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Bosnia and Herzegovina and Russia: An overview of their relations according to print and electronic media from 2008 and 2015

Abstract

Media represent the most important component of media culture and have a huge influence in the contemporary world in general due to their direct role in the process of creating value scales or criteria according to which events or processes in our everyday life are evaluated. The authors of the paper intend to present an approach and writing style that print and electronic media in B&H used to cover a range on topics about geopolitical relations between B&H and Russia. In this paper, we will present results of the comparative analysis of the texts about Russia in two most widely read daily newspapers in B&H from different entities, Glas Srpske and Dnevni avaz, the values and interests mirrored at the audience and finally the analysis of the contents broadcasted in central news on two entity public broadcasters, RTRS /Radio and Television of Republic of Srpska/ and RTV FB&H / Federal Radio and Television/ about British Resolution on Srebrenica which at the session of the UN Security Council from July 8th 2015 did not gain support of its permanent members. The analysis of the informative approach of two entity public broadcasters towards this event shows how people's opinions and behavior can be successfully influenced. Media have impact on the daily news, that is, they determine the type of reports covered and in published in everyday news, but they also 'frame' some of the topics by taking a certain angle of looking at the events.

Keywords: *media; content analysis; B&H; Russia; public broadcasters; objectivity; manipulation; Resolution on Srebrenica*

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Introduction

In modern era, the era of electronic media, most of the social sciences take journalism as its referential source in order to study and interpret conditions in the society. Following events of everyday life in print media gives power to journalism and therefore the ability to form and direct public opinion. Political responsibility that journalists express in their views and interests, not always corresponding to the will of people, is another by-product of this power. Media function within special legal and political circles and therefore represent inevitable participants in political, economic, social and cultural dynamics of social power. From the political perspective, media have different roles and goals such as: opportunities to change and form public opinion, to impose their will to a certain group of people, to influence development of consciousness about national, religious or some other affiliation by taking part in overall education process.

To this effect, it is necessary to inform on the connection between media and political factors which influence directly the creating of public opinion and public/media discourse. Political manipulation, deception and different forms of influence are crucial for creating and shaping public opinion. On this topic, Jevtović comments that it is wrong to take only lie or manipulation as the basis of psychological persuasion of the public.

‘Within a political community one can find a newly formed system of functional rationality which fully serves the political system. Physical and psychological characteristics, gained or inherited, affinities and capabilities, habits, emotions, passions, skills – all of these influence formation of perceptive mechanism of the personality by becoming a target of propaganda industry’³.

Relations between media and political elites, according to this author, take place on the institutional and interpersonal level; they are mutually entangled and closely related to their mutual interest.

‘This is a contemporary inquisitorial crusade against the masses which should not be the slaves to quality, critical spirit and analytical opinion, but enforced view that media always tell the truth. Scattered, emotional, psychologically concentrated to only one link in the whole of the information chain, a message has a goal to direct a man’s consciousness towards a certain in-

³ Зоран Јевтовић, *Јавно мишљење и политика* (Београд: Академија лепих уметности, Центар за савремену журналистику, 2003), 87.

terest which is very skillfully imposed from the far off centers of power⁴.

In multinational state communities with complex political system, such as B&H, interaction between political and media elite is additionally determined and divided according to ethnic affiliation and entity borders, so that communication takes place within a discourse of *their* and *ours*. The analysis of media contents, print and electronic media in B&H, performed for the purposes of this paper, shows that TV or print media use heterogeneous ethnic groups, each with solid political and national leadership and organization, to produce fear by promoting intolerance towards other and different ethnic groups.

It is for this reason and for the purposes of the paper that we provide an overview of the results of the comparative analysis that included texts about Russia published in the daily papers, *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz*, two leading papers in B&H, from different entities, for the period November 2007-February 2008. Apart from this, an analysis included the content broadcasted in central news of two entity public broadcasters, RTRS and FTV, in regard to Resolution on Srebrenica which was not adopted at the session of the UN Security Council held in New York on 8th of July 2015.

Democracy and media as its fourth pillar have marked only the beginning and the end of the 20th century that many authors consider to be the bloodiest century in the whole of human's history (two great wars, fascism, Stalinism, Cold War). From the perspective of communication potential, it was the century of unbelievable development of media when daily press had dramatic ascent, radio as the first electronic media hinted at the notion of the planet Earth as McLuhan's 'global village', and finally the phenomenon of television as a true miracle of science and technology that allowed everyone to, right from their homes, live and close, passively take part in the important events from every part of the globe. And while print media mobilized an eye and radio an ear, the television offered both and represented a fascinating simulation of life. Development of electronic media at first brought hope that an idea about refining public opinion through media can come true. Effects that modern media have on social life have never led to actual realization of this idea; on the contrary, the realization of the principle 'fourth pillar of democracy' has never seemed further away. Besides, technology development favored the development of media which use new technologies to the maximum, while constantly innovating their forms and its role in the society. This is how media, according to Šuvaković, became one of the dimensions of the

⁴ *Op.cit.* 88.

globalization process which influenced 'media worldview – no longer accuracy, truth, independence of news, but commercialization of the news'⁵.

