education and health, culture, art, Etc.
- Analyse to what extent do local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina contain different information sources and how they are treated respectively (are some of them privileged in regard with others)
- Analyse to what extent local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina contain different opinions and views, regarding the topics and themes that are subjects to reporting, including to what degree journalists appear unbiased in their sharing



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- Draft and create recommendations for media, local governing officials, civil society parties and citizens regarding the promotion of pluralism and diversity in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Provide initial foundations concerning the development plans regarding the education of journalists and editors in local media houses required for professional reporting, concerning public interests in local communities and also to determine and define whether the implemented education may contribute in raising the level of professionalism and pluralism in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Research and survey methods

Research and survey is to a certain point **longitudinal**, taking into consideration that in October 2020, its first stage was completed (whose results we shall present in this report).

In September 2021, yet another monitoring of media contents was conducted, including the interviews with local media journalists with the purpose of determining whether the presentation of investigative results from research and survey initial (first) stage and set of recommendations and education for journalists in local media, has raised the level of professionalism and contents pluralism of local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, second research and survey stage served as test or control for corrections of recommendations.

Quantitative content analysis is used in both, initial (first) and second research and survey stage, with the purpose of collecting statistic indicators about content pluralism in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while during the second stage, apart from quantitative content analysis, applied, implemented and **qualitative media content analysis**, the aim was to gain contextual insight into samples and consequences on media reporting in local communities.

Inductive method is used in both, initial (first) and second research and survey stage, regarding the conclusions about trends in reporting of local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Techniques on collecting information included media monitoring and **interviews** with journalists of local media.

Variables

Variables used in **code list for media monitoring** in both stages include the following:

- Number of contents that reflect promiscuity and varied of themes in local media
- Number of contents with represented themes regarding local communities' public interests in regard to number of contents about other questions and issues
- Number of collocutors regarding contents broadcasted by local media
- Media approach about different collocutors (equal towards all or biased towards some of them)
- In case of obvious side taking, the parties have a preferential status in media contents (whether these include local politicians, business powerful figures, civil society representatives, analysts, citizens, Etc.)



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- Number of contents containing different/oppositional views, opinions and attitudes about certain questions, in regard with the number of contents where views, opinion and attitudes are conformed
- Number of contents that prefer authors' work of journalists, regarding *copy – paste* method

Sample/corpus

Monitoring sample includes the following:

- During the initial (first) stage, 34 local Bosnian media houses (four printed, eleven radio stations, ten TV stations and nine online internet web sites) both under public and private ownership (see attached list of media houses)
- During the second stage, 20 local Bosnian media (three printed, seven radio stations, seven TV stations and three online internet web sites), both under public and private ownership

Local media imply and comprehend those that are, both thematically and according to their range and in sense of general public, orientated and biased towards specific local communities, that is, media houses that are fundamentally established with the purpose of providing local community public with information (incusing municipality and cantons), in regard with questions, topics, themes and issues concerning public interest, that is, those that are significant for those local communities.

Monitoring corpus includes articles and texts from printed press and posts from internet web sites and news from radio or television stations outlined in sample (see attached list of media houses). Corps also includes texts from printed press and internet web sites, as well as all reports/stories from radio and TV station news. Number of contents included in research and survey corpus is 617 (during the initial (first) stage and 331 during second stage (948 contents in total).

Research and survey time and place

Research and survey is conducted in local media that operate in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of BiH, Republic of Srpska and Brcko District) on 29 September 2020 (initial/first stage) and 29 September 2021 (second stage).



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INITIAL/FIRST RESEARCH AND SURVEY STAGE

(Monitoring on 29 September 2020)

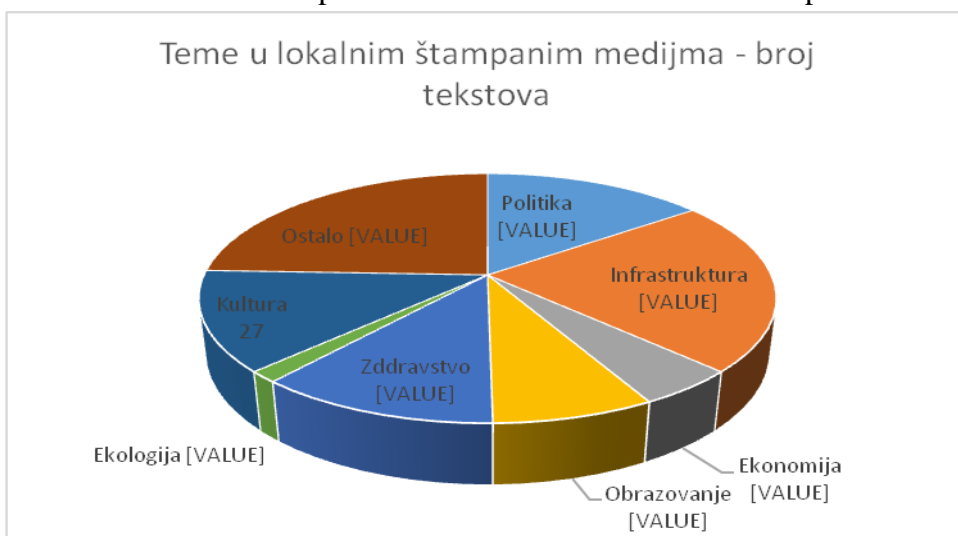


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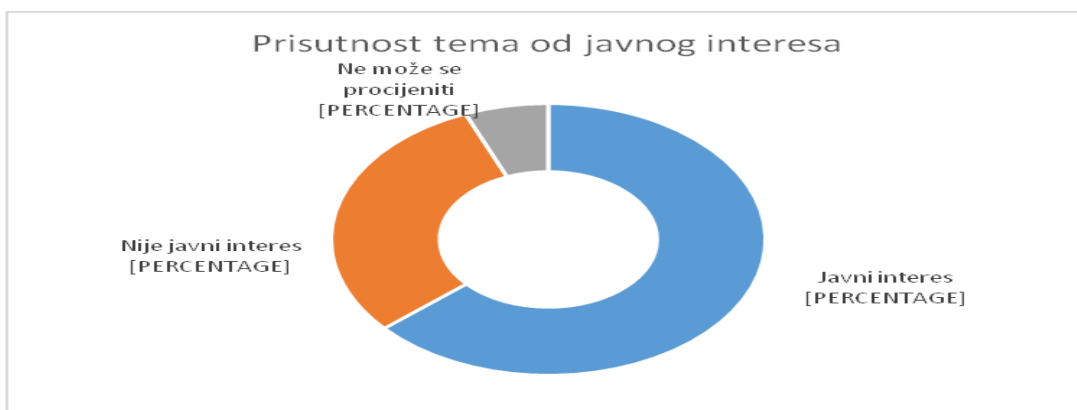


RESERACH AND SURVEY RESULTS – MONITORING RESULTS – 1st RESERACH AND SURVEY STAGE – PRINTED PRESS (MEDIA)

209 articles (texts) in total were analysed on four printed media samples. Present topics in printed media are indeed miscellaneous, but we should outline that most numerous topics are those that are not directly tied with local communities, like certain marginal topics, including sport venues and similar events. However, a significant presence of topics and issues from the field of local infrastructure (utilities) development does encourage, including local politics as well. Least number of topics covers the area of environmental protection.



The monitors noticed notable presence of topics considered as public interests, in regard with those that were not: 64 of topics were analysed in local printed media and were considered as general public interests. It shows that local printed media are aware of their work duties for public interests benefits. But, just in any case, there is enough required space in order to increase the contents percentage. As media with most topics concerning general public interest, the monitors outlined Kozarski vijesnik (local media).

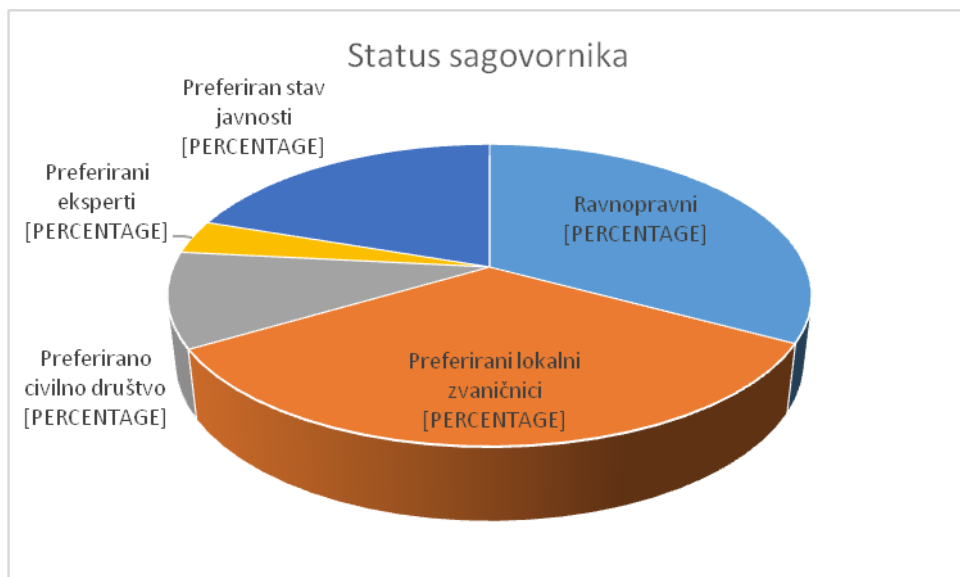
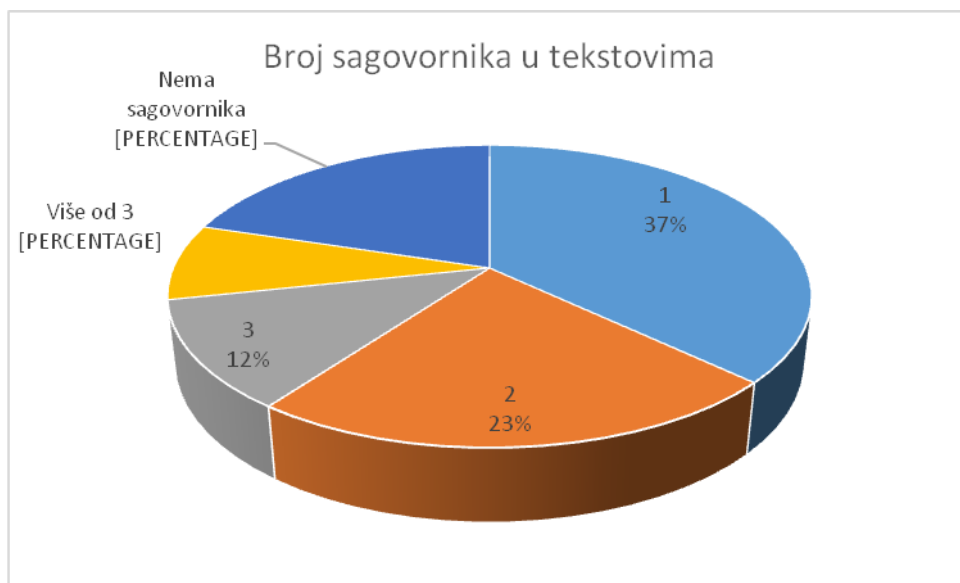




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However, we are concerned about the fact that people working in printed media houses consult very limited number of collocutors (mostly one per text/article), and these collocutors often conform with the hosts, that is, there are not many confronted views and opinions in texts/articles. Also, there is almost equal number of texts, where preferred local governing officials are involved and those where collocutors are on equal level, but certainly there is a very limited number of texts with preferred views by experts, civil society and similar. As media with highest percentage of equal collocutors, the monitor outlined Semberske novine.

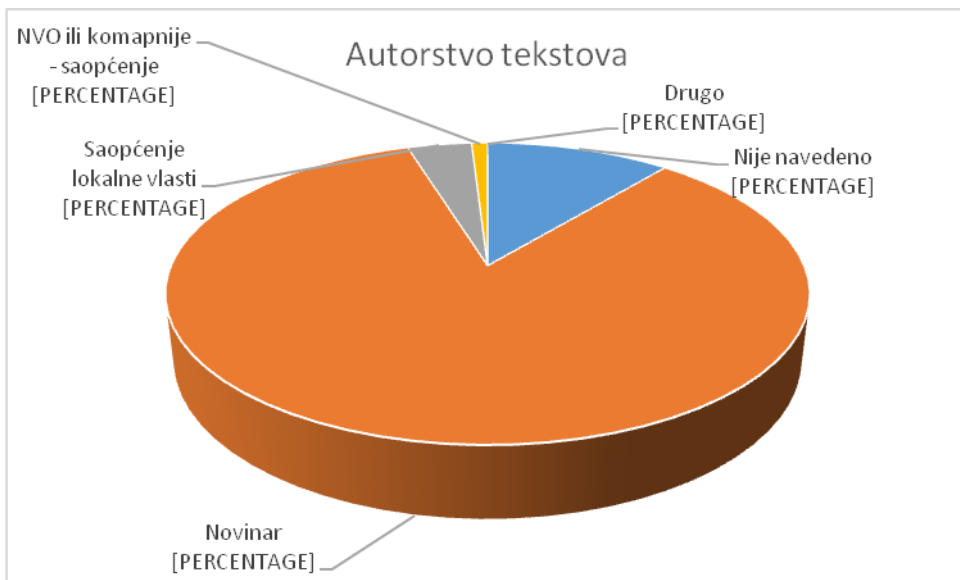




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Journalists mostly sign published texts/articles and journalism, in this specific context, is transparent and clearly highlighted. Nevertheless, local governing official press releases are often used as sources in published texts/articles signed by authors.



As key advantages of local printed media, we may mention the presence of various topics and issues, considered as public interests and as crucial disadvantages we may indicate the absence of significant number of collocutors. In texts where more collectors are present, plurality opinion and local governing official preferring is also on a lower level.



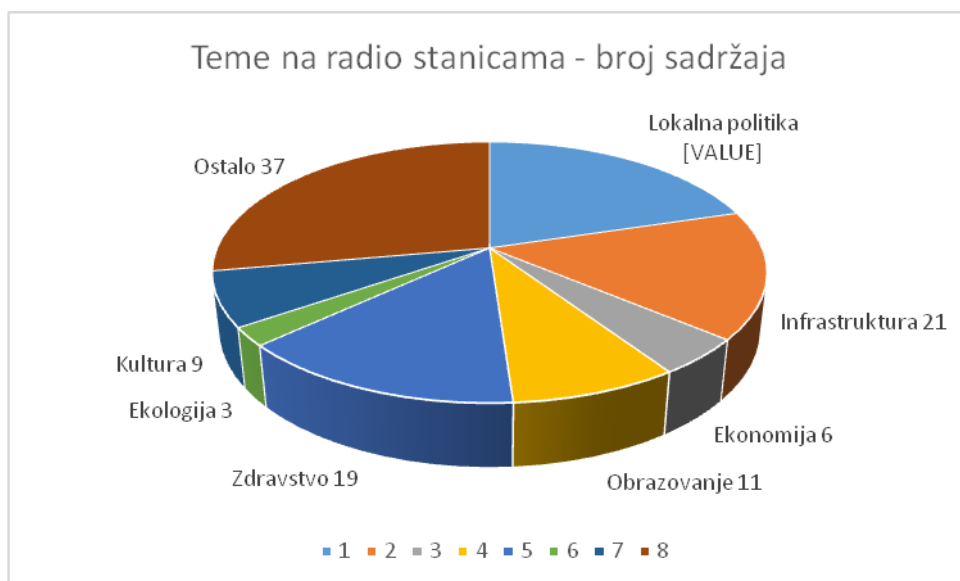
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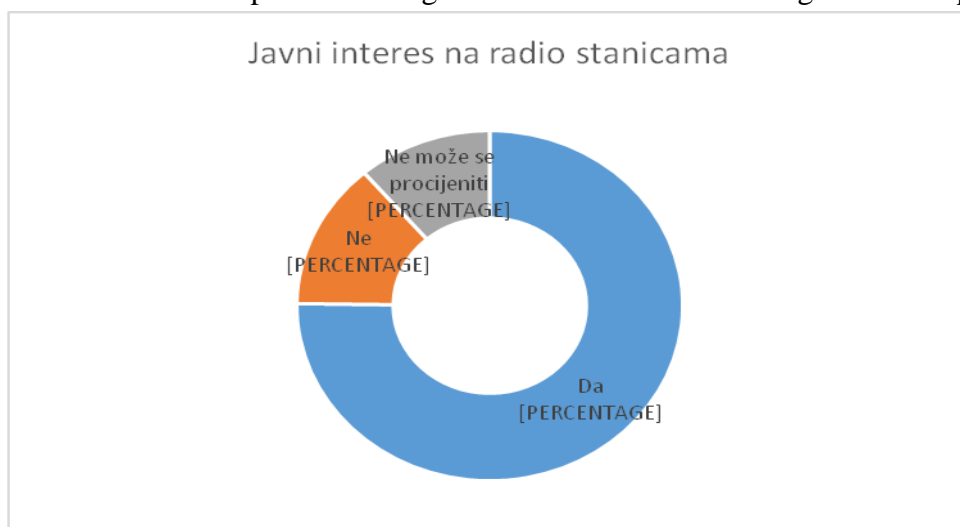
RADIO STATIONS

133 contents in total were analysed on 111 local radio stations.

