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Drazen Pavlica - NATIONAL TELEVISION STATIONS STRUCTURE OF ACTORS AND TONE OF COVERAGE

There is hardly any doubt as to what painted media landscape in this pre-election campaign. From the day one of our monitoring activities, we were faced with the omnipresence of Aleksandar Vucic in the media, considerably more in the role of a Prime Minister than as a President of the ruling party. The findings of our monitoring activities, carried out in 2012 and 2014¹ and, as we believe, of all previous monitorings since the multi-party system was introduced, show that no person before him has ever usurped so much media space. Multiple daily appearances on TV screens have made Vucic an unparalleled sovereign of media space.

Just to give some indication of the degree of his omnipresence in the media, it should be pointed out that Vucic was given the total of 28.112 seconds (some 468 minutes) of presence on television stations with nationwide outreach. In percentages, Vucic accounted for as much as 27% of the total time which analysed television stations dedicated to the actors of the election process. When the said 28.112 seconds are broken down, it can be seen that on average, Vucic accounted for somewhat less than seventeen minutes of daily presence in the media, that is, over three minutes per television station. The mentioned data relate to the total time of Vucic's presence in the media, regardless of whether he was portrayed in a positive, neutral or negative light. It is important to note that the mentioned seconds represent the aggregate time of his appearance in the role of a Prime Minister, on the one hand, and a President of the ruling party, on the other. The time asymmetry between these two roles is highly pronounced (21.229 as against 6.883 seconds, in favour of the Prime Minister role) and shows what the media portrait of Aleksandar Vucic was built on. Apart from the block of time dedicated to elections (strictly limited media space in the pre-election period), cameras tirelessly followed Vucic's every step.

The figures we laid out will not fully show the extent of Vucic's media supremacy if we do not put them in the reference framework for comparison purposes. Thus, Ivica Dacic, whose roles are largely in conformity with Vucic's, was disproportionately underrepresented by the analysed television stations. Dacic received eight times less coverage than Vucic (3.256 seconds). This difference is particularly pronounced when it comes to their appearance in the role of party officials (1.062 as against 21.229 seconds). The 20:1 appearance ratio of the Prime Minister to the First Deputy Prime Minister perfectly shows who was at the epicentre of media discourse. To obtain the most functional findings, we added to these two mentioned officials Bojan Pajtic, the Prime

¹ Reports on our previous monitoring activities can be found at <http://www.mediamonitor.rs>.

Minister of the Provincial Government and Democratic Party leader. He was somewhat more present than Dacic (3.660 seconds), solely because he appeared more in the role of a party official.

It will be interesting to take a glance at the media presence of the President, Tomislav Nikolic, in the pre-election time. The final calculation shows that on all television stations put together, Nikolic appeared for somewhat less than 2.000 seconds. To a certain extent, this information could be interpreted as the media pushing off the stage someone who takes an important political position. At the same time, the distribution of favourability attached to his presentation is within the expected range of the research.

The dominant representation of Vucic already leads to the conclusion that when it comes to favourability, he will also have the advantage. Either as a Government official or a party actor, Vucic is certainly portrayed more favourably than Dacic or Pajtic. Thus, in 90.9% of the news items, Vucic was shown affirmatively, whereas for the First Deputy Prime Minister (78.4%) and the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina (80.9%) this percent was evidently lower. At the same time, Vucic and Dacic had a small percentage of unfavourable representation as government and party officials, while the representation of Pajtic was quite the opposite. This is supported by the finding that Pajtic, as a party leader, was portrayed in an (extremely) negative light in 42.2% of the cases. If, according to the foregoing, Vucic can be called a crucial protagonist of these elections, then it is safe to say that certain media did their best to assign the role of a central antagonist to Pajtic. It should be noted that there were also television stations which did not participate in this drama created by the media, at least not in the part in which Pajtic was cast as a perfect antagonist. Further in the text we intend to present the analysis of each individual television station.

Among the electoral list of candidates, the movement *Dosta je bilo* (*Enough is Enough*) was disregarded by the media to the highest extent. The figure of 1.473 seconds speaks for itself, however, this finding carries more weight if we know that, for example, *Zavetnici* (*Oath Keepers*) and *Levica Srbije* (*the Serbian Left*) were given much more space in news programmes. When we look at the list of candidates representing ethnic minorities, we can see that *Bošnjačka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka* (*the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak*) considerably surpasses all others. From the perspective of favourability, the most unfavourably distributed representation is that of *SDA Sandžaka* (*the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak*) (33.5% of unfavourable representation, 56.5% of favourable representation) and of *DS* (*Democratic Party*) (29.8% of unfavourable representation, 59.2% of favourable representation). It is important to note that there were no sufficient exceptions to this rule to base the media image of the list of candidates on their leaders.

Finally, it is crucial to analyse the extent of participation which different supervisory bodies and critical public had in the modelling and improving of the overall election process and the media discourse. What particularly raises concerns is almost complete absence of supervisory bodies from

the analysed television stations. Thus, REM (*Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media*) was given just two seconds while the Anti-Corruption Agency reached the insignificant eleven seconds. When it comes to the actors of critical public, such as various analysts and civil society representatives, they, quite expectedly, took incomparably more media space. However, this airtime was also insufficient to make us conclude that the critical public did its invaluable social task responsibly and appropriately – particularly when we take into account the predominant approach used in such news items.

Table 1 Actors - all television stations (in seconds and percentages)

	N	%
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	21.229	20.4
Government of Serbia	11.836	11.4
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD – SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	7.487	7.2
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	6.883	6.6
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	6.073	5.8
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	5.139	4.9
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	4.689	4.5
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	4.059	3.9
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	3.203	3.1
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	3.006	2.9
City of Belgrade	2.314	2.2
Reporters	2.158	2.1
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	1.994	1.9
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	1.954	1.9
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	1.827	1.8
Public opinion researchers	1.747	1.7
Analysts	1.717	1.7
Bošnjačka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	1.690	1.6
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	1.668	1.6
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	1.473	1.4
Other parties	1.338	1.3
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	1.259	1.2
Savez vojvodanskih Madara (<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)-Ištvan Pastor	1.129	1.1
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	1.070	1.0
CSOs	1.051	1.0
Citizens	903	0.9
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	654	0.6
Foreign actors	628	0.6

Minority parties	547	0.5
Dušan Bajatovic, Srbijagas	441	0.4
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia	419	0.4
Local officials	355	0.3
Dragan Vucicevic, Informer daily	267	0.3
Republikanska stranka(<i>the Republican Party</i>)	252	0.2
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	236	0.2
Složno za Srbiju (<i>United for Serbia</i>)	138	0.1
Mayor of the town of Niš	104	0.1
Patriarch Irinej	97	0.1
Ombudsman	55	0.1
State Audit Institution	40	0.0
OSCE	34	0.0
Meho Omerovic	27	0.0
Commissioner for the information of public importance	21	0.0
Anti-Corruption Agency	11	0.0
Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media	2	0.0
Other	601	0.6
Total	103.825	100.0

Table 2 Campaign of officials on television stations, combined (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Prime Minister of Serbia	631	1.298	19.300	3,0	6,1	90,9
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS(<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	226	88	6.569	3,3	1,3	95,4
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	41	188	833	3,9	17,7	78,4
Ivica Dacic, SPS(<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	60	64	2.070	2,7	2,9	94,3
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	100	25	529	15,3	3,8	80,9
Bojan Pajtic, Democratic Party	1.270	144	1.592	42,2	4,8	53,0

RTS – Serbian Broadcasting Corporation

It is evident that the image of Bojan Pajtic in the media, notably in the capacity of the President of the Democratic Party, represents one of a more indicative divides between television stations. Undeniably, RTS is among one of the television stations which did not add drama to an unenviable role in which Pajtic was cast. Quite the opposite, in the news of RTS, he was mentioned in a negative context only one time. However, an unexpected finding is worth mentioning. Namely, as the Provincial Prime Minister, Pajtic was not given sufficient time on RTS (64 seconds). In a particular way, RTS silently marginalized an important political figure.

RTS not only largely departed from the usual manner in which Pajtic was portrayed by the majority of television stations, but also differed in portraying Vucic. Namely, RTS showed more critical tones when presenting Vucic (6.4% as Prime Minister and 9.8% as the President of SNS) compared to what was recorded in general findings. At the same time, it was RTS that

accounted for a higher percent of unfavourable presentation of the party led by Vucic (20%). On the other hand, Vucic received the highest representation on RTS, but was not given as much advantage over Dacic as on other television stations. The First Deputy Prime Minister and SPS leader came considerably close, however, still vastly trailing behind Vucic's media presence (4.702 Vucic's to 1.087 Dacic's seconds).

When we analyse all the actors who participated in the election process, we can see that in terms of representation, the Government of Serbia comes second. Thus, the Prime Minister was present in the media almost twice as much as all other members of his Cabinet put together. The news of RTS were, to a certain extent, open to direct their criticism at the Government - both its Prime Minister (250 seconds) and individual members and in general (175 seconds). It is interesting to note that only SDA of Sandžak exceeded 200 seconds of unfavourable presence (more precisely, 217 seconds), which accounts for 38.8% of the total time taken by the mentioned party.

Table 3 Tone of presenting the actors on RTS (in percentages)

Actors	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Government of Serbia	7.6	16.2	76.2	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	6.4	3.0	90.6	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
City of Belgrade	8.0	7.0	85.0	100.0
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0.0	6.5	93.5	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	9.8	0.0	90.2	100.0
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	0.8	11.1	88.1	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	20.0	13.9	66.1	100.0
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	11.4	13.2	75.4	100.0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	1.8	4.2	94.1	100.0
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	2.8	39.3	58.0	100.0
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0.0	4.1	95.9	100.0
Savez vojvodanskih Madara (<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)- Ištvan Pastor	0.0	2.8	97.2	100.0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	0.3	3.4	96.3	100.0
Bošnjacka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	0.0	4.9	95.1	100.0
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	38.8	9.3	51.9	100.0
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	4.3	8.9	86.8	100.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	25.5	74.5	0.0	100.0

Ombudsman	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	0.3	1.8	97.9	100.0
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	0.0	4.1	95.9	100.0
Složno za Srbiju (<i>United for Serbia</i>)	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Dosta je bilo(<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	0.0	17.7	82.3	100.0
Minority Parties	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Other parties	0.4	15.7	84.0	100.0
Patriarch Irinej	0.0	10.9	89.1	100.0
CSOs	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Citizens	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Analysts	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Dragan Vucicevic, Informer daily	4.0	0.0	96.0	100.0
Foreign actors	5.2	43.0	51.8	100.0
Reporters	0.0	92.3	7.7	100.0
Public opinion researchers	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Meho Omerovic	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	8.4	4.4	87.2	100.0
Republikanska stranka(<i>the Republican Party</i>)	0.0	1.5	98.5	100.0
Mayor of the town of Niš	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table4 Campaign of officials on RTS (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	250	117	3.541	6,4	3,0	90,6
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS(<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	78	0	716	9,8	0,0	90,2
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	33	43	512	5,6	7,3	87,1
Ivica Dacic, SPS(<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	0	5	494	0,0	1,0	99,0
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	0	0	64	0,0	0,0	100,0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	1	6	322	0,3	1,8	97,9

TV Pink

There are plenty of undeniable reasons to conclude that the media discourse of TV Pink should be taken as a disgraceful example. We will try to summarise some of the reasons for this, all in the light of media matrices used for the presentation of the election participants. Firstly, no other television presented Vucic as uniformly as TV Pink. This being said, we take into account that as a Prime Minister he was shown positively in 98.4% of the time, whereas as the SNS President he accounted for somewhat less (96.9%). TV Pink tried very hard to create the atmosphere of enthusiastic support to Aleksandar Vucic, which was boosted by the quantity of time they dedicated to him—the largest quantity of time among all analysed television stations. The disbalance of presence between the Prime Minister Vucic and the Minister Dacic assumed huge proportions since the former was given almost fifty times the time quantity of the latter. Is it even worth mentioning

that such phenomenon was not nearly recorded in our monitoring activities carried out in 2012 and 2014?

Even a superficial analysis of research findings shows that a clear demarcation line was drawn in the media discourse of this television. The ruling parties and the election participants of such parties were cast in a positive light, whereas the political opponents were portrayed in an extremely negative light. Among the latter, Bojan Pajtic, that is, DS (63.6%), had the worst treatment (as much as 69% of unfavourable representation in the capacity of DS President), whereas the movement Dosta je bilo (*Enough is Enough*) did somewhat better (50.7%). The coalition DSS-Dveri closes the circle of election rivals who were, more often than not, put into an unfavourable context by TV Pink, albeit to a lesser extent than the aforementioned actors.

Therefore, this television station had the longest list of unsuitable political actors, where in the case of Pajtic and DS, a downright political defamation was applied. Contrary to a homologous, daily and excessive affirmation of Vucic, TV Pink continuously attacked Bojan Pajtic and DS party. They put their entire discursive resources in the service of such media strategy, including analysts, citizens, and civil society organisations.

Table 5 Tone of presenting the actors on TV Pink (in percentages)

Actor	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Government of Serbia	0.0	11.1	88.8	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	0.1	1.6	98.4	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	58.1	0.0	41.9	100.0
City of Belgrade	0.0	0.3	99.7	100.0
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0.0	0.7	99.3	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	2.4	0.7	96.9	100.0
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	0.4	16.4	83.2	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	4.1	3.6	92.2	100.0
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	63.6	10.4	26.0	100.0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	2.9	7.9	89.2	100.0
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	26.1	17.3	56.6	100.0
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	29.2	4.0	66.8	100.0
Savez vojvodanskih Mađara (<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)- Istvan Pastor	0.0	8.7	91.3	100.0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	3.8	11.0	85.2	100.0
Bošnjačka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	0.0	7.5	92.5	100.0
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia-Oath Keepers</i>)	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	21.3	78.7	0.0	100.0
Anti-Corruption Agency	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	69.0	8.2	22.8	100.0
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	0.2	11.5	88.3	100.0
Složno za Srbiju (<i>United for Serbia</i>)	0.0	58.1	41.9	100.0
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	50.7	11.1	38.2	100.0
Minority Parties	0.0	5.6	94.4	100.0
Dušan Bajatovic, Srbijagas	54.7	16.0	29.3	100.0
Local officials	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Other parties	60.0	0.0	40.0	100.0
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
CSOs	0.0	34.7	65.3	100.0
Citizens	0.0	92.6	7.4	100.0
Analysts	0.7	65.3	33.9	100.0
Dragan Vucicevic, Informer daily	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Foreign actors	0.0	51.0	49.0	100.0
Reporters	17.9	68.3	13.8	100.0
Mayor of the town of Niš	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6 Campaign of officials on TV Pink (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	4	98	6.109	0,1	1,6	98,4
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS(<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	37	11	1.518	2,4	0,7	96,9
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	1	30	95	0,8	23,8	75,4
Ivica Dacic, SPS(<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	0	0	352	0,0	0,0	100,0
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	18	0	13	58,1	0,0	41,9
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	946	112	313	69,0	8,2	22,8

TV Prva

TV Prva also depicted Bojan Pajtic, as the party president, in a negative tone by more than 50% (53.9%). As opposed to TV Pink, TV Prva dedicated to Pajtic much less time. According to what we saw on RTS, SDA of Sandžak(*the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak*) also accounted for a high percentage of unfavourable representation on TV Prva (51.4%). Now it would be appropriate to explain that so much unfavourable presence of SDA of Sandžak(*the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak*) is the consequence of the fact that Sulejman Ugljanin sent the request to the UN forces to come to Sandžak. While the percentages of unfavourable presentation of the movement *Enough is Enough* and coalition DSS-Dveri dropped below 10%, SRS (*Serbian Radical Party*) remained above 20%, as on TV Pink.

Out of all television stations with national coverage, TV Prva showed the smallest range of representation of the Prime Minister and the remaining members of the Government. When it comes to Vucic, general and individual findings basically match; however, in the capacity of the Serbian Progressive Party President he is favourably portrayed in 99.3% of the cases. This is the best positive score Vucic achieved in any of the television stations, either in the role of the Prime Minister or as a party leader.

