

# Second Electoral Round of the 2010 Croatian Presidential Election in Daily Newspapers: Uneven Coverage of Candidates

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## SUMMARY

*Using content analysis method, we examined the quantity and the quality of media coverage of the candidates for the Croatian president in the second circle of the campaign during the 2010 elections, from December 28, 2009, to January 8, 2010. The studied corpus encompasses six Croatian mainstream national political dailies as the sources of articles (units) for content analysis: Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Vjesnik, Glas Slavonije, Novi list and Slobodna Dalmacija. The analysis was conveyed on 625 newspaper articles on the presidential candidates, published in the mainstream dailies during the 12-day period of the second electoral round. Out of 625 analyzed articles, 276 (44.2 %) referred to the candidate Milan Bandić, 194 (31 %) items discussed both presidential candidates, and 155 (24.8 %) articles were about the candidate Ivo Josipović. The two presidential candidates made the cover of the investigated newspapers 43 times in a 12-day period during which articles on Milan Banadić were more frequently announced on newspaper covers. The candidate Milan Bandić was also granted more space in the political dailies during the campaign in second electoral round than his opponent Ivo Josipović. Research results demonstrated that the print media more frequently connoted both candidates negatively than positively in journalists' and editorial comments. Negative statement*

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*bias is even more emphasized in comments on the independent candidate Milan Bandić. Analysis of the articles' themes has shown that the candidate Milan Bandić was more often presented in articles that were campaign not-related. The results have confirmed that mainstream print media did not fulfill their task of ensuring even coverage for both parties in the electoral process.*

**Key words** presidential election, campaign coverage, media bias, mediatization of politics, personalization of politics, print media, Ivo Josipović, Milan Bandić

### **Fifth presidential elections in independent Croatia**

At the beginning of the year 2010, the young Croatian democracy has elected its president for the fifth time since the Croatian independence was achieved in the early 1990-ies. There were twelve candidates<sup>1</sup> in the first electoral round of the presidential campaign. In accordance with the Croatian Constitution provisions (Ustav RH, 2001: paragraph 94)<sup>2</sup> the two candidates with the highest number of votes in the first electoral circle - Ivo Josipović with 32.4 percent, and Milan Bandić with 14.8 percent - entered the second circle of presidential elections. Their campaigns during the second electoral round were very different. As an independent candidate, Bandić based his campaign on populism and attacks on his opponents' party SDP (left center) in efforts to mobilize the voters of the right. Josipović's campaign was more moderate as he presented himself as the representative of modern, pro-European, intellectual Croatia. In the second electoral round Ivo Josipović won 60.3 percent or 1 339 385 votes leaving behind his rival Milan Bandić with 39.7 percent or 883 222 votes.

These were the fifth presidential elections held in Croatia since its independence, but Ivo Josipović is the third Croatian president. Josipović 'inherited' the second Croatian president Stjepan Mesić who won his first mandate in the 2000 presidential election<sup>3</sup>, and obtained five more years of presidency in the 2005 presidential election<sup>4</sup>. Prior to Mesić, the Croatian president was Franjo Tuđman - the founder of the Croatian state and the ruling Croatian party (HDZ). In 1990 he was elected for President of Socialist Republic of Croatia (one of the six Republics in former Yugoslavia), and he won the first immediate presidential election in independent Croatia in 1992. Tuđman had seven opponents in the 1992 election<sup>5</sup>, yet he triumphed in the first electoral cycle. In 1997 Tuđman was reelected and had once

again repeated his victory in the first electoral circle with an even higher score – he won 61.4 percent of all casted votes<sup>6</sup>.