Topics and themes on radio stations are not so important and as far as those that have direct contacts with local community lives are concerned, most notable topics and themes cover local politics, which means that they share the views, opinions and statements given by local politicians. Radio stations also have least number of topics and issues linked with environmental protection, as well as the field of culture.



The monitors noticed notable presence of topics and themes considered as public interest in regard with topics and themes that are not. Radio stations have larger percentage of topics and themes considered as public interest, regarding local printed media. Radio Konjic, Radio Gradska mreža Mostar and Radio Čapljina were marked by the monitors as media houses with all topics being considered as general public interests.

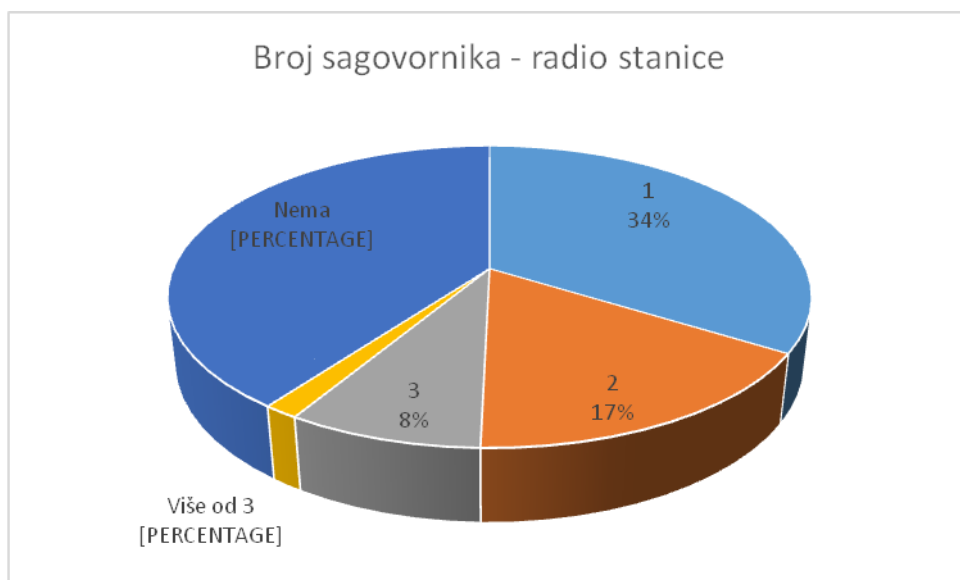




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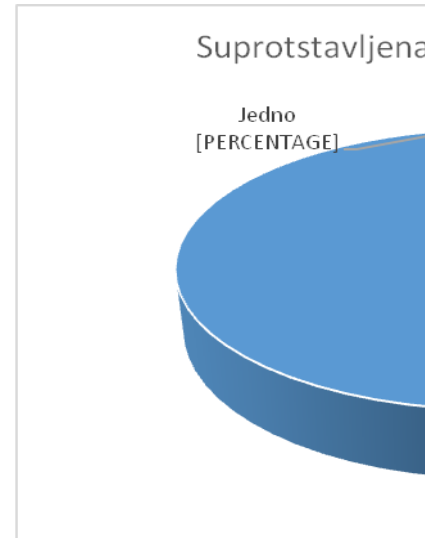
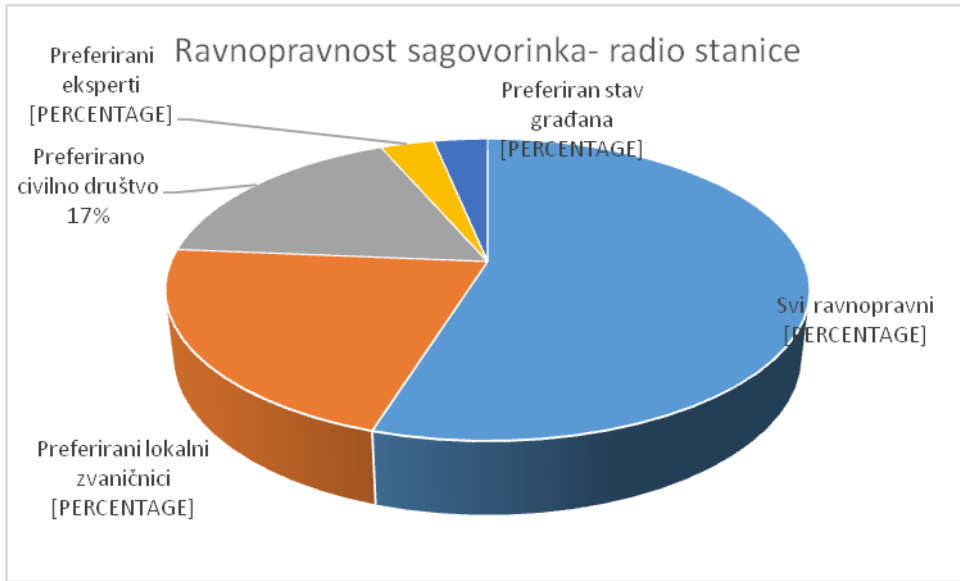
Radio stations contain a significant number of contents without collocutors; instead, they relate to short speaking information read by radio hosts. With contents where collocutors are included in radio stations programs, only one collector is involved and where there is more than one collocutor, they have equal status, in terms of duration of their statements, as well as the fact that different collocutors are selected accordingly. However, this also concerns conformation, rather than opposed views and opinions by collocutors, that is, dominant tone and narrative of the content itself, which is created by journalists, involves collocutors that confirm such narrative, without notable pluralism in views and opinions that would enable audience to, from different interpretations of certain question, have their own opinion and express their own views. In only one case (out of 133 monitored contents), we noted three opposed views and opinions (this happened in Brcko District radio station).



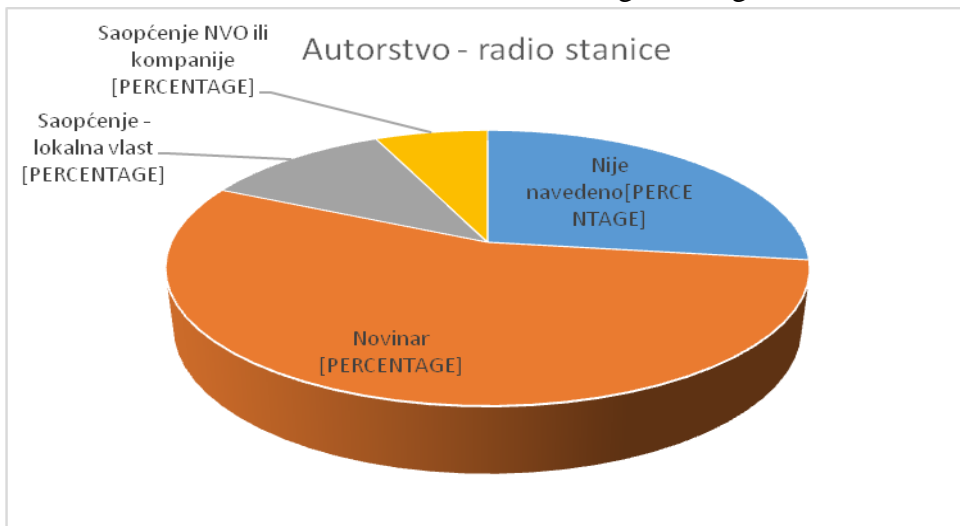
As in the case of printed media, it is important to highlight here that the fact that stories are made with one source only, as well as the fact that single and conformed sources are taken into consideration, if (there are more of them), does not necessarily implies to actual and real emerging of pluralism; instead the ostensible pluralism in media is created, and in reality, no space is left open for citizens, regarding better understanding of events, themes, topics and questions that media has been report about. An increased number of sources in stories, as well as finding collocutors without pre – arranged conformed views and opinions and same relationship towards the topic that is subject to reporting, represent specific items that local radio stations should thoroughly work on.



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Journalists create most reports including field stories on local radio stations. But, taking into consideration, that there are many short information that are being read and broadcasted from the studio, neither their authors nor sources are being mentioned. It is interesting that this source is mentioned only when it comes to local governing press releases, but not in cases, for instance, of some agency news or news shared from other media sources. We might interpret this as radio stations demands to highlight their authors' work, in regard with what they had shared from local governing official sources.





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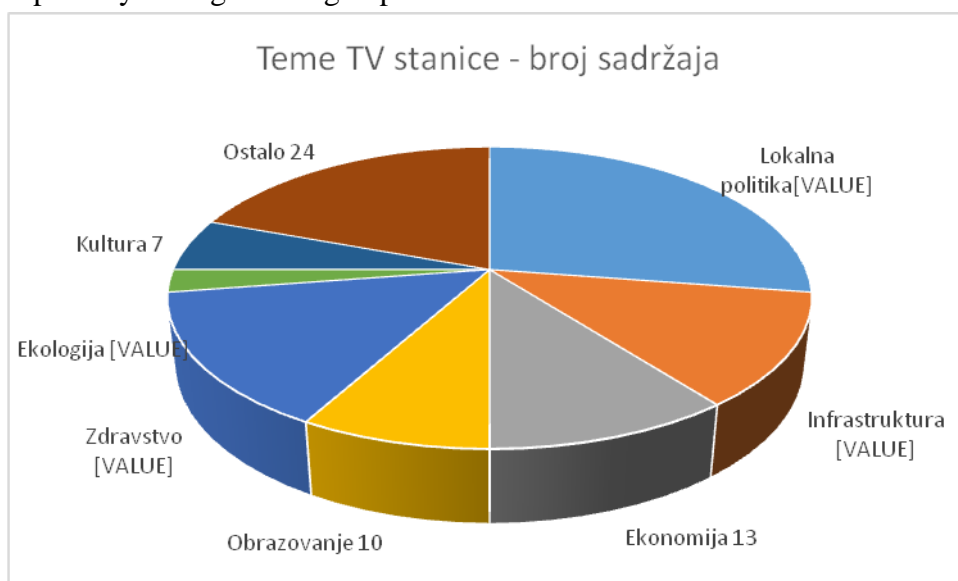


We may outline the presence of various subjects, topics considered as general public interests, as key advantages of local radio stations, as well as local printed media. On the other hand, key disadvantages include, above other things, lack of larger number of collocutors during their programs, and in those contents where more collocutors are present the presence of plurality opinion is reduced and decreased.

TV STATIONS

124 contents were analysed in total on samples taken from ten local TV stations.

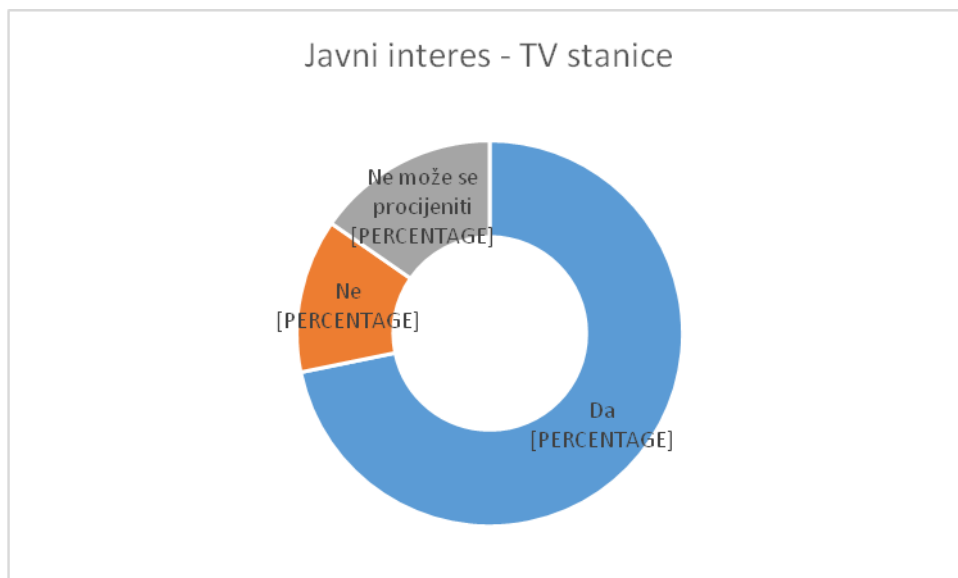
On local TV stations the biggest numbers of topics include those that relate to local politics, that is, those that share views and opinion given by local politicians. Least number of topics on local TV stations concern topics that relate to environmental protection, as well as issues covering the field of culture. We note an insignificant number of topics covering the issue of public health in regard with radio stations and printed media, which could appear as unusual, because we talk about the period of pandemics where everyone would expect that topics themes and issues directly related to public health would have much more time in media, especially during this fragile period.



The monitors on TV stations recorded public interest topics. As media with the greatest number of these specific topics, that is, media with all topics and themes being analysed through sample considered as public interest, the monitors outlined TVSA, as well as RTVTK and RTV USK.

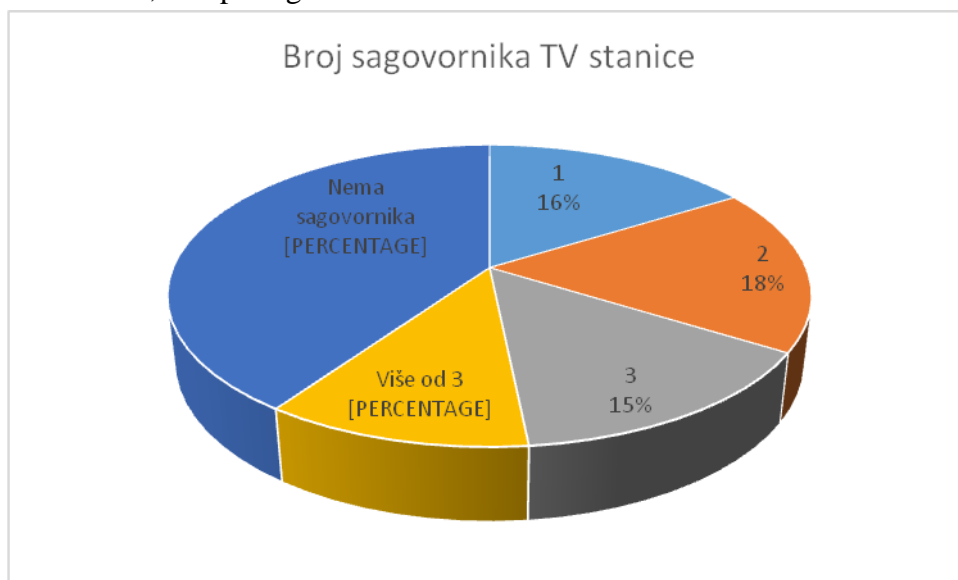


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Significant percentage of contents without collocutors is noted on TV stations too, since we talk here about so – called news being read and broadcasted from the studio. However, what does represent the advantage of TV stations, in regard with printed media and radio stations, is notably greater number of reports with large number of collocutors.

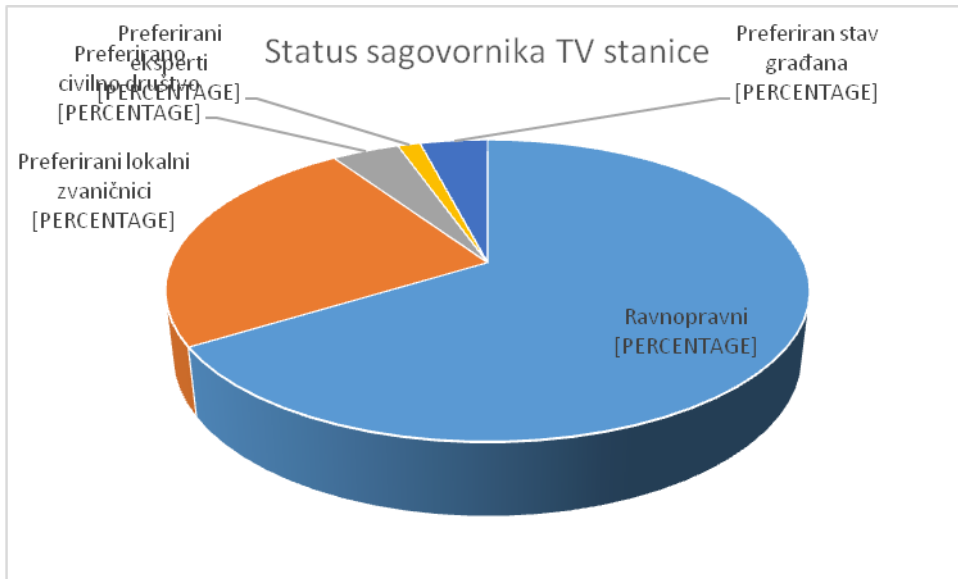
TVSA and ATV from Banja Luka have had greater number of reports with more than three collocutors, comparing to other TV stations.



