

Pregledni rad
UDK 321.01:351.78
Primljeno: 13.08.2016.
Odobreno: 11.09.2016.

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**INFILTRATING IDEOLOGY IN MEDIA CONTENT
CASE STUDY: THE ISIS REPRESENTATION IN TV NEWS IN SERBIA**

Abstract

The object of the study analysis is the media presentation of Islamic State (IS), radical Sunni extremist group which, according to the public and experts' opinion, currently presents one of the greatest threats to global security. Attracting the public attention with the brutality of its activities, the Islamic state has been chosen as the object of the paper; as the reporting on their activities can be used to test the thesis that media ownership structure affects media editorial policy, in this case using the examples of TV channels N1, RTS1 and Al Jazeera Balkans. The paper shows and explicates the results of the comparative, quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis on the reporting about Islamic State in central news programs of Serbian Broadcasting Corporation (RTS1) and two news channels, N1 and Al Jazeera Balkans. The starting point is the Van Dijk's definition of discourse as the reflection of the ideology of entities involved in its production, while the purpose is to find similarities and differences in the presentation and interpretation of the phenomenon in three analyzed media through a comparative analysis of reporting on the Islamic state, and attempt to discover the ideological background of the media, infiltrated in the information through usage of various discursive techniques.

Keywords: *media, television, discourse, the Islamic State, ideology, RTS, N1, Al Jazeera Balkans.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a unique medium which combines the visual images, sounds and language, television has a strong power to produce ideas and thoughts in people.¹ Due to this peculiar combination, television has become a suitable tool for the dissemination of ideologically shaped messages, because it allows things that cannot be explicitly said by words to be presented by image, sound, gesture, intonation or facial expression. For this reason, content analysis would not be a particularly suitable method to examine television content, while a broader discourse analysis would be more applicable.² Another reason for selecting television is the huge influence it has on the creation, shaping and changing the audience attitudes and behavior. Although it does not tell us precisely *what* to think, television has the main role in agenda setting, it is "...remarkably successful in telling us what to think *about*."³ From a variety of daily events, the editors extract the ones they consider important and interpret them according to their own interests and beliefs. This way we receive a more simplified picture of reality, complementary to the goals of program producers, which leads to propaganda and manipulation. A whole set of techniques has been developed that can serve this purpose, and some of the most frequently used are the "artificial creation of news, the change of news by either dropping or disregarding parts of it, the introduction of emotionally colored arguments and (dis)qualifications and, finally, the presentation of misinformation and outright lies."⁴

The importance of the role of media in people's everyday lives is best illustrated by the fact that a large part of the population believes that "the true and real is only what we hear and see on TV"⁵, and does not perceive the media images as constructs, but rather the facts. This is why an unbiased and clear media picture of Islamic State would help us better understand this phenomenon and how it functions, with the final aim of countering it. Each kind of bias, sensationalism and unilateral presentation of the group only contributes to strengthening their propaganda strategy designed to spread overall fear⁶, but also leads to the discrimination of Muslim population in general, which may increase the

1 Berger A. A. (1998), *Media Analysis Techniques* (Second Edition), Sage Publications, p. 31

2 Van Dijk T. A. (1985), *Discourse and Communication: new approaches to the analysis of mass media discourse and communication*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, p. 2

3 Parenti M. (1993), *Inventing Reality-of the Politics News Media*, St. Martin's Press New York, p. 23

4 Skopljanac Brunner N. (2000), *An Analysis of Media Presentation of Reality by RTV Serbia, Media and War*, Belgrade, Centre for transition and civil society research, p. 224

5 Kovačević B. (1996), *Medijski rat i genocid*, BanjaLuka, Glas srpski, str. 100

6 Simeunović, D. (2009). *Terorizam: opšti deo*. Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, str. 26

frustration among the Muslims, where revolted individuals could easily join the IS. Furthermore, balanced reporting on the Islamic State would reduce the number of soldiers recruited from Europe, Australia and other remote areas attracted by the media image of IS. These assumptions are based on the proposition of “television war” and Marshall McLuhan’s viewpoint that American warpath in Vietnam was the first war of this kind, “as a spectacle of death and destruction, offering the American public a unique show-program.”⁷ The television war later proved to be efficient in the Desert Storm Operation and during the war in former Yugoslavia, emphasizing the role of media propaganda in accomplishing the war goals.⁸

The media manipulation and ideological background are best reflected in the news programs⁹ as the news themselves require reduction, both due to limited time for presentation, and the fact that the selected news are considered to be the most important events during the day. Thus, primetime news programs, lasting 30-60 minutes, usually broadcast in the evening, as a set of the most important daily news, represents suitable material for a discourse analysis.

2. THE PERCEPTION OF THE ISLAMIC STATE AS A GLOBAL THREAT

Founded as a branch of Al-Qaeda in Iraq more than a decade ago, during the fights against the US army in the Sunni regions of western Iraq¹⁰, this Islamic Salafist – jihadi terrorist organization was gradually moving towards the border of Syria, and finally, in 2011, when a rebellion against al-Assad in Syria turned into a civil war, this group “took the advantage of the chaos, took over the northeastern parts of Syria by establishing a base for its operations and identifying themselves as ISIS.”¹¹ The greatest success achieved so far by the group happened in June 2014, when they conquered the city of Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq and announced the Islamic Caliphate, with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as a caliph. Viewed from the ideological standpoint, Islamic State is an extremist fraction of the Sunni Islam “which seeks to restore early Islam’s days of glory through jihad, a holy war directed against internal and external enemies...and...desire to purify Islam of its

7 Remondino E. (2002), *Televizija ide u rat*, Beograd, Clio, str. 12

8 Kovačević B. (1996), *Medijskiratigenocid*, BanjaLuka, Glassrpski, str. 26

9 Skopljanac Brunner N. (2000), *An Analysis of Media Presentation of Reality by RTV Serbia*, Media and War, Belgrade, Centre for transition and civil society research, p. 224

10 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre, (2014) *ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organization*, available on: http://www.crethiplethi.com/files/cp_0115.pdf, 26.6.2016.