The media researchers who investigated media coverage of parliamentary and presidential elections in Croatia during the 1990-ies have established that the media were biased, favoring the ruling party HDZ in the 1995 parliamentary elections (Baranović, 1995), and also clearly favoring Franjo Tuđman, the contemporary president in the 1997 presidential election (Baranović, 1999). The results of 1990-ies election coverage studies comply with Chalaby's notion of political communication in presidential regimes in de-structured and non-consolidated democracies, which Croatia was in the 1990-ies Tuđman's era. Such regimes result in 'a specific type of the relationship between presidents and state-controlled media on the one hand, and between presidents and the press on the other' (1996:136) - and in both relations the president controls the media by setting an adequate legislative frame (more in Chalaby, 1996). With the 2001 Constitution changes, the presidential regime in Croatia was substituted by a semi-presidential regime. Also, due to the process of Croatian accession to the EU, for the past decade the legislative frame concerning media and electoral coverage was modified to meet the European standards and demands equity of all parties in the electoral process: the Law on Croatian Public Television (Zakon o Hrvatskoj radioteleviziji) was changed in 2003, and the Law on Electronic Media (Zakon o elektroničkim medijima) was altered in 2009. With the aim of defining rules on electoral coverage in the electronic media, other laws are also applied on media coverage during the electoral process<sup>7</sup> (more in Zgrabljic Rotar, 2010:15). As a result, the research on electoral coverage in the young Croatian democracy after 2000 show an increase in media impartiality (Stantić et al, 2003; Peruško, 2008). However, the conducted research was in relation to the coverage of the electoral proces on radio and television, which are submitted to strict and precise legal regulation. The Croatian print media, whose electoral coverage is in the focus of this paper, are, on the other hand, not submitted to such strict legal regulations. None the less, they are expected to implement the same rules in order to fulfill their task of providing equal coverage of all parties in electoral coverage. This demand is formulated through professional rules and codes issued by the Croatian Journalists' Association (Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo - HND)<sup>8</sup>. But even though the tasks of media in electoral coverage are clear, Croatian media experts note that the 'rules on media role in elections are not a guarantee for honest and objective reporting' (Malović, 2003: 45) and that the Croatian print media actually delude the public by not recognizing their obvious support to one of the candidates or to a certain political option (Malović, 2007: 95). Therefore, this study aims to empirically investigate whether Croatian mainstream print media successfully met

their task of equal and impartial coverage during the 2010 presidential campaign or have they abused their role. We explored the characteristics of the print media reporting on the second electoral round of the 2010 presidential election in Croatia in relation to the concept of media biases, as well as the presentation of presidential candidates in print media regarding and the idea of mediatization and personalization of politics. Considering the increase in media impartiality found by the studies of Croatian media electoral coverage conducted over the last decade, we assumed that the print media have fulfilled their role in ensuring even presentation of the presidential candidates through equal number and size of published articles, but we also assumed there would be differences in tone as well as in topics through which candidates were presented in published articles.

## **Media bias concept**

Explaining the factors that effect media coverage of politics in general, the *political competition model* of contemporary media theorist Gadi Wolfsfeld (2009: 86-87) implies that the intended role of media in coverage of politics, and electoral process as well, is never fulfilled. Wolfsfeld's model argues that: (1) it is more probable that the political process will affect the media, then the opposite, 2) the level of control that a political party holds over its political surroundings is one of the key variables that defines the role of the media in the political conflict, 3) the role of the media in political conflicts is subjected to change in time and depending on different circumstances, 4) the changes in the role of the informative media must be analyzed in two dimensions: structural and cultural dimension of political competition and 5) one side in the competition always has an advantage in the quality and quantity of the media coverage it is getting, but the other party (challenger) can succumb this obstacle utilizing media as tools for gaining political influence. Wolfsfeld thus implies that the media, rather than being objective and neutral, tend to be biased, which means they favor one party in a political conflict. According to McQuail the term media bias connotes 'tendency in a news report to deviate from an accurate, neutral, balanced and impartial representation of the 'reality' of events and social world according to stated criteria. A distinction is usually made between intended and unintended bias. The former steams mainly from partisanship, advocacy and the ideological standpoint of the medium or source. The latter is generally attributed to organizational and routine factors in selection and processing of news' (2007: 548). Oppositely, he defines impartiality as 'balance in choice and use of sources,

so as to reflect different points of view and also the presentation of two (or more) sides where judgments or facts are contested' (McQuail, 2007:357).

D'Allesio and Allen (2000) defined 'media biases' by three different criteria. The first criterion is gatekeeping bias which implies the preference for selecting stories from one of the parties. The criterion of coverage bias takes into consideration the amount of coverage given to the opposite parties in the media, whilst the statement bias considers the tone in reporting one of the two parties in conflict. Regarding their criteria in print media frame, the gatekeeping bias would be shown as an unequal frequency of publishing newspaper articles on the two presidential candidates. The criterion of coverage bias can, thus, be examined and visible through the comparison of the size of published articles on two candidates. The third, statement bias criterion, would be visible in comparing the frequencies of positive and negative connotations given to candidates in journalists' and editorial comments. D'Allesio and Allen specify that an equal number of positive and negative attitudes expressed in comments about the two candidates' would be considered as impartiality (neutrality). This criterion was also used by Druckman and Parkin (2005: 1031) in measuring editorial slant in different newspapers covering a political campaign.