One of our characteristic findings is that Ivica Dacic, as the member of the Government, was presented in a neutral light in as much as 78% of the time. Such neutral presentation of Dacic could be taken as a particular pattern, where this percent is by far the highest on TV Prva.

Table7 Tone of presenting the actors on TV Prva (in percentages)

Actor	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Government of Serbia	4.0	14.1	82.0	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	2.1	12.3	85.6	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	24.3	1.0	74.8	100.0
City of Belgrade	0.2	3.7	96.1	100.0
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	5.2	4.0	90.8	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	0.1	0.5	99.3	100.0
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	0.0	1.7	98.3	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	7.5	6.5	86.0	100.0
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka(<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	22.4	5.9	71.7	100.0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	3.8	4.8	91.3	100.0
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	20.8	52.4	26.8	100.0
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	3.0	7.9	89.2	100.0
Savez vojvodanskih Madara(<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)- Ištvan Pastor	0.0	18.9	81.1	100.0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	9.1	6.1	84.8	100.0
Bošnjačka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	0.0	3.2	96.8	100.0
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	51.4	2.9	45.7	100.0
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	7.6	5.6	86.7	100.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	13.1	82.7	4.2	100.0
Commissioner for the information of public importance	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	53.9	0.0	46.1	100.0
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	0.0	4.2	95.8	100.0
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	7.6	20.5	71.9	100.0

Minority Parties	14.6	38.4	47.0	100.0
Local officials	48.2	16.9	34.9	100.0
Other parties	13.0	14.6	72.4	100.0
OSCE	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
CSOs	0.0	98.0	2.0	100.0
Citizens	0.0	98.5	1.5	100.0
Analysts	0.0	87.1	12.9	100.0
Dragan Vucicevic, Informer daily	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Foreign actors	0.0	24.6	75.4	100.0
Reporters	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Public opinion researchers	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
State Audit Institution	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Republikanska stranka(<i>the Republican Party</i>)	77.7	9.1	13.2	100.0
Mayor of the town of Niš	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 8 Campaign of officials on TV Prva (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	63	363	2.532	2,1	12,3	85,6
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS(<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	2	10	1.834	0,1	0,5	99,3
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	2	78	20	2,0	78,0	20,0
Ivica Dacic, SPS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	26	29	464	5,0	5,6	89,4
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	49	2	151	24,3	1,0	74,8
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	152	0	130	53,9	0,0	46,1

TV B92

Generally speaking, a reasonable critical edge aimed at those in power, which used to distinguish B92, has become considerably blunt. It suffices to say that the Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic, was placed in the unfavourable context only in 5.8% of the cases. The Prime Minister also managed to dominate the primetime news of TV B92 with as much as 4.619 seconds of presence. The dominance of Vucic is, among others, supported by the finding that Dacic managed to collect twenty four times less time than the Prime Minister.

In addition to RTS, TV B92 is among those television stations which did not take part in the drama created by the media where Bojan Pajtic was cast as a key antagonist. The recorded 11% of unfavourable presentation of Pajtic as a political party leader makes a considerably smaller percentage than that we identified on TV Pink, TV Prva and TV Happy.

Among parties /lists of candidates, SDA of Sanžak(22.7%), SRS (22.1%) and SNS (17.9%) were most often unfavourably depicted. Unlike any other television station, TV B92 presented the President Nikolic unfavourably in 18.1% of the time. Similarly as TV Pink, TV B92 opened its media space to criticize Dušan Bajatovic in the capacity of Srbijagas director.

The media succession of TV B92 led us to believe that this television station will be again proverbially opened for the analysts and civil society representatives. Summary findings show, in no uncertain terms, that TV B92 did not even stand out from among those television stations which could be hardly expected to nourish critical public. More precisely, the civil society representatives collected 464 seconds, whereas analysts were given 281 seconds. It can be agreed that this is insufficient for a television station which seeks (sought) to strike an appropriate balance between objectivity, reasonableness and criticism in the interest of the public and society.

Table 9 Tone of presenting the actors on TV B92 (in percentages)

Actor	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Government of Serbia	4.8	13.1	82.1	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	5.8	8.4	85.7	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	0.3	7.4	92.3	100.0
City of Belgrade	0.6	0.0	99.4	100.0
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0.0	20.5	79.5	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	3.5	1.4	95.1	100.0
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	18.1	11.6	70.2	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	17.9	14.5	67.6	100.0
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	11.2	17.8	71.0	100.0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	9.3	9.9	80.8	100.0
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	22.1	19.5	58.3	100.0
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	2.7	4.7	92.6	100.0
Savez vojvodanskih Mađara (<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)- Istvan Pastor	0.0	0.9	99.1	100.0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	0.5	7.4	92.1	100.0
Bošnjacka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	0.3	0.0	99.7	100.0
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	22.7	15.3	62.0	100.0
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	0.0	5.4	94.6	100.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	13.6	63.6	22.9	100.0
Commissioner for the information of public importance	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Ombudsman	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	11.0	2.6	86.4	100.0
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	0.0	2.8	97.2	100.0
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	5.1	7.9	87.0	100.0
Minority Parties	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Dušan Bajatovic, Srbijagas	42.1	31.3	26.6	100.0

Local officials	19.1	0.0	80.9	100.0
Other parties	2.0	27.4	70.6	100.0
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Patriarch Irinej	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
OSCE	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
CSOs	1.9	72.8	25.2	100.0
Citizens	16.4	44.8	38.8	100.0
Analysts	0.0	90.0	10.0	100.0
Dragan Vucicevic, Informer daily	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Foreign actors	0.0	86.0	14.0	100.0
Reporters	1.3	98.1	0.6	100.0
Public opinion researchers	0.0	92.3	7.7	100.0
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	35.7	0.0	64.3	100.0
Republikanska stranka (<i>the Republican Party</i>)	12.1	0.0	87.9	100.0
Mayor of the town of Niš	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10 Campaign of officials on TV B92 (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	270	390	3.959	5,8	8,4	85,7
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	78	32	2.133	3,5	1,4	95,1
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	5	6	182	2,6	3,1	94,3
Ivica Dacic, SPS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	33	14	603	5,1	2,2	92,8
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	1	22	274	0,3	7,4	92,3
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	51	12	400	11,0	2,6	86,4

TV Happy

Finally, it remains to take a look at the media presentation which was in the pre-election period produced by TV Happy. Here, they also did not deviate from essential uniformity in the quantity and manner of presence of Aleksandar Vucic in the media. We were convinced that it was not possible to achieve any more imbalanced ratio between the presence of the Prime Minister and his First Deputy Prime Minister as shown on TV Pink, but were reassured by TV Happy. Namely, on TV Happy, Vucic was represented sixty four times more than the First Deputy Prime Minister Dacic, who gathered only 55 seconds.

Belgrade high officials, largely the Mayor, Siniša Mali, received the most coverage by TV Happy. Out of 1.083 seconds they received in total, Belgrade officials were unfavourably portrayed in only one. It could be concluded that the media image of Belgrade officials was the most affirmative one, regardless of the fact that this finding is partly spoiled by RTS.

Pajtic, primarily as the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina, did not do well on TV Happy, too. He collected 55.3% of negative representation. Truth be told, as a Province Prime Minister, he accounted for only 60 seconds on TV Happy. Nevertheless, in the role of a DS

president, Pajtic did considerably better, and his unfavourable representation went down to 21.4%. No television had shown such a high percentage of negative presence as TV Happy did with SDA Sandžaka (*the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak*) (97.9%). Even the movement Dosta je bilo (*Enough is Enough*) was not spared from an extremely unfavourable media treatment, which is supported by 47.4% of negative telecasts.

Table 11 Tone of presenting the actors on TV Happy (in percentages)

Actor	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Government of Serbia	7.6	13.7	78.7	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	1.2	9.3	89.4	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, the Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	53.3	1.7	45.0	100.0
City of Belgrade	0.1	0.6	99.4	100.0
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	14.3	15.0	70.7	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	7.1	8.1	84.8	100.0
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	2.7	9.5	87.8	100.0
Aleksandar Vucic – Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	11.7	0.9	87.4	100.0
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	20.9	5.7	73.4	100.0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	0.7	6.8	92.5	100.0
Vojislav Šešelji, PhD – SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	20.6	17.2	62.2	100.0
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0.0	13.2	86.8	100.0
Savez vojvodanskih Madara (<i>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians</i>)- Istvan Pastor	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	4.6	9.4	85.9	100.0
Bošnjacka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
SDA Sandžaka (<i>the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak</i>)	97.9	2.1	0.0	100.0
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	0.0	5.4	94.6	100.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	36.5	63.5	0.0	100.0
REM(<i>Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media</i>)	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Commissioner for the information of public importance	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	21.4	2.5	76.1	100.0
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	5.9	17.3	76.8	100.0
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	47.4	0.4	52.2	100.0
Minority Parties	5.3	94.7	0.0	100.0
Dušan Bajatovic, Srbijagas	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Other parties	31.9	8.0	60.2	100.0
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Patriarch Irinej	0.0	3.2	96.8	100.0

CSOs	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Citizens	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Analysts	33.2	31.1	35.7	100.0
Foreign actors	0.0	24.0	76.0	100.0
Reporters	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Public opinion researchers	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0

Table 12 Campaign of officials on TV Happy (in seconds and percentages)

	N			%		
	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.	Neg.	Neut.	Posit.
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	44	330	3.159	1,2	9,3	89,4
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS(<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	31	35	368	7,1	8,1	84,8
Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister	0	31	24	0,0	56,4	43,6
Ivica Dacic, SPS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia</i>)	1	16	157	0,6	9,2	90,2
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	32	1	27	53,3	1,7	45,0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	120	14	427	21,4	2,5	76,1

TOPIC CONFIGURATIONS

We will not be wrong to conclude that the structure and representation of topics undoubtedly show whether the media fulfil their fundamental and invaluable social role. The topics and the extent and manner in which they take media space determine whether the media will truly represent the entire complexity of a given society and politics. To that extent, the media face a big challenge of having to respond, in the most appropriate manner, to the vast heterogeneousness of a modern society.

The analysis of media presentation requires the observance of socio-political framework, mostly when it comes to the structure of topics. By leaving particular topics behind the media horizon and not covering the other topics, the existing media and political dominance become even more empowered. The lack of particular content in primetime news or even their excess clearly speak of the distribution of the existing (extra)media power.

Thus, the question is raised to what extent the topic structure of primetime news programmes reflects social diversity? How much the image on the screen matches the everyday life of citizens? And further, do the identified topics and the used approach really facilitate elections for the voters?

After compiling the research findings we can see that only three topics exceeded 10% of representation: election process, economy and criticizing Government /former regimes. It was to be expected that the theme block relating to the election process would be most present, which was confirmed with approximately 20%. This is a smaller percent than in 2012, however, in that year, parliamentary and presidential elections were held in parallel, which called for a more complex

media and electoral infrastructure. This thematic trinity, which exceeded 10%, is complemented with 11.1% of economy and 10.8% of criticizing Government /former regimes. For comparison purposes, in the elections held in 2014, economy was predominant in more than 20% of news items, whereas in 2012, this accounted for exactly 8.5%.

When analysed by television stations, we can see that the said three topics ranked first on each of them, however there are certain deviations in percentages of their representation. These percentages are the highest in connection with the election process, varying from 23.8% (TV Prva) to 15.7% (TV Happy). Simultaneously, when it comes to criticizing Government/former regimes, representation is somewhat higher (from 9.5% on RTS to 12.6% on TV Pink) than that of economy (from 9.4% on TV B92 to 13.7% on TV Pink).

A considerable gap can be observed in the distribution between the three most represented topics and the remaining ones. Thus, the first subsequent topic which we summarized in a phrase "better future", is represented with 5.6%. It is interesting to note that in 2012 elections, the mentioned topic was less represented by only few permilles (5.3%). The following topics had similar representations: facing the past (5%), national interest (4.4%) and human rights (4%). It should be pointed out that the topic of facing the past was given a considerable airtime by television stations, notably for the reasons of the situation prevailing at that time. Namely, the initial period of our monitoring was also marked with the announcement and, finally, disclosure of the verdict of the Hague Tribunal to Vojislav Šešelj. This is also an example which graphically shows the nature in which the Serbian media respond - by covering this important topic only in the light of one of the sentences passed by the Hague Tribunal.

While it was evident that RTS focused less on the topic of facing the past (2.8%), TV B92 (6.1%) and TV Happy (6.2%) dedicated twice as much airtime to this topic. When it comes to the promises of a better future, TV Pink spared least time (7.2%), while the time below average was recorded on TV Prva (4.3%) and TV B92 (4.6%). The biggest oscillations were recorded in relation to the national interest, where, on the one hand, RTS stood out with 7.3%, while, on the other, TV Prva summed up 2.9% of representation.

Although it may not seem so at first sight, some topics, such as the construction of infrastructure (3.6%) and relations with the surrounding countries (3.5%), had considerably high representation. This conclusion particularly applies to the infrastructure ventures which were covered in as much as 278 segments. Applying the same arithmetics, we come to the findings that in each day of monitoring, on average some ten news items were dedicated to infrastructure. For the purposes of precision, we would like to point out that some of the analysed television stations covered such events in a much more systematic manner. Thus, TV Prva, with 119 news items, considerably surpassed other television stations in showing infrastructural feats. And finally, it

should be added that the said findings are not the characteristic of these elections since the similar representation percent of this topic was identified in 2012 elections. The holders of political power again did not miss this opportunity to speedily strengthen infrastructural capacities in the pre-election time.

A particular novelty in these elections are sharpened geopolitical divisions among election participants (EU-Russia). If we use the approximation, we can conclude that to a certain extent, the percent of representation of the said topics is proportional to the political power of actors who support one of the two aforementioned options. The segments covering European integration accounted for 3.1%, while those focusing on a firm cooperation with Russia accounted for 1.3%. However, even such far-reaching and indicative geopolitical dichotomy did not encourage the media to approach this topic with more nuance and versatility.

Among the more prominent topics covered in the analysed programmes were Kosovo and already mentioned topic of relations with the surrounding countries. Approximately as in 2014, the media covered Kosovo in 3.4% of segments, but in a considerably different manner than in the past. Thus, the majority of news items related to the implementation of the Brussels Agreement, daily life, and the dynamics of political life in Kosovo. Formerly, the focus was placed on the aspect of national, strategic, and state status of Kosovo, whereas in this period of monitoring, this was primarily reduced to the technical/formal side of the reached agreements and their (un)intended consequences². The topic of relations with the surrounding countries was much more noticeable in the media than in 2012 and 2014, and this was not only the consequence of extra-media circumstances. The attempt to functionalise a micro-geopolitical triangle comprised of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia was in the core of this media discourse fragment.

It is also important to determine the social categories targeted by the election participants. When classifying the topics, we attempted to outline the structural plane of society and thus, we obtained a particular overview of the target audience to which the election messages were sent. The youth, farmers, the elderly/pensioners, and workers were the social categories that were covered in this descending order. When we know that the youth, as a topic, was covered in only 2.9% of news items but still accounted for the highest representation, it becomes clear that the youth were underrepresented. Generally speaking, the lists of candidates and their ideas did not uniformly and sufficiently relate to the given social categories.

We had supposed that some of the topics would be under higher media scrutiny in this pre-election campaign. Underrepresentation or the lack of some essential topics speak a lot about the character of the ruling political and media discourse. Indeed, even extremely precise statistics does

² We reached the similar findings in our research on the media presentation of the Brussels Agreement published in the last four months of 2015.

not help much in forming at least a bit clearer picture of the quality of media coverage regarding the topics. More often than not, we, as researches, were surprised at the media constructs which differed from what we knew for a fact or what we had witnessed in our everyday lives. In accordance with the aforementioned, the primetime news programmes failed to cover, to the extent to which their format allowed, social and discursive diversity, both in depth and width. As a consequence, the television stations did not help their viewers to get a more subtle and rational picture of what was being offered in these elections.