11 Cronin, A. K. (2015). ISIS Is Not a Terrorist Group: Why Counterterrorism Won't Stop the Latest Jihadist Threat. *Foreign Aff.*, 94, p. 87.

flaws and return to what was perceived as the Golden Age of Islam.”¹² However, the Islamic leaders throughout the world deny any possibility that the interpretation proclaimed by the Islamic State is Islam indeed, but rather the opposite - that their beliefs and particularly their actions are directed against Islam. Maulana Shahid Raza, Executive Secretary of the Muslim Sharia Council in the UK, speaking about Islamic State for the BBC, called “all the Shias, Sunnis, the imams, politicians, Muslim community leaders and the media to work together to confront this cancer of violence and destruction.”¹³ Even the members of similar radical groups, such as the Al-Qaeda which, until recently, had been considered the biggest terrorist threat, reject any connection with the IS and their beliefs.¹⁴ Nevertheless, there are still understandings by which the Islamic State is very Islamic, such as the one of Greame Wood, the author of the article “What ISIS Really Wants”, noting that the IS “has attracted psychopaths and adventure seekers, drawn largely from disaffected populations of Middle East and Europe...But religion preached by its most ardent followers derives from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam.”¹⁵

After a series of terrorist attacks in Tunis, Baghdad, Cairo, Beirut, Paris, Nice and Brussels, where hundreds of people were killed, this group reached the global spotlight. For the first time since the World War II, the IS terrorist actions forced the world’s greatest powers to cooperate and engage in a joint fight against terrorism. What makes this radical Sunni group even more recognizable, in addition to mass terrorist attacks with a large numbers of civilian casualties, is their open brutality and bestiality such as the beheading of captured hostages, enslavement of women and children, crucifixion of “infidels“ etc. Although the IS members use the medieval torture methods for those they consider apostates and infidels, they are skillful in using new media for the sake of spreading their own propaganda.¹⁶ One of the most brutal video recordings was published on 15th February 2015, demonstrating the members of the Islamic State cutting off the heads of Egyptian Christians they kidnapped two months earlier in Libya.

12 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre, (2015), *ISIS: Ideology and Vision, and their Implementation*, Available on: <http://www.crethiplethi.com/isis-s-ideology-and-vision-and-their-implementation/islamic-countries/syria-islamic-countries/2015/>, 26.06.2015

13 BBC: *ISIS, Islamic Extremism*, Available on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjDxALZbV_g, 09.09.2015.

14 Tran M. (2014), *Who are Isis? A terror group too extreme even for al-Qaida*, Available on: <http://www.the-united-group.com/xhtml/press2.php>, 12.09.2015.

15 Wood G. (2015), *What ISIS Really Wants*, The Atlantic, Available on: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>, 12.06.2015.

16 Greene, K. J. (2015). *ISIS: Trends in Terrorist Media and Propaganda*, http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=international_studies_capstones, 15.10.2015.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The criterion for the selection of media to be analyzed in the paper was their ownership structure. Serbian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Television of Serbia) was founded by the Law on Radio and Television, from 31 July 1991 “as a highly centralized, state informative and propaganda mechanism.”¹⁷ The democratic changes from the year of 2000 brought about the process of RTS transformation into a public service broadcaster, which is obliged, according to the Article 4 of Law on public media services, to ensure objective and timely informing, with a guaranteed independence of its editorial policy and funding sources.¹⁸ However, ever since it was established, RTS has been exposed to the influences of various political structures with a great impact on the audience attitudes and opinions. The reason for the editorial dependence lies in the fact that, as a state broadcaster, Radio Television of Serbia was financed from the state budget and there was a close link between state officials and the TV station management. The situation has changed with the introduction of the TV subscriptions that allowed financial, and therefore greater editorial independence. However, due to poor collection, the fee was abolished, and RTS once again returned to the system of budget funding until the end of 2015, thus placing the autonomy of the editorial policy in threat.

The second selected medium - N1 is a local and regional 24-hour platform for the news broadcasting in the Balkans, with 3 production centers in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo.¹⁹ What makes N1 particularly interesting for the paper is the fact that, as the exclusive regional CNN partner, it has the right to broadcast CNN’s programs of relevance to viewers in the region, but also to exchange its own program of international importance with CNN. When it comes to ownership, the proprietor of N1 channel is Adria News within the United Group.²⁰ Furthermore, the United Group is owned by a leading US investment firm KKR (Kohlberg Kravis Roberts) led by David Petraeus, ex Commander of the international forces in Afghanistan and former head of the CIA. A co-investor in the company is The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.²¹ Although according to the claims of N1 Program Director for Serbia Jugoslav Ćosić, the partnership

17 Milenkovic D. (2015), *Medijskopravo i politike*, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Fakultet politickih nauka, str. 171 / 172

18 “Zakon o javnim medijskim servisima” (2014), Sluzbeni glasnik Republike Srbije br. 83/2014, Beograd, Available on: <http://www.uns.org.rs/zakoni.html>, 10.09.2015.

