Framing of the President: Newspaper Coverage of Milan Bandić and Ivo Josipović in the Presidential Elections in Croatia in 2010*

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Summary

Building on the idea of *news framing* which is assumed to have a certain influence on people's perceptions of the world around them, the paper examines how the major newspapers in the country used certain frames to report about the two front-running candidates in the second round of the presidential elections in Croatia in 2010. The paper first examines if there were any differences between Ivo Josipović and Milan Bandić in terms of their visibility in newspaper reports. Secondly, the paper investigates if and how newspapers employed *valenced frames* to report about the candidates. Thirdly, the paper speculates how the news framing of the candidates may have affected the outcome of the elections.

The results show that three *valenced news frames* dominated the news coverage about the candidates: success frame (winner – loser), suitability frame (suitable – unsuitable) and integrity frame (honest – dishonest). Although Milan Bandić was the most visible candidate, the press favoured Ivo Josipović, framing him as suitable for the position, honest and decent, and as the likely winner. On the other hand, Milan Bandić was framed predominantly as dishonest, unsuitable and the loser. The paper finally suggests that the news framing of the candidates may have contributed to the victory of Ivo Josipović.

Keywords: framing, Croatia, presidential elections, Milan Bandić, Ivo Josipović

Introduction

The 2010 presidential elections in Croatia were a contest between a university professor Ivo Josipović, the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and a long-term mayor of Zagreb, an independent candidate, Milan Bandić. My initial

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assumption was that media coverage was from the very beginning heavily biased towards Ivo Josipović who was deemed more acceptable for the position.

Resorting to the analysis of news frames that act as strong devices for shaping public understanding of issues, events, policies and people, this study tackles a challenging task of establishing whether this is more than just an impression.

The first part of the paper provides a brief theoretical overview of the framing paradigm. The study of framing is interested in how news is framed, who the primary sponsors of frames are and what the genesis of particular frames is, as well as how framing might inform people's understanding of their social realities.

Using content analysis, I examine the *valenced frames* which newspapers employed so as to attempt to create certain public understandings of the candidates. Pilot analysis identified three dominant frames and the related dichotomies (of which more later): a) success frame (winner – loser), b) suitability frame (suitable – unsuitable) and c) integrity frame (honest – dishonest).

Finally, the paper discusses how framing of the candidates may have affected the outcome of the elections which were won by Ivo Josipović.

On News Framing

According to Entman (1991: 7), news frames exist at two levels: 'as mentally stored principles for information processing and as characteristics of the news text'. At the first level, frames exist as 'internalized guides' which reside in people and affect our interpretation of others, common issues and events. Goffman (1974) famously described framing as 'schemata of interpretation' that provides a context for understanding information. On the other hand, news framing refers to 'the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issue for its audience' (Nelson et al., 1997: 221). Thus, framing is the work that both media and their audiences do in making sense of the social world.

At the second level, as an attribute of the news, framing is described as 'the process by which a communication source constructs and defines a social or political issue for its audience' (Nelson et al., 1997: 221). According to Entman (1991: 6-7) news frame the world through 'critical textual choices' that producers of news are engaged in. Though seemingly 'inevitable and unproblematic', such choices in terms of naming and expression are central to seeking to establish a particular kind of interpretation of events:

"By providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so – and others entirely invisible (...) through repetition, placement, and reinforcing association with each other, the words and images that

comprise the frame render one basic interpretation more readily discernible, comprehensible, and memorable than others".

Preferring one to the other version of 'truth' operates by way of 'selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse' (Gitlin, 1980: 7), and provide their audiences with resources in understanding their world.

The creation of news frames is strongly linked to issues of power, hegemony and ideology (e.g. GUMG, 1980; Philo, 1990; Hackett, 1984; Carragee and Roefs, 2004; Zaller, 1992). However, it is important to highlight here that framed news does not necessarily equal bias because news frames may also appear as the unconscious acts of journalists, emerging from their own cognitive habits (Entman, 1991, 1993) and daily professional routines (Tuchman, 1978).