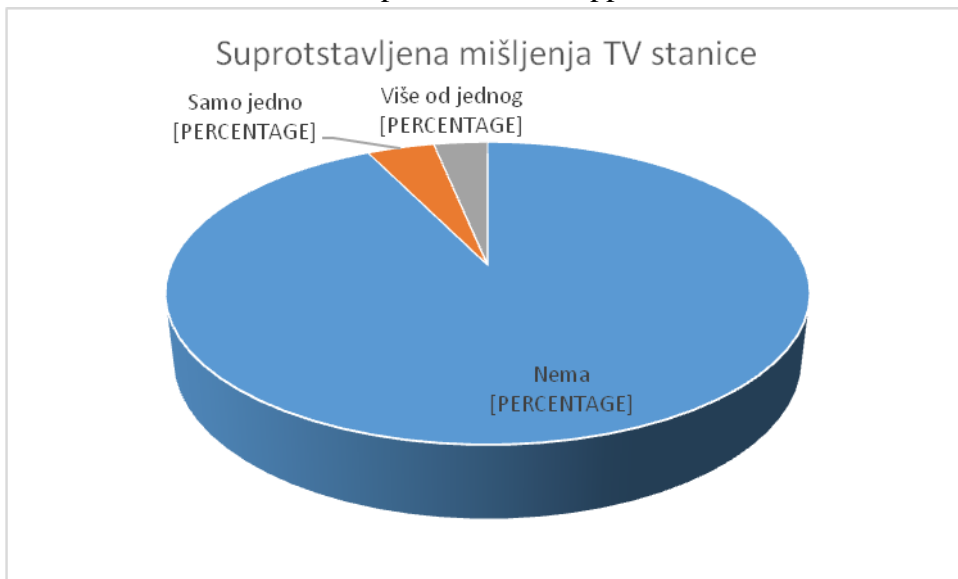
On TV stations, collocutors in most cases have equal status in terms if duration of their statements, as well as the fact that different collocutors are selected. But, with almost three quarters of monitored contents, local officials are preferred. As media with most equal collocutors' statuses, the monitors mentioned RTV TK.



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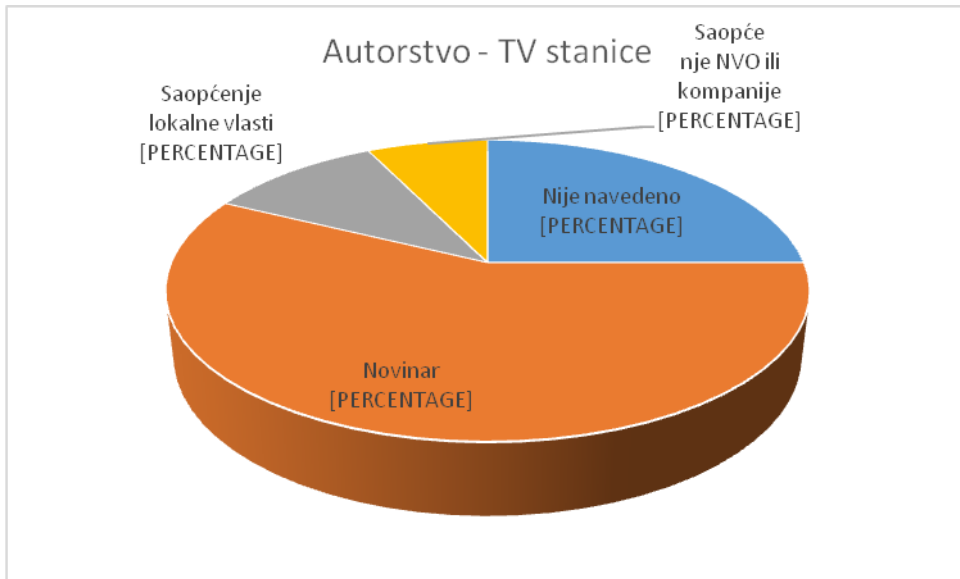
In reports with more collocutors being involved on TV stations, there are, in most cases, conformed – biased collocutors, rather than those that prefer opposed views (between themselves). No TV station had three opposed and confronted views and opinions, and only ATV and TVSA contained reports with two opposed and confronted views and opinions.



In local TV stations, with most reports included, that is, during field stories, authors are actually journalists, while during the news reading period, the authors are not mentioned at all, but in the end of informative shows, editors' names are listed, so viewers may conclude that editors are actually authors (at the same time), even though during the news reading, the sources are not mentioned at all. In 11% of examined contents, local governing officials are mentioned as the source of information. Greatest number of such cases is presented at TVSA, so we may conclude that the insisting in this particular case should have authors' journalists' stories separated and distinct from release sharing, that is, the insisting implies general transparency in that sense.



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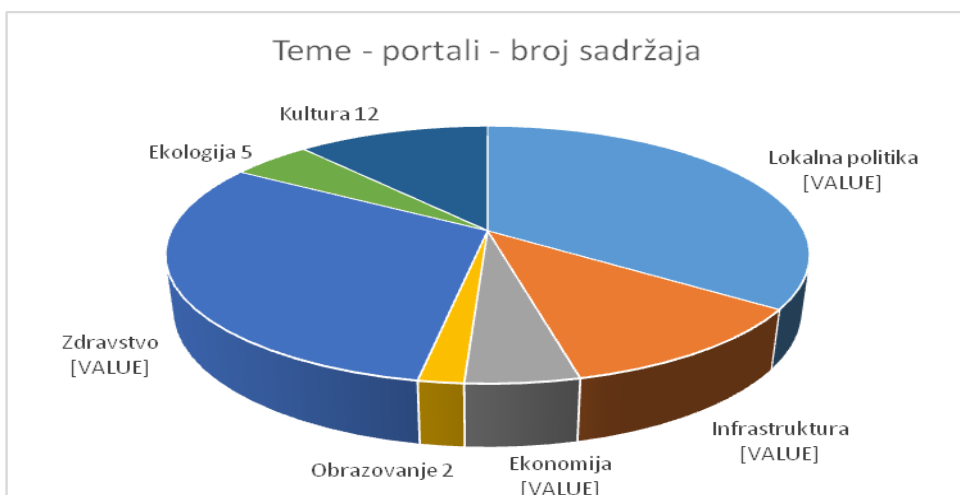


As key advantages of local TV stations, we shall mention the number of collocutors during TV reports, as well as the insisting of some local TV stations, to indicate clearly to the general public audience about what exactly is included into TV authors' work, and local governing officials' shares as press releases. On the other hand, relatively limited number of opposed and confronted opinions and views in reports may be considered as local TV disadvantage.

ONLINE INTERNET WEB SITES (PORTALS)

151 contents in total were analysed on samples of nine local internet web sites.

During the monitoring period, the internet web sites recorded greatest number of contents from the field of local politics and public health. This was, to certain way, expected, because web sites began more and more important for citizens, so local politicians directed their attention to them. Also, a number of public health issues have increased which surely has something to do with COVID – 19 pandemics.

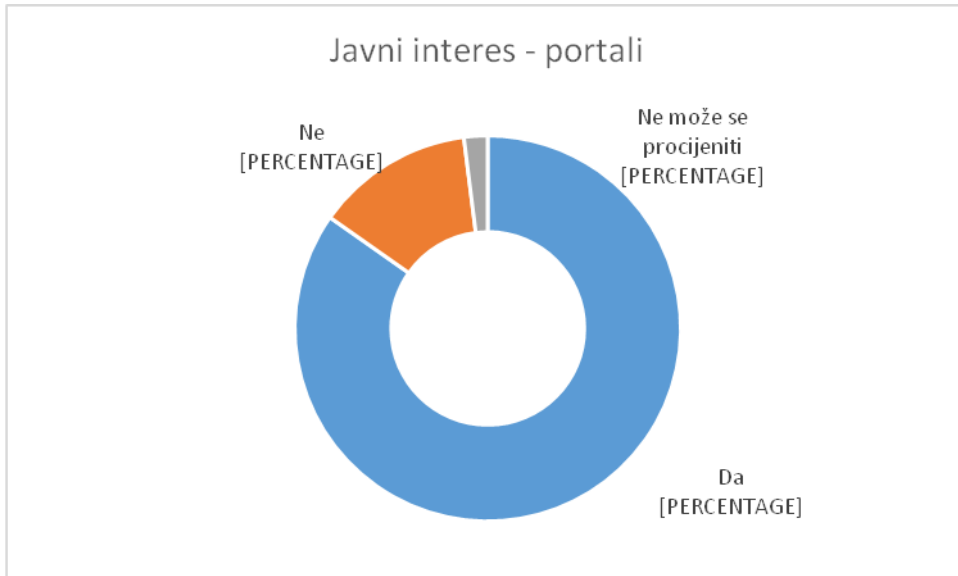




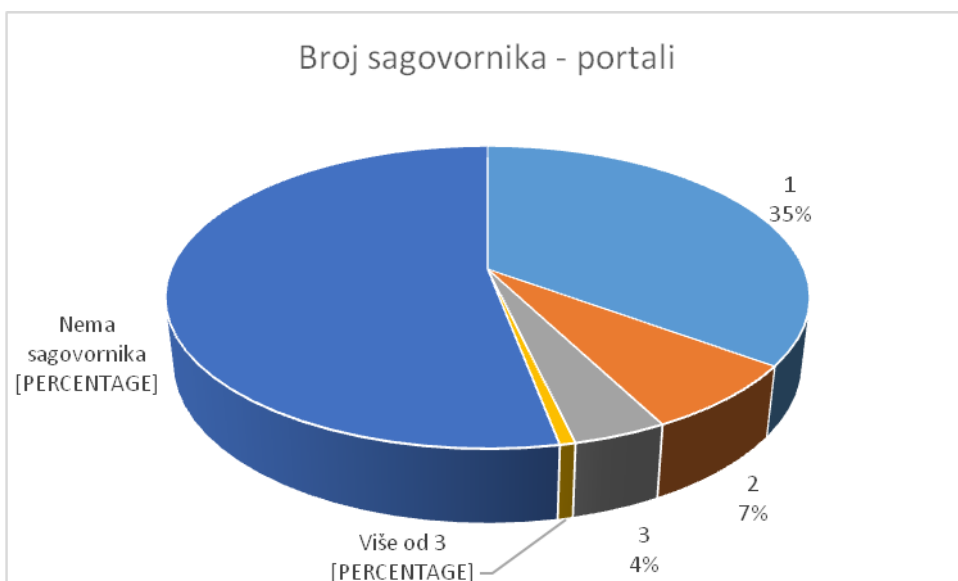
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The monitors also noticed a significant percentage of topics considered as public interest.



Internet web sites contained greatest number of contents without any collocutors. Usually, contents concern incomplete posts, texts (or those that are signed with initials only) where certain comments are inserted and posted, including expressed views (texts by authors or editing offices), analysis of statistics (information) and similar issues. More than one third of contents, posted on internet web sites are based on statements provided by a single collocutor only.

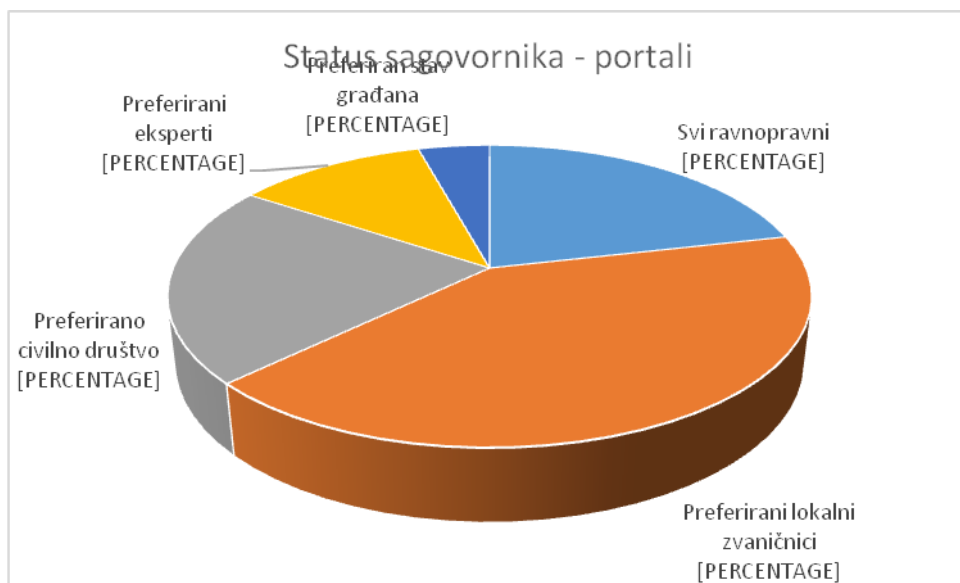




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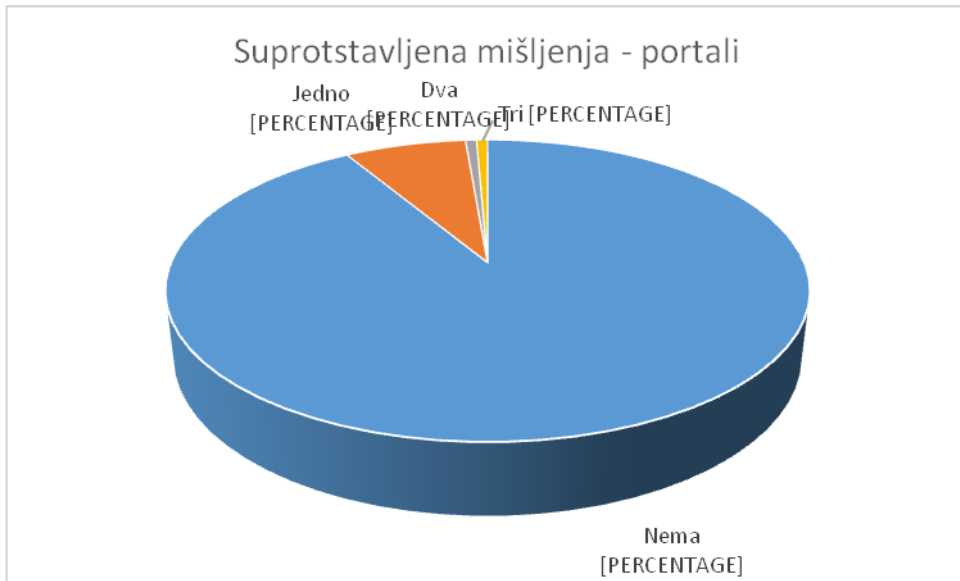
We find greatest share of contents on internet web sites where preferred local officials emerge in regard with other media types. This is, to some extent, expected, having in mind that they deal with local politics more than anyone else, so therefore, in this particular context, they share views and opinions delivered by local governing officials. Opinions and views provided by experts, above anything else, mostly concern topics, themes and issues that relate to public health, including COVID – 19 pandemics.



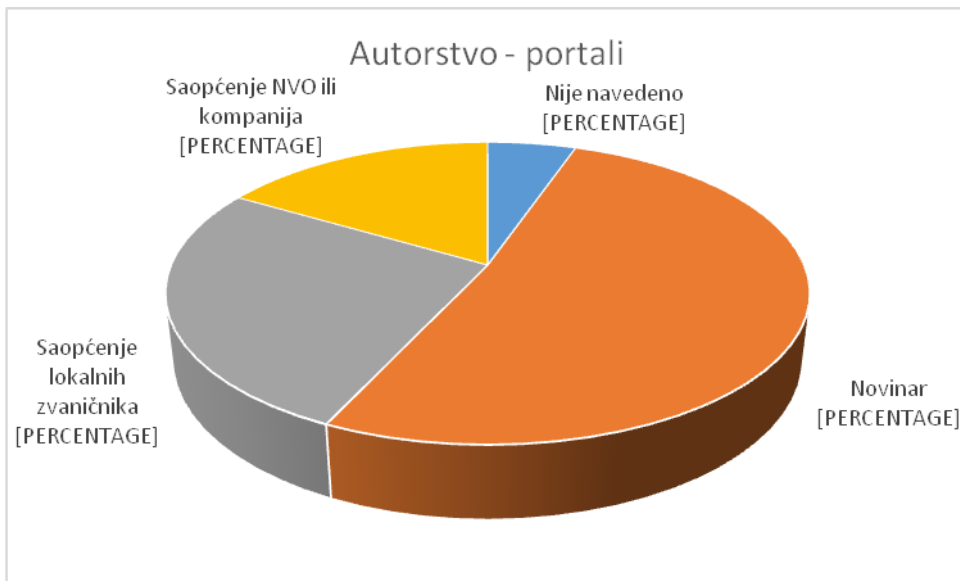
We also noted a vast number of single – directed contents on internet web sites, that is, contents without opposed or confronted views and opinions. There is a very limited number of contents with at least two opposed and confronted views and opinions, and there were no contents with more than three such views and opinions at all. This only proves and indicates that internet web sites are the weakest links on media scene, as far as plurality opinion is concerned.