19 N1, <http://rs.n1info.com>, 11.09.2015.

20 Barlovac B., Vučićević B. (2014), *Balkanski CNN i njegov aršin*, Vreme, 18.12.2015.

21 Popadić J. (2014), Novi medijski zakoni otvorili vrata N1 televiziji, Evopska opservatorija za novinarstvo, Available on: <http://rs.ejo-online.eu/medijska-politika/novi-medijski-zakoni-otvorili-vrata-televiziji-n1>, 25.10.2015.

with CNN does not affect the editorial policy of N1²², Rani Raad, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer of CNN International stressed that the agreement with N1 “underscores our commitment to growing and expanding the CNN affiliate business...and enables us to deliver on our goal of supporting local news operations with training and consultancy expertise and we’re delighted that N1 is joining the CNN fold.”²³

Al Jazeera Balkans (AJB) is the regional news channel of Al Jazeera Media Network, founded and subsidized by the Emir of Qatar²⁴, which was often suspected in the media for providing financial support to the Islamic State.²⁵ Such ownership structure raises numerous controversies about its editorial independency, although Qatari government emphasizes Al Jazeera’s editorial independence because “for Qatar, AJE is most important as a showcase of Qatari media freedom.”²⁶ Further on, according to Al Anstey, CEO of Al Jazeera America, since the AJ is privately funded this means “there’s no commercial imperative, there’s no sort of political influence and therefore you really are looking pure and simple at the story.”²⁷ In the world of 24/7 channels Al Jazeera openly challenges the “BBC/CNN approach”, advocating “non-Western, global perspective.”²⁸ In order to represent all sides of the story, it often plays the role of “devil’s advocate” putting itself “in the shoes of the antagonist,”²⁹ which contributes to being labeled as a pro-Muslim television. Its editorial policy is distinguished by “in depth coverage, representation of the stories world seldom looks at, different perspective and desire to give a voice to the voiceless.”³⁰

22 Matkovic V. (2014), *Predugo smo svi bili hermatizovani*, Danas 14.11.2015.

23 The United Group, www.the-united-group.com, 28.11.2015.

24 Lynch, M. (2005). Watching Al-Jazeera. *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-), 29(3), str. 37

25 Michelle M. (2014), Amena Bakr and Angus McDowall, *German minister accuses Qatar of funding Islamic state fighters*, Available on: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/20/us-iraq-security-germany-qatar-idUSKBN0GK1I720140820>, 13.09.2009.

26 Figenschou T. U. (2014), *Al Jazeera and the Global Media Landscape: The South is Talking Back*, Routledge, New York, p.164

27 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analysing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p.18

28 El-Nawy, M., & Powers, S. (2010). Al-Jazeera English A conciliatory medium in a conflict-driven environment?. *Global Media and Communication*, 6(1), p. 73

29 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analysing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p.13

30 Painter J. (2008), *Counter-Hegemonic News, A case study of Al-Jazeera English and Telesur*, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, p.20

During the US war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, CNN and Al Jazeera were considered the major competitors in reporting, offering different viewpoints and interpretations of events. While CNN shows “overwhelmingly American perspective“ and emotional and sensationalist coverage of conflict topics, Al Jazeera rather chooses to show concern and seek for justice.³¹ Therefore is very interesting to see their current reporting positions on the new threat to global security, with the addition of RTS as a public service broadcaster and its own view on the topic. For this reason, the date when IS members beheaded 21 Egyptians was taken as the beginning of the analysis, which covers the period from 16th February to 22nd February 2015³² in order to compare the interpretation of the event and other events linked to the IS, represented in the analyzed media. Two main assumptions are that the different interpretations and attitudes seen in the three media on the Islamic State activities are *conscious* and *intentional* media constructs in line with their editorial policy and ownership structure and that these opposing media perspective can be defined as *pro-Western*, and *pro-Islamic*.

In the analysis of the Islamic State representation in the central news programs³³ of RTS1, N1 and Al Jazeera Balkans, the method of quantitative and qualitative analysis of media discourse was used. “Since people acquire, express and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk, discourse analytical study of ideology is most relevant.“³⁴ This method was chosen due to the specific nature of television, which represents a unique combination of text, images and sounds, where each individual element has a specific function in the construction of the meaning. Therefore the discourse analysis emerged as the most appropriate because it “examines the use of language, necessarily in conjunction with the context and non-verbal elements of linguistic structure.“³⁵ Text is important because the word selection, sentence structure, style and rhetoric can be used to the infiltrate ideology in the media content, but textual analysis itself is not sufficient, because some non-verbal elements of communication can often better express, but also hide the

31 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analyzing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p.15

32 The sample was smaller for N1 because this news channel does not broadcast Dnevnik u 19h on weekends, and therefore the analyzed period for this medium was from 16/02/2015 to 20/2/2015. Due to the fact that statistical methods was applied, opportunities for potential disproportionality are reduced.

33 Al Jazeera Balkans does not define *Vijesti u 20h* as a central news program because this one-hour-long program is broadcast every 2 hours.

34 Van Dijk T. A. (2006), *Ideology and Discourse Analysis*, Routledge, Journal of Political Ideologies 11(2), p. 115

35 Savic S. (1993), *Diskurs analiza*, Univerzitet u Novom Sadu, Filozofski fakultet, str. 9

meaning. As Van Dijk explains, “depending on context, any variable structure of discourse may be ideologically ‘marked’. Specific intonation, stress or volume in the expression of a word or phrase may be interpreted as sexist or racist.”³⁶ However, it should be noted that words or phrases themselves are not ideologically biased, but it is “their specific *use* in specific communicative situations that make them so.”³⁷

In order to obtain more reliable information, discourse analysis was accompanied with *comparative method* as well. Comparing the contents of the three analyzed media made it easier to spot the different approaches to the same subject and to notice intentionality in the certain content omission. *Statistical method* was used for the quantification of the results, along with *descriptive method* for the content elements that were hard to describe in a different way. The unique *analysis code* consisted of 10 following categories was also made: presence of the news on the Islamic state, news length, genre, cause, location, visual presentation, subject and object of the news, linguistic and rhetorical features and the context value.