Even though it is usually stated that politics are more likely to affect media, it can be viceversa. The political power of the media derives from the fact that the media control the access to the wide public – made of potential voters. The media control the process of selection, framing, and 'packaging' - defining the re-presentation of – events, subjects, topics they mediate to the public. For these reasons, from the perspective of politicians and political parties the media have always been considered a powerful 'instrument', especially during the electoral process. The competition for media attention is an important element in contemporary politics, especially politics of conflict that mark electoral campaigns. This competition leads to mediatization of politics<sup>9</sup>. Media experts and theorist have defined mediatization of politics almost thirty years ago. Swedish media researcher Kent Asp defined mediatization as a process whereby 'a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of mass media in their coverage of politics' (Asp, 1986 in Hjavard, 2008: 106). Mazzoleni and Schultz (1999) explain the effects mediatization has on politics: 'mediatized politics is politics that has lost its autonomy has become dependent on its central functions on mass media, and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media'. Therefore, the concept implies that the media have subdued politics to the rules of media system functioning. And according to Heinrich Oberreuter (in Kunzick and Zipfel, 2006: 58) the media omit the political content by giving more importance to the 'drama' (of media forms), thus victimizing politics and causing politicians to adapt to the media

forms. Thus the mediatization of politics becomes evident in the personalization of politics. Milardović defines personalization of politics as a post-modern society's product which beams the spotlight on the person rather than on the political platform the person is representing. 'A politician is turned into an *image* whose character becomes the center of political doing. In the centre is a picture, sensation, perception of that picture, whilst the text is simply necessary secondary content with very little meaning, especially in a model of politics understood as a spectacle' (2004: 308)<sup>10</sup>. In the context of the print media and our research, mediatization and personalization of the presidential campaign would be visible in articles disclosing personal information on presidential candidates – on their character, families, hobbies, friends, previous jobs, education etc.

## Research method

The research method for our study was content analysis. Content analysis is a 'technique for the systematic, quantitative and objective description of media texts, that is useful for certain purposes of classifying output, looking for effects and making comparisons between media and over time or between content and 'reality'. Content analysis is not well suited to uncovering the underlying meaning of content, although it can provide certain indicators of 'quality' of media' (McQuail, 2007: 551). O'Sullivan, Dutton i Rayner described content analysis as a research method favorable for systematic measurement and comparison of the characteristics of the selected media samples and contents (2003: 285).

Using this method in our observation, the research examined the quantity and the quality of media coverage of both candidates for the Croatian president in the second circle of the campaign in the 2010 elections, from December 28, 2009 to January 8, 2010. The researched sample encompassed six Croatian mainstream national political dailies as sources of articles (units) for content analysis: *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list*, *Vjesnik*, *Glas Slavonije*, *Novi list* and *Slobodna Dalmacija*. Three Croatian national dailies - *24 sata*, *Bussiness.hr* and *Poslovni dnevnik* were not taken into consideration because the first one is printed on a smaller - tabloid format, while the other two dailies specialized in economics topics. The research sample was thus representative and included all articles about the presidential candidates published in the above listed six mainstream national political dailies during the twelve days of campaign in the second electoral round. Articles about the presidential election that did not refer to one of the two candidates were not subjected to analysis. For example, reports on the legislative and election rules were

left out. The data for analysis were collected by 'Presscut d.o.o', a Croatian agency for press-clipping and the creation of media content databases, and analyzed with their permission directly through the agencies' web site ([www.presscut.hr](http://www.presscut.hr)).

In relation to D'Allesio and Allen's (2000) gatekeeping and coverage media bias criteria, the hypothesis of the research was that both candidates have been presented in an equal number and size of newspaper articles in Croatian national political dailies. Regarding the statement bias, the results of the research were expected to show that one of the two candidates was more often negatively than positively connoted in journalists' comments. Regarding the concept of mediatization and personalization of politics, we predicted that the results would show researched dailies reporting more often on the candidates' private lives and careers than on the campaign topics.