Theoretical framework

Professional public has already been dealing with the question of media influence for a long time. Media as means and sources of information are also a factor in socialization and a witness to great social changes; media have their role in intensifying conflicts between interest groups and deepening social division but also in overcoming these things; media in these turbulent times serve as a witness of conflict situation at all levels and very often function as accomplice in these situations. One could conclude that such contents is very appealing to media and even represent their focus. Thus, media rejected the concept of promoting common good and protecting public interests and became guardians of transnational capital and neoliberal ideology. In such situation, television singled out as a media with the greatest degree of dependence to those in power shaping the social paradigm in favor to the interests of corporative ideology with the final aim of maintaining *status quo*. This is why television is considered to be 'the extraordinary instrument of the symbolic order'⁶.

However, these intentions always come with the question of ethics in reporting and informing and presentation of truth in general. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as post-conflict society, faces many challenges and obstacles in its development which is the reason why media have such a big role in their Endeavour to empower a dialogue between many different groups in all spheres and it is especially important to act on empowering interreligious dialogue between different ethnic groups. Unethical reporting and inciting interethnic intolerance influence poor standing of B&H in the future.

Since the breakup of Yugoslavia in the beginning of the 90s of the last century, the disappearance of former central Yugoslav republic in the civil war, its constitution in Dayton and its different stabilization phases, B&H has been in search for a model of political organization and international consensus. Media, deeply divided along ethical lines themselves, followed all of the changes in the last two decades and emerged as one of the elements or factors of the fragmentation of BH society. In the works of some of the leading theorists of

⁵ Урош Шуваковић, *Транзиција: прилог социолошком проучавању друштвених промена* (Косовска Митровица: Филозофски факултет Универзитета у Приштини, 2015), 249.

⁶ Пјер Бурдије, *Нарцисово огледало – Расправа о телевизијском новинарству* (Београд: Клио, 2000), 31.

consensus democracy,⁷ like Lijphart and Lembrich, media were also categorised as one of the elements of fragmentation. They point out that members of every one of the fragments read 'their' newspapers, listen to 'their' radio stations, watch 'their' TV channels, just like they go to their church, celebrate their own holidays, attend their own schools. These authors believe that media system and practice truly reflect and maintain schisms on wider social, cultural, political and constitutional level. Theoretical generalisations by Lijphart and Lembrich mirror conditions and circumstances in B&H and its media sub-systems as well.⁸

Media coverage in print and electronic media for 2008 and 2015 – analysis and interpretation of the research results

For the analysis of media reporting of print and electronic media, the method of qualitative content analysis was used, because its application acts holistically in the research of social phenomena, that is, in 'understanding the meaning of certain phenomena in context'. Comparative analysis was used to include 34 copies of *Glas Srpske* and 39 copies of *Dnevni avaz*, or, in total, 106 texts about Russia and the following topics: headlines and contents dedicated to the attitude that Moscow-Russia took towards the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, headlines and contents about representation of the personality of the Russian president Vladimir Putin and headlines and contents about resource scramble in Southern and Eastern Europe by Russia¹⁰. The analysis included estimates of the attitudes¹¹ of the authors who wrote the

⁷ Consensus democracy is a word derived from the Latin word consensus, meaning consent or agreement, which makes consensus democracy an order based on consensus or agreement by all of the members. According to A. Lijphart and G. Lembrich, leading theorists of consensus democracy, the outcome of encounter between democracy and deeply divided societies does not have to be neither assimilation nor separation, but as Lembrich calls it concordance democracy or, according to Lijphart, consensus democracy. Consensus democracies are characterised by a high level of decentralisation, great autonomy and limited number of jurisdictions in joint bodies where common interests are agreed upon. Ненад Кеџмановић, *Елементи владавине* (Београд: Чигоја штампа, 2011), 55 – 57.

⁸ *Op. cit.* 56-57

⁹ Vladimir Ilić, Drugi aleksandrinski tekst o analizi sadržaja, *Sociologija* Vol. LIV, No. 3, (2012): 485.

¹⁰ Биљана Милошевић, Савремени штампани БиХ медији о Русији, *Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње* (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 149.

¹¹ An attitude can be defined as "a gained tendency to react positively or negatively toward persons, objects or situations around us or according to our own characteristics, ideas or actions". Mladen Zvonarević, *Socijalna psihologija* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1985), 124.

texts about the mentioned topics where they were seen as positive, negative and neutral. Ratio between these attitudes expressed in the daily papers from two entities is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Overview of the authors' attitudes present in mentioned texts from the research sample

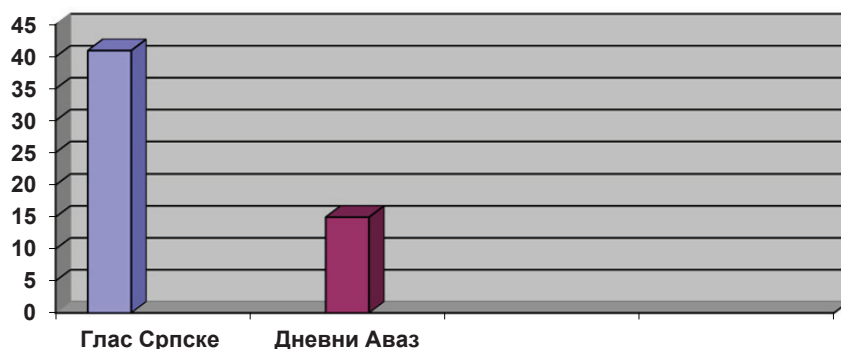
Name of the papers	Authors' attitudes						Total	
	Positive		Negative		Neutral			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Glas Srpske</i>	14	13,21%	4	3,77%	28	26,32%	46	43,3%
<i>Dnevni avaz</i>	4	3,77%	17	15,98%	39	36,66%	60	56,41
Total	18	16,98%	21	19,75%	67	62,98%	106	100%

Source: Биљана Милошевић, Савремени штампани БиХ медији о Русији, Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 149.