4. RESULTS

The analysis covered a seven-day period with a total of 19 analyzed primetime news programs, with average duration of 44 minutes and 36 seconds. While RTS and N1 broadcast half-an-hour news program, Al Jazeera has an hour-long news program.³⁸ The analysis did not include the sports program block, neither the segment of weather forecast. The quantitative level of analysis was applied to the news program in total, while the qualitative analysis only covered the news where the Islamic State is mentioned at least once, or those that can be indirectly linked with the IS activities (e.g. the news about the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism). The total number of analyzed news was 24, with an average duration of 73 seconds. All the news were transcribed in order to carry out precise and detailed analysis.

The first criterion was the **presence of the news** on the Islamic State. Viewed in the context of the number of news, the lowest number was presented on N1, followed by RTS, while the greatest number of reports was shown on AJB (See Chart 1). There are multiple explanations for this distortion. First of all, N1 does not

36 Van Dijk T. A. (2006), *Ideology and Discourse Analysis*, Routledge, Journal of Political Ideologies 11(2), p.124

37 Ibid, p.128/129

38 Potential disparities because of the different duration of the news programs are avoided by using the statistical method. It should be noted here as well that Al Jazeera Balkans does not define *Vijesti u 20h* as central informative program.

broadcast *Dnevnik u 19h* on weekends, thus the analysis covered five rather than seven programs, which directly reduced the number of news on the IS. However, in the first five days of analysis, AJB broadcast even nine news pieces on the topic. The abundance of Al Jazeera news dedicated to the Islamic State is in line with its editorial policy to present those parts of the world that other media rarely focus on.³⁹ Al Jazeera also has a stable financial inflow, which gives it relative independence to engage in the topics the audience might not be so interested in, contrary to commercial media, such as N1, which depends on advertisers and its own audience. Providing news from the remote regions such as the Middle East means ensuring correspondents in the areas, making it impossible for the media with unstable budget funding such as RTS, opposed to the privilege of N1 to take over CNN reports. Although AJB has one-hour-long news program with more room for in-depth interpretation, the distortions in terms of news number clearly show the opposite editorial policies, a different focus of attention and the interest to present end explain this phenomenon. Watching only the news programs of RTS and N1, the audience would be deprived of the information that Bosnian citizens were arrested for attempting to join the IS or the Islamic Conference on Terrorism, broadcast by Al Jazeera Balkans only.

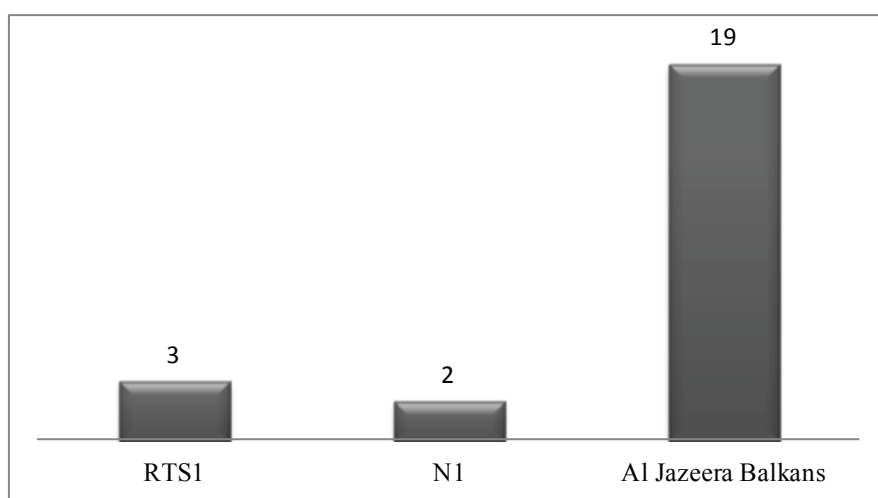


Chart 1: Number of news on the Islamic State

The second criterion related to the number of news was the **news duration**. The shortest reports about the Islamic State were presented by RTS, with a negligible

³⁹ Painter J. (2008), *Counter-Hegemonic News, A case study of Al-Jazeera English and Telesur*, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, p. 20

difference compared to AJB, while the news with the longest duration were showed on N1. The duration of AJB's reports is shorter due to the amount of news related to the topic, as well as due to a different concept of news program, where all news on IS were put into a single block, to make one comprehensive picture. The results seen for RTS can be also explained by the fact that the station has no reporters in the Middle East and usually takes over short agency news. Thanks to their cooperation with the CNN, N1 had good materials for longer reports. In percentage terms, the news on IS have taken up a minimum space on RTS - 1.42% of the program⁴⁰, followed by 2.6% of the N1 program, while AJB allocated the most time to the Islamic state - 7.01%.

News genre can be a very interesting indicator of editorial policy because it illustrates the dominant way of topic treatment. Two out of three RTS reports on the Islamic State by genre could be defined as the news, in this case taken from the news agencies due to its financial difficulties and the absence of correspondents. N1 broadcast two items on this issue and both were longer reports. However, the most diverse by genre were AJB's news (See Chart 2). Because of the larger time space available, but also due to the particular interest to present this topic adequately, besides the news and reports AJB also broadcast analytical comments by its correspondents. Peculiarly interesting were the reactions offering another side of the story, such as the statement of the BiH Islamic Community leader condemning the execution of the Copts, or the Qatari foreign minister who rejected accusations of Qatar helping the Islamic State, where one can clearly notice the influence of the ownership on its editorial policy.⁴¹ In the context of ideological position, these statements go in favor of classifying AJB approach as pro-Muslim, but here we can also notice AJB's tendency to make a clear distinction between Islam and Islamic believers on the one hand, and the Islamic States and their activities on another.