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In terms of authorship, around one half of texts (post) were signed as journalists' texts, but over one quarter represents shared press releases by local governing officials.



Internet web sites generally, comparing to other media types (printed press media, radio and TV), demonstrated poorer quality in regard with promiscuity and variety of collocutors, including plurality opinions and sustainability from mere sharing of views and opinions delivered by local governing officials, that is, copy – paste method during the work.



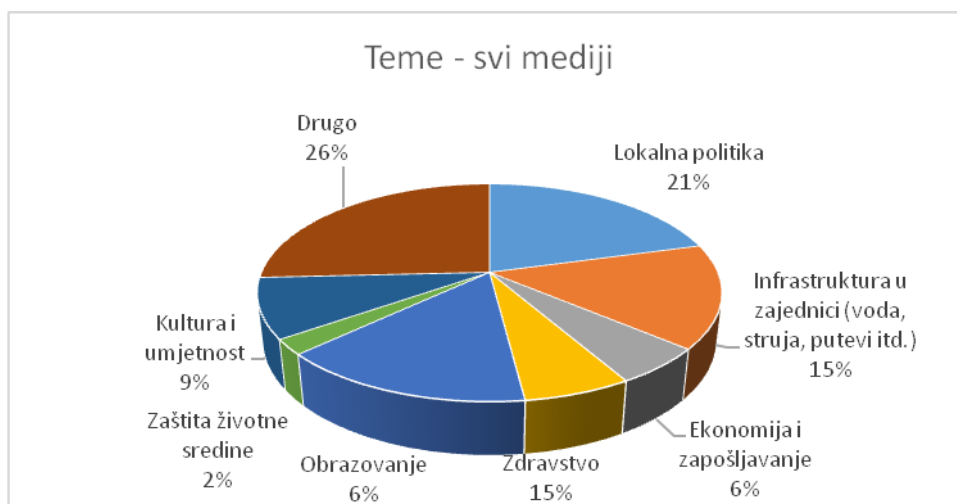
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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AND SURVEY RESULTS AND 1ST STAGE MONITORING CONCLUSIONS

As previously stated, 617 contents in total were analysed in 34 local media.

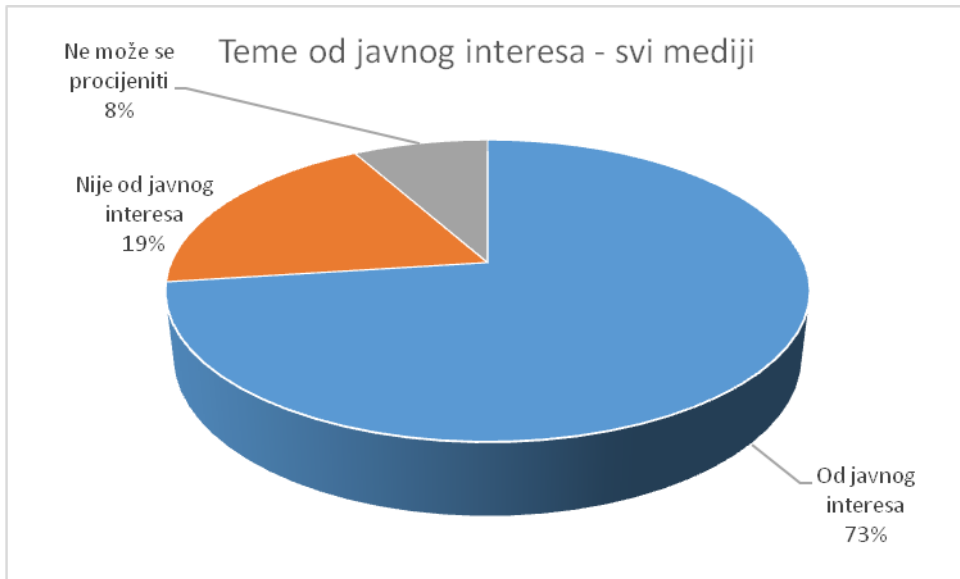
When we analyse summarised research and survey results, we may see that local media deal with subjects that are not strictly bound to local communities, so more than one fourth of contents actually consists of such themes and subjects, which include entertainment, trivial information, and information that are considered interesting for wide audience, but they do not relate to local community. One fifth is made out of themes and subjects that have common ground with local politics and these mostly regard to sharing of views and political statements delivered by local officials and other involved local political entities and parties. This only confirms that there is plenty of space for advancement of local media work and their genuine placing into local community functions and its needs.



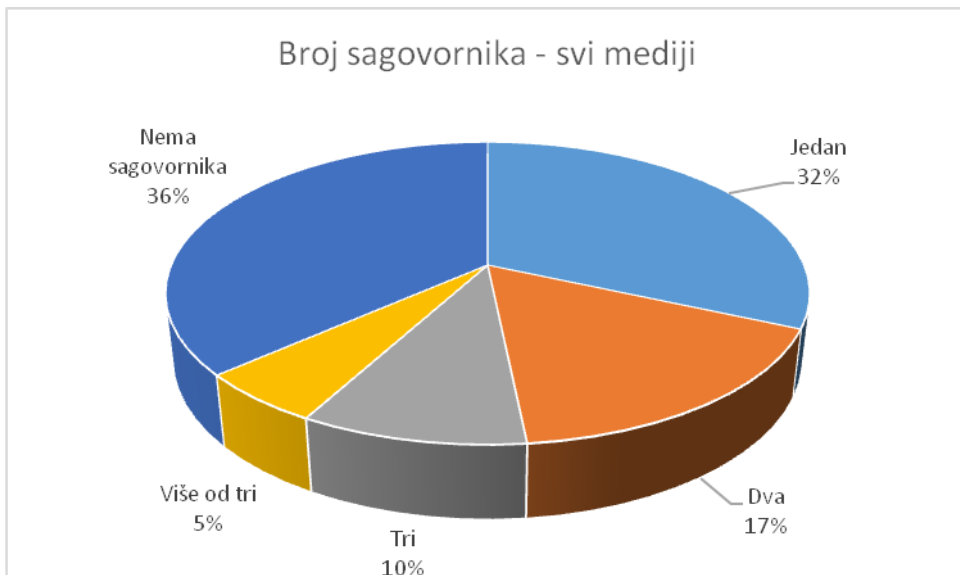
With local themes and subjects, during the selection of themes that shall be subject to reporting. Public interest is present but this interest is neglected during the processing of themes.



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Selection of collocutors in media displays simplicity in reporting. Namely, more than one third of contents have no collocutors, instead; it concerns the news that media take from agencies, sharing other media posts, reviews by journalists regarding certain topics, sharing statutes from social media and similar. One third of contents have one source only, that is, it has one collocutor. This seems as rather concerning information that only confirms internal approach of themes, topics and subjects, which is, reporting where plurality opinion is not accomplished by stories, including argument and evidence confrontation.

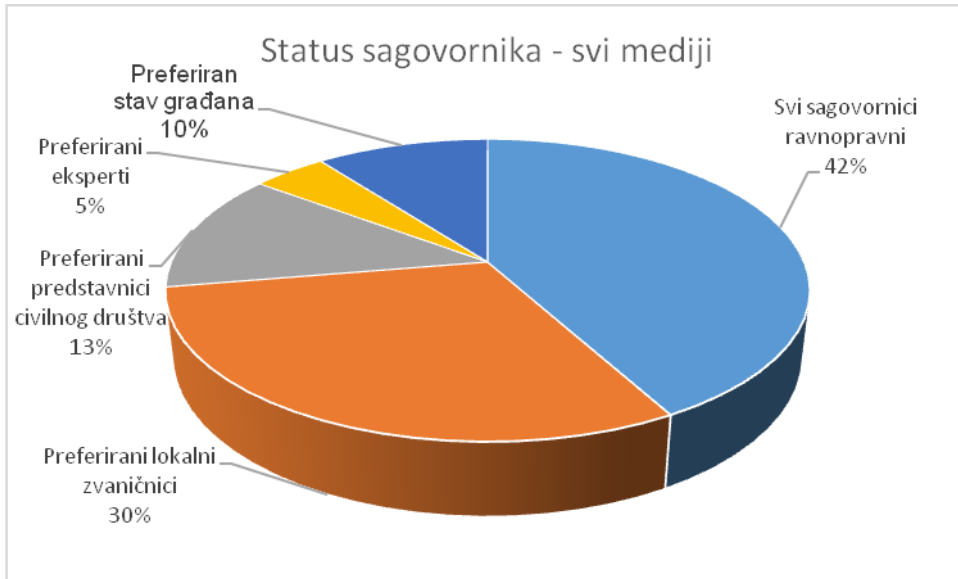




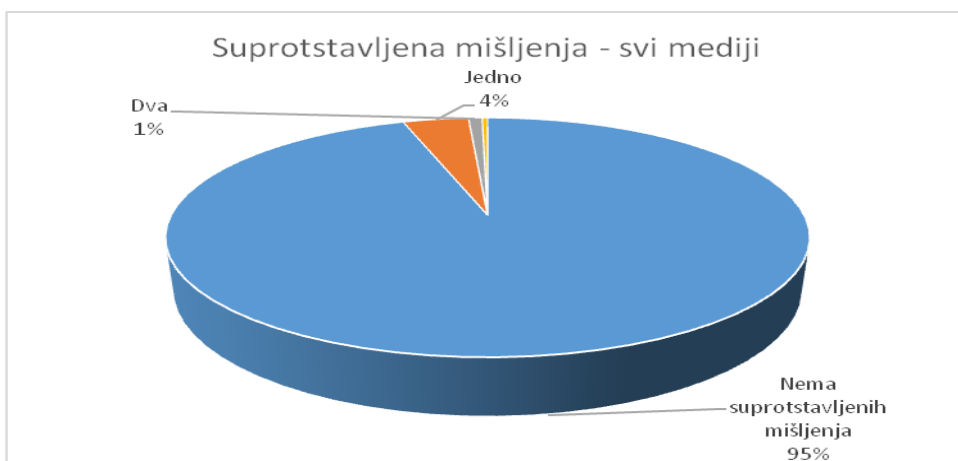
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In cases when two or more than two collocutors are involved, media usually provide them with equal space, but we note one third of contents with preferred local politicians. Also, we see reduced media interest for civil society representatives and experts which should be changed in future, because it is them that can provide public with help in order to have better understanding of processes and phenomenon where media report and review these from different perspective and not just from local politics point of view.



What is quintessential and what seemed to be crucial problem that was proved by research and survey, is the fact that in 95% percent of cases there were no confronted and opposed views and opinions. Therefore, when different collocutors are involved, they are mostly conformed about certain subject and theme, which is the question following the revealing of unified views, since there is no argument – based confrontations. This is an absolute indicator of pluralism absence in local media.

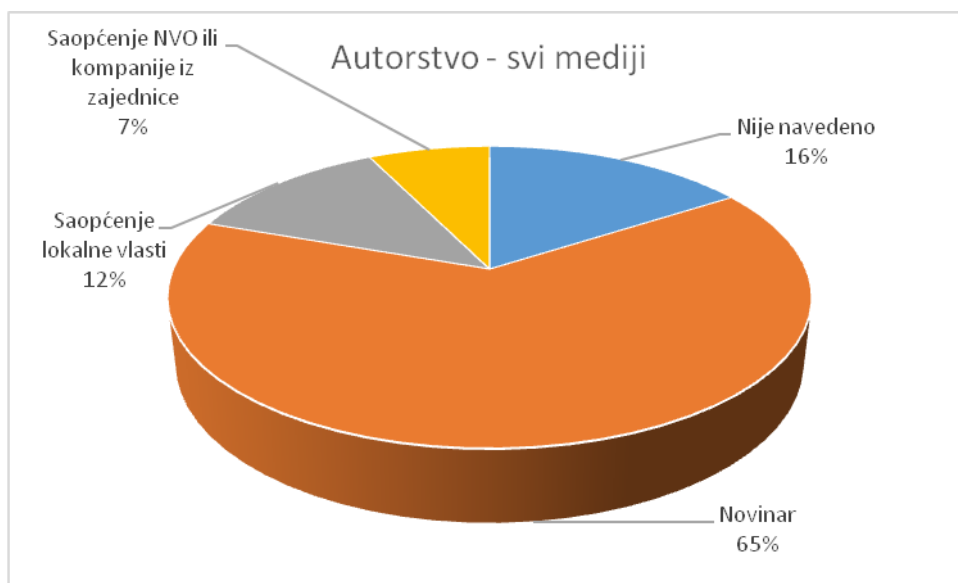




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As far as the authorship is concerned, the situation, in terms of formality, is on a satisfactory level, because most contents are signed as authors' work. However, we should emphasize that journalists' stories and those with applied *copy – paste* method, that is, those where journalists share views from social media or just “pre - tailored” certain release, arrive to editing office. Therefore, it is important to once again remind local media to significance of actual and real journalists' work, including checking of research and survey results and shaped and formed information into a genuine journalists' story.



As we already mentioned, the goals of research and survey in this stage include the following:

- Analysis in terms of to what extent do contents of local media in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina reflect public interests, regarding the topics and themes that are subject to reporting (local politics, utilities (infrastructure), economy and employment, public education and health, culture, art, Etc)
- Analysis in terms of to what extent do contents of local media in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina contain various information sources and how they are treated (are some of them in privileged positions in regard with others)
- Analysis in terms of to what extent do contents of local media in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina contain various views and opinions regarding the views and opinions that are subjects to reporting and to what extent journalists are not biased in their sharing



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After conducted monitoring we may conclude that:

- Local media mostly deal with local politics, sharing the views of local officials and other political figures in local communities. Other topics they deal with include local officials and political figures in local community. Another theme they deal with is local infrastructure (utilities), but mostly by announcing certain projects from that particular field, which often benefits local officials that use this topic, theme and content for self – promotion
- Themes considered as public interest are present in local media, but the way that they are defined does not help citizens to be provided with quality – based information about them and review, in appropriate way, to what extent public, that is, their interest, is present and how it could be defended in local community
- Local media mostly base their contents on limited number of sources, including collocutors (mostly one or eventually two)
- When media have more collocutors as part of their program contents, these collocutors mostly conform about the theme or topic that is subject to discussion and there are no confronted and opposed views and opinions. We could often note that the selection of collocutors and journalists' approach, in regard with topics, themes and collocutors that the pre -planned views and judgement by journalist exists related to given topic and theme, including their views and attitudes. Even the selection of collocutors is done in way that they are already conformed and that they fit in into the view those journalists' views to express, that is, into the narrative that is being developed. This does not only decrease the contribution in term of plurality of opinion in local communities, but it is also not in conformance with key journalists' unbiased principles. It seems that journalists do not provide their audience with the opportunity to hear different views and opinions, but they a priori reject them as collocutors, that is, they do not conduct research and survey by consulting more collocutors in order to review the issue from different perspective, but instead from the perspective they initially take and “defend” and support with conformed collocutors.
- Collocutors are mostly equal in stories; however, the percentage of contents with non – selective *copy – paste* method is not to be underestimated where views and opinion by local officials are shared, including local governing authorities' attitudes. This leaves an impression that local media feel almost responsible to share what local officials will to express in public. Even when they are financed from the local communities' public budget means which should not be their task and duty in the first place. Responsibility towards public must be priority in regard with responsibility towards governing officials. Local media, by selecting topics and themes demonstrated responsibility towards public interests, but the selection of collocutors and preferential in relation with local officials are still distanced from fulfilling their social role and work to the benefit of public interests.