In a nutshell, there were too many simplifications and too much meagreness and one-sidedness in presenting topical circles to give the media a passing grade. Not even with the best will we are able to take any of the television stations as the example of a balanced and unbiased media discourse in the pre-election period. At the same time, some of the television stations, such as TV Pink, abandoned the principles of a proper media presentation to such an extent that they made other television stations seem (somewhat) more acceptable.

Table 13 Topics of all television stations (in seconds and percentages)

	N	%
Elections, lists of candidates, RIK, researches	1.523	19.7
Economy, finance, investments, banking system	856	11.1
Criticizing Government, former regimes	834	10.8
Announcing reforms, better future, peace and stability	436	5.6
Facing the past, war crimes	388	5.0
National interest	342	4.4
Human rights, restitution	308	4.0
Infrastructure (opening highways, factories)	278	3.6
Relations with the surrounding countries	268	3.5
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement	262	3.4
European integration, opening of chapters	242	3.1
Poverty, unemployment, social justice	226	2.9
Youth, education	221	2.9
Corruption, nepotism, classic criminal activities	192	2.5
Rule of law, democratization, CSOs, media	185	2.4
Village, agriculture	168	2.2
Elderly, pensioners	149	1.9
Army, police	134	1.7
Regionalization, decentralization	106	1.4
Alliance with Russia, economic cooperation	102	1.3
Culture, historical anniversaries	88	1.1
Workers, protests, strikes	86	1.1
Health care	85	1.1
Foreign policy	78	1.0
Ecology	42	0.5
Religion, religious communities, secularization	39	0.5

NATO, for or against joining	30	0.4
Support to the Prime Minister /Government line of action	22	0.3
Reform of public administration	19	0.2
Sports	17	0.2
Communal problems	13	0.2
Total	7.739	100.0

Table 14 Topics by television stations (in percentages)

	RTS	Pink	Prva	B92	Happy
European integration, opening of chapters	2.5	4.2	3.1	2.5	3.5
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement	2.6	3.3	4.0	3.6	3.2
Corruption, nepotism, classic criminal activities	2.0	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.3
Youth, education	3.4	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Elderly, pensioners	2.3	1.1	1.9	2.0	2.5
Workers, protests, strikes	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.0	2.3
Village, agriculture	2.6	1.6	2.2	2.4	1.9
Human rights, restitution	4.5	4.7	4.2	3.5	3.0
Facing the past, war crimes	2.8	4.6	5.1	6.1	6.2
Ecology	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.2
Health care	1.3	0.9	1.2	1.3	0.5
Rule of law, democratization, CSOs, media	3.1	2.3	2.1	3.0	1.4
Culture, historical anniversaries	2.0	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.9
Elections, lists of candidates, RIK, researches	18.7	16.3	23.8	21.7	15.7
Poverty, unemployment, social justice	3.3	2.4	2.1	3.4	3.6
Economy, finance, investments, banking system	10.6	13.7	10.0	9.4	12.5
Relations with the surrounding countries	2.5	3.8	2.8	3.3	5.4
Announcement of reforms, better future, peace and stability	6.3	7.2	4.3	4.6	6.5
Army, police	1.3	1.2	1.5	2.1	2.6
Criticizing Government, former regimes	9.5	12.4	9.6	12.6	9.8
Regionalization, decentralization	1.8	1.1	0.8	1.0	2.4
Foreign policy	0.9	0.6	1.5	0.9	1.0
Infrastructure (opening highways, factories)	2.3	3.5	6.3	2.7	2.3
Religion, religious communities, secularization	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2
National interest	7.3	3.8	2.9	4.0	4.8
Reform of public administration	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Alliance with Russia, economic cooperation	2.1	1.3	1.3	0.7	1.4
NATO, for or against joining	0.6	0	0.4	0.5	0.4
Sport	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Support to the Prime Minister/Government line of action	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.2
Communal problems	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

GENRE STRUCTURE

As in the media monitoring we conducted in the previous two election cycles (2012 and 2014), the prevailing genre of all analysed news programmes was a report. Most often the reports were structured so as to allow the actors covered in a news segment to be directly seen and heard. In the representation of reports within the genre structure, there are noticeable discrepancies between television stations. On the one hand, RTS (64.6%) and TV Pink (64.3%) led the way, with considerably more percents than TV Prva (48.7%). The remaining two television stations drifted more toward the percentage of report representation identified on RTS and TV Pink.

This poses the question as to which genre the “shortage” of reports observed on TV Prva slanted? The research findings quite clearly show an above-average presence of statements on the mentioned television station. It is worth explaining that by statement we mean those news items which are only comprised of “isolated” observation or conclusion of the election process actor. Quite understandably, statements were more frequent in the coverage of election campaign than when the cameras sought to record the activities of state officials. While on other television stations statements reached some 20%, on TV Prva they accounted for almost 31% of the total number of news items.

Generally speaking, there was an insufficient number of segments in which reporters, in one way or the other, took a more active attitude toward the direct election actors. When analyses, comments, reportages, different forms of talk-shows and theme blocks are put together, we can see that their representation does not exceed ten percent. TV B92 makes an exception because on that TV station, the mentioned genres reached 17.8% of representation in the total number of news items, which is three times more compared to TV Happy (5.7%). In addition, out of the total number of 437 news items recorded on TV B92, 32 (7.3%) were some kind of analytical considerations. When we take into account that our research covered 28 days in total, it is clear that on average, TV B92 did not miss a day to show a more versatile and more deeply analysed news item. The fact that such number of news items imbued with analysis was not negligible is supported by one-digit number they recorded on other television stations.

As in our previous monitoring activities, the primetime news of TV B92 had the most evenly distributed and the most attractive genre structure.

Table 15 Genres by television stations (in percentages)

	RTS	Pink	Prva	B92	Happy
News	8.5	9.9	12.9	10.1	18.3
Report	5.7	10.9	8.4	6.4	14.4
Report with statement	58.3	50.5	38.2	49.9	44.6
Interview	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0
Comment	0.0	2.3	0.6	0.0	0.0
Analysis	1.7	1.0	1.5	7.3	1.2
Reportage	2.3	3.6	3.4	3.0	2.4

Studio guest	0.8	1.8	0.4	3.4	0.3
Live report from the scene	0.6	2.9	2.1	0.5	0.0
Topic– media package	1.9	0.8	1.7	3.9	1.8
Statement	19.9	15.6	30.2	15.3	14.4
Visualised voice-over	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

IMAGE GENERATED BY THE MEDIA

The analysed television stations applied a dual strategy when producing an image in the media. On the one hand, when covering the events not related to elections, as a rule, the television outlets built the media image on their own sources. On the other hand, when covering the election campaign, they received a ready-made content from the direct election actors. This can be concluded by mere comparison of the news items. The same content and manner in which news were covered undeniably showed that a vast majority of news items were the materials prepared in advance by the election participants. Accordingly, the television outlets only had to mechanically incorporate such news items in a visibly framed block of election coverage.

Having in mind questionable operations and status of Tanjug news agency, we paid particular attention to its appearance in the pre-election cycle. Compared to the image the media produced in 2012 elections, the representation of Tanjug proportionally dropped on all analysed television stations. Again, in these elections TV Pink assumed the pattern in which it mostly fed off the media products of Tanjug (8.4%). In addition to its underrepresentation on RTS (1.9%), a complete absence of Tanjug on TV Happy is striking. Finally, it should be stressed that the analysed television stations referred to the other news agencies in only few news items.

When it comes to the diversity of sources, TV B92 took the lead, whereas TV Happy had the most reduced number of sources. However, it can be concluded that such diversity was largely misleading, since the majority of sources were represented in a negligible percent. At the same time, analysed television stations did not even come close to observing an important media principle that the source of a particular information has to be expressly disclosed. Without the visibility and relevancy of the source of presented information it is hard to speak of the preserved media integrity. Hidden or obscured sources open much more possibilities for unreliable media constructs.

Table 16 Sources by television stations (in percentages)

	RTS	Pink	Prva	B92	Happy
Tanjug	1.9	8.4	5.0	4.9	0.0
Beta	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

FoNet	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
TV Pink	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
B92	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
RTS1	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Statements of candidates	20.3	15.8	28.0	14.4	14.9
Vecernje novosti	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0
Blic	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Press release of the Ministry	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.3
Foreign media	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3
Press release of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Press release of the Government	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.2	1.2
EU officials	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0
USA officials	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0
Public opinion research agencies	0	0.3	0.9	1.9	0.3
Press release of CSOs	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0
Sandžak Press	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Insajder net	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Party press release	1.9	2.4	4.1	2.3	7.1
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.2	1.2
Reporter	74.0	68.3	59.4	73.8	74.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

REGIONAL/LOCAL TELEVISION OUTLETS

STRUCTURE AND TONE OF ACTORS

Niš

The television outlets in Niš blemished the unquestionable quantity of airtime that Vucic received from the television stations with national coverage. Not only the Mayor of the town of Niš - who was noticeably at the forefront (5.960 to 5.186 seconds) - but also other local officials, were given dozens of seconds more than Vucic. The pattern of Vucic's appearance on national television stations as a Prime Minister, on the one hand, and as a political party leader, on the other, was again confirmed on Niš television outlets. As opposed to 3.894 seconds he received in the capacity of the Serbian Prime Minister, Vucic accounted for 1.292 seconds as the President of the Serbian Progressive Party. Out of 92 seconds of unfavourable presentation in total, only one was observed on NTV, while all other remaining seconds were aired on TV KCN.

At the same time, the researchers noticed that the fields in the tables, which were supposed to show the presence/absence of Ivica Dacic as a Government's Deputy Prime Minister, remained

blank. While as the President of the Socialist Party of Serbia he gathered 310 seconds, in the capacity of the Government member he did not receive a second of coverage on any of the TV outlets in Niš. This is an unexpected finding, particularly if had in mind that Pajtic, in the role of the Province Prime Minister, accounted for 163 seconds. Out of the mentioned seconds, 38 had a negative connotation and all of them were broadcasted on TV KCN.

In addition to the finding that Niš television outlets pushed back Vucic from the place of the most represented figure, there is another thing which is more indicative and important for this analysis. Namely, within eighteen days of our monitoring, the Mayor of the town of Niš, Zoran Perišić, was not given a second of unfavourable presentation. Every step of the Mayor was closely followed, particularly by Niška television. In the daily succession of different (convenient) events in Niš, it was inevitable for cameras to, at least, catch a glimpse of Perišić, although, as a rule, he also had the opportunity to address the public. On the other hand, local officials were not spared from adverse presentations, however, sporadically and to a small extent. The treatment the state and town officials were given by Niš television outlets makes obvious the strategy assumed in the media discourse.

Regarding the television outlets in Niš, there is one more research finding that departs from the image created on national television stations. Except for TV Zona Plus, on the remaining three analysed television outlets in Niš, the Prime Minister was noticeably less represented than the Government of Serbia. While President Nikolic was brushed aside by national television stations, it was Niš television outlets that really cast him in the minor media role. This is best shown by the fact that, for example, Nikolic was not given one second of presence on TV Belami.

The conclusion that civil society representatives and analysts were underrepresented on the national TV screens applies even more to Niš television outlets. Civil society representatives were more represented than analysts, which runs counter to their representation on national television stations. The extent of such underrepresentation is supported by the fact that on all Niš television outlets, analysts were given only 56 seconds. The extent of disregard for the voice of analysts and civil society representatives is best shown by the fact that TV Belami did not give them any seconds.

Table 17 Tone of presenting the actors on TV Belami (in seconds)

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government of Serbia	0	106	1.393
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	0	24	975
City of Belgrade	0	0	1
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0	0	180
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	0	0	191
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is</i>	1	42	449

<i>Winning)</i> Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka(<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	1	0	91
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	1	20	733
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	0	0	140
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0	16	347
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	0	4	103
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	3	551	0
Other parties	0	3	91
Citizens	0	0	15
Foreign actors	0	0	21
State Audit Institution	0	27	0
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	0	0	140
Pokret socijalista (<i>Movement of Socialists</i>)	0	2	57
Niš, moj grad (<i>Niš is my Town</i>)	0	0	95
Srcem za Niš(<i>With All Our Hearts for Niš</i>)	0	12	1.193
Ujedinjena seljacka stranka(<i>United Peasant Party</i>)	0	0	210
Mayor of the town of Niš	0	79	1.550
Local officials	27	112	1.627

Table 18 Tone of presenting the actors on TV KCN (in seconds)

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government of Serbia	6	149	1.314
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	88	26	1.079
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	38	0	125
City of Belgrade	0	11	133
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0	59	297
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	2	0	305
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	1	0	252
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	83	12	413
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka(<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	3	3	4
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	8	5	445
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	5	97	232
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0	2	244
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	11	22	385
Bošnjacka demokratska zajednica Sandžaka (<i>the Bosniac Democratic Union of Sandžak</i>)	19	0	0
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	0	1	30
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	41	259	0
Commissioner for the information of public importance	0	41	0

Ombudsman	0	0	32
Levica Srbije (<i>the Serbian Left</i>)	0	2	157
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	0	18	117
Minority Parties	26	0	0
Other parties	19	2	0
CSOs	0	0	46
Citizens	161	0	21
Foreign actors	0	56	0
Reporters	0	39	0
State Audit Institution	0	1	0
Republikanska stranka(<i>the Republican Party</i>)	10	0	0
Chief Administrative Officer	0	0	47
Mayor of the town of Kragujevac	0	0	18
Mayor of the town of Niš	0	60	1.075
Local officials	45	64	983

Table 19 Tone of presenting the actors on NTV (in seconds)

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government of Serbia	1	71	1.079
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	1	3	693
Marko Đurić, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0	0	24
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	0	0	142
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	0	0	29
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	32	6	225
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka(<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	0	16	3
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	0	0	260
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	0	2	28
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0	1	29
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	0	14	110
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	0	72	0
Ombudsman	0	0	1
Other parties	0	91	78
Analysts	0	0	39
Public opinion researchers	0	79	0
State Audit Institution	0	63	1
Niš, moj grad (<i>Niš is my Town</i>)	0	0	75
Srcem za Niš(<i>With All Our Hearts for Niš</i>)	0	0	56
Mayor of the town of Niš	0	161	2.061
Local officials	12	179	1.656

Table 20. Tone of presenting the actors on TV Zona (in seconds)

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Government of Serbia	0	13	647
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	0	0	1.005
Marko Đurić, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0	0	41
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	0	1	651

Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	0	74	33
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	0	17	550
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka(<i>For a Just Serbia- Democratic Party</i>)	0	9	0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	22	28	122
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	0	9	0
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	0	9	62
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	0	325	0
Other parties	0	10	31
OSCE	0	1	0
CSOs	0	7	104
Analysts	0	0	17
Foreign actors	0	17	79
Reporters	0	116	0
Meho Omerovic	0	0	35
State Audit Institution	0	13	0
Niš, moj grad (<i>Niš is my Town</i>)	0	0	31
Srcem za Niš(<i>With All Our Hearts for Niš</i>)	0	5	0
Jedinstvena romska partija (<i>United Roma Party</i>)	0	1	0
Mayor of the town of Niš	0	14	1.274
Local officials	46	106	957

Kragujevac

While Niš television outlets blemished the Vucic's media indisputableness, those in Kragujevac went one step further to completely disintegrate it. To support this conclusion, one just needs to mention that on two analysed television outlets in Kragujevac, Vucic collected just 386 seconds. His absence from K9 television outlet was striking. Namely, only 68 seconds of his presence were recorded, whereas nine seconds were negatively toned.

The tendency to marginalize Dacic in the media reached the utmost limit. The finding that the Deputy Prime Minister and the President of one of the ruling parties recorded only one, negatively toned second of presence, sounds quite unexpected. In addition, when it comes to favourability, the fact that Pajtic was favourably treated supports the conclusion that the television outlets in Kragujevac offered a largely remodelled media image. In addition to equally presenting Pajtic as the Province Prime Minister and the party leader, all 195 seconds that Pajtic received had a positive connotation.

Notably due to the fact that a particular number of ministers visited Kragujevac, the Government of Serbia established a lead not only over the Prime Minister but also over all other actors. The President Nikolic received somewhat better treatment by the media in Kragujevac than by those in Niš.