Just by looking at the sample of the authors' attitudes on any of the subjects about Russia for the period in question, it is discernable that newspapers *Dnevni avaz* (Federation B&H) leads in expressing negative and neutral attitudes, unlike newspapers *Glas Srpske* (Republic of Srpska) which expresses more positive and partially neutral attitudes on the same topics.

For the observed period, there were 39 texts about Russia's attitude toward the status of Kosovo and Metohija in *Glas Srpske* (or 41% of total texts) and 14 texts in *Dnevni avaz* (or 14,84%) (chart No. 1). On the given topic, the authors in *Glas Srpske* expressed positive attitude in two texts, negative in one text and neutral in 16 texts (chart No. 2).

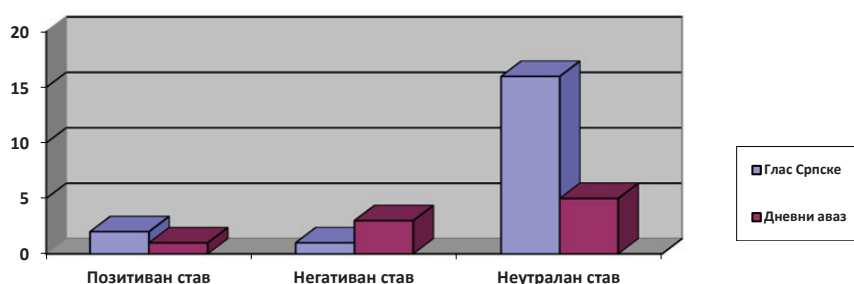
Chart No. 1 Overview of the texts about Russia's attitude towards the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in the daily newspapers *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz* presented in percentage



Source: *Op. cit.* 150

An overview of authors' opinions about Russia's attitude towards the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in the daily newspapers *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz* is given in the chart No. 2.

Chart No. 2 Overview of the authors' attitudes in the texts about Russia's attitude towards the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in the daily newspapers *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz*



Source: *Op. cit.* 151

The subject of analysis was also the language, as a writing style used by authors of those texts and categorized as the language of hatred, language of tolerance and biased language was also taken into consideration for the sample analysis (chart No. 3). In *Glas Srpske*, out of 19 processed texts on the giv-

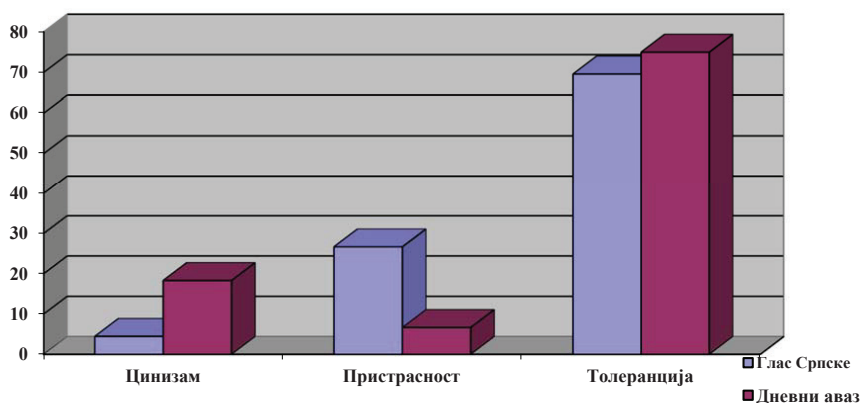
en topic, 2 texts expressed positive attitude of the author, one text expressed negative attitude and 16 texts expressed neutral attitude.¹² It is interesting that in both analyzed lists, the most represented neutral views of the authors in process of informing the reading public which is not that troublesome when compared to the fact of the total number of the texts with negative attitude in *Dnevni avaz* which was shocking but also very much revealing of the real emotions of people living in the Federation of B&H when the question of independence of Kosovo and Metohija is concerned. What is striking is tendentious hatred and wishing that Serbia and the Serbs lose another part of their territory. This conclusion is further underlined by the analysis results of writing style and the language used (chart No. 3): the language of hatred and cynicism is present in the texts from *Dnevni avaz* that deal with actions and decisions of president Vladimir Putin on the topic of the independence of Kosovo*. Texts whose content warns the West of possible consequences and Russia's reaction to violations of Kosovo*'s sovereignty have been noticed.