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- Three are of course exceptions and positive samples of local media that display responsibility and demonstrate high level of professionalism in regard with others, however, we could generally say that, as far as plurality opinions and meeting public interest is concerned, internet web sites are on a lowest possible level

Referring back to research and survey questions we might say that:

- Obeying professional standards of local media journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina does exist to a certain level, because extreme cases of standard violations have not been recorded at all. This rather relates to samples of summarised stories, without genuine depth, more thorough research and survey and efforts by media to obtain quality – based information and present them in public
- Content creating in local media, in accordance with professional unbiased principles and plurality opinion has been present in our media, while *copy – paste* based journalism dominate in other media, but also unilateral reporting based on small number mostly conformed sources
- Quality of local media reporting regarding topics considered as public interests is still on a satisfactory level in most analysed media houses

SECOND RESEARCH AND SURVEY STAGE

(Monitoring on 29 September 2021)



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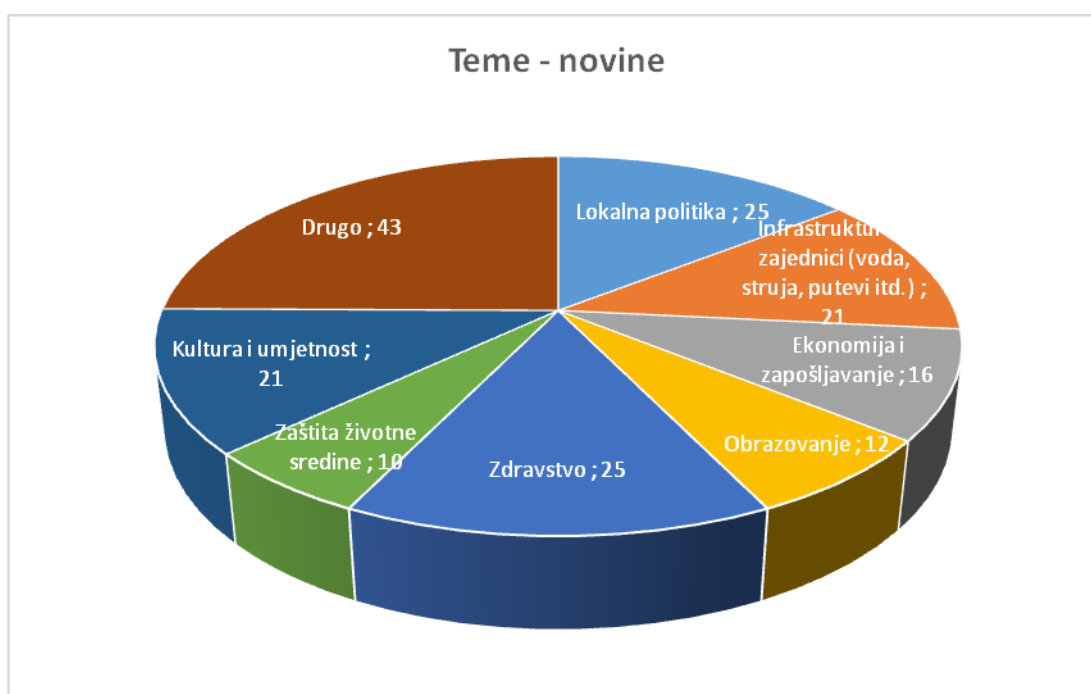


RESEARCH AND SURVEY RESULTS – MONITORING RESULTS – 2nd research and survey stage

PRINTED MEDIA (PRESS)

173 articles (texts) in total were analysed on three printed media samples

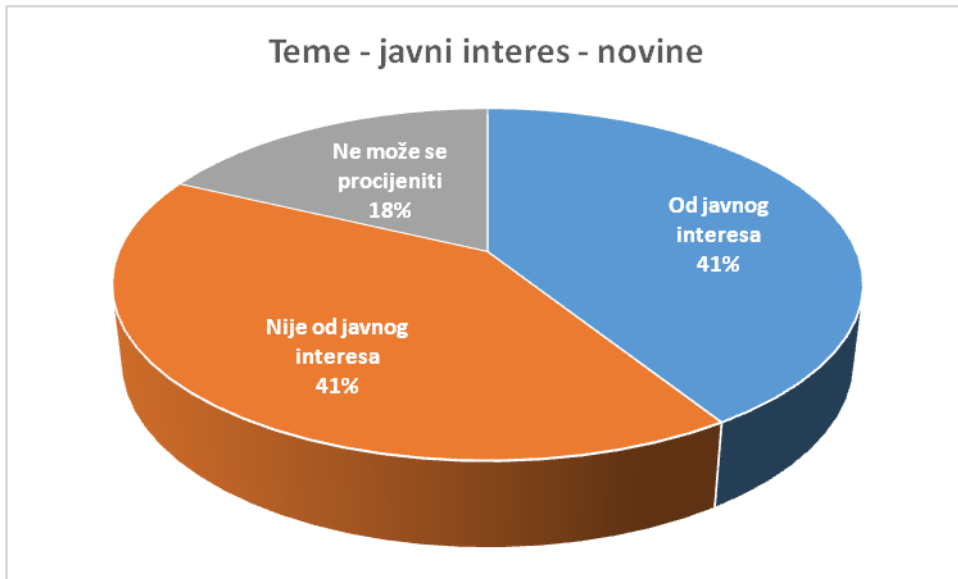
As far as topics and themes are concerned, diversity has become notable, including (and as expected), more notable number of those related to public health (considering to pandemics conditions). A number of topics and themes, covering the area of show and entertainment contents, are also relatively high.



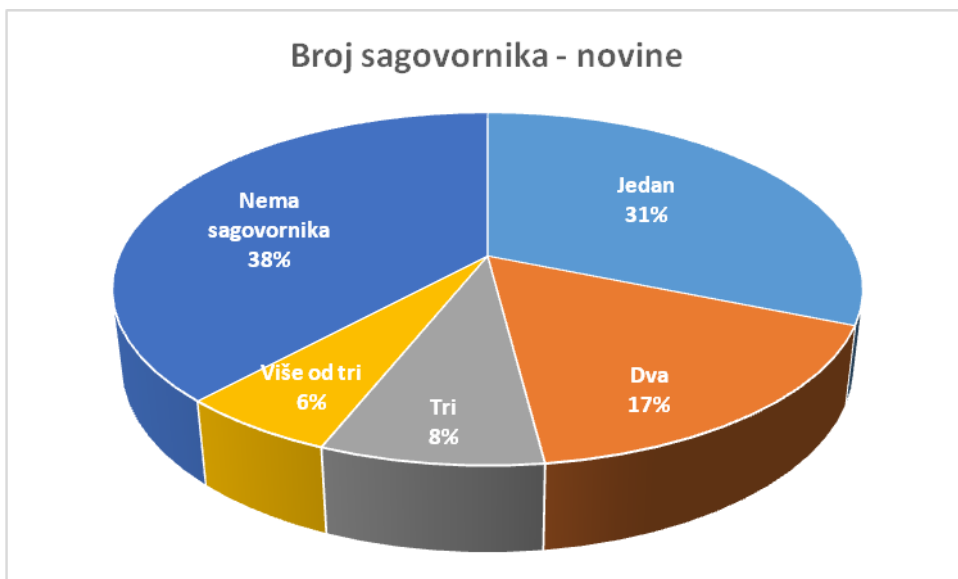
The ratio between public interests based themes and topics on one hand, and those that, on the other hand, are not is equal: 41% consists of those themes and topics that do display public interests (which also corresponds with the number of contents, including those related to infrastructure, public health and education, economy and culture), and 41% consists of themes and topics that are not considered as public interests and these mostly relate to shows, entertainment, that is, related to “plays and games”. Although this ratio, during the first research and survey, was more in favour of public interests, it still remained relatively good, which again indicated the fact that printed media (press) has comprehended the importance of themes and topics that should serve the public in the first place, including the reports, in terms of themes and topics as listed above.



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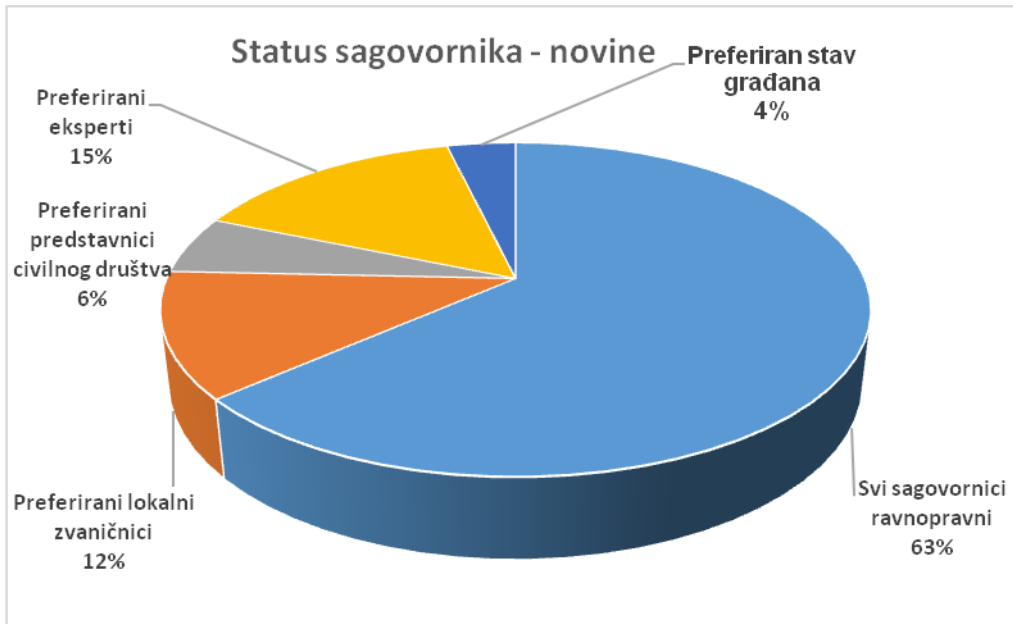


Number of collocutors in contents has not increased at all in regard with the initial (first) research and survey stage, as far as printed media (press) is concerned. It is notable that almost one third of contents include one collocutor only, and more than one third of contents have no collocutors at all. However, the fact that equal treatment of collocutors is encouraging in printed media where there are more of those. These contents make up 63% in total.





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As far as confronted and opposed views and opinions are concerned, a progress, in regard with initial (first) research and survey stage, is almost neglected. Still, 91% of articles/texts contain no confronted and opposed views and opinions. *Semberske novine* (a local news paper) have more of these texts comparing to other monitored printed media.

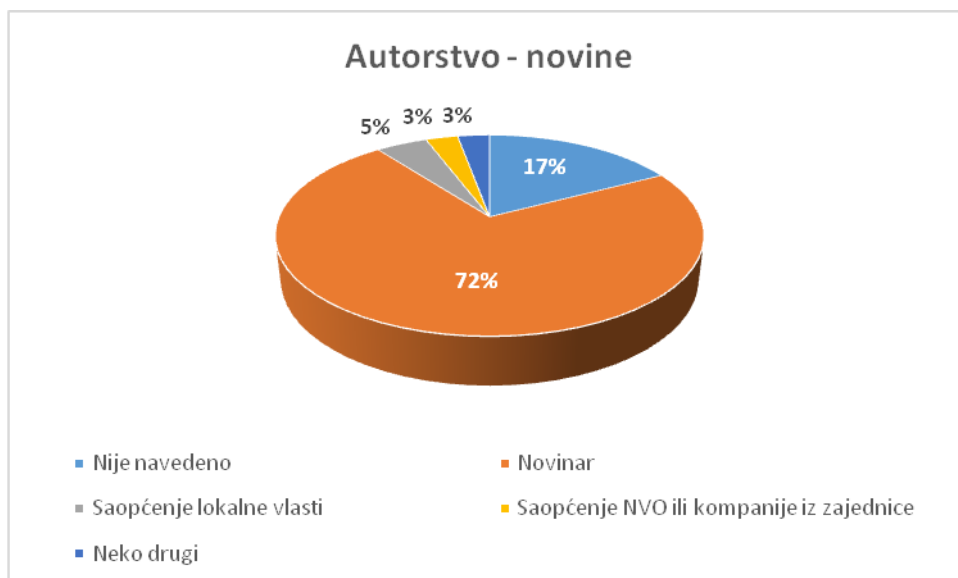




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In terms of authorship and in regard with initial (first) research and survey stage, the number of unsigned contents is notable, that is, those that had no sources indicated. 18% of these types of contents were outlined on the monitoring day. An increased number of contents where local governing officials were used as sources were also noticed (5%).

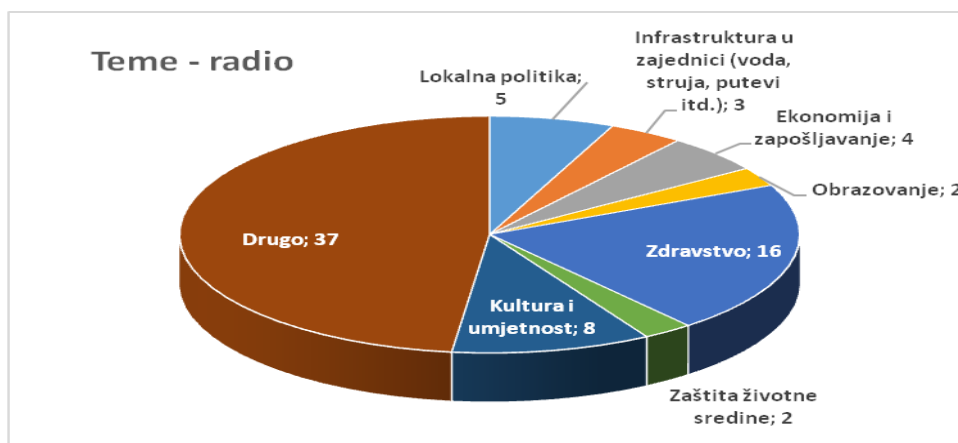


With printed media (press) we could still notice that key advantages include diversity and relatively high percentage of themes considered as public interest, while on the other hand, plurality opinion in texts is reduced.

RADIO STATIONS

77 contents in total were analysed on seven radio stations.

Light still leads the way in radio, that is, entertainment shows, including, despite the pandemics, themes that are related to health issues. Topics related to local politics, utilities (infrastructure), employment and culture are almost equally broadcasted on radio stations.

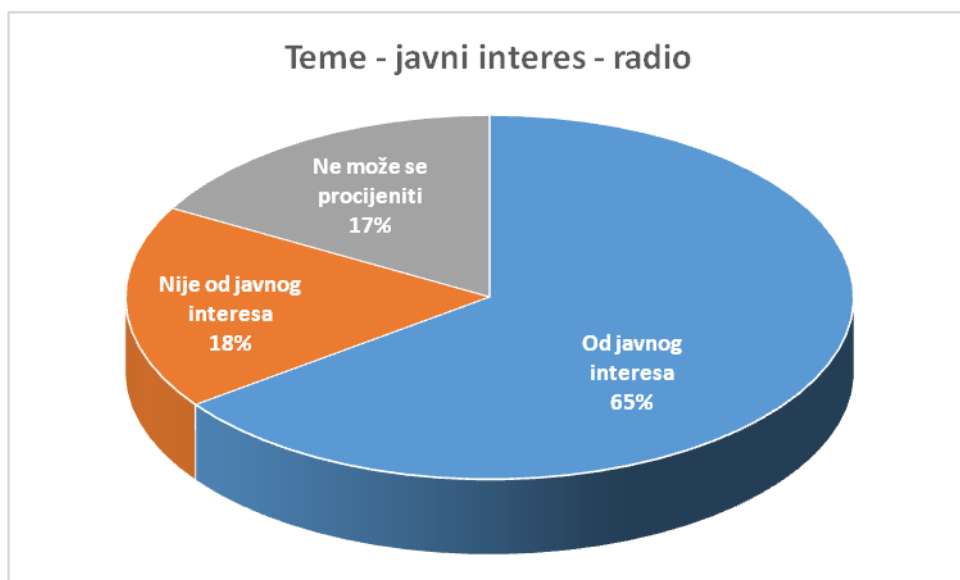




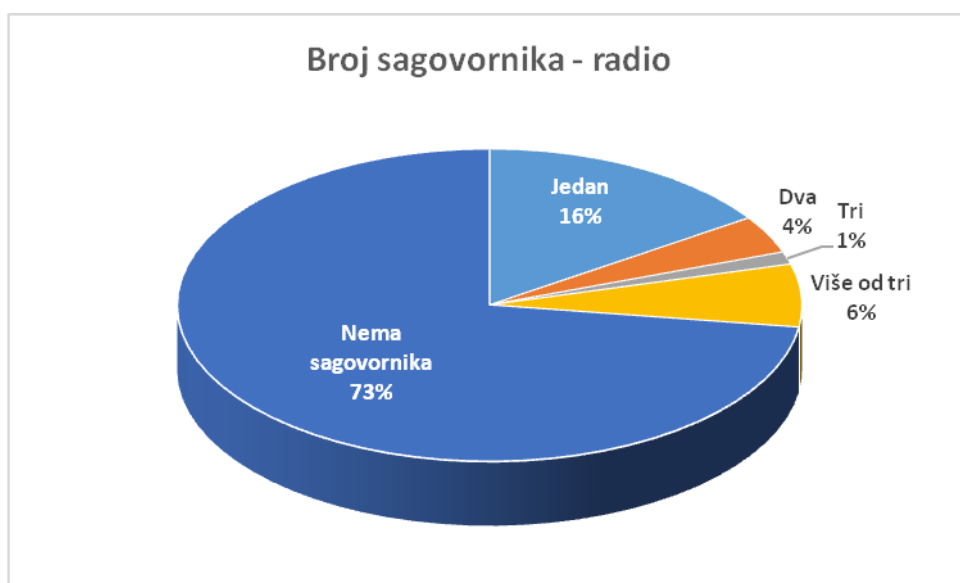
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Themes considered as public interest are present with 65% contents in radio stations, which is less percentage that in initial (first) research and survey stage. During entertainment program shows, it is not easy to assess whether the subject relates to public interest. However, in any event, the number of public interest themes and topics is still relatively on high level.