In that sense, Entman argues that (1993: 56) 'journalists may follow the rules for "objective" reporting and yet convey a dominant framing of the news text that prevents most audience members from making a balanced assessment of a situation'. Nelson et al. (1997: 236) similarly contend that mass media may strongly influence public opinion without a deliberate intention to do so: 'the media may sincerely follow institutional norms of impartiality and neutrality, yet they cannot escape the fact that their approach to a story implicitly teaches the public how to understand the central issues'. On the other hand, framing is the very logic of contemporary news making. As Nelson et al. (ibid: 237) illustrate, 'not all sources can be quoted, all angles explored, or all relevant facts cited. The media depend upon frames to help organize and lend coherence to relatively brief treatments of complex subjects'.

Valkenburg et al. (1999: 550) similarly assert that journalists inevitably frame political events to make them understandable to a large audience: 'reporters use frames to simplify and give meanings to events and maintain audience interest'. Although this simplification ordinarily operates as a matter of assumed professional routine, we must remember that it is also ideologically informed. Dominant paradigms may work through journalists who internalize dominant 'interpretative schematas' which in consequence affects their process of producing news.

Yet, whatever the particular processes that generate frames, we are better off attending to what the particular frames in particular cases are and how they might be structuring the audiences' understanding of their messages.

Hallahan (1999: 208) argues that framing seeks to provide contextual cues for the audience. Schuck and de Vreese (2006: 6) believe that news frames provide a 'powerful tool in constructing meaning in public debate and in shaping understanding of public issues'. Nelson et al. (1997: 223) suggest that framing represents another 'subtle, *yet* important, manner in which political communication shapes

popular thinking about politics (...) and public affairs'. Lamenting about the effects of news framing, Entman (1991: 7) brings up an important perspective about the *reciprocal relationship* between media frames and frames in audiences' thinking. He argues that journalists frame their reports according to what they think their audiences' expectations and pre-existing assumptions about certain issues might be, that is, how their audiences might understand them best. This kind of enforcement of frames on a daily basis can help certain frames endure.

Although the number of studies on the reach and type of the tangible effects of news framing in the field of political communication remains modest compared to the rising scholarly interest in the concept of framing itself, several studies have gathered firm evidence of the effects of media framing on public opinion. For instance, in their widely quoted study Capella and Jamieson (1997) provide evidence on how news framing of the election campaign encourages public cynicism; Iyengar (1991) provides evidence for the impact of framing on citizens' political attitudes; Nelson et al. (1997) demonstrate how frames shape audiences' understanding of issues; a series of experimental studies provide evidence on how news framing of the EU influences public perceptions of European issues (Valkenburg et al., 1999; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000) and affects support for the EU and the process of enlargement among the European public (de Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Schuck and de Vreese, 2006), and so on.

Categorization of News Frames

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000: 94) usefully structure the analysis of news frames as inductive and deductive. The inductive approach seeks to detect all frames which appear in particular media and also investigates their internal characteristics and salience. However, as Semetko and Valkenburg (ibid.) note, this approach is usually labour intensive and difficult to replicate. The second, deductive approach predetermines the frames in the analysed material and then establishes the prominence of each frame. This approach has been widely applied in recent studies. The literature has thus far identified a number of news frames which refer to 'a broad range of topics, hereby exceeding thematic, cultural or time limitations' (de Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003: 363). The relative generalisability of these frames allows multilevel comparisons (cross-research, cross-national, cross-media), which then produce 'generic frames' (de Vreese, 2002). For instance, Iyengar (1991) differentiates between 'thematic' and 'episodic' frames; Patterson (1993) and Capella and Jamieson (1996; 1997) discuss 'game frame' or the dominance of a 'strategic frame' in campaign coverage. The latter is usually examined in relation to a 'conflict frame', 'human interest frame' and 'issue/policy' frame, all typical for electoral coverage (Gan et al., 2005). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in their analysis of European