The media from the Federation of B&H support all attacks on Orthodoxy and Orthodox territories. The language of tolerance was used in newsflash when reporting on certain situation did not call for an emotional outburst. Most of the texts with neutral attitudes of its authors were written in the language of tolerance. In *Glas Srpske* of the time, there were only two texts that used language of cynicism and they refer to the portraits of the leader of Kosovo* Democratic Party, Hašim Tači who is responsible for putting Albanian theory into practice, that is, for mass destruction and persecution of the Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija, which is fully documented, as well as in the texts about Western actions in regard to Kosovo*.¹³ I suppose that in both of the given examples it is needless to ask a question why the language of hatred was used because any objective person can offer compelling arguments when citing many examples and situations of suffering of the Serbs through ages.

¹² Биљана Милошевић, Савремени штампани БиХ медији о Русији, Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 151.

¹³ *Op. cit.* 153.

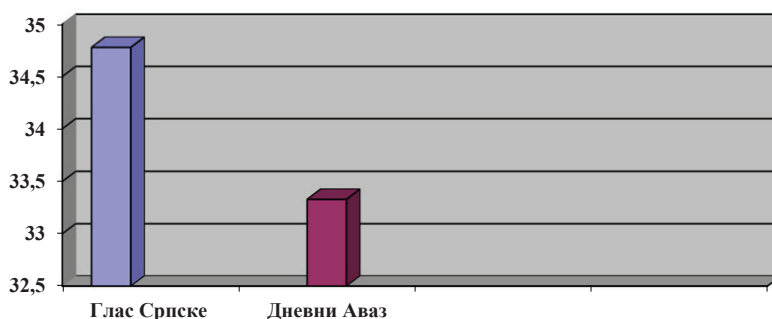
Chart No. 3 Overview of the language – writing style used by authors of the texts in *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz*



Source: *Op. cit.* 151

Texts about people from Russia abound with the name of the president Vladimir Putin whose name is mentioned in one third of all texts in *Dnevni avaz* (33,33%) and somewhat less than one half of the texts in *Glas Srpske* (34,78%) (Chart No. 4).

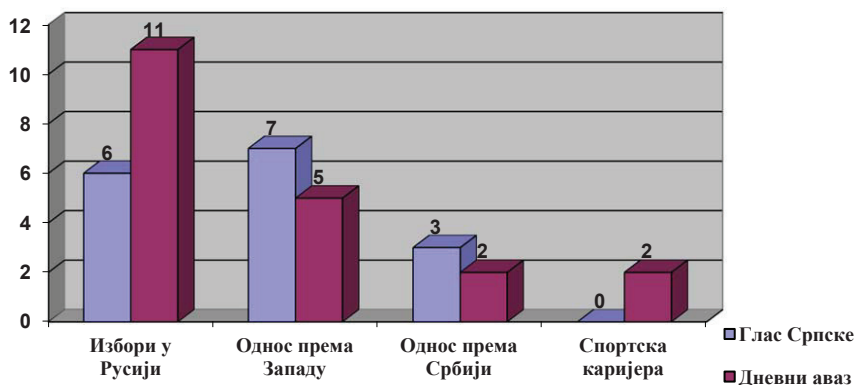
Chart No. 4 Overview of texts about the personality of President Vladimir Putin in the newspapers *Glas Srpske* and *Dnevni avaz* presented in percentage for the noted period



Source: *Op. cit.* 153

His name is mostly present in the context of elections for that period, his attitude towards the West, Serbia and his sport career (chart No. 5). There are 6 texts in *Glas Srpske* that deal with the problem and prejudices concerning the elections in Russia and 11 of them in *Dnevni avaz*. Seven texts in *Glas Srpske* deal with an opinion and understanding of the West by President Putin and 5 of them in *Dnevni avaz*. Relationship with Serbia and Putin's understanding the political circumstances at the time was a topic of 3 texts in *Glas Srpske* and 2 of them in *Dnevni avaz*. The papers from the Federation B&H also wrote on his dedication to sports and body culture; there were 2 texts that dealt with these topics.

Chart No. 5 *The context that the name of V. Putin is used in the newspapers Glas Srpske and Dnevni avaz*



Source: *Op. cit.* 154

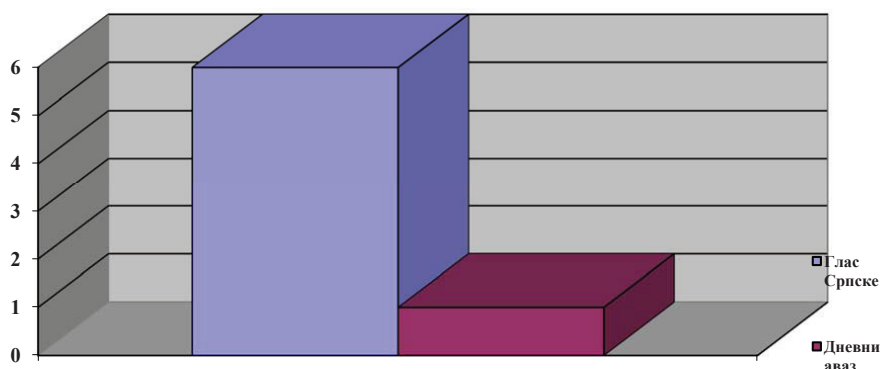
These results show how diligently every Russia's move is followed in regard to the Balkans and the world in general. The greatest amount of attention in *Dnevni avaz* was showed to the Russian election at the time and premonitions about a potential new president; one could even refer to a kind of 'fear' that the first man in Russia will again be someone who protects interests of Orthodoxy and who is willing to risk the reputation and power of the country to do so. For this reason, observing Putin's personality came into focus and his every move in public but also in private was closely monitored. It is obvious that his successful career in sport (*judo*) is seen and compared by the other side to "discipline and perseverance" in his politics.¹⁴ *Glas Srpske* paid attention to other socio-political topics that are not only related to Putin's sports career, which reveal an easiness among the Serbs, as ethnic community, with