We notice significantly higher percentage of contents without collocutors in regard with the initial (first) research and survey stage on radio stations. The subject usually relates to contents where only the host expresses her/his views on air without collocutors during the program.

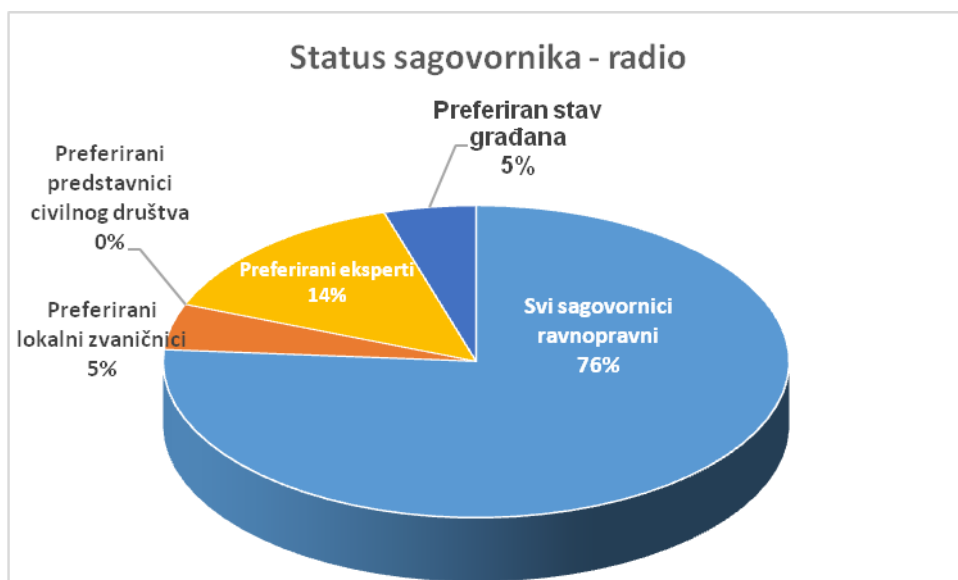




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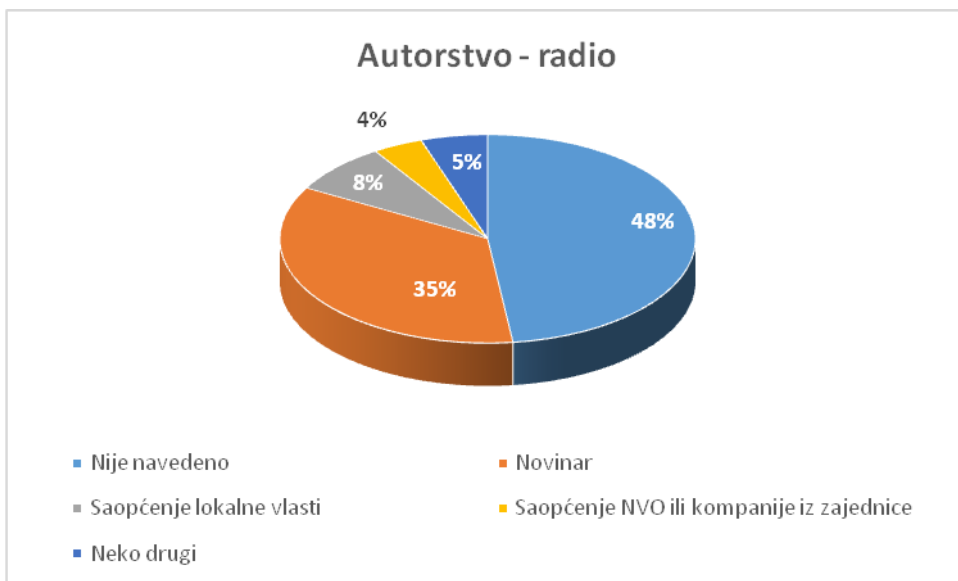
In three quarters of the content, collocutors usually have equal status, in terms of equal amount of time they are provided with so they could express their views and opinions. But, as in the initial (first) research and survey stage, contents without confronted and opposed views and opinions are absolutely dominating contents in that sense.



Authorship is usually neglected in radio stations, having taken into consideration that a large amount of contents are actually news that are being read and broadcasted from the radio stations where author's name is not mentioned. As far as reports and stories are concerned, authors are actually radio station journalists. In regard with the initial (first) research and survey stage, it is notable that the number of contents is decreased that relate to press releases delivered by local governing officials (8%).



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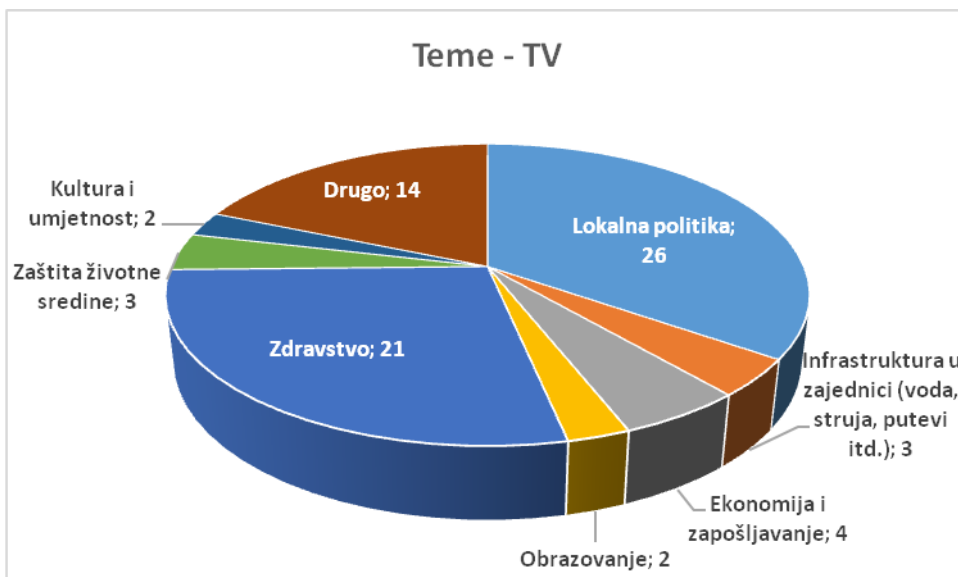


With radio stations, as well as in printed media area, we may, as an advantage, outline the equality of collocutors, while, on the other hand, we notice more significant disadvantages in the context of an increased percentage of contents without collocutors (this is something that, in radio program, should actually guarantee the program dynamics), as well as decline of percentage of public interests themes comparing to initial (first) research and survey stage.

TV - STATIONS

7 contents in total were analysed on seven local TV stations.

Contents diversity is ever present on TV stations, with, rather slight, almost neglected advantage given to themes and topics related to local politics. Comparing to the initial (first) research and survey stage, this seems as improvement in terms of contents diversity that local TV stations deal with.

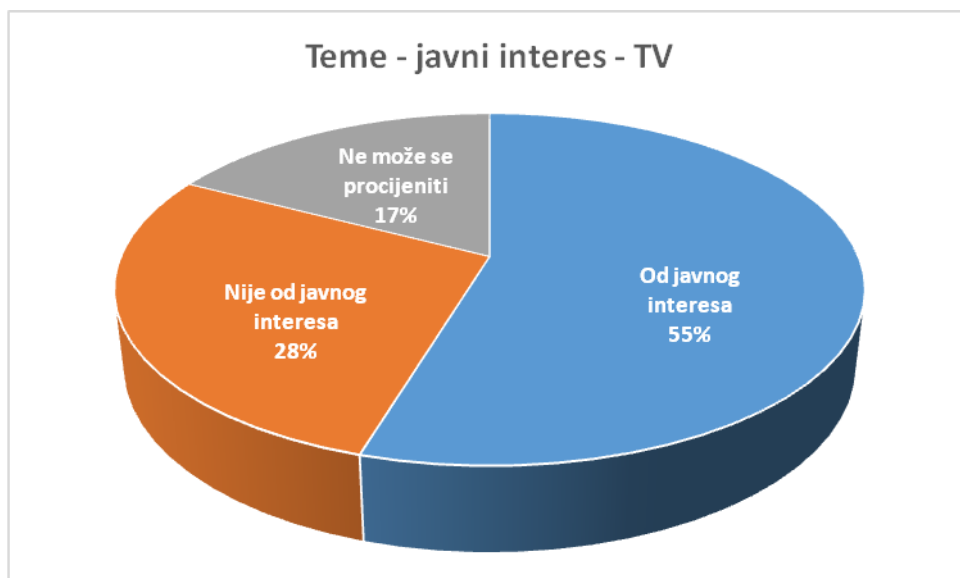




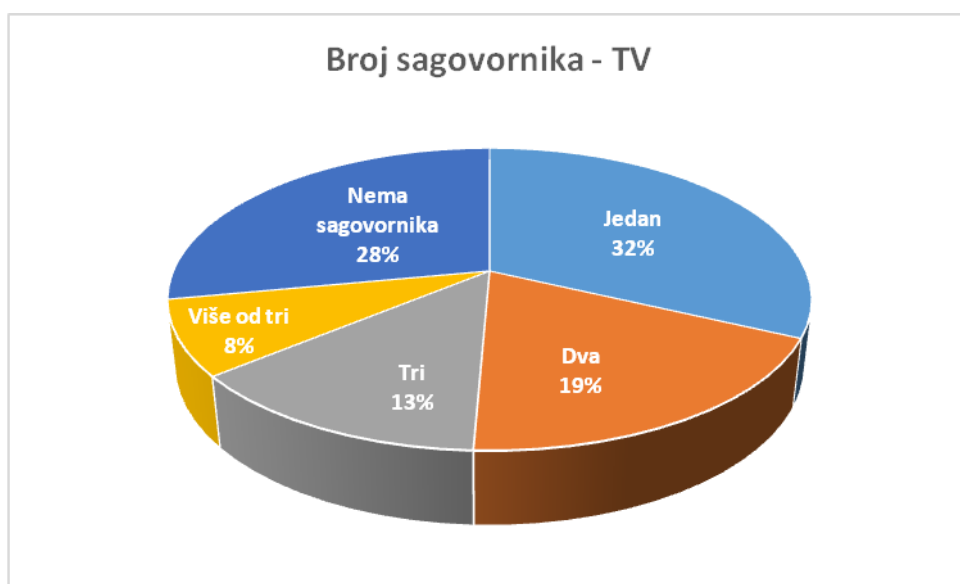
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However, we do notice that percentage of themes considered as public interest decreased in regard with the initial (first) research and survey stage. Therefore, we might say that contents diversity has increased, unlike public informing about subjects considered as public interest which has decreased.

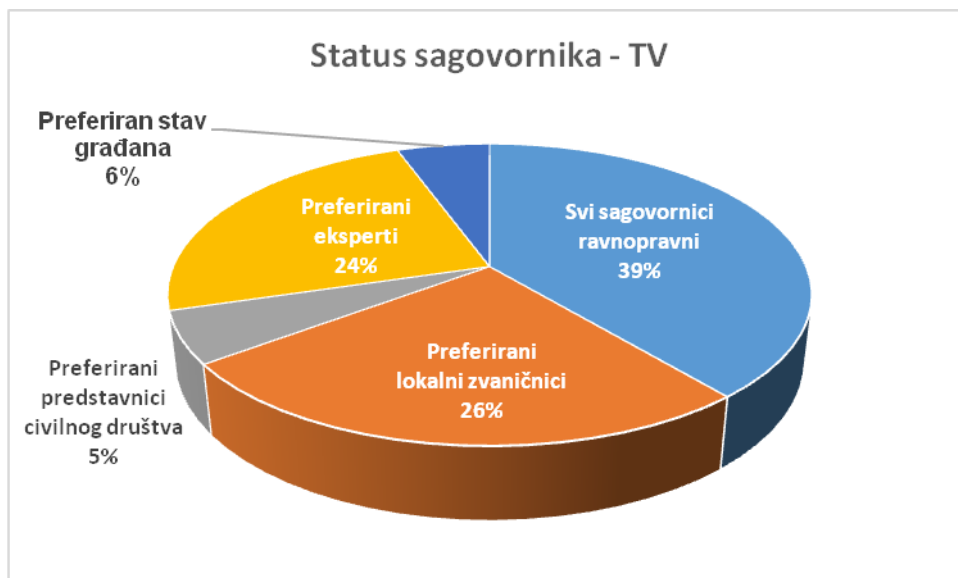


In local TV stations, comparing to initial (first) research and survey stage, we notice that contents without collocutors have also decreased, and accordingly, contents whit preferred experts have recorded a decreased percentage. This could be explained by the fact that themes and topics related to public health, or pandemic to be précised, experts are consulted, but also by the fact that local TV stations at present, not only to provide facts, but also to explain the context of such facts for which they undoubtedly must consult experts.





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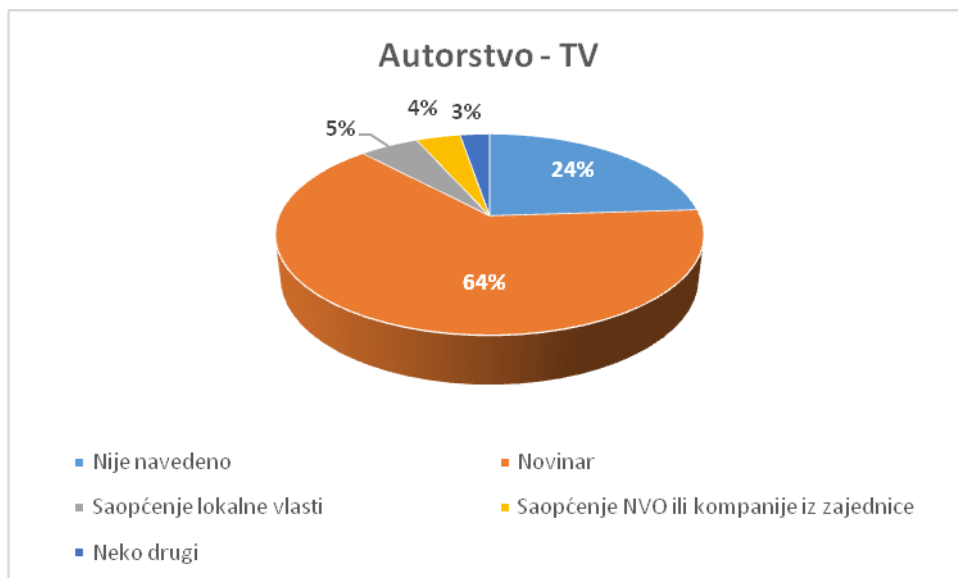
Again, in most contents broadcasted by local TV stations, there are no confronted and opposed views and opinions. Even when confronted and opposed views and opinion emerge, they mostly relate to a single confronted person, while others usually conform. This only confirms that, as in the initial (first) research and survey stage, the absence of plurality opinion and attitudes in contents broadcasted by local TV stations is still significant, which we could consider as deviation from public media role that would present diverse attitudes to local community, regarding key questions considered as public interest, thus encouraging social dialogue.



Contents authors on local TV stations are mostly journalists, which is rather expected and understandable. Local media, to a lower percentage, share press releases, but also share releases issued by local governing officials and non – government sector.



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Absence of plurality opinion in contents by local TV stations still remains a problem, as in the initial (first) research and survey stage, while the increasment of number of contents with that involve experts and is considered as one of many local TV station advantages.