The variables used in the research were as follows: (1) candidate the article refers to (Ivo Josipović, Milan Bandić, both candidates); (2) newspaper the article is published in (*Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list*, *Glas Slavonije*, *Vjesnik*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, *Novi list*); (3) announcement of the text on the newspaper cover (announced, not announced); (4) size of the text measured in fractions (smaller than one quarter, between one quarter and a half, a half page, between half page and one page, one page, between one and two pages), although the usual measurement used by media researchers would be cubic centimeter of space, or word count. However, since working with an electronic data base of newspaper articles made it impossible to measure the size of the articles in cubic centimeters, and word count was also not optioned in the data base, we decided on measurement in fractions, marking a page as the whole number. Introducing (5) genre as variable was necessary to determine the number of journalists' and editorial comments. Genre is 'essentially just a word for any main type or category of media content' (McQuail, 2007:556), and for the purpose of this research newspaper genres were divided as follows: news, affidavit, news with affidavit, interview, bulletin (report), reportage, comment, research journalistic story, photo-news, readers letters and reactions and caricature or strip. The overall tone of text (6) variable was coded, as in Druckman and Parkin (2005): negative, neutral and positive. The topics (7) of the texts were distinguished as topics from candidates' private lives, career or professional lives, campaign topics, and other topics. The positioning (8) of the text as a variable was coded according to the division of the examined newspapers main headings (novelties and politics, business section, culture, entertainment, sports, last page, contributions, regional page, other), in order to establish possible differences in positioning articles on the two candidates.



## Research Results

The investigated 12 day period of campaign overlapped with one national holiday; New Year (January 1<sup>st</sup>) on which none of the investigated newspapers were printed; and one religious holiday Sveta Tri Kralja (The Holy Three Kings, January 6<sup>th</sup>) on which date only *Slobodna Dalmacija* was issued. In addition, *Vjesnik* is not published on Sundays, and therefore was not issued also on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Altogether, the researched corpus included 625 articles on presidential candidates published during a 12-day period, from December 28 2009 to January 8 2010, of the Croatian 2010 presidential campaign in six investigated daily newspapers that published a total of sixty issues. A total of 625 articles were analyzed, and the analysis showed that the number of analyzed articles in individual newspapers varied (Table 1).

Table 1 Gatekeeping bias: The number of articles on presidential candidates published in the investigated daily newspapers during the presidential election campaign in the second electoral round (December 28 2009 – January 8 2010)

Articles (n= 625) in newspapers	Ivo Josipović	Milan Bandić	Both Candidates	Total
<b>Jutarnji list</b>	18 (30.0%)	27 (45.0%)	15 (25.0%)	60 (100%)
<b>Večernji list</b>	38 (23.9%)	73 (45.9%)	48 (30.2%)	159 (100%)
<b>Vjesnik</b>	16 (23.5%)	27 (39.7%)	25 (36.8%)	68 (100%)
<b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>	28 (24.4%)	48 (41.7%)	39 (33.9%)	115 (100%)
<b>Novi list</b>	30 (21.4%)	73 (49.3%)	45 (30.4%)	148 (100%)
<b>Glas Slavonije</b>	25 (33.3%)	28 (37.3%)	22 (29.4%)	75 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	155 (24.8%)	276 (44.2%)	194 (31.0%)	625 (100%)

Uneven coverage of the campaign between individual newspapers was also assigned to their coverage of the presidential candidates. In all analyzed newspapers the candidate Milan Bandić was presented in more articles than his opponent Ivo



Josipović, and in *Večernji list* and *Novi list*, the ratio was roughly 1:2 articles in favor of the candidate Milan Bandić. In sum, out of the 625 analyzed articles, almost one half of analyzed articles referred to the candidate Milan Bandić, around one third of analyzed items discussed both presidential candidates, and only one quarter of all analyzed articles was dedicated to the candidate Ivo Josipović. The two presidential candidates made the cover of the investigated newspapers 43 times during the investigated 12-day period (Table 2). Comparison of the number of covers dedicated one or the other candidate again showed a ratio of 1:2 covers in favor of Milan Bandić. With the exception of *Jutarnji list* which had only two covers and both referring to both candidates, the remaining five investigated newspapers more frequently announced on their covers articles on the candidate Milan Bandić.

Table 2 Gatekeeping bias: The number of articles on presidential candidates announced on the investigated daily newspapers' covers during the campaign in the second electoral round (December 28 2009 – January 8 2010)

Covers (n= 43) in newspapers	Ivo Josipović	Milan Bandić	Both candidates	Total
<b>Jutarnji list</b>	0	0	2	2 (4.6%)
<b>Večernji list</b>	1	2	3	6 (14.0%)
<b>Vjesnik</b>	1	3	7	11 (25.6%)
<b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>	1	3	3	7 (16.3%)
<b>Novi list</b>	3	5	4	12 (27.9%)
<b>Glas Slavonije</b>	1	3	1	5 (11.6%)
<b>Total</b>	7 (16.3%)	16 (37.2%)	20 (46.5%)	43 (100%)

Research results also showed that Milan Bandić was granted a larger amount of space in political dailies during the second electoral round of campaign than his opponent Ivo Josipović, not only in number of published articles, but as well in size of the published articles (Table 3). Because of the technical problems with measuring

the exact size of the articles analyzed in our electronic data base, which led us to choosing fractions as the measurement form and a newspaper page as the unit of size, the results in Table 3 do not display numerically conclusive figures about the total size of the articles published. Still, the comparison of numbers of articles categorized by their size undoubtedly shows that the two candidates were not granted the same amount of space on the pages of the analyzed newspapers during the campaign in second electoral round. Again, the numbers were in favor of Milan Bandić.