¹⁴ *Op. cit.* 154

anyone similar to Putin coming to power or being favored by Putin himself as the potential president.¹⁵

Texts about 'the scramble' for resources in the Southern and Eastern Europe by Russia are represented the least since only 6 out of total 106 texts touched upon this theme (5,66%) - 5 texts in *Glas Srpske* (10,87%) and only one text in *Dnevni avaz* (1,66%) (chart No. 6).

Chart No. 6 Number of texts about the scramble for resources in Southern and Eastern Europe by Russia in the noted newspapers



Source: *Op. cit.* 155

Contents with titles such as 'Southern Flow' or 'Siberian Gas Pipeline' show that partnership between Russia and the Balkans dates back far into the past which is also the reason why Russia was presented as an absolute leader in world energy industry in 5 texts in 'Glas Srpske' although its production of gas equals the American.¹⁶ Since Serbia was planned to be the main energy junction of the gas line, it is not surprising that only one text for the relevant period about the topic was found in *Dnevni avaz* and even then only as news-flash.

Russian NO to the Resolution on Srebrenica

In the overview of the influence that media reports had on the perception and shaping of public opinion, the authors opted for the event that worsened already fragile multiethnic relationships in Bosnia and Herzegovina and di-

¹⁵ *Op. cit.* 154

¹⁶ *Op. cit.* 155

rectly influenced geopolitical processes, on one side between Bosnia and Herzegovina – Serbia – Russia, and on the other side between Russia – the West. The analysis included approach, interpretation, writing style/language and the influence on creating the attitude towards the significance of the events in the central news of the public broadcast systems¹⁷ of Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Resolution on Srebrenica, created by the Great Britain and sent to the United Nations Security Council to be adopted, among other things, contained the 'strongest condemnation of Srebrenica genocide as determined by the verdicts of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice ... it deprecates the denial of this genocide as a distraction of the endeavors towards reconciliation'¹⁸ and the word 'genocide' is mentioned 37 times. The Russian Federation opposed the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica pointing out that its content was 'politically motivated and that the guilt for the past was ascribed to one nation only. The approach that accuses only one side as responsible in committing war crimes is illegitimate and can cause even greater division in Bosnia and Herzegovina society'.¹⁹ Russia's attitude was backed up by Serbia and Republic of Srpska which openly advocated and asked Russia to veto the British Resolution. Opposite Russian attitude, the United States, Great Britain and France insisted on the strongest condemnation of the 'horrible events in Srebrenica which were a genocide'²⁰, while the resident representative of the United States by the United Nations emphasized that 'the genocide was committed in Srebrenica where 8000 Bosniaks were murdered and that the Russian veto breaks hearts of the Srebrenica victims. The denial of the genocide not only insults the victims but also stands as an obstacle towards the reconciliation'.²¹ Through the British Resolution, the West indirectly accused Russia for dest-

¹⁷ Public broadcasting service is a non-profit, independent radio and television organization founded in the name of general publicity and financed from public incomes. It provides various, balanced and highly valuable programs which satisfy needs of most citizens and the public in general without any bias and discrimination. Rade Veljanovski, *Javni RTV servis u službi građana* (Beograd: CLIO, 2005), 28.

¹⁸ Политика, front page, July 8, 2015, <http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/33>, [12.02.2018.]

¹⁹ Excerpt from the speech of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Churkin at the session of the UN Security Council on July 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZhnylprBfU>, Dnevnik 2, RTV FB&H 08.07.2015., [12.02.2018.]

²⁰ Excerpt from the speech of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Churkin at the session of the UN Security Council on July 8, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZhnylprBfU>, Dnevnik 2, RTV FB&H 08.07.2015., [12.02.2018.]

²¹ Excerpt from the speech of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Churkin at the session of the UN Security Council on July 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZhnylprBfU>, Dnevnik 2, RTV FB&H 08.07.2015., [12.02.2018.]

abilization of the current situation in the Balkans and for threatening the cross-ethnic reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the appeal of the ambassador Churkin not to vote for the Resolution and prevent further deterioration of the political differences which will increase the tensions in the region, the resident members of the United Nations still opted for voting. The outcome of the voting: 10 votes *for* the Resolution were not enough for adopting the Resolution on Srebrenica because of one Russian *against*.

The news from *East River* on the Western Initiative failure caused divided reactions and opposite interpretations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Publicly outspoken opinions and attitudes on the Resolution which did not pass reflected a deep ethnic division in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, essentially, followed the line of geopolitical differences in interests and approaches by Russia and the West related to this region. Reports by local media about the events from the United Nations Security Council meeting were influenced by entity affiliations. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Russian opposition was described in negative context, presenting the information in *a very emotional way*²² with emphasized empathy towards the victims and over exaggerated dive of the communicator/journalist into the feelings and needs of the public while, at the same time, projecting pieces of information as fictive truth that Russia is the proven enemy of the Bosniak people.