40 The result was received by comparing the total duration of all news programs of a channel with the sum of duration of news about the IS.

41 How big is the influence of Qatari sheik on editorial policy of Al Jazeera demonstrates the case of the reporting on Bahrain, when the ruling Sunni minority attempted to quell brutally the pro-democratic uprising of the Shiite majority. In this case Al Jazeera has deviated from its policy of "giving voice to the voiceless" and in accordance with the interests of the Qatari sheik whose troops were in Bahrain, presented just a short reports on the events in Bahrain. See more on: Aryn B. (2011) *Bahrain's Voiceless: How Al-jazeera's Coverage of the Arab Spring is uneven*, Available on: <http://world.time.com/2011/05/24/bahrain-voiceless-how-al-jazeeras-coverage-of-the-arab-spring-is-uneven/>, 15.11.2015.

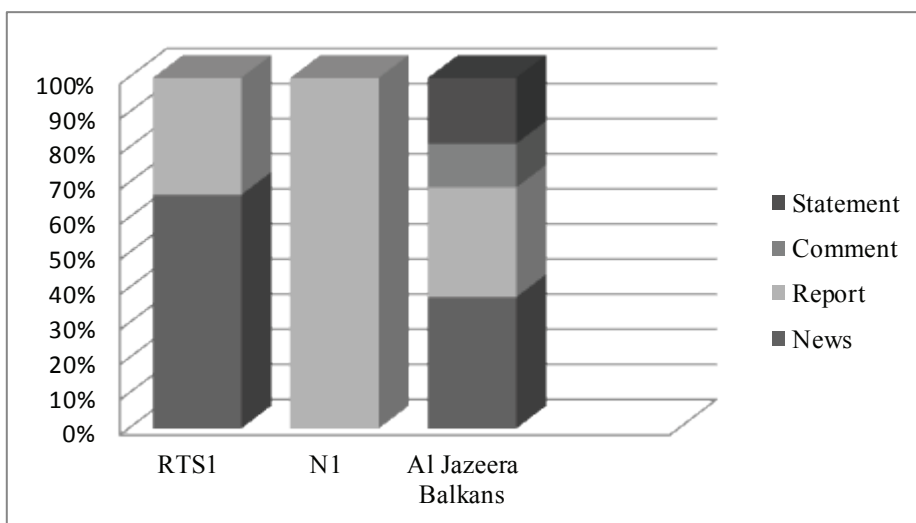


Chart 2: Percentage distribution of different genres

In the coverage on conflicts, journalists should be cautious with footage of explicit violence, because the videos of people about to be killed, shown without any warning, could cause damage to the audience, particularly to victims' families and friends. One of the IS strategy for intimidation is to present their recordings of brutal murders and torture via Internet, while it is up to the media to choose whether to publish it or not. According to Robbins, "screen exposes an ordinary spectator to the harsh realities, but extracts the harshness from such reality. The result is a certain moral vacuum: the screen gives the sensation requiring no responsibility, taking us into a spectacle, not confronting us with the complexity of reality."⁴² Two out of three IS news on RTS presented the video footage with alarming content, such as the sea colored red from the blood of executed Copts or the photo of Kurds locked in cages, which gives a strong impression on the atrocity of the group. There is a similar video content in N1 report, showing the victims on their knees just before the execution and the sea red from the victims' blood. This kind of **visual presentation** is consistent with "CNN's model of putting a strong emphasis on what viewers want and therefore packaging its programs to appear as attractive and visually appealing as possible to audiences."⁴³ Only AJB had a different approach to this topic, with less emphasis placed on the act of execution,

42 Robbins, K. (1994), *The politics of science: The meaning of communication and the uses of media in new Europe*, New Formations 21, p. 93

43 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analysing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p. 11

and a greater focus on the Egyptian bombing of Islamist positions in Libya, as a reaction to the execution of Copts. Thus the visual presentation is less disturbing, with snapshots of fighter planes, graphic maps and taped statements. This approach fits the AJ policy to avoid sensational approach to the conflict issues, but rather to try to find its own, different perspective and to "tend(ed) to express an air of concern, alarm and a justice-seeking agenda."⁴⁴

Journalists can prepare news **regarding** some current event, pseudo-event or news may arise as a result of media intention to investigate and present certain phenomena to the public. In this analysis, reports were mainly driven by current events, such as the execution of 21 Egyptian Copts or the Egyptian bombing of IS positions in Libya. However, the news made on journalists' initiative are particularly indicative, as they demonstrate media interest in the topic even when there are no current events related to a phenomenon. Such reports give media more freedom for their own interpretation in line with their ideological position. RTS, as already mentioned, does not have reporters in the conflict areas and consequently no such reports. N1 took over CNN's report on the most important battle cities of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and Al Jazeera Balkans prepared a report on the combatants from Misrata fighting against the Islamic State. Besides having the necessary funding for such news, the AJ report on the Libyan fighters is in accordance with its motto "The opinion and the other opinion", with its constant endeavor to present the other side of the story.⁴⁵