ONLINE (WEB SITES) PORTALS

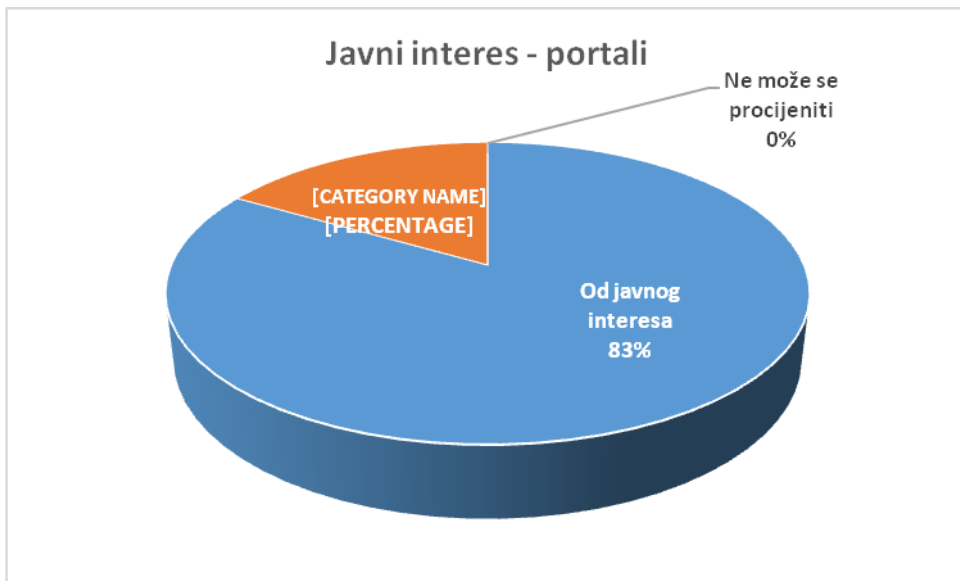
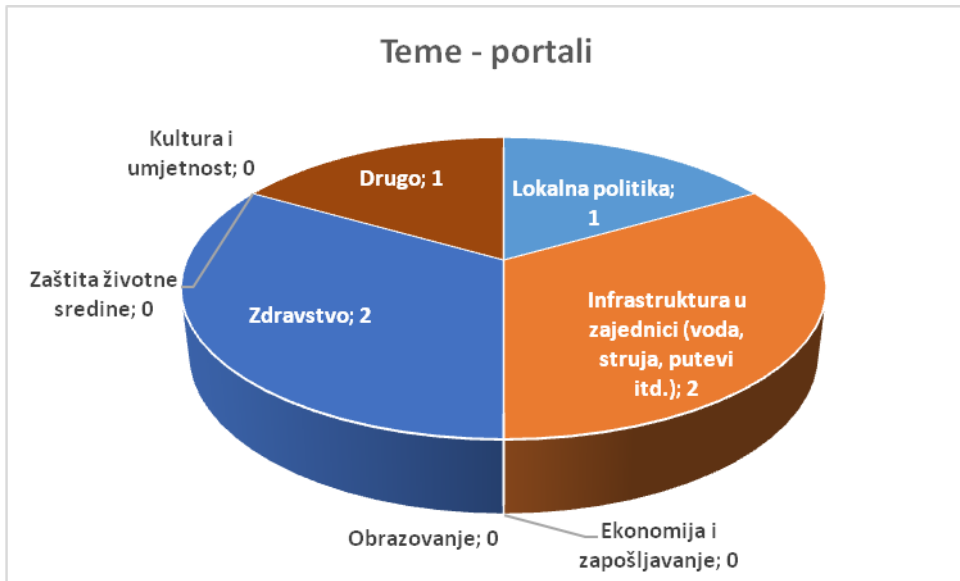
On web sites (portals), selected for this particular research and survey stage (three in total), the number of contents with included themes and topics related to local community issues is significantly small (only six), so we might as well say that web portals are more orientated in providing general public (audience) with common affairs, rather than issues related to their local community.

Sample taken out of six analysed contents is insufficient for having any type of conclusions that would be usually considered valuable for local web sites (portals); however, we notice that there are various themes and topics which are mostly regarded as public interests, but again, there are no collocutors in those stories. Instead, these mostly relate to press releases issued by local governing officials or other involved parties in local community. Therefore, we might say that analysed web sites treat local issues, themes and topics in rather superficial way; they merely share local community releases, while their focus is more directed to other common issues that are obviously more interesting to general public.

Although, we do want to outline and underline once again, that very limited number of analysed articles, texts and posts are not sufficient enough to make any standard conclusions whatsoever, we shall still present and display a number of contents, their themes, topics and issues and authorship in the following diagrams:

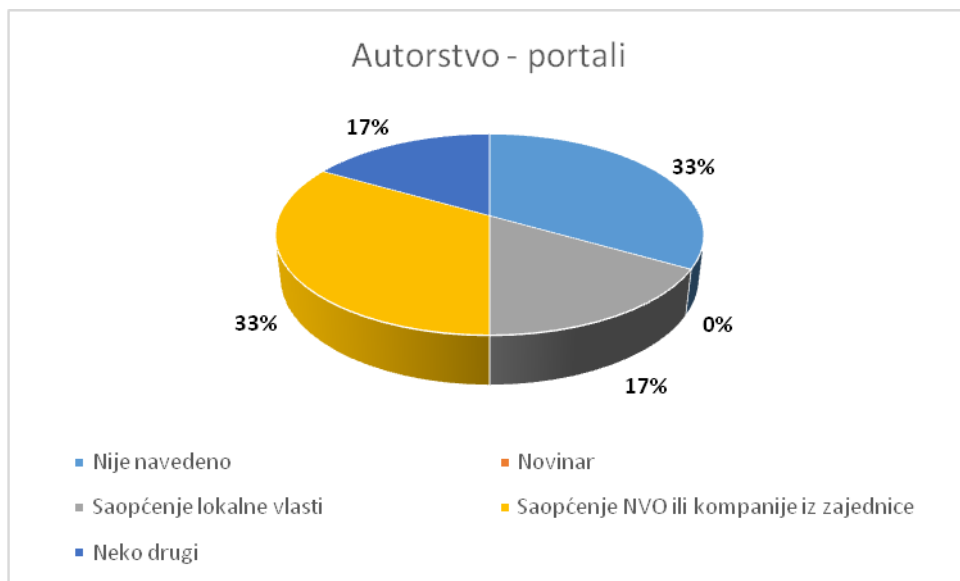


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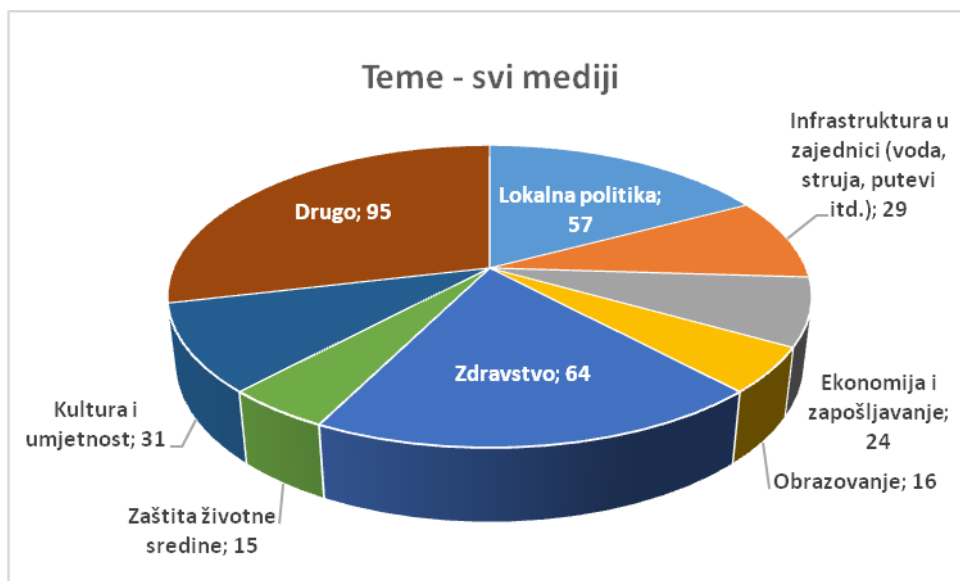
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CUMULATIVE RESEARCH AND SURVEY RESULTS OF THE SECOND MONITORING STAGE

331 contents in total were analysed during the second research and survey stage in 20 local media houses.

When we analyse cumulative data (information) from local media houses, we could see that during this, second research and survey stage, local media focus more on themes and topics that are not directly related to local communities, but instead they mostly pay their attention to common issues which they find more interesting to general public, with local politics themes and topics still dominating this pattern, including an increased number of those that relate to public health issues, which again, could be based in the fact that 2020 and 2021 were COVID – 19 pandemic periods.

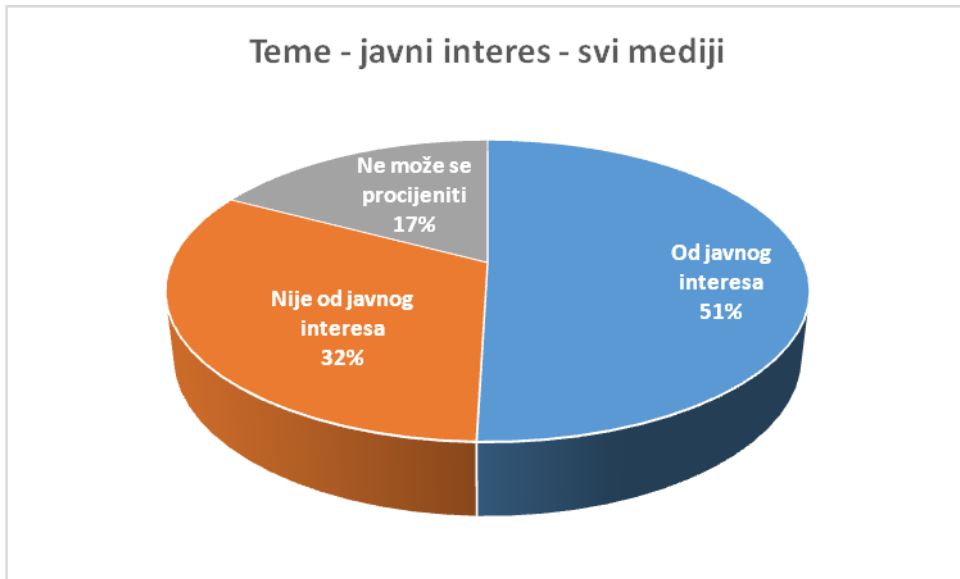




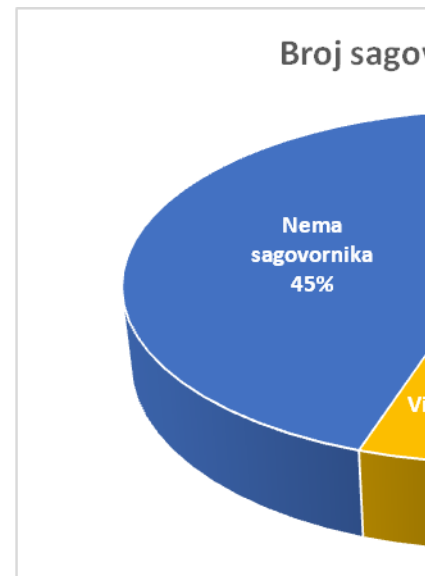
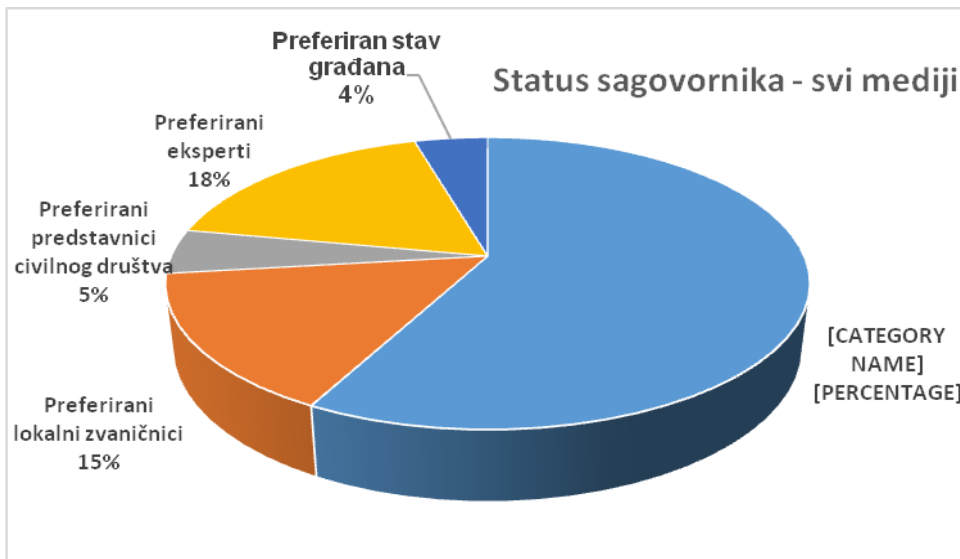
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During the second research and survey stage, the number of contents considered as public interest, in regard with the initial (first) stage recorded a decrease. Having said this, the fact that these themes and topics often experience unilateral approach, with limited number of collocutors (where most of them always conform), makes it clear that plurality opinion in local media is not present in local media as it should be.



Number of contents with more collocutors is, looking through percentage figures; decreased comparing to the initial (first) research and survey stage, but the encouraging fact is that, during this stage, there were more contents where collocutors were equally treated.





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Number of contents with included confronted and opposed views and opinions in local media is still limited. More than 90% of contents in monitored local media have not contained confronted and opposed views and opinions during neither first nor second research/survey stage.



Contents authors in local media are mostly journalists, but even during this (second research and survey stage), it is notable that they often sign (as journalists' story) contents where they actually share parts of releases for media or statutes copied from social media sources. In this context, we remind local media to importance of genuine, real, authors' research and survey work in terms of stories.

As previously outlined, the goals during this research and survey stage included the following:

- Analyse to what extent have local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflected general public interests regarding themes, topics and issues that have been subject to reporting (local politics, infrastructure (utilities), economy and employment, public education and health, culture, arts, Etc).
- Analyse to what extent have local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina had different information sources and how these had been treated (have any of them been privileged in regard with others).
- Analyse to what extent have local media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina contained diverse opinions and attitudes in regard with themes, topics and issues that have been subject to reporting and to what range have journalists been unbiased in their sharing



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After having the monitoring process conducted, during the second research and survey stage, we might conclude that:

- Local media mostly deal with local politics, sharing the views and attitudes of local figures and other political parties involved in local communities. Second topic they take into consideration includes public health (which displays a change comparing to 2020), although this mostly includes revealing the number of infected, vaccinated and deceased people during the COVID – 19 pandemics, rather than dealing with actual public health issues
- Second research and survey stage also confirms that local media contain themes that are considered as general public interests, however, the way these are processes does not help public audience in terms of receiving quality – based information as a result
- Even this research and survey stage also displayed the limited number of contents with three or more than three collocutors, so we could confirm the theses deriving from the initial (first) research and survey stage that local media mostly based their contents on rather limited number of sources, included collocutors (most often one or sometimes two collocutors)
- In cases when media have more collocutors in their contents, these collocutors mostly conform about topics or issues that are subjects to discussions and have no confronted and opposed views and opinions, which is the case during initial (first) research and survey stage
- Collocutors in stories are mostly equal and during the second research and survey stage this does represent certain progress comparing to the initial stage

Should we refer back to research and survey questions, we might say that even second stage confirmed the same as the initial (first) stage, that is, there were no significant changes during the year, as far as changes in the context of local media pluralism (for which we could only repeat what we had already said after the completion of the initial (first) research and survey stage) is concerned:

- Obeying professional standards in local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina is present to a certain level, because no cases of extreme violations of these standards have been recorded; instead it was more concerning superficially processed stories, without genuine depth and more serious research, including media effort and attempt by media to get quality – based information and present them in public
- Creating local media contents in accordance with professional principles which include non – biased and pluralism – based views and opinions is present in some media houses, while in others, *copy – paste* type of journalism is dominating, including a unilateral reporting based on a very limited number of conformed sources
- Quality of media reporting by local media regarding the public interests issues is still not on a satisfactory level in most media that have been subject to analysis



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LONGITUDINAL COMPARATIVE PERSPECKTIVE

(Analogy and comparison of first and second research and survey stages)



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COMPARATIVE LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INITIAL (FIRST) RESEARCH AND SURVEY STAGE APPLICABLE IN LOCAL MEDIA

After having research and survey conducted, including the results, few key recommendations were suggested as far as local media are concerned, that is, their way of reporting about and in local communities. These recommendations include:

- To have public interest in main focus, but not just during the selection of themes and topics, but also during the approach regarding themes, topics and issues, which shall be directed mainly to providing general public with information, rather than being focused on local governing officials or any other entity that would eventually release her/his own information
- More attention should be paid to public education, culture, health and environmental protection issues, instead of focusing on sharing personal views and attitudes by local politicians, that is, those being orientated to mere following of their activities and agendas that they tend to impose
- While processing certain issues, themes and topics, instead of just doing the “coverage” of daily affairs, more attention should be paid to doing serious and thorough thematic and investigative stories
- Thematic stories should include at least two collocutors in order to provide the public audience (citizens) with a possibility to look at the certain problem or issue from different angles and perspectives
- Collocutors should be selected according to their competences, rather than just from powerful positions they have in their communities. More space should be provided to experts from the area that is subject to research and investigation
- Collocutors with diverse, that is, different views and opinions should be selected, in order to have different views and opinions faced in public space and also to have crystallised which view and opinion produces best possible solution to a certain problem in community which is in focus on journalists’ story
- Ensure and enable plurality opinion in a way that journalists shall not, based on *a priori* principle, create their own view and attitude, including the approach about the theme and topic they report, in order to prevent a “tailoring” of views delivered by other collocutors into the pre – planned and pre – defined stance. Instead, different collocutors shall be consulted and their arguments shall be displayed on objective basis, all with the purpose of general public interest
- Arguments shall be crucial in reporting and in selecting the collocutors, as well as in providing space to collocutors; most important thing is to select collocutors that are able to use the strength of arguments and that are not biased and can take question and issue in most rational way



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- Reduce *copy – paste* methods, that is, have more journalists' stories in order to gain more information, stories that are checked by journalists and stories that journalists shaped and formed. Signed reports or texts where journalists just puzzled parts of press releases, including views and attitudes shared, copies or taken from social media or similar sources shall and cannot represent authors' genuine work

After having completed second research and survey stage and in terms of applying the recommendations in local media, we conclude that:

- Unfortunately, local media failed to place public interest into a focus plan, in fact, the percentage of themes and topics considered as public interest has decreased
- More attention is not paid to themes and topics that include public education, culture, health and environmental protection, but, on the other hand, more attention is paid to health issues mostly due to pandemics. However, the pandemic issues was also covered on shallow basis, rather than genuine, thorough and quality – based reporting that would satisfy information provided to public and help them have better orientation in a society they live in. Therefore, we might say that there were no thematic and investigative stories instead of having “covered” local daily affairs.
- Stories included a larger number of collocutors comparing to the initial (first) research and survey stage , but due to the fact the collectors with diverse and confronted views and opinions (neither did these opinions confronted in public) were not selected, we could say that these recommendations was not implemented in full, as well as the recommendation that would ensure plurality opinion in a way so that journalists would not, on *a priory* basis, create their views and approach to certain issues they report about, and consequently “tailor” collocutors' views and opinion into the pre – planned and pre – defined. Instead, they would, for the sake of public interest, consult different collocutors and present their arguments in most appropriate and objective ways.
- *Copy – paste* method is still present, which means that there are many copied t3exts, articles or posts where journalist merely puzzle parts of press releases, views, attitudes and opinion copied, shared or taken from social media sources and Etc, which simply cannot be treated and considered as author's work



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SUMMERY OF RESEARCH AND SURVEY INTERVIEWS



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RESEARCH AND SURVEY INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL MEDIA JOURNALISTS

In order to understand the context of local media functioning, and partially by the “insight view”, explain the monitoring results, it was planned to make research and survey interview with ten local media journalists. However, bearing in mind that we got the answers from only five such journalist, we decided to make interviews with journalists that have not worked in local, but in common population media houses. This proved as an advantage, bearing in mind that could compare journalist’ views and opinions that work and those that do not work in local media houses.

We asked the journalists the following questions:

- Initial (first) monitoring stage (2020) proved that local media mostly deal with local politics, in terms of sharing the statements delivered by local politicians. What do you consider as main reason for having this as dominant theme, topic or subject in local media?
- How do you assess the relationship between collocutors in regard with local media? Are experts, civil society representatives and citizens ready to collocutors in local media? What difficulties you as journalists encounter in this particular context?
- Research and survey during the initial (first) stage confirmed a low level of readiness by local media to share collocutors’ confronted and opposed views and opinions, and, on the other hand, a very high level of aptitude to share press releases for media by local officials and institutions in an unconditional way and without any limits whatsoever. What is your opinion on this and why, according to your personal view, there is a lack of plurality opinion and following of agenda by local politics in local media in this sense?
- Which key problems, according to your opinion, local media and local media journalists face and encounter in their work?
- According to your opinion, what should be done in order to enable local media to have more freedom and liberty require for their functionality so their work could have more quality?

In this particular section we shall outline key answers that we got from journalists and answers that could help us make certain conclusions.

- Journalists mostly believe that the politics is a constituent part of most media contents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that local media make no exception in this particular manner. Media reporting is mostly based on following what politicians say and do, including their meetings, press conferences and other events and venues where they participate. COVID – 19 pandemics has placed, as its priority, themes, topics and issues from the field of public health, even though journalists think that these issues mostly cover mere data and information, regarding the number of infected and deceased persons, including the number of vaccinated people and types of vaccines, rather than covering the context.



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They believe that the key reason for this specific situation is time shortage required to make an interesting story. Most media employ less people than they actually require and need, so journalists, under such circumstances, must create a significant number of contents on daily basis, so they have not enough time to investigate various themes and stories. Second key reason they outline include the fact that politicians impose certain topics and themes, and editors expect from journalists to follow these, because if other media houses have these themes and topics covered, and their media fail to follow them, the problem shall emerge – journalists are therefore considered as incapable of completing their tasks and duties, that is, they failed to cover their shift on that particular day.

- Journalists also reckon that politicians are always prepared to speak for media, but just because they are aware of the duties they have in terms of being responsible for general public audience and what they actually do, but because they believe that their appearance in media, particularly on TV, present them with political benefits and make their political campaigns easier when the time is right. On the other hand, they claim that there are very few competent collocutors from the academic society, including civil society Etc. Some of them either refuse to speak for media or they simply seem afraid of appearing in public or they consider that they should get paid for appearing in public which is something that many media cannot afford. Therefore, journalist are, to some extent, forced to consult a limited number of collocutors and these are mainly those that are ready to talk in media; since they are often adjust their own duties and are often invited several times to talk in media and sometimes, media have no time in terms of finding, selecting an inviting appropriate and competent collocutors in time. This is not, according to journalists, about being ignorant in terms of not knowing that they need them or refuse to have more collocutors in their contents and stories, instead it is about not being able to find appropriate and competent collocutors in small local communities.
- Journalists replied and responded in very similar way as far as plurality opinion in media contents. Bearing in mind that there are very few available collocutors in general, it is even more difficult to find them, for instance, for thematic program where they would eventually confront and oppose their views and opinions. Furthermore, certain collocutors often with views and opinions different to majority of people, refuse to talk for local media for two main reasons: they are either afraid of being judged by the local community people or, they do not want to have personal conflict based on their different views and opinions or they are afraid that media would not share and pass their views and opinions in most appropriate way. Journalists believe that political parties' releases are shared less than local officials' releases, while some of them believe that sharing such press releases is actually journalists' duty, because local governing officials, through their press releases, in fact inform their citizens about issues that are considered important.



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- Key problems for local media as claimed by journalists, relate to the following; pressures imposed by local governing officials to “cover up” everything they (local officials) do, local officials often address local media editors, complaining about journalists and their reporting, because, officials claim, journalists’ reports are not in PR sense, which only proves that local officials fail to understand that local media are not suppose to serve them, instead local media must serve general public. Poor and inadequate labour status follow this line, along with low wages in local media houses, as well as insecurity in terms changing their jobs (in small local communities, if a journalist loses her or his job, she or he is unlikely to find another one). Some journalists claimed that that auto censure also occurs emphasizing that journalists in local media house are in more difficult position (in terms of pressures imposed against them), in regard to those working in big towns and cities, because being under pressure in small local communities means that their families, relatives and friends also suffer because “people in smaller communities know each other”
- As certain solutions to local community problems, journalists claim that it would be necessary and rather required to redefine the laws regarding local media and to additionally work more with local officials about their awareness that local media are not their private properties. Certain people would advise more work with local media editors so they could realize and become aware that their work is not to have local community politicians are pleased with editors’ work, but to provide general public with quality – based information that concerns their communities. Also, journalists claim that it would be very important to employ more people in local media houses, as well as to modernize their equipment and technology, but also to improve other labour and work conditions, including wages, salaries and days off work, because journalists in these media houses are often on the edge of *burn outs*.

According to answers and replies provided above, we could conclude that journalists are aware of disadvantages in local media contents which was proved and confirmed by this monitoring, but they, in large extent, see their outer elements as samples of pure political pressures (including pressures imposed by local officials), insufficient capacity of editing offices in local media houses in terms of personnel (staff), including the equipment and technology, lack of will and readiness of collocutors to participate in media contents Etc, rather than inner – professional (lack and absence of ethic, dependability, censure and auto censure).



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**RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PLURALISM
OF MEDIA CONTENTS
(Based on monitoring results and interviews)**



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RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PLURALISM OF MEDIA CONTENTS

Taking into consideration that, after having the initial (first) research and survey stage completed, we managed to create a set of recommendations that are mostly not implemented after one year, we may merely repeat them and use them in order to make an appeal to local media houses so they could apply them during their work. These recommendations include the following:

- Public interests should be top priority, not just in terms of selecting themes and topics, but primarily in terms of having approach to certain themes and topics that would be directed to citizens being provided with information, rather than being focused on local officials' interests or any other party that would eventually use local media to release their own information
- More attention should be paid to themes and topics from the field of public education, culture, health and environmental protection, and less to insisting on sharing local politicians' views, that is, to mere following of their activities and agendas they impose
- With treating certain themes and topics, local media should work on thematic, investigative stories, instead of just "covering" daily affairs
- Thematic stories should have at least two collocutors involved, in order to provide the public (citizens) to see certain situation, problem or event, looking at them from different perspective through various sources
- Collocutors should be selected according to their competences, instead of being selected according to their public influence and power they have; more space should be given to experts from the field that is subject to investigation
- Select collocutors with diverse and mutually different views and opinions so their views and attitudes could confront in public space, thus having crystallized the opinion that may serve as best possible solution to certain problem in a local community and view that is in focus of journalists' story
- Enable and ensure plurality opinion in a way that journalists shall not, based on *a priori* principle, create their views and opinions, including the approach about the theme and topic that is subject to investigation, so they would not "tailor" collocutors' views and opinion into the pre – planned and pre – defined. Instead, they would, for the sake of public interest, consult different collocutors and present their arguments in most appropriate and objective ways.
- Arguments shall be crucial in reporting and in selecting the collocutors, as well as in providing space to collocutors; most important thing is to select collocutors that are able to use the strength of arguments and that are not biased and can take question and issue in most rational way



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- Reduce *copy – paste* methods, that is, have more journalists' stories in order to gain more information, stories that are checked by journalists and stories that journalists shaped and formed. Signed reports or texts where journalists just puzzled parts of press releases, including views and attitudes shared, copies or taken from social media or similar sources shall and cannot represent authors' genuine work

Based on interviews with journalist, we have found out that it would be strongly advisable to establish pre – conditions so that given and specified recommendations would be successfully applied and implemented within local media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These pre – conditions include the following:

- More work with local officials on their awareness that local media are not their private properties and that they must display and demonstrate more tolerance towards critical views by local media
- More work with local media editors so they could realize and become aware that their work is not to have local community politicians be pleased with editors' work, but to provide general public with quality – based information that concern their communities. In other words, local media editors should be reminded about public interest and that their duty, as media representatives, is to work in public interest only.
- Have more people employed in local media houses, as well as to modernize their equipment and technology, but also to improve other labour and work conditions, including wages, salaries and days off work
- Better journalists' protection in local media when it comes to attacks and assaults (especially when they are being attacked or assaulted by local officials), because they are much more difficult positions, under these circumstances, than other journalists (particularly those that work in big towns or cities).



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ATTACHMENTS



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ATTACHMENT 1: List of media/sample of 1st research and survey stage

• PRINTED MEDIA

1. Semberske novine, Bijeljina
2. Naša riječ Zenica
3. Derventski list
4. Kozarski vjesnik, Prijedor

• RADIO STATIONS

1. Radiopostaja Čapljina
2. Radio Konjic
3. Radio Brčko distrikt
4. Radio Livno
5. BIG Radio Banja Luka
6. Radiopostaja Vitez
7. Radio Prijedor
8. Bobar Radio Bijeljina
9. Radio Gradska mreža
10. Radio Cazin
11. Radio Srebrenica

• TELEVISION STATIONS

1. RTV Unsko-sanskog kantona Bihać
2. RTV Bosansko-podrinjskog kantona (RTV Goražde)
3. RTV Zenica – Zenica
4. RTV Tuzlanskog kantona – Tuzla
5. TV Sarajevo – Sarajevo
6. Alternativna TV (ATV) – Banja Luka
7. RTV Herceg Bosne – Mostar
8. TV Kanal 6 Travnik
9. HIT TV Brčko distrikt
10. RTV Doboј



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- **ONLINE WEB SITES (PORTALS)**

1. Tuzlanski.ba – Tuzla
2. Hercegovina.info – Mostar
3. Trebinjelive.info – Trebinje
4. Visoko.co.ba – Visoko
5. Srpskacafe.rs – Banja Luka
6. eSrebrenica.ba – Srebrenica
7. MojPrijedor.com – Prijedor
8. Radiosarajevo.ba – Sarajevo
9. Starmo.ba – Mostar



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ATTACHMENT 2: List of media/ sample of 2nd research and survey stage

- **PRINTED MEDIA**

1. Semberske novine, Bijeljina
2. Naša riječ Zenica
3. Derventski list
4. Kozarski vjesnik, Prijedor

- **RADIO STATIONS**

1. Radiopostaja Čapljina
2. Radio Konjic
3. Radio Brčko distrikt
4. Radio Livno
5. BIG Radio Banja Luka
6. Radio Trebinje
7. Radio Prijedor
8. Radio Gradska mreža
9. Radio Cazin
10. UPS media

- **TELEVISION STATIONS**

1. RTV Unsko-sanskog kantona Bihać
2. RTV Bosansko-podrinjskog kantona (RTV Goražde)
3. RTV Zenica – Zenica
4. RTV Tuzlanskog kantona – Tuzla
5. TV Sarajevo – Sarajevo
6. Alternativna TV (ATV) – Banja Luka
7. RTV Herceg Bosne – Mostar
8. HIT TV Brčko distrikt



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• **INTERNET WEB SITES (PORTALS)**

1. Tuzlanski.ba – Tuzla
2. Hercegovina.info – Mostar
3. Trebinjelive.info – Trebinje
4. Visoko.co.ba – Visoko
5. Srpskacafe.rs – Banja Luka
6. Radiosarajevo.ba – Sarajevo
7. MojPrijedor.com – Prijedor
8. Starmo.ba – Mostar

ATTACHMENT 3: Code list

Themes/subject	Number
Local politics	
Local community infrastructure/utilities (water, electricity, roads Etc)	
Economy and employment	
Public education	
Public health	
Environmental protection	
Culture and art	
Other	
Total:	

Themes/subject	Number
Public interest	
Not public interest	
Not applicable	
Total:	

Number of collocutors	Number
One	
Two	
Three	
More than three	
No collocutors	
Total:	



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Collocutors status	Number
All collocutors are equal	
Preferred local officials	
Preferred civil society representatives	
Preferred experts	
Preferred citizens' views and opinions	
Total:	

Confronted and opposed views and opinions	Number
No confronted and opposed views and opinions	
One confronted and opposed view and opinion, others conformed	
Two confronted and opposed views and opinions	
Three confronted and opposed views and opinions	
Exposed journalists' views and opinions	
Total:	

Authorship	Number
Not indicated	
Journalist	
Local officials press release	
NGO press release or local community company	
Someone else	
Total:	



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ATTACHMENT 4: Monitors of 1st research and survey stage

- Eldar Karavdić
- Elvedina Obuća
- Sonja Milinić
- Nela Azinović
- Vera Kukrić



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ATTACHMENT 5: Monitors of 2nd research and survey stage:

- Sonja Milinić
- Vera Kukrić
- Nela Azinović
- Rabija Arifović
- Kerim Sefer



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ATTACHMENT 6: List of questions for research and survey interview

Prof. Dr. Lejla Turčilo

Local media monitoring 2021 – interviews, questions:

- Initial (first) monitoring stage (2020) showed that local media mostly deal and focus on local politics by mostly share statements delivered by local politicians. What is, according to your opinion, the reason for having this as most dominant issue from local media perspective of view?
- How do you assess the relationship between collocutors and local media? Do you consider experts, civil society representatives and citizens ready to be collocutors in local media contents? What difficulties, in this sense, do you, as journalist, most encounter?
- During the initial (first) stage, research and survey showed very low level of local media preparedness to share and transmit confronted views and opinions by collocutors, and, on the other hand, very high level, to, unconditionally and without changes, share and transmit press releases issued by local officials and institutions. How do you comment this and why, according to your opinion, does this absence of plurality opinion happen, including the following of local politics agenda in local media houses?
- Which key problems, according to your opinion, do local media and local media journalists face and encounter?
- What, according to your opinion, should be done in order to provide/enable local media with more freedom which is required for their functioning and better quality?



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