**Table 3** Coverage bias: Articles on presidential candidates published in the investigated daily newspapers during the presidential election campaign in the second electoral round (December 28 2009 – January 8 2010), sorted by their size

Article (n=625) size	Ivo Josipović	Milan Bandić	Both candidates	Total
>1/4 of a page	82 (28.9%)	141 (49.6%)	61 (21.5%)	284 (100%)
<1/4 and >1/2 of a page	34 (22.2%)	62 (40.5%)	57 (37.3%)	153 (100%)
=1/2 of a page	15 (25.9%)	29 (50.0%)	14 (24.1%)	58 (100%)
<1/2 and >1 page	15 (27.7%)	20 (37.1%)	19 (35.2%)	54 (100%)
=1 page	8 (16.0%)	20 (40.0%)	22 (44.0%)	50 (100%)
<1 and ≥2 pages	1 (3.9%)	4 (15.4%)	21 (80.7%)	26 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	155 (24.8%)	276 (44.2%)	194 (31.0%)	625 (100%)

Regarding the ‘statement biases’ in journalists’ comments, the results of the research suggested that it is the one criterion of bias which was not in favor of the candidate Milan Bandić (Table 4). Journalists’ and editorial comments made 15.4 percent of all articles analyzed in this research. There were exactly 96 comments published in the investigated dailies during the analyzed period of time. Other abounded genres are: news (129), affidavit (34), news with affidavit (65), interview (34)<sup>11</sup>, bulletin-report (158), reportage (11), journalistic research (77), photo-news (3) and ‘other’ (18, accounted as 17 readers’ letters and reactions and 1 caricature/

strip). The analysis of the comments' tone showed that approximately one half all comments was neutral in tone, 45.8% of all comments were negative, and only 5.2 % were positive by tone.

Table 4 Statement bias: Tone of comments on presidential candidates published in the investigated daily newspapers during the presidential election campaign in the second electoral round (December 28 2009 – January 8 2010)

Comments' (n=96) tone	Ivo Josipović	Milan Bandić	Both candidates	Total
<b>Positive</b>	2	1	2	5 (5.2%)
<b>Negative</b>	5	28	11	44 (45.8%)
<b>Neutral</b>	4	12	31	47 (49.0%)
<b>Total</b>	11 (11.5%)	41 (42.7%)	44 (45.8%)	96 (100%)

A closer look into to table 4 demonstrates not only that the candidate Milan Bandić was commented on much more frequently than Ivo Josipović during the campaign for the second electoral round, but also that journalists' and editorial comment were in percentage more often negative that comments on Ivo Josipović. Neutrality was mostly noted in comments that referred on both presidential candidates. Unequal number of positive and negative attitudes expressed in comments about the two candidates' leads, accordingly to the earlier introduced definition and description of statement bias criterion, to the conclusion that the print media were statement biased towards both candidates, connoting them both negatively more frequently than they were positively connoted. However, negative statement bias is more emphasized in comments on the independent candidate Milan Bandić.

The hypothesis that researched dailies reported more often on the candidate's private lives and careers than on the candidates' campaigns was tested in two variables: articles' positioning in different newspaper headings, and the topics of the analyzed articles. A vast majority of the analyzed texts appeared on the front pages: 507 (81.1%) articles were published in news/politics heading, 33 (5.3%) articles were published in different contributions, another 25 articles were published in the regional pages (4%) of newspapers. One article, about the candidate Milan Bandić,

was published in the business section. Milan Bandić was the topic of four articles published on the last page of the newspapers, while three articles on last pages reported on both candidates. Bandić is also mentioned five times in articles in sports pages, and one article on the sports pages refers to both candidates. Out of four articles in the culture sections, three referred on Bandić, and one on Josipović. A total of 11 articles were published in entertainment pages (1.8%), and 31 articles (5%) were published in other headings.

The analysis of the topic of the article variable showed that the Croatian media mostly reported on the campaign activities of the candidates (Table 5).