In the central news of the public broadcast service of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the main news was that British Resolution on Srebrenica did not come through in the United Nations Security Council; however, instead of the more thorough report on the event itself, which would be expected in a professional approach, the news host announced that the story will be broadcasted in the upcoming part of the news. In the background there was footage of Potočari Memorial Center and the host announced the news story about the beginning of official commemoration of Srebrenica event by peaceful march under the name of "Through paths of Death to Freedom". The creator of the disclosure model of the manipulation in media, French theorist Philippe Breton refers to 'lever' as an instrument of the *cognitive amalgam*²³ which is used to create certain positive and negative associations among the viewers: the central news of the public broadcast service of the Federation B&H used as lever a so called 'switch video' in duration of 35 seconds where archived footages were combined: a close shot of the woman weeping, black-out, a shot of the names of the dead in Potočari cemetery, blackout, a shot of the two men carrying a bag with mortal remains, repetition of the shot with names of the dead on the cemetery, a close shot of the man weeping, a close

²² Žaket Dejl, *Novinarska etika – moralna odgovornost u medijima* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2007) due: Džejms Poter, *Medijska pismenost* (Beograd: MULTIMEDIA CLIO, 2008), 29.

²³ Filip Breton, *Izmanipulisana reč* (Beograd: CLIO, 2000)

shot of the man holding to his head, a wide shot of the covered coffins, black-out, a shot of names of the dead in Potočari cemetery with the blood spreading over it and, at the end, the image with the title 'Srebrenica – 20 years'. 'Media truth' such as this one in the central news of the public broadcast service of the Federation B&H was construed by using two techniques of manipulation: framing and amalgams which point out the intention of the editors to 'focus' on a certain theme in a specific angle of perception by creating false logic relationships in situations when two matters are not conditioning each other but are still presented as such. The news continues with the announcement by the host who repeats that the Resolution was not adopted in the United Nations Security Council and quotes the attitude of the US representative that *the Russian veto breaks hearts of the Srebrenica victims' families*. Along the repetition, as one of the manipulation techniques, the cognitive amalgam (positive or negative association) through established *laver of poison*²⁴ and with regard to context is used to link two terms/processes. Instead of the announced story of events from New York, what comes next is a live coverage from the place Liplje where so called peace march started. Reactions and emotions of the survivors and victims' families are discussed. The journalist, with the ambiguous term 'some say', interprets the event and reports that the Russia's attitude was expected because of its politics towards the Balkans and Serbia. This type of reporting represents a demagogical form of speech characterized by ambiguity and lack of arguments and therefore blurs the sense of the message so that the statement presented (that the Russian politics is known) is left without any arguments. Then, the news host again announces that the Resolution was not adopted because of the Russian veto and proceeds with the story about the course of the United Nations Security Council meeting where all the participants in the event are included. What follows next is a live coverage from New York by the journalist from FTV who comes out with imprecise and unfounded statements such as that 'the world diplomacy and conflict between the East and the West chose Bosnia and Herzegovina as their scapegoat'. However, he remains completely silent on the Russian insistence that one nation cannot be blamed for the events from the past. In the given context and the emotional attitude, such form of reporting contains the language of hatred. The elements of such language are particularly present in the next story which includes statements by the survivors and families of the victims. Here are some of those: *We know that there were a lot of Russians in the protected area of Srebrenica who took part in the war, killed Bosniaks, and committed genocide... I call upon all Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond to boycott everything related to Russia... etc.*

²⁴ *Op. cit.*

In the FTV central news broadcasted on 8th of July 2015, which was analyzed during our research, editors intentionally tried to construe media truth, adjusting their own ideas, intentions and goals to the viewers' expectations. France Vreg refers to this as *functional communication*²⁵ which occurs when communicator construes the significance and sense of the event and indulges feelings and emotions of the viewers by offering empathy instead of responsibility. Furthermore, the principle of indexing is visible in the approach to the source of information²⁶ (Potter, 2008: 273) when the news is homogenized by using the interlocutors' statements which fit into an already formed attitudes and opinions. The FTV editorial board introduced the statements and interlocutors who commented on the mentioned event in identically determined fundamental values: that the Russian attitude towards Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot come to good, that facing the past and accepting the 'genocide' in Srebrenica is a precondition to the reconciliation, that the Russian attitude towards Bosniaks is traditionally hostile and so on. The right of the other side to tell their own story and opinion, which is one of the fundamental principles of ethical journalism, was given as late as in the 20th minute of the FTV central news! The reporter from Banja Luka itemized that the Government of Republika Srpska held a special meeting where Srebrenica victims were honored and where it was concluded that not adopting the Resolution on Srebrenica prevented destabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region; furthermore, it was also stated that the President of Republika Srpska expressed his gratitude to Russia, China and Serbia and mentioned that the President at that time Tomislav Nikolić said that Russia was a great friend to Serbia and that a horrible crime was committed in Srebrenica. Live coverage from Banja Luka was ended by the replay of the 'switch video' with the intention to activate *laver of poison* by using cognitive amalgam such as: *aggressors, enemies, etc.* in the mind of the information recipient.