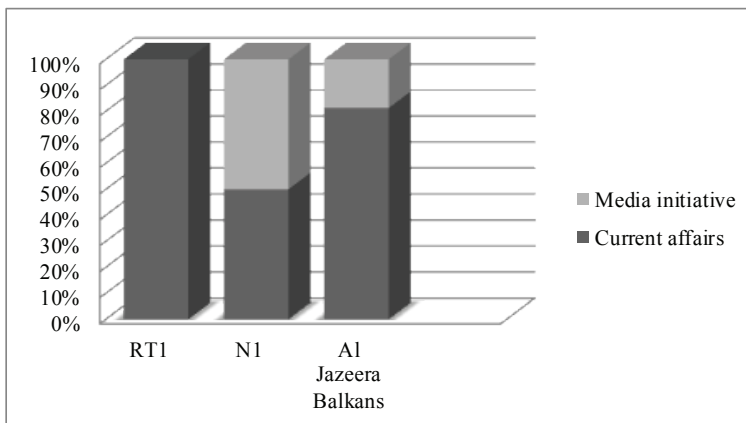


Chart 3: Percentage distribution of the different motives for the news creation

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 15

⁴⁵ Thai E. (2010), *Alternate Viewpoints: Counter-hegemony in the Transnational Age*, Available on: <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=756>, 17.09.2015.

Location as a criterion for the analysis can also be an interesting indicator of ideological background. What is particularly important in the news preparation is that it has to be as close to the audience as possible, because it enables them to accept it and identify with it. The Islamic State war in the Middle East and North Africa is not something that could directly affect the audience of these media, but the spread of its activities in Europe, or even closer, in the Balkans, would increase the interest for this group. Al Jazeera Balkans, with its headquarters in Sarajevo, was the only one to broadcast the report on the arrest of seven Bosnian citizens on a suspicion that they wanted to join the IS. Thereby the IS activities are brought closer to the audience, justifying further reporting on their activities, but also showed the fight of dominantly Muslim country against the Islamic State, which goes in favor of the AJ strategy for distinguishing the IS from Islam. However, it is particularly interesting that the N1 did not broadcast this news although its journalists were at the media conference. The reason for such decision could be the editorial estimation that the news would not be important for their audience in Serbia.

Another important aspect for discourse analysis is the **relation between the subject and the object of the news**. Assigning a certain actor as the news subject means giving them more importance. Journalists have the freedom to present their own interpretations and the possibility to place focus on different actors, thus making the subject – object positions subject to change. In the report on the execution of 21 Copts, RTS and N1 put the emphasis on the act of execution, where the IS members were the news subjects. Contrary to this, AJB's emphasis was placed on the activities of the Egyptian Air Force, with the Libya representative's complaint on the attack on their sovereignty, while the act of execution was mentioned only as a pretext for this military action. Once again we can see how AJ presents the same event in an alternative way, showing the Muslim's country struggle against IS and "giving voice to the voiceless."⁴⁶ Additionally, its approach was differentiated by the fact that the culprits in AJ reports were marked as *the group close to ISIL*, while N1 and RTS named them *the members of the Islamic state*.

46 Painter J. (2008), *Counter-Hegemonic News, A case study of Al-Jazeera English and Telesur*, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, p. 20

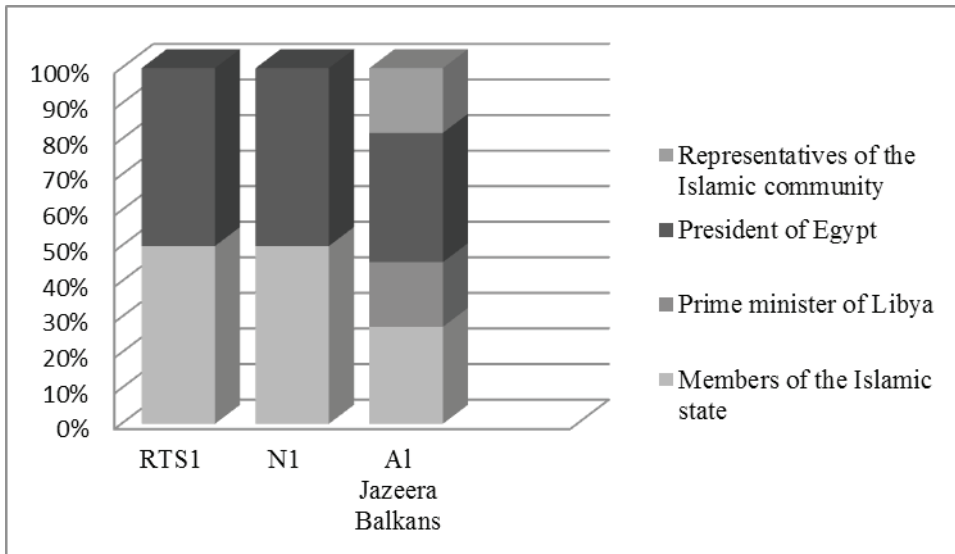


Chart 4: Percentage distribution of the different subjects of news

Al Jazeera’s intention to offer a different perspective was clearly demonstrated in the selection of objects, i.e. the selection of those who are the subject’s matter of interest. In all three media, the Islamic State was the most common object. However, in AJ news the Islamic State was twice as much in the role of an object than in the position of the subject, while the ratio on N1 and RTS was pretty much equal. This creates the impression that AJB intentionally avoids to give the central position to the group, but more often presents it as the cause or the consequence of the events.