Table 5 Themes of articles on presidential candidates published in the investigated daily newspapers during the presidential election campaign in the second electoral round (December 28 2009 – January 8 2010)

Article (n=625) topic	Ivo Josipović	Milan Bandić	Both candidates	Total
<b>Private life</b>	12 (7.7%)	14 (5.1%)	4 (2.1%)	30 (4.8%)
<b>Professional career</b>	9 (5.8%)	39 (14.1%)	3 (1.5%)	51 (8.2%)
<b>Campaign</b>	120 (77.4%)	181 (65.6%)	151 (77.8%)	452 (72.3%)
<b>Other</b>	14 (9.1%)	42 (15.2%)	36 (18.6)	92 (14.7%)
<b>Total</b>	155 (100%)	276 (100%))	194 (100%)	625 (100%)

Over two thirds of all analyzed articles were ‘campaign coverage’, and less than one third of all articles were not campaign related. Individually, Ivo Josipović was in percentage more frequently presented in ‘campaign related’ than Milan Bandić. The difference between the candidates in topics ratios was partly generated by reports that often referred to Milan Bandić as the mayor of Zagreb, Croatian capital, while such articles on Ivo Josipović, who was a member of the Croatian parliament and a professor of law, were few.

## Discussion and conclusions

Our study demonstrated that the mainstream national Croatian dailies did not serve their intended purpose in the electoral process in 2010. The results did not support our research hypothesis that both presidential candidates would be presented in an equal number and size of newspaper articles in six analyzed newspapers. Quite the opposite, we found that one of the two candidates was more often negatively than positively connoted in journalists' comments. Also, even though we found that the dailies reported more on campaign topics than on the candidates' private lives and careers, the appearance of almost one third of articles not related to the campaign supports the conclusion that the media did not present the candidates in a proper fashion.

Only one scientific, empirical research on the Croatian presidential elections was conducted before this one. In the 1997 Presidential elections Baranović (1999) analyzed media coverage of the electoral process during the whole campaign period on the news program broadcasted on the first channel of the Croatian radio, one of the principal state owned radios in Croatia. Her results have also shown that presidential candidates who run the campaign did not have equal media treatment on the Croatian radio. Results of more recent research also cannot be compared with the results of this research as they did not focus on the print media, but on radio and television coverage of election which is, as we have earlier explained, submitted to different, highly defined and strict legal provisions of electoral coverage (Peruško, 2008; Milivojević, 2008).

Croatian print media today are mostly private businesses, and directed towards self-regulation. The 'Croatian transition in the 1990-ies brought deregulation and media privatization through the entrance of foreign capital and foreign holders which speeded up the commercialization of media content and the degradation of ethical and professional standards' (Zgrabljic Rotar and Vrljević Šarić, 2009: 380). Out of six investigated dailies only one – *Vjesnik* - is state controlled but is now facing the threat of being closed down.<sup>12</sup> The remaining five investigated dailies are owned by private, mostly foreign, media concerns<sup>13</sup> and are thereby not (so much) under the influence of the Croatian political structures. But in a free market economy, they are profit guided. This implies that journalistic professional values are often considered inferior to the market economy values and rules. In a poor Croatian advertising market additionally struck by the ongoing economic crisis and recession, the Croatian print media daily face the same challenge: survival. Electoral campaigns - presidential, parliamentary or local elections campaigns - present an opportunity for increasing incomes. In such circumstances, and in regards to the results of this

research results showing uneven coverage of the presidential candidates in the 2010 presidential election in the investigated print media, the data on campaign expenses of both candidates can be significant for the explanation of the uneven coverage: the analysis conducted by GONG (a non-partisan citizens' organization founded in 1997 to encourage citizens to take active participation in political processes)<sup>14</sup> and Transparency International Croatia (TIH) has shown that the candidate Milan Bandić spent twice as much on advertising in electronic and print media that Ivo Josipović during the presidential campaign.