In the FTV central news from 8th of July 2015, 24 minutes were provided for the events related to the Resolution on Srebrenica, which was not adopted, where the word 'genocide' was mentioned 37 times. Even though the official term proposed by the Great Britain was the Resolution on Srebrenica, the phrase the Resolution on Srebrenica Genocide was used continuously in the central news.

The public broadcaster of FB&H used the distorted image to create a false mutual dependency based on ethnic background (Russians are orthodox, traditional allies and protectors of the interests of the Serbs, Serbia and Republic of Srpska) and crime committed (Bosniaks are the only victims, genocide was

²⁵ Franc Vreg, *Društveno komuniciranje* (Zagreb: Centar za informacije i publicitet, 1975)

²⁶ Džejms Potter, *Medijska pismenost* (Beograd: MULTIMEDIA CLIO, 2008), 273.

committed in Srebrenica, the Serbs are responsible ones, they are protected by the Russians). The inevitable conclusion is that Russia was responsible for the events in Srebrenica. Accountable, unbiased and objective reporting, which ought to be the foundation of the public service, demands accountable media, accountable journalists and accountable viewers in order to work in public interest. The analysis of the content displayed in the news from 8th of July 2015 shows deviation from the fundamental principles of objective, unbiased and ethical reporting. Furthermore, the approach used by Federal TV (determining the importance and significance of the story, selection of its content and overemphasized empathy), brought to life the event two decades old and thus caused a crisis situation²⁷. The situation related to the unadopted Resolution on Srebrenica was misused for creating 'media truth' in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and latent forms of crisis situation in the attitudes of media in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Russia are still present.

In the central news of the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska, 16 minutes were provided for the events related to the unadopted Resolution on Srebrenica. In the trailer (preview of the news content) there were three stories: Russia breaks Britain with veto, illustrated with the footage from the United Nations Security Council meeting, where the Russian Ambassador, Vitaly Churkin raised his hand high to vote NO and the follow-up text under the title 'Success in New York', then the story about the president of Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik who expressed gratitude to Russia and China for being persistent – Prevented Destabilization of the Region, and finally the story about the conclusions from the special session of the Government of Republic of Srpska – Commemorating the victims; Gratitude to Russia, China and Serbia. It was visible already from the trailer that the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska approached the mentioned event responsibly and without triumphalism since the unadopted Resolution on Srebrenica was the most important and the most significant decision for Republic of Srpska. Only the title 'Success in New York' points to a biased attitude of the editorial referred only to accredited attitude of Republic of Srpska that the unadopted Resolution on Srebrenica was the only right decision, leaving out the attitude from the other entity. The value of the news in this case was determined by informative media approach. The news story from the United Nations Security Council meeting starts with the listing of the countries that supported the Resolution, 10 of them along with the USA, Great Britain. It is pointed out that all of this was not enough *to accomplish the goal of one part of the international community to declare Serbian nation as genocidal*. Taking into

²⁷ Vladimir Barović, *Medijsko izvještavanje u kriznim situacijama* (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, 2012), 55.

account the nature of the context, this comment made by the journalist disrupts the principle of balance in its informative approach by simplifying the assessment and stating the opinion of one side only. The balance is one of the criteria of objectivity.²⁸ After the news story from New York, where all sides and participants were included, the statement of the president of Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, was broadcasted where it was pointed out that no triumphalism should be shown, that he did not feel any personally, and that the gratitude towards Russia should be expressed. Wanting to emphasize the danger and political incorrectness of the Resolution on Srebrenica, which was considered by the President as *cynical and disastrous for the Serbs*, he reminded to all the situations from the past when the British worked against the Serbian nation. This is the only example, in overviewed media reports, that the British Resolution on Srebrenica was perceived from the historical angle. The President of Republic of Srpska brought these facts into direct relation with the Resolution and introduced this as a deliberate intention of the Great Britain to harm the Serbian nation by putting 'genocidal' label on them. The broadcast then showed the statement of the Prime Minister of Republic of Srpska, Željka Cvijanović, where the respect for the victims and their families was emphasized, as well as gratitude to those who highlighted the danger of the Resolution, and the initiative of the Government to improve the life quality in Srebrenica. In the central news of the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska from 8th of July 2015, the statements of the Serbia officials were broadcasted as well as the story with opinions and attitudes of some of the politicians and citizens from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The analysis of the content displayed in the central news of the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska about the events related to the unadopted Resolution on Srebrenica in the United Nations Security Council shows that this public service used a balanced approach to present to the public a complete story behind the mentioned event. The news emphasized the elements in favor of Republic of Srpska, Serbia and Russia; however, the standpoint of the parties that proposed the Resolution, the ones who backed it up and the Bosniak representatives, were not neglected. In the content broadcasted by the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska, the word 'genocide' was not mentioned at all except in the statements by Sarajevo residents who commented on the unadopted Resolution.

Unlike the public broadcast service of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which created crisis with its reporting in that entity, the reporting of the public broadcast service of Republic of Srpska did not raise any tensions in that entity or create any kind of unpleasant atmosphere.

²⁸ Džejms Poter, *Medijska pismenost* (Beograd: MULTIMEDIA CLIO, 2008), 289.