politics tease out five prominent, broadly present news frames: conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequence frame, morality frame and responsibility frame. Opposed to (or subordinated to) these generic frames stand 'issue-specific' frames (de Vreese, 2002) which are relevant only for certain specific issues or stories. Recently a 'valence framing' was introduced into political communication research (de Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Schuck and de Vreese, 2006). It refers to the assumption that some frames work so as to represent issues, events or persons in clearly contrasting terms. These frames operate upon obvious positive-negative dichotomies and usually have encrypted values which inherently imply valence. In de Vreese's and Boomgaarden's (2003: 364) opinion the 'Cold War' frame and the 'Dictatorship – Democracy' frame represent illustrative examples of valence framing. The literature provides a series of other, more 'mundane' examples: Martin and Oshagan (1997) identified two contesting frames that dominated the news coverage of the closing down of a General Motors factory – a 'no option' frame and an 'alternative' frame; Van Gorp (2005) offers the example of the valenced framing of asylum-seekers in eight Belgian newspapers where they were framed either as 'innocent victims' or 'intruders'; Schuck and de Vreese (2006) examined how the German press frames the issue of EU enlargement in terms of 'risk' and 'opportunity' for Europe; Williams and Kaid (2009) examine valences in the U.S. media coverage of the EU, and so on.

The effect side of valenced framing has been addressed in a range of studies, mainly in the fields of psychology, health communication, marketing and management and much less in political communication (Schuck and de Vreese, 2006: 7). Let me now test out the valence framing as indicated in the introduction, by looking at the news coverage of the two front-running candidates in the 2010 presidential elections in Croatia, Milan Bandić and Ivo Josipović.

Professor and His Nemesis

Milan Bandić was one of the pioneers of the Social Democratic Party ('SDP', the reformed Communist Party). He joined the party in the early 1990s and won his first term as the mayor of Zagreb in 1997. In 2000 he was re-elected but had to resign in 2002 following a scandal when he was caught driving drunk. In 2005 he ran for the mayor position again, and again as the candidate of the Social Democratic Party – and won once more. Four years later he was re-elected for the third successive time, still as the candidate of the Social Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the rifts between him and his party leadership widened. Although his remarkable public popularity remained pretty much consistent, the media increasingly portrayed him as the party's 'enfant terrible' and a hard working but thoroughly corrupt official. Despite the party's disagreement with some of his actions, he announced his independent

presidential candidacy in November 2009 which resulted in his excommunication from SDP. Thus in the 2009/2010 presidential elections Milan Bandić competed as an independent candidate. In the first round, competing with 11 other candidates, he came second with 14.83% of the votes. In the final round he lost to SDP's nominee Ivo Josipović, and returned to his mayoral position.

Ivo Josipović is a renowned professor of international and criminal law and a distinguished classical music composer. He was a member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia since the 1980s. Later he joined its successor, SDP. In 1994 he left politics and focused on producing science and music. In 2003 Josipović returned and became an SDP MP, holding different positions within the Parliament. He won the party nomination at the SDP convention in July 2009 and immediately started his presidential campaign. His media image preceding the election was unpretentious but favourable: he was widely prized for his legal expertise and his public reputation was overall positive. He won the first round of the presidential elections with 32.42% of the votes and finally won the presidency with 60.26% of the votes.