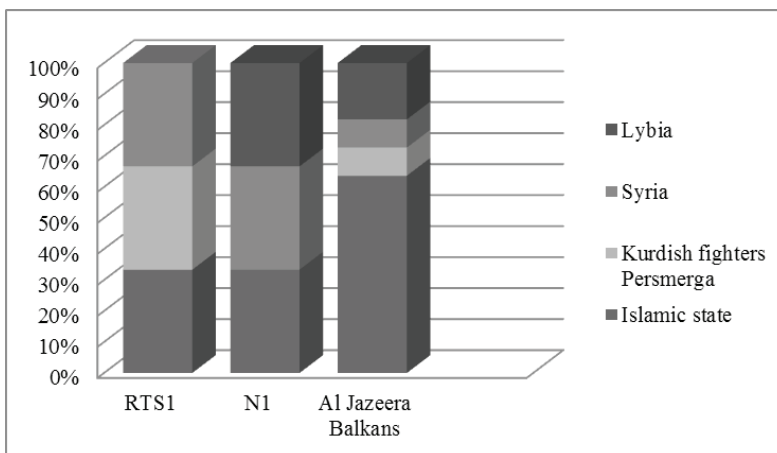


Chart 5: Percentage distribution of the different objects of news

In order to properly apply the discourse analysis, the examination of **linguistic and rhetorical features of the news** is highly important, because the "words on television are like a water: they take the form of the surrounding they are in."⁴⁷ The phrases used by the media referring to the Islamic State show us how they perceive it, in accordance with the dominant media's opinion about it. First of all, instead of "the Islamic State", AJB journalists use the phrase "Islamic states of Syria and the Levant (ISIL)." The difference comes from the Arabic word "al-Sham", referring to the area which nowadays includes Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, thus we can translate it equally as "the Levant", "Greater Syria", "Syria" or even "Damascus."⁴⁸ While reporting on the activities of the Islamic State, RTS uses the terms "fundamentalists" and "extremists", and N1 stands out by the use of noun "Islamists", directly referring to Islam, although the Islamic leaders deny relationship with IS. On the other hand, Al Jazeera's journalists avoid these qualifiers, opting for value-neutral structures such as "the members of the ISIL", while the broadcast reactions of the Islamic Community's representatives are the only situations where we can hear the phrases "terrorists" and "armed groups."

Language is also a convenient mean for constructing the image of the enemy. By differentiating "us" from "them", us always being the threatened side, with them acting as enemies endangering us, we create a black-and-white image of reality, being easier for the audience to understand. A common feature to all analyzed media is that "they" are always the members of the Islamic State. The RTS and N1 stressed the "outrageous crime" and "barbaric execution" of the hostages which qualifies IS as the enemy, and the usage of "dramatic language" is one of CNN's editorial distinctiveness.⁴⁹ Slightly milder condemnation comes from Al Jazeera, but primarily through the statements they decided to broadcast, not directly through the language of the media. On the other hand, the matter of "we" in the reports of RTS and N1 is not clearly defined, while the two AJB news with Muslim leaders' statements designates "we" as all Muslims endangered with "their"(ISIL) operations.

47 Remondino E. (2002), *Televizija ide u rat*, Beograd, Clio, str. 50

48 Here it is interesting to mention that in addition to Al Jazeera the president of the United States Barack Obama is one of the very few using the term ISIL. What are the true reasons for the decision it is hard to claim with certainty, although we can suppose that the term Islamic state has more universal meaning and to a greater extent associates with Islam, and this is perhaps why they avoid the use of this term. See more: Pasternack Alex, *Why ISIS Isn't 'ISIS' or 'Islamic State,' and What We Should Really Call It*, 2014, Available from: <http://motherboard.vice.com/read/why-isis-isnt-isis-or-islamic-state-and-what-we-should-really-call-it>, 15.11.2015.

49 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analysing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p.13

As the use of the epithets in TV news is not necessary, nor even recommended, the employed epithets can be illustrative indicators of media's viewpoints. In RTS reports we can find phrases condemning the IS actions such as the "cruel murder" and "unprecedented felony." Similar constructions were found in N1 with the epithets like "frightening video footage", "sea filled with the blood", "barbaric execution", presenting the personal attitude of the media. In this case Al Jazeera once again keeps an objective distance and neutral approach, avoiding the usage of these biased linguistic structures.

The value context certainly presents the most important and the conclusive indicator of the ideological background of the media. Bringing together all the other criteria, it explicitly shows whether the attitude of the media towards a particular topic is positive, neutral or negative. The value context could be read from the selection of interlocutors and the news to be broadcast, the media decision to present one or more sides of the story, the language they use to present a certain phenomenon etc. The Islamic state was not presented in a positive sense in neither of the media. The ratio of negative and neutral presentation is equalized in N1, while neutral presentation of the Islamic State prevailed in RTS, similar to Al Jazeera Balkans where it dominated (See Chart 6).

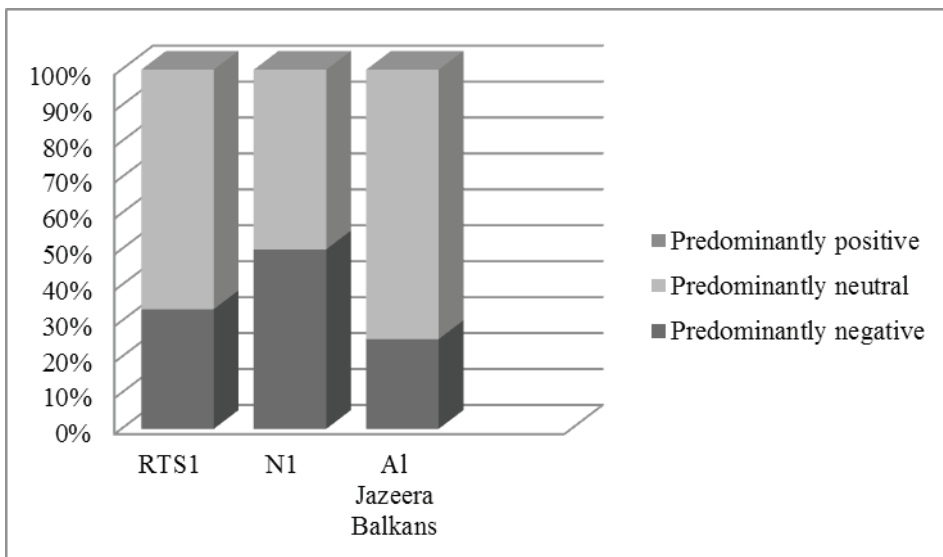


Chart 6: Percentage distribution of the positive, negative and neutral value context