Unlike the Mayor of Niš, the Mayor of Kragujevac was not that much omnipresent. His media presence was particularly reduced by the television outlet K9. While modest presence of local officials was recorded on the television outlet K9 (376 seconds), RTK generously gave to him its media space (1.506 seconds).

By and large, the television outlets in Kragujevac provided to the candidates in electoral lists a solid opportunity to present their programmes. Even a superficial comparison with the television outlets in Niš indicates that in presenting the activities of election participants, the television outlets in Kragujevac were more systematic, balanced and detailed. Through the list of candidates, Veroljub Verko Stevanovic – Zajedno za Kragujevac (*Together for Kragujevac*), many things could be seen unfolding in the media presentation over there. Not only that the said list was the most represented but was also most negatively toned (299 seconds). Although RTK took the lead (217 seconds) in that respect, even the television outlet K9 spared no segments in which the list of candidates Veroljub Verko Stevanovic – Zajedno za Kragujevac (*Together for Kragujevac*) was unfavourably framed (82 seconds).

We noticed that Kragujevac television outlets lacked (critical) public voice, even more than those in Niš. While the analysts were completely absent, civil society representatives had very modest appearances (30 seconds).

Table 21 Tone of presenting the actors on Kragujevac television outlets (in seconds)

	K9			RTK		
	Ne g.	Neu t.	Posi t.	Ne g.	Neu t.	Posi t.
Government of Serbia	45	38	550	2	22	1.404
Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Prime Minister	9	0	15	1	0	235
Bojan Pajtic, Prime Minister of the Province of Vojvodina	0	0	42	0	0	48
Marko Đuric, Office for Kosovo and Metohija	0	0	8	0	0	126
Aleksandar Vucic, SNS (<i>the Serbian Progressive Party</i>)	0	1	43	0	0	82
Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia	1	0	31	0	0	207
Aleksandar Vucic - Srbija pobeđuje (<i>Serbia is Winning</i>)	97	9	431	47	19	868
Za pravednu Srbiju – Demokratska stranka (<i>For a Just Serbia-Democratic Party</i>)	33	6	52	0	5	0
Ivica Dacic – SPS, JS (<i>the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia</i>)	30	32	697	0	21	405
Vojislav Šešelj, PhD– SRS (<i>the Serbian Radical Party</i>)	1	17	281	0	34	168
Dveri – DSS (<i>Doors to the Altar – Democratic Party of Serbia</i>)	1	34	899	0	49	595
Savez za bolju Srbiju (<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>)	1	79	812	0	32	557
Za slobodnu Srbiju – Zavetnici (<i>For a Free Serbia- Oath Keepers</i>)	0	0	29	0	0	29
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	0	204	71	0	591	0
Ombudsman	0	0	0	32	0	0
Bojan Pajtic, DS (<i>Democratic Party</i>)	0	0	58	0	0	47
Dosta je bilo (<i>Enough is Enough</i>)	1	11	193	0	24	157
Minority Parties	0	1	4	0	1	15
Other parties	0	0	142	0	65	37

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia	0	0		0	0	35
CSOs	0	2	28	0	0	0
Citizens	24	20	12	0	0	0
Reporters	0	111	189	0	135	0
Public opinion researchers	0	0	53	0	0	0
Ruska partija (<i>the Russian Party</i>)	0	0	50	0	5	53
Chief Administrative Officer	0	0	20	0	0	49
Mayor of the town of Kragujevac	57	54	350	1	2	908
Other officials	0	139	237	0	149	1.357
GG Sladan Rakic	0	14	126	19	2	303
Pokret socijalista (<i>Movement of Socialists</i>)	1	3	93	0	12	324
Srpska narodna partija (<i>Serbian People's Party</i>)	0	1	101	0	1	120
Zelena stranka(<i>Green Party</i>)	0	20	25	0	43	53
Sigurno bolje(<i>Better for Sure</i>)- Vladan Vucicevic, PhD	0	10	143	0	2	189
Svi za Kragujevac (<i>All for Kragujevac</i>)	1	4	190	0	28	331
Veroljub Verko Stevanovic- Zajedno za Kragujevac (<i>Together for Kragujevac</i>)	82	40	977	217	35	584
Mayor of the town of Niš	0	0	5	0	0	0
Ujedinjena seljačka stranka(<i>United Peasant Party</i>)	0	0	0	0	20	182

TOPIC CONFIGURATIONS

Niš

It is visible at first sight that to a certain extent, topic configurations were rearranged on Niš television outlets. The representation of the three topics still exceeded ten percent, as on the national television stations, but their composition and/or ratio was different. Economy took the first place (15.6%) while election process went down to the second place (12.8%) and the infrastructure (12.3%) climbed third.

Economy kept supremacy on each of the television outlets, while on TV KCN, its representation shared the first place with that of the election process. This television outlet was the only one that showed any changes to the three first-ranked topics by the fact that criticizing the Government /former regimes (9.2%) pushed infrastructure (8.3%) to the fourth place.

Similarly to national television stations, on Niš television outlets, there was a considerable space between the three most represented topics and the remaining ones. This could be described as a second, also a three-member representation circle, which includes the topics exceeding five percent. The youth (6.4%), criticizing the Government /former regimes (5.4%) and a better future (5%) are more prominently present in the media discourse. If we were to look for another *differentia specifica* compared to national television stations, it would be worth noting that Niš television outlets covered youth much more.

Knowing that our towns are not short of communal problems, this topic was underrepresented on television outlets with just 2.7%. Even more than such underrepresentation, the manner in which this important topic was presented speaks of the fact that local (Niš) media did not articulate the actual interests of citizens. The media (co)participated in diminishing the importance of communal problems largely by failing to criticize different actors and their lightly given promises that, within a given period of time, they would (magically) resolve these issues.

Table 22. Topics on Niš television outlets (in percentages)

	all TVs	Belami	KCN	NTV	Zona
European integration, opening of chapters	2.0	1.9	3.9	1.0	0.4
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement	1.5	0.9	3.6	0.2	0.4
Corruption, nepotism, classic criminal activities	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.2	2.0
Youth, education	6.4	4.7	7.2	7.1	7.0
Elderly, pensioners	0.9	0.7	1.0	0.4	1.5
Workers, protests, strikes	1.0	1.2	0.7	0.4	1.8
Village, agriculture	1.0	3.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
Human rights, restitution	3.0	3.1	3.3	1.8	3.5
Facing the past, war crimes	0.6	0.3	0.9	0.8	0.2
Ecology	1.3	2.1	1.3	0.6	1.1
Health care	4.0	2.5	3.7	6.1	4.2
Rule of law, democratization, CSOs, media	1.8	1.3	1.1	2.4	2.6
Culture, historical anniversaries	1.8	1.0	1.3	2.2	3.3
Elections, lists of candidates, RIK, researches	12.8	9.3	15.4	12.7	14.3
Poverty, unemployment, social justice	3.1	3.2	2.4	3.7	3.5
Economy, finance, investments, banking system	15.6	16.5	15.4	15.3	15.1
Relations with the surrounding countries	2.5	2.7	2.7	1.8	2.9
Announcement of reforms, better future, peace and stability	5.0	6.0	2.9	4.9	6.6
Army, police	2.5	2.9	2.2	2.9	2.0
Criticizing Government, former regimes	5.4	5.6	9.2	3.9	0.9
Regionalization, decentralization	0.8	1.0	1.1	0.4	0.4
Foreign policy	1.5	1.8	0.7	2.7	0.9
Infrastructure (ribbon-cutting ceremonies for highways, factories)	12.3	13.3	8.3	14.7	14.3
National interest	2.8	2.9	5.5	1.0	0.4
Reform of public administration	0.7	0.3	0.3	1.8	0.7
Alliance with Russia, economic cooperation	0.8	1.6	1.1	0.0	0.0
NATO, for or against joining	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Sports	1.7	3.1	0.4	2.0	1.1
Support to the Prime Minister/Government line of action	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.7
Communal services	1.1	2.2	0.1	1.8	0.2
Communal problems	2.7	1.3	1.9	4.5	3.9
Legalisation	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Budget	1.2	0.7	0.0	0.6	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Kragujevac

A well-established pattern of the tree topics exceeding ten percent of representation threshold, which was followed by national and Niš television stations, was not applied in Kragujevac. Namely, Kragujevac television outlets exceeded the said limit with only two topics – election process (19%) and infrastructure (13.4%). Although economy was again among the three first-ranked topics, its representation dropped to 8.9%.

These general findings do not fully apply to the individually analysed television outlets. To that extent, on RTK, economy (11.3%) joined the said topics and accounted for more than ten percent of presence.

More than in Niš television outlets, the topics dedicated to youth represented an important segment of media discourse in Kragujevac. The promise of a better future was present somewhat more frequently than on national and Niš television stations. This was notably contributed by RTK (7.7%) where, by the way, the highest representation of this topic was recorded among all analysed television stations.

The representation of the topics on European integration and Kosovo among Kragujevac television outlets dropped below half a percent. Among other things, this finding can be explained as the indicator that Kragujevac television outlets were focused on local/regional framework. Television outlets in Kragujevac reduced their media focus on local/regional economy more sharply than those in Niš. A statistical indicator able to confirm this is that in Kragujevac television outlets, the presentation of communal problems accounted for 4.5%.

Table 23 Topics on Kragujevac television outlets (in seconds and percentages)

	All TVs		K9		RTK	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
European integration, opening of chapters	5	0.4	4	0.7	1	0.1
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement	2	0.2	2	0.3	15	2.1
Corruption, nepotism, classic criminal activities	29	2.2	14	2.4	63	8.7
Youth, education	95	7.2	32	5.4	8	1.1
Elderly, pensioners	28	2.1	20	3.4	2	0.3
Workers, protests, strikes	17	1.3	15	2.5	22	3.0
Village, agriculture	36	2.7	14	2.4	28	3.8
Human rights, restitution	36	2.7	8	1.4	4	0.5
Facing the past, war crimes	9	0.7	5	0.8	18	2.5
Ecology	29	2.2	11	1.9	22	3.0
Health care	36	2.7	14	2.4	9	1.2
Rule of law, democratization, CSOs, media	27	2.0	18	3.0	18	2.5
Culture, historical anniversaries	26	2.0	8	1.4	117	16.1
Elections, lists of candidates, RIK, researches	251	19.0	134	22.6	25	3.4
Poverty, unemployment, social justice	52	3.9	27	4.6	82	11.3
Economy, finance, investments, banking system	117	8.9	35	5.9	3	0.4
Relations with surrounding countries	3	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0

Announcement of reforms, better future, peace and stability	86	6.5	30	5.1	56	7.7
Army, police	27	2.0	10	1.7	17	2.3
Criticizing Government, former regimes	72	5.5	28	4.7	44	6.0
Regionalization, decentralization	12	0.9	8	1.4	4	0.5
Infrastructure (opening highways, factories)	177	13.4	92	15.5	85	11.7
National interest	28	2.1	8	1.4	20	2.7
Reforms of public administration	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1
Alliance with Russia, economic cooperation	6	0.5	4	0.7	2	0.3
NATO, for or against joining	3	0.2	0	0.0	3	0.4
Sports	28	2.1	14	2.4	14	1.9
Support to the Prime Minister/Government line of action	13	1.0	2	0.3	11	1.5
Communal services	5	0.4	3	0.5	2	0.3
Communal problems	60	4.5	29	4.9	31	4.3
Budget	4	0.3	3	0.5	1	0.1
Total	1.320	100.0	592	100.0	728	100.0

GENRE STRUCTURE AND IMAGE GENERATED BY THE MEDIA

Niš

The assumption that genre structure will be less diverse on local than on national television stations was realistic. Report is also prevalent on Niš television outlets, in considerably higher percentages than was the case on national television stations. Thus, the representation of report did not go below 60% on any of Niš television outlets, whereas on TV Zona it reached the unattainable 83.7%. The presence of news came second on all television outlets, recording on KCN television the admirable 31.5%. The logic behind the editorial strategy of Niš television outlets is best supported by the fact that there were only two analytical news items, whereas comments were not noted at all.

Compared to national television stations, those in Niš reduced the information sources even more than when it came to genres. On Niš television outlets, reporters were the predominant source of information, in a considerably higher percent than they were on national television stations. This ranges from 79.8% on TV KCN to as much as 93.2% on TV Zona. Accordingly, it is understandable why no other remaining source of information, on any of Niš television outlets, managed to exceed ten percent of representation. As a source of information, Tanjug recorded a modest representation percent, while it was completely absent from TV KCN.

Table 24 Genres by television outlets in Niš (in percentages)

	Belami	KCN	NTV	Zona
News	7.7	31.5	17.4	8.9
Report	30.1	35.1	19.0	14.8
Report with statement	50.6	26.8	47.1	68.9
Analysis	0.0	0.6	0.8	0
Reportage	3.2	1.2	5.0	3.7

Studio guest	0.0	0.0	0.8	0
Topic – media package	1.9	0.6	0.8	0.7
Statement	6.4	2.4	7.4	3.0
Visualised voice-over	0.0	1.8	1.7	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 25 Sources by television outlets in Niš (in percentages)

	Belami	KCN	Niš	Zona
Tanjug	1.9	0.0	2.5	0.8
FoNet	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.8
TV Pink	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Statements of candidates	5.8	2.4	7.4	3.0
Press release of the Ministry	1.3	0.6	0.8	0.0
Press release of the Government	1.9	2.4	0.0	1.5
Press release of the Ministry of Internal Affairs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Public opinion research agencies	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0
Party press release	0.0	8.9	2.5	0.0
RIK (<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	0.6	0.6	1.7	0.0
Reporter	88.5	79.8	84.3	93.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Kragujevac

When it comes to the genre distribution of news items, Kragujevac television outlets are largely similar to those of Niš. The exceptional supremacy of report was not jeopardized by Kragujevac television outlets and in both towns, report was represented with nearly 70%. As opposed to Niš television outlets, TV K9 (14.1%) and RTK (19%) pushed the presence of news to the third place, replacing it by statement. Regarding the genre structure, the lack of analyses and comments on television outlets in Kragujevac also contributed to the pronounced homology of the analysed local /regional television outlets. We recorded only two analyses and one comment on Kragujevac television outlets, all broadcast on TV K9.

When compared to those in Niš, the television outlets of Kragujevac additionally reduced the number of information sources and thus, there were only five sources on TV K9 and RTK, respectively. To a somewhat lesser extent than in Niš, in Kragujevac, TV reporters were shown as the central information source. Statements of candidates, as the information source, took the second place, in a considerable percentage. While on television outlets in Niš Tanjug recorded a modest percent of representation, it is safe to say that it was almost completely absent from Kragujevac television outlets.

Table 26 Genres by television outlets in Kragujevac (in seconds and percentages)

	K9		RTK	
	N	%	N	%

News	19	12.2	19	9.0
Report	42	26.9	47	22.3
Report with statement	66	42.3	97	46.0
Comment	1	0.6	0	0
Analysis	2	1.3	0	0
Reportage	3	1.9	2	0.9
Studio guest	0	0	4	1.9
Topic– media package	1	0.6	2	0.9
Statement	22	14.1	40	19.0
Total	156	100.0	211	100.0

Table 27 Sources by television outlets in Kragujevac(in seconds and percentages)

	K9		RTK	
	N	%	N	%
Tanjug	0	0	1	0.5
Statements of candidates	22	14.1	41	19.4
Public opinion research agencies	1	0.6	0	0
Party press release	5	3.2	2	0.9
RIK(<i>the Republic Electoral Commission</i>)	2	1.3	3	1.4
Reporter	126	80.8	164	77.7
Total	156	100.0	211	100.0

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

It is worth noting that the following conclusions notably concern the media image created by the television stations with national coverage. This certainly does not exclude the analysed local/regional television outlets in Niš and Kragujevac from a considerable number of the presented conclusions.

De-substantialization – when relying on the picture painted by the media, even the focused viewer would find it difficult to discern what was being offered by the majority of parties /lists of candidates. Even daily and close watching of news programmes broadcast by television stations with national coverage did not come close to providing sufficient information for making a relevant and rational decision about who is to be trusted in these elections.