Milan Bandić ran a highly personalized campaign deploying strong humanization techniques in an attempt to appear close to 'ordinary people' and familiarize with voters. After the break up with his party, Bandić started leaning towards the right, departing from his social democratic values, hoping to embody an ideological antipode to the leftist Ivo Josipović. Josipović basically campaigned on one message – 'New Fairness' – hoping to address the troubles of Croatian society with corruption but also emphasizing his own 'morality' compared to his opponent's 'immorality'.[1]

In the 2010 presidential elections there was no incumbent. The former president had completed his second mandate and a new president was to be introduced. The media coverage seemed from the very beginning more advantageous to Ivo Josipović than Milan Bandić. In that respect, the elections were often portrayed as a contest between a decent professor and a notorious mayor, or as one journalist put it, as a battle between 'Muses and Yacuzas' (31-12-10, JL). Even a superficial glance at the headlines gave an impression that the newspapers had chosen their candidate: a 'decent professor' over a 'populist hick'. This study presents a challenging task of moving beyond impression and establishing if and to what extent valenced framing was the pattern of reporting in the 2010 presidential elections.

Research Design

The concept of valenced framing has been recently introduced to political communication to examine how news framing of political issues or situations in either

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[1] For instance, 'Josipović: Bandić has sullied everything with corruption' (02-01-2010, JL).

positive or negative terms may affect people's 'perceptions, judgments, evaluations and behaviour' (Schuck and de Vreese, 2006: 5).

Using content analysis, this paper investigates how newspapers in Croatia employed valenced frames to report about the candidates in the second round of presidential elections in 2010, assuming that this might have had some impact on voters' perceptions and consequently on their voting preferences.

This study attempts to move beyond the usual investigations of frames in electoral coverage which focus on the news framing of the election process itself ('what is at issue', Gamson and Modigliani, 1989: 57). Drawing on similar analyses of *social groups* framed either in positive or negative terms (e.g. Van Gorp's asylum-seekers, 2005), this study wanted to test how valence framing was used to create an understanding of *the key people* involved in the process – the candidates.

A deductive approach to framing analysis was applied. Pilot analysis was conducted to predefine dominant frames which will be analysed in the research, using content analysis. The results suggest that three *valenced news frames* dominated the news coverage about the front-running presidential candidates: the success frame, the suitability frame and the integrity frame. The success frame is a variant of a generic *conflict frame* or a *horse-race frame,* typically associated with election coverage (see Patterson, 1993; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The other two frames are issue-specific and were pervasively used to portray two frontrunners.

Thus, the main objective of this study is to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What was the overall prominence of the identified frames in news reports?

Q2: In which way were these frames used to portray Milan Bandić and Ivo Josipović and were there any significant differences in the respective framings of the candidates?

Methodology and Coding

Given that a frame is 'an ever-present discursive device that channels the audience as it constructs the meaning of particular communicative acts' (Simon and Xenos, 2000: 367), it is not surprising that frame analysis is often used in discourse analysis. However, considering content analysis a methodology for 'making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages' (Holsti, 1969: 14), I deemed it the most adequate to identify and quantify framing patterns in the electoral coverage of the 2010 presidential elections in Croatia.

My pilot study suggested that three pervasive frames were used in media representations of the candidates: the success frame, the suitability frame and the integrity frame. Each frame was then assigned two belonging contrasting valenced

frames, each based on the positive-negative dichotomies: winner – loser, suitable – unsuitable and honest – dishonest. Each of the six valenced frames was then assigned three questions to be answered positively or negatively. These questions were used as *indicators* or *markers* of the specific frame. The questions are identically structured but point to alternative evaluative directions according to the inherent valence of the particular frame. For instance, 'Does the article suggest that the candidate is politically, professionally or in any other way *unsuitable* and therefore should not be supported or voted for?' and 'Does the article suggest that the candidate is politically, professionally or in any other way *suitable* and therefore should be supported or voted for?'.[2] Articles were coded for the presence or absence of the frame indicators for each of the candidates. An additional variable was introduced to measure the strength of the frame: depending of the number of frame indicators present in the article (i.e. number of questions/indicators answered positively within each frame), the strength of the frame was measured on a scale from 0 to 3, where '0' indicated that no frame indicator is present, '1' that the strength of the frame is low, '2' that the strength of the frame is medium and '3' that the strength of the frame is high.