As our analysis has shown, the role of media in creating reality and influencing public in picking a side is very important. The situation did not change since 2008 and the reporting of print media on subjects related to the role of Russian Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina by two public broadcast services is the same as in July, 2015. The differences in approach and interpretation of the events are in line with the entity division in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as geopolitical preferences and interests. The effects of different informational approaches carry on and continuously reappear. Among many examples, for this occasion we chose two of them whose consequences are still present: the first one is the attack on the Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, during commemoration in Potočari (three days after the United Nations Security Council meeting on British resolution) which remains unsolved, and the second one is a recent visit of the President of Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, to East Sarajevo where the monument was erected and dedicated to the Russian Ambassador in the United Nations Security Council, the late Vitaly Churkin, as a token of appreciation for the Russian NO.

Final reflection

The paper underlined the importance of media role regardless of whether it dealt with criticism, judgment, sanctioning of the language of hatred, or the promotion of the differences. Because of its role in informing the public and creating the public opinion, media are the ones that have equal power to participate in creating the atmosphere of intolerance or aggression between the certain groups but also to promote tolerance as a basis of any well regulated society and essential precondition for the development of an individual. The media in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflect the image of the whole society which is divided by entity, ethnic and political principle. As a society, with visible divisions based on ethnic groups, we are facing the biased forms of reporting in media because the most common policy of public media is based on defending the national interests. According to its Constitution, Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities and three constitutional ethnic groups can be applied to the media as well. Everyone follows the politics of their ethnic and political elites, mutually confronted and with no basic consensus on the future of the country. Normative thesis that the media should be independent critical instance opposed to the political conflicts in the contemporary society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and also the factor in creating democratic public has been commonly accepted. This paper used its research

results and analysis to put such a normative approach into perspective. The goal of consensus democracy in the political theory and political praxis in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not to evolve into something else, but to keep the fragmentary society within the boundaries of the stable and functional whole. The role of media would thus be to support this specific equilibrium and not to undermine it. Media activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina is performed in two directions, depending on the territorial-national and ethnic affiliation – in the direction of the centralized and unitary country, advocated by the media of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the opposite direction maintained by the media from Republic of Srpska which are in favor of recession and disintegration of the country. The analysis has shown that social, political and institutional heritage determines the flow of the media transformation, their nature and character. Ethnic principles of organization of all authority instances in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are derived from its constitutional structure and founded on ethnic and national identities, are reflected to all areas of social life where the national key is the decisive factor in all processes. The public in Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into three ethnic communicational communities. The process started in the 90s, after the first multi-party elections in the Ex-Yugoslavia state, was further reinforced during the war in the period of 1992-1995, and until today remained fundamentally unaltered. The relation *us* and *them*, or *ours* and *theirs*, represents a dominant political discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was constructed as dominant public discourse by media. During the civil and ethnic conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, overemphasized war propaganda was replaced by more subtle methods with dominant processes of imposing agendas in order to create reality suitable for political and interest groups.

With the insight into the gathered results and their interpretation, we reached the conclusion that, Russia was depicted as the aggressor in the Balkans and beyond in the newspapers from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the situation in *Glas Srpske* is different (in *Avaz* there is a policy to treat unorthodox as an endangered category).²⁹ Russian interests in the Balkans, in the historical context, mostly coincided with the national interests of the Serbs and it was surely expected that the existence and protection of the Serbs in the Balkans are in Russian interest.³⁰ This is somewhat realized by the presidency of Putin who stated in June 2001 that: 'Strategic importance of south-east Europe, for Russia, is not only defined by geopo-

²⁹ Биљана Милошевић, Савремени штампани БиХ медији о Русији, *Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње* (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 156.

³⁰ Радослав Гаџиновић, Русија и безбједност Балкана, *Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње* (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 78.

litical factors but also by historical, social and cultural closeness of Russian and Serbian people³¹. On the other hand, when one considers the style of writing of RS media, the negative representation of the West and Islam is not present as much as the negative representation of the Serbs and Orthodoxy on the other side. These media write confidently about the reputation Putin enjoys among the people, about the trust people have in Russia in regard to the situation in Kosovo*, and the main value they point out is patriotism³² because Kosovo and Metohija are perceived by the Serb people as the basis of national consciousness and collective identity. Orthodox Russia, historically the ally of the Serb, global military, financial and economic power that almost always represented and defended the interests of the Serbs is seen as the threat by the Bosniak political elite and common people. The media in the Federation B&H report on topics about Russia in a pronounced negative way. Cooperation between Russia and the Balkans, or a part of the Balkans, represents *resistance to the globalization of violence*³³ coming from the West. Absolutely opposite opinion is present in RS where Russia is seen as a loyal friend and the ally of the Serbs. Media reports also share a unique attitude with the national and political leadership which is benevolent and one-sided about everything that refers to Russia and Russian people.

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³¹ *Op. cit.* 80.

³² Биљана Милошевић, Савремени штампани БиХ медији о Русији, *Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње* (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008)

³³ Лазо Ристић, Сарадња Русије и Балкана као отпор глобализацији насиља. *Русија и Балкан-питање безбједности и сарадње* (Београд: Институт за политичке студије Београд, 2008), 87.

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