Besides profit, there are other factors which contributed to an uneven coverage of the two candidates: prior to the election Ivo Josipović was, as a professor of law and member of the Croatian Parliament, less familiar to the media than Milan Bandić who entered the election as the Mayor of Zagreb, Croatian capital. The research results show that Bandić's function was partly a reason of more numerous articles that referred to him. Another reason why Milan Bandić was more interesting to the media than the actual Croatian president Ivo Josipović could be their different approach to the campaign: Ivo Josipović strived to be a moderate candidate and was often regarded as the 'dull candidate', while Milan Bandić campaign's aim was provoking the public reaction, and he was connoted as the more controversial of the two candidates. The outcome of the 2010 Croatian presidential election certainly showed that wide access to the mass media was not a guarantee for electoral victory in case of the candidate Milan Bandić, and thus the question about the effects of print media electoral coverage can be addressed in future research.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Milan Bandić (independent candidate), Andrija Hebrang (HDZ - Croatian Democratic Party), Ivo Josipović (SDP - Social Democrat Party), Josip Jurčević (independent candidate), Damir Kajin (IDS - Istrian Democratic Party), Boris Mikšić (independent candidate), Dragan Primorac (independent candidate), Vesna Pusić (HNS - Croatian liberal party), Vesna Škare Ožbolt (independent candidate), Miroslav Tudman (independent candidate), Nadan Vidošević (independent candidate), Slavko Vukšić (DSSR - Slavonian Democrat Party)
- <sup>2</sup> The Croatian Parliament has for the fourth time in 20 years of Croatian independence, on June 16 2010, accepted the changes of the Croatian Constitution suggested by the Croatian government. However, the Constitutional changes of 2010 do not interfere with the legal framing of presidential election.
- <sup>3</sup> Among nine candidates (Dražen Budiša (HSLs), Savka Dabčević-Kučar (HNS), Dobroslav Paraga (HSP), Silvije Degen (SSH), Marko Veselica (HDS), Ivan Cesar (HKDS), Antun Vujić (SDSH) in the 2000 presidential election, Stjepan Mesić and Dražen Budiša obtained the entrance in the second electoral circle in which Mesić conquered victory with 56.01 percent (1 433 372) of voters support.
- <sup>4</sup> In the 2005 presidential election Mesić has had as much as twelve rivals wanting to take up his position: Đurđa Adlešić (HSLs), Miroslav Blažević (SHB), Ljubo Česić (independent candidate), Mladen Kešer (independent candidate), Jadranka Kosor (HDZ), Doris Košta (independent candidate), Anto Kovačević

(HKDU), Slaven Letica (independent candidate), Boris Mikšić (independent candidate), Ivić Pašalić (HB), Tomislav Petrak (HPS), Miroslav Rajh (HSM). In the second electoral cycle his dominance over his rival Jadranka Kosor (candidate of the ruling party HDZ, actual Croatian Prime minister), was conformed by numbers of voters that supported him for another mandate. Mesić won a very high 65.93 percent (1 454 451) of all votes.

- <sup>5</sup> In the 1992 presidential election Tuđman's opponents were: Dražen Budiša (HSLŠ), Savka Dabčević-Kučar (HNS), Dobroslav Paraga (HSP), Silvije Degen (SSH), Marko Veselica (HDS), Ivan Cesar (HKDS) and Antun Vujić (SDSH).
- <sup>6</sup> In the 1997 presidential election, Tuđman had only two opponents: Zdravko Tomac (SDP) and Vladimir Gotovac (HSLŠ).
- <sup>7</sup> Zakon o izboru predsjednika Republike Hrvatske (The Croatian President Election Law), Zakon o izborima zastupnika u Hrvatski sabor (The Croatian Parliament Election Law), Pravila o postupanju elektroničkih medija s nacionalnom koncesijom u Republici Hrvatskoj tijekom izborne promidžbe (The Rules of Electoral Promotion in Croatian National Electronic Media) and documents issued by Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo (Croatian Journalists' Association):
- <sup>8</sup> HND has, in 1995, issued an act stating the principles of journalistic professionalism in electoral coverage (Načela profesionalnog djelovanja novinara u javnim glasilima u sklopu izbora), and again in 1997 issued guidelines for electoral coverage in Croatian daily newspapers and on public television (Pripomene za praćenje izbora u hrvatskim dnevnim listovima i na Hrvatskoj radioteleviziji).
- <sup>9</sup> Different paradigms are used in explaining the relation between media and politics. Kunczik and Zipfel (2006) account for four different approaches: 1) the *paradigm of independence of the two systems* includes the division of their authorities, promoting the idea about media as the 'watchdog', the fourth instance overseeing the three authorities: legislative, judicial and executive authorities; 2) according to the *instrumentalization / addiction paradigm* the boundaries between political and media system are always shifted on one of the systems expense. If the media are dependent on politics than we are talking about *instrumentalization* in which the media lose their autonomy. When the aim of politics becomes simply communicating through media and creating communication strategies – it is said that politics is addicted on media and is being *mediatized*. The remaining two paradigms are the 3) *symbiosis paradigm* (mutual simultaneous dependence of media and political systems), and 4) *super-system paradigm* (media and political system merger).
- <sup>10</sup> The phenomenon seems inevitable in presidential elections where the candidates particularly often stress that the citizens are electing a person not a political party for their president. One of the candidates in the second electoral circle of the Croatian Presidential Election 2010 – the presidential candidate Milan Bandić, even had a slogan 'Man, not a political party'. Furthermore, whilst analyzing the newspaper articles on the Croatian Presidential Election 2010 campaign in six Croatian political dailies, we've not only established the recipes for meals Milan Bandić can cook, but we also had the opportunity to learn the names and species of the candidates pets!
- <sup>11</sup> Out of 34 analyzed interviews referring to presidential candidates, 24 interviews were conducted with the presidential candidates. Ten were interviews with other public persons who were then asked to comment on presidential campaign and candidates. Out of the 24 interviews with candidates, Milan Bandić was interviewed 14, and Ivo Josipović 10 times. The types of interviews conducted with them were: personal and informative interviews. The first type aims to present the interviewee's personality, while the informative interview aims to present as much data on the given topic as possible (more in Zgrabljčić Rotar, 2007: 130). Considering the importance of this genre, unequal presentation through interviews can also be explained by the gatekeeping bias concept.
- <sup>12</sup> It is the Croatian Government's decision that *Vjesnik* is no longer to be printed by *Narodne Novine*, the official newspaper of the Republic of Croatia. The decision was brought in June 2010, and currently models and possibilities for *Vjesnik's* salvation are currently being explored. The explanation offered for such a decision by the Croatian Government are financial difficulties caused by the ongoing economic recession in Croatia.