This discrepancy is the most obvious in the news on the 21 Egyptian Copts beheading, where the negative value context was dominant in the RTS and N1

reports, with explicit negative lexical structures and visual presentations, while AJB shifted its emphasis to the act of bombing and opened the space for a value-neutral approach to this subject. Additionally, four out of five AJB reports with a negative approach contained the statements of Islamic leaders, the Egyptian president and Qatari officials denying connections and condemning the activities of this group, and thus cannot be directly attributed to the editorial policy of Al Jazeera.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the presented results we can conclude that the analyzed media have disparate standing points related to Islamic State. These differences are reflected in the perspectives given, opposing visual presentation, interlocutor selection, decision on which news to broadcast and different value-colored linguistic structures. The starting point that different interpretations are deliberate constructions of the media, following the undertaken analysis, could be also justified, given that when N1 decides to call this group "Islamists", it is not merely a coincidence, but a linguistic structure in accordance with their stand that what the Islamic State preaches is Islam. Similarly, when AJB opts to quote Islamic leaders, it is not only because the audience has the right to hear that side of the story, but it reflects its editorial principle "to give voice to the voiceless"⁵⁰ and shows the interest of its owner, the Qatari Sheikh, to make distinction between the IS and Islam. Due to the similarities in topic's treatment between N1 and RTS, we can define their approach as pro-Western, while the way in which Al Jazeera approached this issue could be characterized as pro-Muslim.

Pro-Western approach, similarly to CNN's approach defined in literature⁵¹, implies one-sided interpretation with no opinion concerning the other side, with visually appealing presentation attractive to the audience, as well as subjective linguistic constructs. These are exactly the characteristics we found in the N1 and RTS news, with no statements of the Islamic representatives denying connection between the Islamic State and Islam, but they openly called the IS members "Islamists", "extremists", "fundamentalists" who committed an "outrageous crime" and "barbaric, savage and terrorist act". Using the harsh words and negative sentence structures, their image of the Islamic State as the enemy was completed with other

50 Henery M. (2010), *Why do we see what we see? A comparison of CNN International, BBC World News and Al Jazeera English analysing the respective drivers influencing editorial content*, Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, Hilary Term, p.23

51 Ibid

discursive techniques such as the visually aggressive approach, with images of victims about to be murdered, hostages captured in cages and disturbing images of bloody sea. This approach reflects a pro-Western ideological background, in accordance with the ownership structure and the commercial interests of the media.

On the other hand, pro-Muslim approach in this context means a more neutral visual presentation and language, with the space for other side of the story, and one different, "Southern" or "anti-Western editorial perspective."⁵² Owned by Qatar Sheikh suspected for the financial support of the group, Al Jazeera Balkans seeks to distinguish Islam from the Islamic State. By broadcasting statements of the Islamic representatives, emphasizing the struggle of the Muslim states against IS, with more moderate and value-neutral language and approach to the topic, AJB made a clear distinction compared to its competitors and "offered a perspective not heard on the other channels."⁵³ This creates the impression that AJB does not strive to present the IS as a barbarian group, which might be because the public opinion still often links the activities of the Islamic State with Islam.

However, all three analyzed media have something in common – none of them is openly on the side of the Islamic State. The difference is reflected in the fact that they are only more or less against the activities of the group, which could be explained by the ownership structure and commercial and political interests of the media.

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UPOTREBA DISKURZIVNIH TEHNIKA U CILJU INFILTRIRANJA IDEOLOGIJE U MEDIJSKI SADRŽAJ STUDIJA SLUČAJA: PREDSTAVLJANJE ISLAMSKE DRŽAVE U TELEVIZIJSKIM VESTIMA U SRBIJI

Apstrakt

Predmet analize ovog rada je medijsko predstavljanje Islamske države (ID), radikalne sunitske islamističke grupacije, koja prema ocenama javnosti i stručnjaka trenutno predstavlja jednu od najvećih pretnji po svetsku bezbednost. Privukavši svetsku pažnju brutalnošću svojih aktivnosti i brojnošću civilnih žrtava, Islamska država je uzeta za predmet ovog rada jer se na osnovu izveštavanja o njenim aktivnostima može proveriti teza da vlasnička struktura medija, odnosno, njena ideološka pozadina utiče na uređivačku politiku, u konkretnom slučaju, televizija NI, RTS1 i Al Džazire Balkans. Rad prikazuje i tumači rezultate komparativne, kvantitativne i kvalitativne diskurs analize izveštavanja o Islamskoj državi u centralnim informativnim emisijama prvog programa Radio televizije Srbije i dva njuz kanala, NI i Al Džazire Balkans. Kao polazna tačka rada uzeto je Van Dijkovo određenje diskursa kao refleksije ideologije subjekata uključenih u njegovu proizvodnju, a svrha rada je da kroz komparativnu analizu izveštavanja pronađe sličnosti i razlike u predstavljanju i tumačenju aktivnosti Islamske države u tri analizirana medija i da pokuša da otkrije ideološku pozadinu ovih medija koja je u vesti infiltrirana upotrebom različitih diskurzivnih tehnika.

Ključne reči: mediji, televizija, diskurs, ideologija, Islamska država, RTS, NI, Al Džazira Balkans.