Derealization of social reality – way too often, the astonishment was the only appropriate response to the way the media presented socio-economic reality as something that clashed with undeniable facts we witnessed on a daily basis. In the analysed television stations, a parallel image of reality, intentionally fabricated by the media, displayed capillary spreading.

De-ideologization – in the pre-election period, media discourse did not sufficiently reflect ideological profile of election participants. The analysed television stations again missed the

opportunity to re-examine ideological rationale of the parties and help clear up the discursive and ideological confusion.

Dedifferentiation – for naming this dimension of media discourse we will again use the term which contains the same prefix as the previous three headwords. Again we intentionally use the term which denotes a particular lack, absence, and denial. Pre-election discourse of parties, conveyed by the media, did not target concrete social groups. Apart from the references to general categories such as “people” or “citizens”, the pensioners and youth were addressed to a somewhat greater extent.

Reducing social complexity – as the consequence of the above, it is clear that the media, at the very least did nothing to thwart political actors in their intentional levelling of social groups. The dividing lines between different social actors – those which comprise the basis of society and those marginalized- were largely blurred.

Repetitiveness, ritualization and trivialization– the extent to which the media plunged into all kinds of pettiness was pathetic. They also did their best to prevent anything which could jeopardize well-established media frameworks and content. Media repetitiveness was also displayed through repeating promotional segments of parties/lists of candidates on the same day on different television stations. Finally, the media image of the Prime Minister was the very expression of repetitiveness because, every day, on more than on occasion, he appeared in different theme frameworks. The media eventually multiplied the presence of the Prime Minister at particular events by inserting his statements from one and the same event in the whole set of news items/contexts.

Responsiveness– with but a few exceptions, the analysed television stations took extremely non-critical and passive attitude to political actors and social structures/processes. In the pre-election media discourse, they did not show any determination to impose any of the socially relevant topics.

Lack of dialogue – the media presented those competing in the elections as self-sufficient entities which do not even hide that their main goal is to win over the voters (at any cost). It was evident that in their primetime news programmes, the analysed television stations avoid to directly confront the election participants, in any way.

Demobilisation of (critical) public – in the recent history of multi-party system in Serbia, no such media shortage of impartial analysts, critically-oriented intellectuals and civil society representatives was recorded. With meagre exceptions, the analysed news programmes were steadily narrowing the margins of any deeper inquiries and analyses. The media laid out before the viewers the content which turned them into passive audience.

Simplification – one of the pre-election campaign results is that the media, in addition to political actors, considerably impoverished the public discourse. They displayed only traces of criticism, sensibility, fine shading and depth.

Heteronomy – all of the aforementioned largely supports the conclusion that the analysed television stations did not even have the opportunity to genuinely fulfil their social function. At the same time, the media approach we witnessed in the pre-election period was hardly capable of reviving the basic trust of (critical) public. The analysed television stations easily succumbed to the demands and logic of capital and/or political power.

Personalization – the lack of programme content and ideological frameworks reduces the media image to personal media simulacra. Never before have the Government of Serbia, on the one hand, and party groups, on the other, been so much identified with the Prime Minister and party leaders. There is no doubt that the responsibility for that fact lies with the media. However, the media acted in accordance with the assumed demands of the consumers who, allegedly, view everything in a (vulgar) personalistic key.

Key protagonist – the whole media dynamics is generated by just one person, the Prime Minister and the leader of the ruling political group. This is decisively contributed by the cumulative nature of his appearance in the capacity of the Prime Minister of the Government of Serbia. Namely, not a day of the pre-election period passed that Vucic did not take an important place in the central news programmes. Comparison with the previous election cycles, since 1990 onwards, would surely confirm that the Vucic's omnipresence on national television stations is unparalleled.

Political enemy figure – again, the drama of media presentation was not void of producing political enemies. In particular, TV Pink again took efforts to be recorded in the chronicles of media shenanigans. The title of a “privileged” antagonist, and almost an archenemy, was given to Bojan Pajtic, notably by the mentioned television station, but others also followed suit.

We-They dichotomy – as a rule, this takes on the following media formula: unlike “them”, “we” are the ones worthy of your favour. With such arguments, the focus is on “them”; those who are not worthy of voters' trust. Regardless of the intentional vagueness with which this may be phrased, the viewers were still aware to which particular actors the constructs “we” and “they” applied in a given context.

Anatomy of mentality – political discourse also offered a kind of a folklore vivisection of Serbian mentality. Here, we could see that the presumed mentality pattern was complimented while its damaging features were pointed out. As in the set of other dimensions, the Prime Minister Vucic took the lead in the analysis of collective and psychological characteristics of Serbian population.

Geopolitical divisions – participants in these elections were divided in terms of their inclination to one of the two geopolitical toponyms (the West/EU *versus* Russia). During the entire campaign, two (irreconcilable) lines were being formed/sorted.

Looking back to the past – it was not easy for an average viewer to tell between the criticisms of different former regimes. The most interesting competition between the election participants was in connection with the (back)dating of the crisis, that is, those who had caused it. In addition to being arbitrary, the dates attached to the beginnings and peaks of the crisis were quite vague.

Looking at the future – the past was not the only thing discussed. The election participants also asked the voters to think about the future. This resulted in a particular temporal engineering since these generally non-binding promises of bright future were not precisely defined in time.

Annihilating the present – as the biggest victim of excessive retrospection and fixed gazing at the fluid future, the present was almost completely annihilated. The present existed only insofar as the current events could be used to improve somebody's treatment in the media.

Absence of (critical) reflexion on the media image – the analysed media/programmes steadily avoided to air the voice of those social actors who could point out to the nature and quality of media reporting in the pre-election cycle.

Lack of self-reflection by the media – in view of the aforementioned, the analysed television stations could not be expected to reconsider the roles and responsibilities they had in the creation and/or imitation of the prevailing media matrix. When it comes to the assessment of its quality, the media discourse not only excluded the process of looking outside but also did not display the introspective, inner voices.

Omnipotence of (current) politics – the dynamics of central news programmes broadcast by the analysed television stations was overly dictated by the shape of (current) politics. In addition to the time slot dedicated to election participants, the remaining parts of the shows allowed the logics of (current) politics to subject everything else to its particular purposes.

Consolidating function of the media – contrary to the media which perform an inquisitive and controlling function, the analysed television stations primarily sought to strengthen and justify the existing social and political structures.

Zoran Gavrilovic - CITIZENS ABOUT THE MEDIA COVERAGE DURING THE CAMPAIGN

Opinion polls, unlike the media, are not the subject of monitoring activities in the election process, despite the fact that even when it comes to opinion polls, anything can be (mis)used.

The misuse of opinion polls is reflected in the propaganda, that is, events when parties and, quite often, the media slanted in favour of such parties, are trying to influence the electorate by presenting/interpreting the findings on the current (non)realistic ratings.

On that occasion, violated are not only ethical and professional standards of journalism but also professional (methodological) and ethical standards of pollsters. It should be stressed that in Serbia³, there is no professional association of pollsters, which makes this type of misuse even more possible and unpunishable. In such situation, the membership in international organisations is of little use, as such organisations do not have in place a proper system which enables them to monitor how their ethical and professional standards are observed⁴.

As opposed to misusing both pollsters' reputation and public opinion polls, the utilitarian use of public opinion polls includes putting researchers in the service of helping and supporting a political party. The grasp of the content and mechanisms of public opinion enables a party/list of candidates to achieve better results. On that occasion, the pollster assumes the role of a contractor or hired staff offering expertise to the employers.

And finally, the use of opinion polls during the election campaign is notably reflected in examining the priorities, expectations or, put idealistically, examining how citizens imagine society tailored to their needs. In addition, opinion polls are partly used to determine whether the election campaign, and the media in particular, help citizens to understand which party, that is, which media are providing them with relevant information on the election activities and programmes of the electoral lists of candidates. Such information has to be clear and equally objective, accurate and timely.

Conducting and presenting the opinion poll according to the standards of professional and ethical conduct narrows the space for electoral manipulation. In the societies where the public opinion polling is in its infancy, whereas the public opinion is not socialised in the democratic spirit, this poses a risk.

³ A sociologist, Srećko Mihailović, tried to bridge this gap by founding the Association for Improvement of Empirical Research, however, this attempt was met with the passive reception of the researchers of social institutes and faculties. On the other hand, growing commercial and civil sector was not interested in any kind of professional self-regulation.

⁴ This is supported by the report of the Anti-Corruption Council of the Serbian Government which pointed to the unethical conduct of the ESOMAR member in Serbia, however, there was no one to notify this organisation of such conduct.

Seeking to analyse the citizens' perception of the monitored media, we organized a telephone survey on a sample of 1.009 respondents.

Our intention was to understand:

- Ø What are the dominant sources/media for providing information about the election campaign?
- Ø What are the media-related needs of the citizens during the election campaign, that is, what citizens expect from the election campaign?
- Ø What is the citizens' perception of the media behaviour in relation to an „ideal role“ of the media in the election campaign?

Sampling frame was based on the (electronic) telephone directory and official data from 2011 Census. The sample type was random, two-phase, stratified.

Allocation was proportional to the size of the region, all municipalities, and types of settlements at the municipality level. In the sampling phases, simple random sample of households and household members was selected by using quota system. Stratification was carried out based on: type of settlement – urban/rural and four geo-economic regions. Post-stratification was carried out based on cross-tabulation of variables: gender, age, region, type of settlements, education and voting in previous republican elections. Eventually, 95% confidence interval for the incidence of 50% was +/- 2.4%.

Media-related needs in the election campaign

In this part, we will present the findings on what citizens expect from the media in the election campaign. In this way, we will obtain a clear picture of electoral and media culture of the citizens of Serbia. Research participants were provided with the possibility to express their opinions in relation to the desirable behaviour of the media in the election campaign, by being provided with the scale of attitudes. Somewhat less than two thirds of the pollees thought that the media should present party programmes and officials expected to implement those programmes. Almost the same percent expected the media to promote what had been accomplished by the parties while in power, whereas half of the respondents expected the media to criticize the activities of parties conducted until election. Almost seven out of ten respondents thought that the media should analyse the activities that parties in power carried out until elections. Awareness that the media should promote the lists of candidates was highly prominent. Thus, two thirds of the pollees felt that in the campaign, the media should promote the parties which acted in the interests of citizens and in the public interest. Almost the same percent of respondents thought that the media should analyse promises, that is, ask the election actors the questions that citizens would ask.

Table 1 Media-related needs of respondents

	Percent agreement
Presentation of party programmes and officials	65.3
Promotion of party accomplishments until elections, while in power	62.3
Criticizing the activities of the parties in power until elections	57.5
Analysis of the activities carried out until elections by the parties in power	68.5
Promoting the parties which act in the interest of citizens and in public interest	66.9
Exposing the parties which do not act for the benefit of citizens and in the public interest	65.1
Analysis and evaluation of what had been promised by parties	64.8
Ask the parties/lists of candidates the questions I would ask	64.5

It is interesting to note that when the results are analysed according to the level of education, age, and electoral behaviour of respondents, no statistically significant difference can be observed. For that reason, we will present only the comparison by parties, for illustration purposes.

Table 2 Media-related needs of respondents depending on the electoral behaviour

	<i>Serbia is winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
Presentation of party programmes and officials	69.9	58.3	60.7	50.9	69.8	92.3	71
Promotion of party accomplishments until elections, while in power	71.1	58.3	56.7	53.7	54.3	84.6	67.7
Criticizing the activities of the parties in power until elections	56.7	64.3	64	50.9	53.5	92.3	61.3
Analysis of the activities carried out until elections by the parties in power	71,6	68,7	66	61,1	63,6	92,3	71
Promoting parties which act in the interest of citizens and in the public interest	70.2	70.4	57.3	59.4	66.7	92.3	87.1
Exposing the parties which do not act for the benefit of citizens and in the public interest	66.4	63.5	68.7	55.4	63.6	80.8	61.3
Analysis and evaluation of what had been promised by parties	68.1	63.5	66.7	54.9	73.6	53.8	77.4
Ask the parties/lists of candidates the questions I would ask	69	51.3	69.3	61.1	64.3	38.5	80.6

Dominant information sources

In the second part, we will present the research findings which speak of the fact that for the citizens, television outlets still remained the primary source of information during the election campaign. Radio Television of Serbia, as a public service, takes the lead with 60.2% of respondents who mentioned this television station as one of the sources of information about electoral developments. This television station is followed by TV Pink, which was specified by 40.9% of respondents as one of the sources of information about election campaign. Among the television stations which influenced the shaping of public opinion are also TV Prva, with 23.1%, and TV B92 (related with TV Prva in ownership) with 19.3%.

Table 3 Sources of information (multiple answers)

RTS	60.2
TV Pink	40.9
TV Prva	23.1
TV B92	19.3
Websites and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)	17.2
TV Happy	8.4
Kurir	6.6
Blic	6.2
Informer	5.6
Vecernje novosti	5.6
I did not get informed about elections	5.3
Local TV stations	4.8
TV N1	3.5
Through a friend, acquaintance and colleagues	3.4
Politika	3.1
TV Vojvodina	2.8
Local radio stations	1.9
From party activists	1.5
Party websites	1.1
Danas	0.9
Radio B92	0.9
Radio S	0.6
From parents and other household members	0.5
Radio Belgrade	0.4
Directly, I was involved in the campaign	0.2
Presence during pre-election activities of parties	0.1
Party documents, marketing material	0.1

Social networks were an important source of information regarding the election. Somewhat less than one fifth of respondents within the sample mentioned that social networks were one of the information sources they used to get informed about the election campaign. The Internet/social networks are followed by daily newspapers (Kurir, Blic, Informer, Vecernje novosti). Politika and Danas dailies were mentioned considerably less than the aforementioned dailies. Despite the fact that the campaign was run for the local elections too, local and regional media as sources of information account for a very low percent. Namely, this percent is within a margin of sampling error (1.9%), which supports the thesis that the election for the Serbian Assembly pushed the elections for the assemblies of towns and municipalities into the background.

Research findings show that the „first hand“ information from electoral programmes of parties and election campaign were almost non-existent. Keeping abreast of what was being offered by political parties, through the participation in election activities or by using party sources, is statistically negligible and speaks of particular political abstinence as well as of the laziness of citizens who just waited for their intermediaries, that is, the media, to project „their own“ interpretation of what political parties were offering.

When analysing findings by regions, it should be pointed out that in Vojvodina, Blic daily was mentioned as more statistically significant source of information (12.45%) than in other parts of Serbia (6.2%). This difference between regions is also noticeable when it comes to the media abstinence and electoral abstinence. With 11.7%, Belgrade is the city where the lack of interest in information about election is statistically much more significant than in other parts of Serbia where the media and election abstainers account for 5.3%.

The analysis of the dependence of election-related media information on the age of respondents shows that RTS, as information source, is statistically much less common among the youth aged 18 to 29 than among older population. The same trend applies to TV Pink, where the young population, who get less informed by watching this television station, is extended to include those between 30 and 44 years of age. On the other hand, the respondents aged over 60, more frequently mentioned TV Pink as information source. The same finding applies to TV Happy.

Table 4 Information about elections depending on the age of respondents

	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
RTS	35.71	61.60	65.29	68.68
TV Pink	29.12	30.38	43.39	52.59
TV B92	10.99	11.81	29.34	21.84
Websites and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)	35.16	22.36	17.36	4.89
TV Happy	0.00	5.06	7.44	15.52
Kurir	1.10	12.24	5.37	6.32

Informer	1.10	4.64	6.61	7.76
Vecernje novosti	4.40	0.42	8.68	8.05
I did not get informed about elections	12.64	3.38	4.96	2.59
Party websites	6.04	0.00	0.00	0.00

Our research shows that in connection with getting informed about politics, the youth largely shifted their attention to the Internet. More precisely, in political communication, young people did not want an intermediary. Instead, they wanted to obtain first-hand information. This is supported by the fact that among those who obtained information from the websites of political parties, youth were the majority. The thesis that every generation has its own news media can be supported by the finding that the audience aged between 45 and 59 mentioned TV B92 as information source to a somewhat greater extent.