- <sup>13</sup> Jutarnji list and Slobodna Dalmacija are owned by EHP (Europapress Holding) which is a part of the WAZ media concerne. Večernji list is in the hand of Stirya. Novi list and Glas Slavonije's ownership relations are not quite clear (see Bošnjak, 2010).
- <sup>14</sup> GONG conducts non-partisan monitoring of election process, educates citizens about their rights and duties, encourages mutual communication between citizens and their elected representatives, promotes transparency of work within public services, manages public advocacy campaigns and encourages and helps citizens in self-organizing initiatives (see more about the organization on [www.gong.hr](http://www.gong.hr))
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## Drugi krug hrvatskih predsjedničkih izbora 2010. u dnevnim novinama – nejednaka pokrivenost kandidata

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### SAŽETAK

Metodom analize sadržaja u članku se istražuje kvantiteta i kvaliteta medijskog pokrivanja kandidata u drugom krugu predsjedničkih izbora u Hrvatskoj 2010. godine, u razdoblju od 28. prosinca 2009. do 8. siječnja 2010. Istraživani uzorak obuhvaća članke objavljene u šest vodećih hrvatskih dnevnih listova *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list*, *Vjesnik*, *Glas Slavonije*, *Novi list* i *Slobodna Dalmacija*. Analizom je obuhvaćeno 625 novinskih članaka o predsjedničkim kandidatima, objavljenih u tim listovima tijekom dvanaestodnevnog perioda drugog izbornog kruga. Od ukupnog broja analiziranih članaka, 276 (44.2%) odnosilo se na kandidata Milana Bandića, 194 (31%) bavilo se s oba kandidata, a 155 (24.8%) bilo je o kandidatu Ivi Josipoviću. Dva su predsjednička kandidata bila na naslovnica istraživanih novena 43 puta u tom periodu, pri čemu su članci o Milanu Bandiću bili na naslovnica češće najavljivani. Kandidat Milan Bandić dobio je također i više prostora u dnevnim listovima tijekom kampanje u drugom izbornom krugu od njegovog protukandidata Ive Josipovića. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da tiskani mediji češće pisali o oba kandidata s negativnim nego pozitivnim konotacijama, kako u novinarskim tako i u uredničkim komentarima. Negativne konotacije bile su više ističane u komentarima o nezavisnom kandidatu Milanu Bandiću. Analiza tema članaka pokazala je da je kandidat Milan Bandić češće prikazivan u člancima nevezanim za kampanju. Rezultati su potvrdili da vodeći tiskani mediji nisu ispunili svoju zadaću koja ima nalaže da moraju osigurati jednaku pokrivenost oba kandidata u izbornom procesu.

**Ključne riječi** predsjednički izbori, pokrivenost kampanje, medijska pristranost, medijatizacija politike, personalizacija politike, tiskani mediji, Ivo Josipović, Milan Bandić