From the perspective of education level, the research shows that TV Pink is one of the main sources of information for the respondents with primary school education or less. Namely, the data speak that this television station is statistically more significantly represented among the respondents with lower formal education. At the same time, among the sampled pollees, who indicated this television station as one of the sources of information about elections, the respondents with post-secondary and university education are considerably less present. The same goes for TV Happy.

Table 5 Information about elections depending on the education of respondents

	Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
TV Pink	51.06	38.46	28.65
Websites and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)	5.44	21.70	26.90
TV Happy	16.01	5.33	2.92
Politika	0.91	1.18	12.87

When it comes to specifying Politika daily as election-related source of information, more statistical significance was recorded among the respondents with university and post-secondary education. The respondents who claimed to have voted for the list of candidates Srbija pobeđuje (*Serbia is Winning*), mentioned RTS, TV Pink, TV Prva and TV B92 (related in ownership with TV Prva) as main sources of information. In the research, each sixth voter for the list of candidates led by the Serbian Progressive Party claimed to have been informed through the Internet and social networks. The same media were the information source for those who voted for the list of

candidates *Za pravednu Srbiju (For a Just Serbia)*. The difference lies only in the representation percent, because the dominant source of information was RTS. For the voters of this list of candidates, Blic daily was statistically significant source of information. The voters of the list of candidates around SPS and SRS as well as of the list of Dveri-DSS used identical sources of information about the election campaign. These are, notably, television stations (RTS, Pink, Prva and B92) and the Internet. Characteristic to the voters of the list of candidates around SPS was that their important source of information were their own party activists.

Table 6 Information about elections depending on the votes of respondents

	<i>(Serbia is Winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS- JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
RTS	57.89	62.61	66.00	68.57	67.44	3.70	45.16
TV Pink	47.08	33.04	41.33	40.00	42.64	22.22	29.03
TV Prva	25.15	21.74	23.33	20.57	17.05	37.04	35.48
TV B92	17.25	26.96	17.33	20.00	14.73	22.22	16.13
Websites and social networks	14.91	20.87	15.33	16.57	10.85	51.85	29.03
Kurir	4.09	8.70	4.00	7.43	6.98	37.04	16.13
Blic	4.39	15.65	2.67	7.43	5.43	11.11	9.68
Informer	7.60	0.87	5.33	6.86	2.33	0.00	0.00
Vecernje novosti	6.43	0.00	7.33	8.00	7.75	0.00	0.00
I did not get informed about elections	6.73	4.35	6.67	5.71	3.88	0.00	0.00
Local TV	5.26	0.00	4.67	2.86	9.30	0.00	16.13
TV N1	1.75	7.83	1.33	6.29	6.20	0.00	3.23
Politika	2.05	1.74	1.33	2.86	4.65	0.00	29.03
TV Vojvodina	2.63	5.22	0.67	1.14	5.43	0.00	6.45
From party activists	0.29	0.00	9.33	0.00	0.78	0.00	0.00
Party websites	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.74	0.00
Danas	1.17	0.00	1.33	0.57	0.78	0.00	3.23
Radio B92	1.17	3.48	0.00	0.57	0.00	0.00	0.00

The voters of the list *Savez za bolju Srbiju (Alliance for a Better Serbia)* used the Internet, that is, party websites and social networks as dominant source of information, as well as Kurir daily. RTS, TV Prva and Politika daily were the main sources of information about the campaign used by the voters of the list of candidates *Dosta je bilo (Enough is Enough)*.

Citizens' perception of the media

Further in the text we will present, in several segments, that is, indicators, the findings which speak of the citizens' perception of the coverage of television stations with national frequency:

- Television stations assisting in taking stock of positive and negative sides of programmes of parties/lists of candidates
- Television stations assisting citizens to take stock of priorities addressed by the lists of candidates
- Conveying important information about party programmes
- Giving the same amount of time to all lists of candidates
- Dealing with the topics which are important/relevant for the citizens
- Asking parties the questions that citizens would ask
- Running smear campaign against state authorities
- Running smear campaign against opposition parties

According to the respondents, it was RTS that largely assisted the voters in taking stock of positive and negative sides of the offered election programmes. TV Pink takes second place, whereas the third place is shared by TV Prva and TV B92.

Table 7 Attitude to the assistance of television stations in taking stock of positive and negative sides of the programmes offered by the lists of candidates

RTS	42.8
TV Pink	34.4
TV Prva	22.2
TV B92	21.4
None	10.0
TV Happy	9.6
I did not follow pre-election TV coverage	4.5
Don't know /can't form an opinion	2.8

In a percent which is statistically considerably lower than the average, young people of up to 29 years of age think that RTS and TV Pink assisted voters to take stock of positive and negative sides of the electoral offer of the parties. The respondents older than 60 think quite the opposite. They are of the opinion that RTS, TV Pink, and TV Happy assisted the voters to take stock of positive and negative dimensions of electoral programmes of the parties. The respondents aged 45 to 60, who got informed through TV B92, feel that those television stations helped them to evaluate what was being offered in April elections.

Table 8 Attitude to the assistance of television stations in taking stock of positive and negative sides of the programmes offered by the lists of candidates, depending on the age of respondents

	Total	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
RTS	42.8	27.47	43.04	40.50	52.30
TV Pink	34.4	15.93	21.52	35.54	52.30
TV Prva	22.2	23.63	24.47	22.73	18.97
TV B92	21.4	13.74	16.46	32.64	20.98
None	10.0	7.69	12.66	15.70	5.46
TV Happy	9.6	6.04	2.95	10.33	15.80
TV N1	9.5	9.89	12.24	8.26	7.76
Don't know /can't form an opinion	2.8	4.40	2.53	1.65	3.16

Similar trends were observed when this variable was “crossed” with the respondents’ education. The respondents with primary school education or less think, in a statistically more significant percent, that TV Pink enabled its audience to see positive and negative sides of programmes offered by the lists of candidates. This attitude is not shared by the surveyed viewers of TV Pink who have secondary, post-secondary and university education – in a statistically more significant percent.

Table 9 Attitude to the assistance of television stations in taking stock of positive and negative sides of the programmes offered by the lists of candidates, depending on education

	Total	Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
RTS	42.8	43.50	39.45	50.88
TV Pink	34.4	54.68	26.63	18.13
TV Prva	22.2	23.56	22.49	18.71
TV B92	21.4	16.31	21.70	30.41
None	10.0	5.74	11.05	14.62
TV Happy	9.6	19.03	5.92	2.34
TV N1	9.5	5.44	11.44	11.70
Don't know /can't form an opinion	2.8	1.51	3.16	4.09

We asked the pollees which of the specified television stations covered the problems /priorities addressed by the parties. According to the respondents, among the analysed television stations, those were mostly covered by RTS and TV Pink.

Table 10 Attitude to the coverage of problems/priorities addressed by the lists of candidates

RTS	42.3
TV Pink	29.9

TV B92	20.1
TV Prva	16.8
None	13.2
TV N1	7.8
TV Happy	6.0
Don't know /can't form an opinion	4.6

Again, when it comes to this indicator of media electoral (dys)functionality, it can be clearly seen that TV Pink and TV Happy did worse in the eyes of the viewers with higher educational backgrounds. TV Pink was judged more favourably by the respondents with primary school education or less.

Table 11 Attitude to the coverage of problems/priorities addressed by the lists of candidates, depending on education

	Total	Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
TV Pink	29.9	43.20	26.04	15.79
TV Happy	6.0	10.27	4.93	1.75

Clear differences can be observed in terms of age of respondents and sufficient information provided about the problems/priorities that political parties addressed in their programmes and appearances. Namely, a smaller percent of those aged 18 to 44, who got informed through TV Pink, think that this television provided information about all parties/lists and problems/priorities pointed out in their appearances and programmes. Conversely, those respondents who were older than 60, and who claimed that TV Pink was one of their main sources of information, were more of an opinion that the mentioned television station provided their viewers with the sufficient information about the priorities and problems that the lists of candidates presented in their appearances and programmes.

Table 12 Attitude to the coverage of problems/priorities addressed by the lists of candidates, depending on age

	Total	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
TV Pink	29.9	13.19	20.68	30.17	45.11
TV Happy	6.0	1.10	2.53	6.61	10.92

The respondents from Eastern and Southeastern Serbia think, in a statistically more significant percent, that TV Pink enabled all parties to present the problems and priorities they were pointing out in the campaign.

The respondents who stated that TV Pink was one of their main sources of information about the campaign and who voted for the list of candidates *Srbija pobeđuje (Serbia is Winning)*, think in a statistically more significant percent that this television station provided the parties with the opportunity to present the problems and priorities they highlighted and wanted to address.

When it comes to TV B92, those who voted for the list of candidates *Dosta je bilo (Enough is Enough)* think, in a statistically significant percent, that it was TV B92 that, more than other television stations, provided all parties with opportunities to present their programmes. The respondents who voted for the list of candidates *Savez za bolju Srbiju (Alliance for a Better Serbia)* gave to TV Prva the same, statistically significant and positive evaluation.

Table 13 Attitude to coverage of problems/priorities addressed by the lists of candidates, depending on the electoral behaviour

	Average	<i>Serbia is Winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
TV Pink	29.9	40.94	23.48	21.33	30.29	32.56	0.00	0.00
TV B92	20.1	16.67	18.26	18.00	18.86	25.58	11.11	45.16
TV Prva	16.8	17.84	14.78	19.33	16.00	12.40	40.74	12.90

The next indicator that we will analyse relates to what extent, according to the respondents, the lists of candidates were given adequate time to present themselves to the prospective voters. The majority of respondents think that RTS gave to the parties sufficient time to present their programmes. TV Pink and TV Prva take the second and third place, respectively.

Table 14 Attitude to the adequacy of time parties had at their disposal for the presentation of their choice

RTS	41.7
TV Pink	31.2
TV Prva	15.5
None	14.5
TV B92	12.8
Don't know /can't form an opinion	8.6
TV Happy	8.2
I did not follow pre-election TV coverage	3.8

In relation to this indicator, we have a finding on statistically significant differences regarding the respondents who notably got informed about the campaign through TV Pink. Namely, the respondents with primary school education and less, consider in a significantly higher number, that this television gave to all lists of candidates enough time to present themselves. This finding is less supported by the respondents with post-secondary and university educational background, who kept abreast of electoral developments through TV Pink.

Table 15 Attitude to the adequacy of time parties had at their disposal for the presentation of their choice, depending on education of respondents

	Average	Primary school education and less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
TV Pink	31.2	49.55	24.65	15.2

Respondents from Belgrade, who obtained the information about the campaign from TV Pink, much less supported the attitude that this commercial television gave to parties sufficient time to present themselves.

Table 16 Attitude to the adequacy of time parties had at their disposal for the presentation of their choice, depending on residency

	Average	Vojvodina	Belgrade	Western and Central Serbia	Eastern and South-eastern Serbia
TV Pink	31.2	32.97	21.21	33.8	36.2

Evaluation of the presence of the lists of candidates partly depends on the electoral behaviour of the respondents. Thus, the respondents who voted for the list of candidates, *Srbija pobeđuje (Serbia is Winning)*, perceive the media presentation of parties more favourably. This is supported by the finding that, to a statistically significant degree, these respondents selected the option stating that no television provided to parties the adequate time to present themselves.

Table 17 Attitude to the adequacy of time parties had at their disposal for the presentation of their choice, depending on the electoral behaviour

	Average	<i>Serbia is Winning)</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
RTS	41.7	48.54	23.48	44	46.86	37.98	44.44	22.58
TV Pink	31.2	39.18	33.04	24	33.14	31.78	11.11	3.23
TV Prva	15.5	18.71	6.96	24.67	9.71	11.63	37.04	12.9
None	14.5	7.02	28.7	19.33	14.29	16.28	7.41	25.81

TV Happy	8.2	12.87	4.35	7.33	5.71	10.85	0	0
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As opposed to the voters of the list of candidates led by the Serbian Progressive Party, the voters of the list around the Democratic Party think, in a statistically significant percent, that RTS did not give sufficient media space for the presentation of the parties. The said respondents have the same attitude when it comes to TV Prva. The respondents who voted for the list of candidates around the Democratic Party largely selected the option that no television gave to the parties sufficient time to present the problems and priorities they wanted to highlight in the campaign. The voters of the *Alliance for a Better Serbia* and the list of candidates, *Enough is Enough*, think that TV Pink and TV Happy gave less time to all lists of candidates to present their programmes.

The topics represent the connection between the electoral promises and expectations. This is why we asked our respondents which television outlets covered the election-related topics of their interest. The majority of respondents said that RTS covered the largest number of topics they thought relevant. Again, in this case, TV Pink takes the second place whereas TV B92 and TV Prva take the third and fourth place, respectively.

Table 18 Attitude to the relevancy of topics covered by analysed television stations

RTS	40.2
TV Pink	29.9
TV B92	19.8
TV Prva	16
None	15.7
TV Happy	7.8
Don't know /can't form an opinion	3.6

When analysed regionally, the respondents who got informed about elections through TV Pink, and who live in Eastern and South-eastern Serbia, thought that this television covered a considerably larger number of topics that they found interesting.

Table 19 Attitude to the relevancy of topics covered by analysed television stations, depending on residency

	Average	Vojvodina	Belgrade	Western and Central Serbia	Eastern and South-eastern Serbia
TV Pink	29.9	27.11	21.65	27.46	45.7

The respondents with primary school education or less, who got informed through TV Pink, mentioned, in a considerably higher percent, that this television station covered the topics which they thought relevant. On the other hand, there was a significantly lower percent of respondents who used TV Pink as one of the sources of information and mentioned that television station as the

one addressing the topics they considered relevant. When it comes to TV B92, the situation is quite the opposite. The respondents with primary and secondary school education, who stated that they were informed through this television station, thought in a statistically less significant percent that this television station covered the topics of their interest.

Table 20 Attitude to the relevancy of topics covered by the analysed television stations, depending on education

	Average	Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
TV Pink	29.9	42.9	25.84	16.96
TV B92	19.8	12.99	21.1	28.65

There was a higher percent of respondents who claimed to have voted for the list of candidates led by Aleksandar Vucic and stated that TV Pink covered the topics they found relevant. For the majority of voters of the list *Za pravednu Srbiju (For a Just Serbia)*, no television station covered any of the topics they thought important. The research findings speak of the fact that part of the topics which interested the voters of the Serbian Radical Party were not presented in any of the television stations. The topics which interested the voters of the list of candidates *Dosta je bilo (Enough is Enough)* were mostly covered by TV B92.

Table 21 Attitude to the relevancy of topics covered by analysed television stations, depending on the electoral behaviour

		<i>Serbia is Winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>For a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
RTS	40.2	46.2	20	44.67	34.29	43.41	62.96	38.71
TV Pink	29.9	42.98	26.96	20	25.14	29.46	3.7	16.13
TV B92	19.8	18.71	22.61	18.67	12.57	14.73	11.11	41.94
TV Prva	16	18.71	13.04	20	8.57	20.16	37.04	0
None	15.7	6.43	32.17	19.33	25.71	11.63	3.7	19.35
TV Happy	7.8	10.53	2.61	8.67	7.43	11.63	0	0

One of the roles of the media in the election process is to ask political parties the questions that respondents would ask. This is why we asked our respondents which television stations did that. Again, when it comes to this category, according to the respondents, RTS was the television station that most often asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask.

Table 22 Attitude to whether the media asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask

RTS	34.8
TV Pink	26.1
TV B92	21.1
TV Prva	14.2
None	12.4
TV Happy	8.9
Don't know /can't form an opinion	6.7

In this case, statistically significant differences again appear with TV Pink. The respondents with lower educational background, who were informed about elections through this television station, largely stated that TV Pink asked politicians the questions they would ask.

Table 23 Attitude to whether during the campaign the media asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask, depending on education

	Average	Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
TV Pink	26.1	40.18	20.91	14.04

When analysed by regions, TV Pink accounts for a statistically considerably higher percent of television stations that asked the questions that respondents living in Eastern and South-eastern Serbia would ask.

Table 24 Attitude to whether during the campaign the media asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask, depending on residency

		Vojvodina	Belgrade	Western and Central Serbia	Eastern and South-eastern Serbia
TV Pink	26.1	25.27	18.61	21.83	40.27

When analysed from the perspective of age, the respondents aged 18 to 29, who got informed through TV Pink, mentioned this television station, in a significantly lower percent, as the one which asked politicians the questions they would ask. On the other hand, the respondents who obtained information through TV Pink and were older than 60, as the answer to the question which television station during the campaign asked politicians the questions they would ask, specified TV Pink more frequently.

Table 25 Attitude to whether during the campaign the media asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask, depending on age

		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
TV Pink	26.1	14.29	19.83	24.79	37.07

The research findings indicate that, in a statistically more significant percent, the voters of the list around the Socialist Party of Serbia stated that the reporters of RTS asked the representatives of the electoral lists of candidates the questions they would ask. Statistically significant difference was recorded in the case of respondents voting for Savez za bolju Srbiju (*Alliance for a Better Serbia*), who stated that TV Prva asked the questions they would ask, however, it is worth noting that a considerable number of voters of this list stated that none of the television stations asked politicians the questions they would ask. As opposed to this list of candidates, the voters of the Serbian Progressive Party answered, in a considerably lower percent, that no television station asked the questions they would ask political parties competing in elections.

Table 26 Attitude to whether during the campaign the media asked politicians the questions the respondents would ask, depending on age

		<i>Serbia is Winnin</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
RTS	34.8	40.06	25.22	48.67	26.29	31.01	22.22	35.48
TV Pink	26.1	34.21	26.96	17.33	26.86	24.81	0	19.35
TV B92	21.1	19.59	21.74	19.33	17.71	14.73	11.11	35.48
TV Prva	14.2	14.91	15.65	18	7.43	12.4	44.44	12.9
None	12.4	5.85	18.26	7.33	21.14	12.4	40.74	29.03
TV Happy	8.9	12.28	8.7	13.33	4.57	6.2	0	6.45

When answering the question as to which television station led the smear campaign against state authorities, the majority of respondents answered „none“, whereas those who answered „don't know /can't form an opinion“ take the second place.

Table 27 Which television stations led the smear campaign against state authorities

None	30.7
Don't know/can't form an opinion	19.5
TV B92	16.6
RTS	15.7
TV Pink	10.9
TV N1	8.3
TV Prva	7.2
TV Happy	4.8

Analysing the research findings which are dependent on the education of respondents, we come to the conclusion that a lower percent of the respondents with primary school education or less

selected the answer „none“, whereas the respondents with post-secondary and university education largely chose the option that no television station led the smear campaign against state authorities.

Table 28 Which television station led the campaign against state authorities, depending on education

		Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
None	30.7	21.15	31.95	45.61
Don't know/can't form an opinion	19.5	28.7	15.19	14.04

Among all television stations, the difference is observed only in case of TV B92. The respondents aged 30 to 44, who got informed through this television station, much less believe that this television station ran the campaign against state authorities.

Table 29 Which television station led the campaign against state authorities, depending on age

		18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
TV B92	16.6	17.58	8.44	24.79	15.8

From the voters' perspective, the voters of the list of candidates Dosta je bilo (*Enough is Enough*) chose the option „none“ in a statistically more significant number, whereas the voters of the Dveri-DSS list of candidates opted for the answer „don't know/can't form an opinion“ in a considerably higher percent.

Table 30 Which television station led the campaign against the state authorities, depending on the electoral behaviour

		<i>Serbia is Winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
None	30.7	24.56	43.48	34	33.71	20.16	22.22	58.06
Don't know /can't form an opinion	19.5	20.18	14.78	18.67	20	31.78	3.7	9.68

When asked to evaluate the behaviour of the media toward the opposition, the majority of respondents thought that TV Pink ran the campaign against opposition parties. The respondents who could not form an opinion as to which television station led the campaign against the lists of opposition candidates take the second place, whereas the third place is taken by those who think that RTS was the television station which conducted the campaign against the opposition lists.

Table 31 Which television station led the campaign against opposition

TV Pink	34.5
Don't know /can't form an opinion	20.9
RTS	19
None	18.9
TV B92	8.8
TV Prva	8.7
TV Happy	7.5
I did not follow pre-election TV coverage	4.8

Statistically significant differences compared to the results obtained at the level of sample appear when the education level of the respondents is „crossed“ with television stations as sources of information about elections. In such case, the finding is obtained that the respondents with primary school education or less, provided the answer „don't know/can't form an opinion“ in a statistically more significant percent.

Table 32 Which television station led the campaign against opposition, depending on the education level

		Primary school education or less	Secondary school education	Post-secondary and university education
Don't know /can't form an opinion	20.9	31.72	15.38	15.79

The respondents who voted for the list around the Serbian Progressive Party and who got informed through TV Pink, stated, in statistically less significant percent, that this television broadcasted propaganda against opposition. On the other hand, the voters of the list of candidates Dosta je bilo (*Enough is Enough*), who got informed through TV Pink, chose, in a statistically significant percent, the answer that this television ran the campaign against opposition.

Table 33 Which television station led the campaign against opposition, depending on the level of electoral behaviour

	Total	<i>Serbia is Winning</i>	<i>For a Just Serbia</i>	SPS-JS	SRS	Dveri-DSS	<i>Alliance for a Better Serbia</i>	<i>Enough is Enough</i>
TV Pink	34.5	26.02	39.13	27.33	45.71	31.78	22.22	61 .29

Zorica Miladinovic

Election campaign in Niš media

LIVE COVERAGE OF ALEKSANDAR VUCIC'S „CULT OF PERSONALITY“

During the election campaign, among the media in Niš, promotional programmes of the Serbian Progressive Party were predominant, particularly those of their leader and the Serbian Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic. All other political parties and leaders were deeply overshadowed, whereas the problems, challenges and incidents occurring during the campaign were almost invisible, except in a smaller number of news media.

The convincing dominance of Vucic and SNS party in Niš was notably assisted by simultaneous live broadcasts of this party's pre-election conventions in Serbian towns /municipalities by as much as four Niš television outlets: Belle amie, Niška televizija, Zona plus and Kopernikus. For instance, all four television outlets provided live coverage of SNS conventions held in Niš (1 April), Zubin Potok (3 April), Pancevo (5 April), Pirot (7 April), Bor (9 April), Kraljevo (11 April), Sombor (13 April), Zrenjanin (18 April), and Novi Pazar (19 April).

On 21 April, the last day of the campaign, before the election silence, these four television outlets gave live broadcasts of SNS meeting in Belgrade. Later on, on the same day, until the very beginning of the election silence, three Niš television outlets (Belle amie, Niška and Zona plus), provided live coverage of „Cirilica“, the show of Happy television station, featuring Aleksandar Vucic.

Despite the fact that these four television outlets duly kept broadcasting/announcing programme schedules, their programmes were abruptly changed, that is, interrupted at the moment when SNS conventions were about to begin.

Neither these television outlets nor the other media gave simultaneous live coverage of the meetings held by other parties.

Despite live broadcasts, in some of these media outlets, the classic reports on the SNS convention in Niš were subject to censorship. For example, the report on SNS convention, which was held in Niš sports hall Cair and broadcast on television Zona plus, mentions neither Vucic's unfavourable statement regarding Niš Progressives, their conflicts and divisions („last warning“) nor his announcement that „all of them will get the boot unless they straighten up“, despite the fact that this was a new and the most important message relating to Niš.

In the Report of Anti-Corruption Council on the ownership structure and control over the media in Serbia, published in February last year, television outlet Belle amie, outlet Zona plus and outlet Kopernikus were specified as the media close to those in power (SNS) in terms of their ownership, finance and editorial policy.

In the course of campaign, Niš media mostly reported routinely, superficially and trivially, whereas the news media, which had the information on irregularities and more subtle topics, that is, those who reported on particular problems, were scarce (Južne vesti, Gradjanin, some national media, occasionally Niške vesti).

For that reason, Niš citizens were not sufficiently informed about the fact that there were attempts (by the municipal police and others) to interrupt the gatherings of Nova stranka (*New Party*) and coalition around

Reformistička stranka- Zajedno za Srbiju (*Reformist Party-Together for Serbia*); violations of regulations on displaying party posters; door-to-door campaigning of SNS party activists asking citizens if they will go to the polls and vote for the SNS; alleged threats to the sympathizers of the „separated“ Progressives who formed the list of candidates „Iskreno za Niš- general Momir Stojanovic“ (*For Niš with Honour – General Momir Stojanovic*) ; unauthorized medical examinations organised by the SNS; alleged fights of Niš Progressives during the celebration at Aleksandar hotel; election of the SNS MP candidate, Jelena Žarić Kovacevic, for the President of the Town Electoral Commission, which cast doubt on her trustworthiness and impartiality.

Particularly concerning is the fact that the media did not know how or did not want to recognise that in the election campaign, the public figures or political parties violated laws, for example, in the course of their humanitarian activities. Instead, they reported affirmatively of such irregularities.

For example, certain Niš television outlets reported on SNS humanitarian action carried out in the centre of Niš where citizens had their blood pressure and sugar level measured. The Mayor, Zoran Perišić, the member of SNS Presidency and head of the Campaign Staff of this party in Niš, was present on that occasion. The citizens who were provided these services were required to present their personal identification number and other identification documents. These television outlets also reported on free-of-charge measuring of blood pressure and sugar level for the citizens of Gabrovac, one of 11 villages on the territory of town municipality Palilula. This was organised by the Health Committee of SNS Municipal Board Palilula and attended by the president of Niš municipality Palilula, Boban Đunic, who is also a head of the SNS Campaign Staff in that municipality.

According to the experts, this represented the violation of: the Law on Financing Political Activities where in the itemized activities of the parties financed from public revenues, humanitarian activities are not stipulated; the Law on Health Care, which clearly prescribes the conditions under which health care services may be provided; and the Law on Personal Data Protection, which does not allow the use and processing of personal data, such as personal identification number, in the manner which is not stipulated by the law.

In this campaign, local officials again abused public offices and /or resources for the promotional activities of their parties. However, according to the available data, the media did not address this issue. One of the most blatant examples is certainly the abuse of public office by the President of town municipality Palilula, Boban Đunic who, in a „live programme“ of television outlet Belle amie, broadcast on 23 March, drew an SNS membership form out of his pocket and offered to his collaborator (President of the Municipal Assembly Palilula), Miloš Stojkovic (SPS), to sign it, which he did. The show hosts humorously „warned“ Đunic to respect the laws and rules of the campaign and afterwards concluded that this „will make history since this has never happened before“.

In addition, a large number of media regularly covered all activities of local officials, presenting them as their usual activities, although it was obvious that the number of such activities had dramatically increased during the campaign. There was not a single media in Niš to bring up this topic or deal with it with criticism, despite the reasons and arguments that called for it.

For example, according to the information obtained from the official website of the town of Niš, in the period/month after the elections were scheduled, the covered activities of the Mayor, Zoran Perišić, were even six times the number of his activities in the period/month before the elections were scheduled. In January this year, he had 14 media appearances on different occasions, in February only five, whereas until 7 March, when the local elections were scheduled, he had only one public appearance. However, from 7 March until the end of that month, he had as much as 21 media appearances and from the beginning of April until election silence, which started in the evening of 21 April, he appeared no less than 27 times. During the election silence he had three more appearances. For the local authorities, all these appearances were portrayed extremely favourably and presented affirmatively.

At the same time, the data from the official town website show that in March last year, when no elections were scheduled, the Mayor Perišić had only 11 public appearances. From 1 to 22 April, he participated only 12 times in the events covered by the media, which is almost three times less than in the „electoral“ April.

According to Article 29, of the Anti-Corruption Agency Act, an official „may not use the public resources and public meetings that he attends in the capacity of official for promotion of any political parties, and/or political entities.“ In addition, an official „is required at all times to unequivocally present to his interlocutors and the general public whether he is presenting the viewpoints of the body in which he holds an office or viewpoints of a political party, and/or political entity.“

The Rulebook on Obligations of Media Service Providers during the Election Campaign, effective since June 2015, additionally stipulates that „the broadcast of a pre-election programme disguised in the form of any news or other type of programme shall be prohibited“. If, in the course of campaign, an abuse of public office occurs in order to promote a particular list of candidates or individual candidates, the Republic Electoral Commission may identify such violation, whereas the penalties are determined by the Supervisory Board of the Serbian Assembly for the Electoral Campaign. However, ever since 2004, this Supervisory Board has never been formed.

ZORICA MILADINOVIC, VESNA CRNOGORAC
LEGAL OPINION IN CASE OF TANJUG NEWS AGENCY
(“AUTHORITIES GOT AROUND THE LAWS ON MEDIA”)

Introduction

According to the *Law on Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency*⁵ of 1995, this enterprise was established with the aim to “perform the activities, that is, operations of public interest in the area of public information stipulated by the Law”. Due to newly occurred legal situation concerning public information and media, which was caused by the adoption of the current *Law on Public Information and Media*⁶ of 2014 (amendments of 2015), the legal status of Tanjug and other media outlets founded by the state had to be resolved in accordance with the said Law. Namely, that was about privatisation as the process where, in a special procedure and under the prescribed conditions, observing the principles of publicity, the ownership of socially-owned or state-owned capital is transferred to the private capital.

To that extent, Article 142 paragraph 7 of the said Law on Public Information stipulates that: “If the capital of the publisher has not been sold by 1 July 2015, the procedure of sale of capital shall be terminated and the publisher’s capital privatised by the transfer of shares to employees without compensation“. The same Article, stipulates in paragraph 8: “If the employees do not accept the transfer of shares free-of-charge, the medium shall cease to exist and will be deleted from the Media Register, and the founder of the publisher shall pass the decision of change of activity or termination of the publisher.”

According to the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Public Information and Media, the state must withdraw its ownership in the media publisher not later than until 31 October 2015.

According to Article 32 of the Law on Public Information and Media, a media publisher may be any natural or legal person carrying on publishing and distribution of media content. However, according to Article 29 of this Law, media are means of public information and do not have the status of a legal person. These are, in particular, dailies and periodicals, news agency services, radio and television programmes and the electronic editions thereof as well as independent electronic editions (editorially shaped websites or Internet portals), entered in the Media Register.

After the Privatisation Agency had organised two public calls for the sale of Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency, which were unsuccessful because of the lack of interested buyers, instead of actions and activities stipulated in Article 142 (paragraphs 7 and 8), immediate actions were taken to regulate „legal consequences of termination“ of Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency. Namely, the employees were not offered free shares and thus, they did not even have a chance to accept (or refuse) them, even though this was their right guaranteed under the Law.

- *Decision on Legal Consequences of Termination of Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency*

⁵ *Law on Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency* // "Official Gazette of FRY", number 11/95

⁶ *Law on Public Information and Media* // "Official Gazette of RS 83/14 and 58/15". Available at: http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_javnom_informisanju_i_medijima.html

After the obvious failure to comply with the Law in this matter, the Government of Serbia issued the *Decision on Legal Consequences of Termination of Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency*⁷. The Decision explicitly states that "the operations of Tanjug were terminated on 31 October 2015, in accordance with Article 146 paragraph 1 of the *Law on Public Information and Media*". The Decision came into force on 5 November 2015.

In this Decision, it is envisaged that the property of Tanjug shall be assumed by the Republic Directorate for Property of the Republic of Serbia, upon the deletion of Tanjug from the Register of Business Entities. Tanjug documents shall be assumed by the Archives of Yugoslavia, and Tanjug shall disburse *all unpaid salaries and other emoluments to which employees are entitled for their work in Tanjug until the date of employment termination*.

The Decision also stipulates that all employees will receive redundancy benefits in accordance with the Redundancy Programme for entities in privatisation process and their work and engagement will be paid for the period until the adoption of the Decision. According to this Programme, the redundancy benefits for 152 employees, in the total amount of 56,058,400.00 Dinars, will be paid irrespective of the termination of the status of the subject of privatisation. The funds for the implementation of the said programme will be provided by the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2015.⁸

The Decision further stipulates that the Director of Tanjug (upon disbursement of salaries, redundancy benefits and other emoluments) will send an application to the Business Register Agency for the deletion of Tanjug from the Register of Business Entities and upon the deletion of Tanjug from the Register, the Media Registrar will, ex officio, delete from the Media Register the medium published by Tanjug.

Upon the search of the Register of Business Entities, on 4 May 2016, BIRODI reviewed the information about Tanjug⁹, which clearly speaks of the fact that Tanjug still exists as a business entity. Among others, this may lead to the conclusion that the Director of Tanjug did not apply for the deletion from the Register of Business Entities even seven months after the Decision of the Government of Serbia was adopted.

- *Relationship between the Law and the Decision*

⁷ *Decision on Legal Consequences of Termination of Public Enterprise TANJUG News Agency* // "Official Gazette of RS no.91/2015 and 102/2015". Available at: <http://demo.paragraf.rs/WebParagrafDemo/?did=299683>

⁸ Section 28 – Ministry of labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Programme 0801 – Employment and regulation of labour system and labour and legal relations, function 412 – Administrative affairs in connection with labour, programme activity 0003 – Support to resolving employment and legal status of redundant employees, economic classification 472 – Social protection benefits from the budget.

⁹ "Business name: PUBLIC ENTERPRISE TANJUG NEWS AGENCY WITH FULL LIABILITY, BELGRADE (STARIGRAD)

Status: Active business entity

Registration number: 07022301

Legal form: Public enterprise

Seat: Municipality: Belgrade-Stari Grad | Place: Belgrade-Stari Grad | Street and number: Obilicev venac 2

Date of foundation: 31-10-1995

Taxpayer's no.: 100038084"

Thus: Article 141 paragraph 13 of the *Law on Public Information and Media* prescribes that upon an unsuccessful privatisation, the founder of the media publisher (in this case the Republic, that is, the Government exercising founding rights of the Republic to Tanjug) shall pass the decision of the termination or change of activity of the publisher. The Government adopted the Decision on termination of publisher ("wind up") and thus, since the legal conditions were met, Tanjug was supposed to be wound up ex lege as late as on 31 October 2015. Therefore, the provision contained in the Decision of the Government, stipulating firstly the deletion of the Public Enterprise Tanjug from the Register of Business Entities, and subsequently the deletion of the Tanjug media from Media register, is not clear.

Legal "fate" (status) of the very Public Enterprise Tanjug is somewhat clearer since, as a publisher, it can be terminated only after its deletion from the Register of Business Entities (kept by the Business Registers Agency) and upon the fulfilment of itemized obligations. This is also described in the Government Decision, under item 5 (obligations of Tanjug Director, as above). However, the very medium of Tanjug (agency service) is not a legal person. In legal transactions it appears solely through the publisher and thus, had to be deleted from the Media Register ex officio, on the date of termination of the Public Enterprise Tanjug - which is 31 October, 2015.

Despite the aforementioned laws, which unambiguously and explicitly govern the legal status of Tanjug News Agency, the Government Decision creates legal confusion, whereas Tanjug medium still operates „as if nothing had happened“. Although the Government Decision could not have been and cannot be the legal basis for the continued work of Tanjug, its content and the very continuance of operations may lead to the conclusion that this was actually what the Government of the Republic of Serbia had intended.

The Government Decision is also legally disputable when analysed from a formal and legal aspect, that is, as a document governing an individual matter arising from a legal text. „State-owned“ Tanjug, as media publisher and medium, must cease to exist under the Law and the Decision of the Government cannot regulate, in any way, the (evident) continuance of Tanjug operations as a medium.

This Decision violates the compliance of all legal acts in the legal system with the highest legal acts – the Constitution and laws. Legal acts, which are subordinate to the law, such as decrees, decisions, rulebooks, orders, notices and others, must be in accordance with the law.

This raises the question if the sequence of deletion of the Public Enterprise and the medium itself is compliant with the Law. The hierarchy of legislation is violated as a legal principle which regulates the relationship between general legal acts and which requires that a general legal act of an inferior legal force must be in compliance with a general legal act of a superior legal force. In other words, this means that the Decision of the Government of Serbia, as a by-law, has an inferior legal force than the Law to which it refers in its recitals but nevertheless governs the matters not stipulated by the Law, such as subsequent deletion of Tanjug medium (which cannot survive one second without the Public Enterprise) from the Media Register.

- *Other expert opinions*

Former judge of the Supreme Court, Zoran Ivošević, however, thinks that in this Decision, the Government has „confused the issue“, and proclaimed the termination of media publisher (Public Enterprise Tanjug) instead of the medium (Tanjug news service). Thus, Tanjug news service continued to operate.

„The Government firstly had to adopt the decision on winding up the Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency and subsequently start regulating legal consequences of such termination. In the recitals of the Decision on Legal Consequences of Tanjug Termination it should be stated that it is based on the act of the Government on the termination of this public enterprise which is also the decision on the initiation of liquidation procedure. On the date when the decision on liquidation is registered, the Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency would continue with its work, but the enterprise would get a prefix – in liquidation – Ivošević says (February 2016).

The expert in media law, attorney Slobodan Kremenjak, says that this situation in connection with Tanjug raises an issue whether it operates as a pirate medium. He „does not understand“ why the Business Registers Agency (BRA) has not deleted Tanjug from the Media Register ex officio, because he thinks that the conditions were met back on 31 October 2015 (January 2016.)

However, a BRA representative, Ružica Macukat, claims that the application for the deletion from BRA register must be submitted by a legal representative who is obliged to sign financial statements for the previous year. She says that Tanjug News Agency firstly must be deleted from the register as a public enterprise and subsequently as a medium. (February 2016).

- *Survival of Tanjug*

According to the explanations provided by Tanjug management, Tanjug is surviving because the Decision of the Government „is implemented in phases“, and after all benefits are paid to employees and the property is transferred to the Republic Directorate, Tanjug should be formally deleted from the records of the BRA. They also stated that thereafter it remains to be seen if the conditions would be created for the foundation of a private agency.

In January this year, Tanjug Director, Branka Đukic, noted that Tanjug cannot be deleted from the Business Registers Agency until property inventory is made and financial statement for 2015 is prepared. For the time being, there is no public information as to the completion of inventory and the financial statement.

Đukic said that Tanjug operations are „co-financed by the state whereas the rest is financed by their own profit made on the market“.

According to the available data, from the moment of passing the Decision on Legal Consequences of Tanjug Termination, this Agency received the budget funds in the amount of somewhat more than 76 million Dinars for redundancy benefits paid to 152 employees and for resolving legal consequences of Agency termination. Before that, the state financed Tanjug with about 200 million Dinars a year, which, according to the reports of the media on Agency operations, amounted to about 70 percent of total Tanjug's revenues.

The remaining reporters of Tanjug still work in Tanjug building in Belgrade, which is believed to be in the ownership of the state, and thus they use all the resources of this Agency. According to the unconfirmed information, they work under temporary service agreements.

In the TANJUG Statement of Operations for the period from 2012 to 2015¹⁰, prepared by Pištaljka, minimum 17.5 million Dinars a month (about two million Euros a year) were allocated from the budget of

¹⁰ Tanjug operations, investigation of financing of the state-owned news agency and its management in the period January 2012 - July 2015. Available at: https://pistaljka.rs/public/download/izvestaji/Tanjug_Pistaljka_preview.pdf

the Republic of Serbia. According to the Law on Budget, as stated in the Report, "The funds are paid to Tanjug by the Ministry of Culture and Information, whereas the Agency is obliged to send its news to state authorities, free of charge. However, according to the research of Pištaljka, in the last year, the state paid to Tanjug „even more money, whereas many state authorities additionally pay for the services of this Agency”.

- *Legal and general issues:*

In view of the above facts and context, legal, ethical and social issues arise and call for the Government, the Ministry and other bodies to provide clear answers:

- Ø If the Republic of Serbia adopted the *Law on Public Information and Media* stipulating the mandatory media privatisation (provision which caused some regional and local media to be privatised in a disputable way and at the last minute!) which had to be implemented until the expressly defined date: 31 October 2015 – why Tanjug remains the only exception to this legal provision in Serbia?
- Ø If the Republic of Serbia is bound by the law to fully withdraw its ownership in all media, what is the "public" and „justified" reason of the Government of Serbia to prolong its exit from Tanjug for months after the legally prescribed deadline?
- Ø Did the Government of RS intentionally/plannigly prolong, for many months, its possible (unlawful) impact on editorial policy of the media from which the state had to withdraw? Was the actual prolongation of Tanjug termination influenced by the fact that 2015 was pre-election year and 2016 is election year and Tanjug Agency has a considerable „share" in the media election campaign?
- Ø Are anti-corruption legal provisions or media ethical standards breached in this way, since the (disputable) Government Decision signed by the Prime Minister enabled the operations of Tanjug which, on its part, intensively covered the Prime Minister's activities in the election campaign?
- Ø Why was there non-compliance with the legal obligation to offer the free-of-charge shares to all employees in the event of unsuccessful sale of capital until 1 July 2015? What criteria were used for keeping the part of Tanjug employees to work there? On what grounds and from which public sources the remaining employees receive their salaries even after the legally prescribed deadline for termination of „state-owned media"?

- *Conclusion*

- § Thus: The case of „Tanjug" is an illustrative example of violation and selective application of media laws, that is, provisions regulating privatisation of media publisher/media, which may be generated by political, partisan or other particular interests.
- § The operation of Tanjug news agency, even seven months after the Government decision on the termination of Tanjug as public enterprise, sets a precedent which undermines the rule of law, jeopardizes the essence/spirit of current media legislation which prescribes the exit of the state from the ownership in media publishers/media and mocks official commitment of the state to mandatory privatisation in the sphere of public information.

- § Particularly concerning is the fact that this legal nonsense was directly made possible by the Government and Prime Minister through adopting the Decision on legal consequences of termination of the Public Enterprise Tanjug News Agency (signed by the Prime Minister).
- § Due to the violation of legally prescribed deadlines for privatisation/termination of Tanjug, continued production and distribution of information which is legally disputable, avoidance of legally binding offer of free shares to employees, and unclear financing of this Agency, competent state authorities, regulatory bodies and journalists' organisations should have reacted in a more serious and efficient manner. However, they failed to do so.

**SUPERVISION OF BROADCASTERS IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN BY REGULATORY
AUTHORITY OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA
(REM IN ELECTION SILENCE)**

Introduction

In this election campaign, the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (REM) did not react to different problems arising in its media monitoring, however, it was recorded that it had a public dispute with one of the electronic media – Television N1, regarding whether particular REM members were consulted by this television outlet about election silence.

Television N1 accused REM of airing on another electronic media (Television Pink) the official announcement where, among other things, it was stated that N1 broke the election silence (without specifying how it was broken), whereas this was broadcasted four hours before the meeting with „N1 case“ on the agenda was even held. Television N1 and journalists' organisations publicly invited REM to explain when the meeting was held and which Article of the Law was violated by this television outlet, however, this regulatory authority failed to respond to these requests.

At the same time, according to website Cenzolovka, REM Council reported that in this election, as well as in previous elections, it sat in constant session. The Council also announced that its monitoring findings on the broadcasters' reporting during this election campaign would be published every week, but this never happened. Additionally, no Final Report on media conduct was published despite the fact that the media campaign ended at midnight, on 21 April.

Such actions of REM, that is, its failure to act, challenged its independence and efficiency and raised questions about its possibly selective actions and shallow monitoring of electronic media reporting during campaigns.

- *Mandate*

Supervision of broadcasters during pre-election campaign is governed by the provisions of the *Law on Broadcasting*, *Code of Conduct of Broadcasters* and binding *Rulebook on Obligations of Media Service Providers During the Election Campaign* as concrete by-law which regulates, in more detail, the conduct of broadcasters during elections.

Media activities in a campaign are stipulated in Article 5 of the *Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament*: “The citizens shall have the right to be informed by the mass media about the electoral programmes and activities of submitters of the electoral lists, as well as about the candidates on the electoral lists. The mass media shall be obliged to ensure equal accessibility of information about all submitters of the electoral lists, and about all candidates on those electoral lists“.

Article 5 of the Rulebook on Obligations of Media Service Providers during the Election Campaign prohibits „disguised broadcast of a pre-election programme in the form of any news or other type of programme“. In Article 6, the Rulebook obliges the media service providers to „when informing of pre-election activities of

the submitters of the electoral lists and of the candidates, it shall ensure that they are represented in the programme without discrimination“. Informing „must be true, objective, complete and timely“.

According to Article 28 of the *Law on Electronic Media*, REM may impose measures on the media which during pre-election campaign failed to ensure the representation of registered political parties, coalitions and candidates without discrimination as well as due to the violation of conditions laid out in the licence or approval for the provision of media service in accordance with the provisions of this Law. REM may impose on the media a remonstrance, warning, temporary ban on publication of the programme content or may revoke their license.

The purpose of supervision of broadcasters is to establish their conduct, compliance of programmes with the provisions of laws and generally binding instructions during pre-election campaign, time and manner of representation of electoral lists and candidates with the aim to determine the extent of balance and equal treatment of electoral lists or candidates. In addition, the principle of accuracy, objectivity, and prohibition of discrimination is subject to monitoring, which facilitates the identification of irregularities in programme content.

Quantitative method is used to measure the total time dedicated to a particular participant in the election process as well as individual and parallel classifications of entered data, for each broadcaster individually, for more than one broadcaster in parallel, or for all broadcasters, in a given period and by the selected parameters. Qualitative method is used for the main data on audio-visual programme content. The analysis identifies the behaviour of broadcasters and the manner and context in which the election participants and other actors appear, with the aim to determine the extent of balance and equal treatment of electoral lists or candidates.

- *Supervisory Board of the Serbian Assembly*

In addition to REM, the supervision over media conduct in the election campaign is or should be conducted by the Supervisory Board for the election campaign of the National Assembly.

According to Article 99 of the *Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament*, in the course of electoral activities, Supervisory Board performs „general supervision of activities of political parties, candidates and the mass media“.

Article 100 of the Law stipulates that this Board monitors pre-election activities and points out possible irregularities in the acts of political parties, candidates and other participants in the electoral procedure; controls the mass media activities regarding the provision of equal conditions for presentation of submitters of the electoral lists and candidates from the electoral lists; suggests measures for respecting equality of candidates in presentation of their programmes; addresses the public in order to protect the moral integrity of candidate's character, warns of acts of political parties, administrative bodies, candidates and the mass media which hinder the electoral campaign and jeopardize equal rights of all candidates.

If any participant of the electoral campaign behaves in such a way to incite violence, or spread national, religious or racial hatred, or encourage gender inequality, the Board shall, without delay, initiate the procedure before relevant state authorities.

The Supervisory Board has ten members, and half of those members are appointed by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia based on recommendation of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and the other half at recommendation of the parliamentary groups of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, from the ranks of prominent public officials, under the condition that they are not members of the political party bodies taking part in the elections. The President of the Supervisory Board is elected among the Board members by a secret ballot.

- *REM's practice to date*

As a rule, it was only after the elections ended that REM has published reports on media conduct during the campaign and imposed any measures. For instance, it was not until May that the report on elections held in March 2014 was published, whereas it was in September 2008 that Television Palma plus was imposed a warning measure due to an obvious slant in favour of an electoral list during the campaign, despite the elections being held in May that year.

According to the practice to date, REM promptly reacted only in cases when election silence was broken. In elections held in 2012 and 2014, REM requested from cable distributors to immediately block the broadcast of particular programmes, mostly from neighbouring countries, due to non-observance of election silence.

According to REM website, this body has never imposed the strictest legally allowed measures on any broadcaster. In rare cases, warning was the strictest measure the REM has imposed on the media due to the breach of the laws during the campaign. Warning measure was imposed only on Television outlets BK, Studio B and Jagodina.

- *Conclusion*

Ø In the pre-election campaign, the REM supervision of broadcasters was not timely, effective and efficient, since this regulatory body was late with the publishing of analyses and reports on supervision and additionally, imposed rare and moderate measures on wrongdoers. Such penalising practice and policy does not facilitate efficient supervision over the media conduct in a campaign and their future reaffirmation in this respect.

Ø The Supervisory Board of the Serbian Assembly for election campaign, which has the right to impose measures /sanctions not only on the media but also on political parties and officials, has not been formed since 2004, which makes the supervision process over the conduct of the media and other actors in the campaign incomplete, partial and impaired.