Articles were then additionally coded for the presence of the frame indicators in the headlines and images which have been identified as important *framing devices*[3]. The presence of the frame in the headline and/or image was interpreted as adding extra strength to the frame. Using Holsti's (1969) method for agreement[4], an inter-coder reliability test was conducted with two independent coders on 45 randomly chosen articles. The average reliability score across categories was assessed at 0.91.

Sample

The analysis included four leading daily newspapers in Croatia: Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija and Novi list. The initial analytical universe included all articles published during the official campaign in the second round of the presidential elections (28 December 2009 to 8 January 2010) which mention Milan Bandić and/or Ivo Josipović. Stratified random sampling was applied and a final sample of 202 articles was yielded for the study: 38 articles from Jutarnji list, 55 from Večernji

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[2] For a complete Code Sheet see Appendix.

[3] For instance, Tankard (2003: 101) defines 11 framing mechanisms, or focal points for identifying frame: headlines and kickers, subheads, photographs, photo captions, leads, selection of sources, selection of quotes, pull quotes, logos, statistics, charts and graphs and concluding statements or paragraphs of articles.

[4] Holsti's (1969) method of agreement is calculated as 2A/(N1+N2) where A is the number of units in which coders agree and N1 and N2 are the number of units coded by each of the coders.

list, 45 from Slobodna Dalmacija and 64 from Novi list. The unit of analysis was *an article* with all the accompanying elements such as images.

Framing of the President in 2010

Content analysis revealed that Milan Bandić was generally more visible than Ivo Josipović. He was mentioned in 187 articles and Ivo Josipović in 142. Looking at the prominence scores we shall see that Milan Bandić appears as the central concern of the story in 46% of articles, while Ivo Josipović scores much lower, being the primary focus of 36.6% of articles.

Looking at the overall prominence of both negative and positive variants of one frame, we shall see that the most common frame in the news coverage of the two front running candidates was the *suitability frame.* One or more indicators of the positive variant of the frame ('suitable') were found in 75.2% of the articles and one or more indicators of the negative variant of the frame ('unsuitable') were found in 72.3% of the articles. Only slightly less prominent was the *integrity frame* which appears in its negative variant ('dishonest') in as many as 76.7% of the articles and in its positive variant ('honest') in 69.8% of the articles. Interestingly, contrary to the initial assumption that the 'horse-race' frame will be very salient, it was the least prominent frame. One or more indicators of its positive variant ('winner') were found in 60.4% of the articles and the negative variant appeared in 67.8% of the articles.

Let us now look at the distribution of the frames across candidates. Table 1 demonstrates that there were significant differences between candidates in terms of their valenced framing.

Table 1: Presence of the valenced frames across candidates

	Milan Bandić	**Ivo Josipović**
Winner	11.3	**29.5**
Loser	**37.4**	9.2
Suitable	18.2	**47.3**
Unsuitable	**42.2**	24.6
Honest	21.9	**38.0**
Dishonest	**55.6**	17.6

p< 0.0005, α=0.05

Milan Bandić was predominantly framed as 'dishonest' and 'unsuitable': 55.6% of the articles in which he is mentioned contain at least one indicator of 'dis-

honesty' while 42.2% of the articles contain at least one indicator of 'unsuitability'. In stark contrast stand the results for Ivo Josipović: 47.3% of the articles mentioning Josipović framed him as 'suitable' and 38% as 'honest'. Dishonesty was not only systematically the most visible interpretative frame used to convey information about Bandić but also the strongest: 'medium' and 'high' strength of the 'dishonesty' frame was recorded in 22.5% of the cases. It was followed by the 'unsuitability' frame whose strength was either 'medium' or 'high' in 15.5% of the articles featuring Bandić (see Chart 1).

**Chart 1:** Valence framing of Milan Bandić

Presence and intensity of valenced frames: Milan Bandić
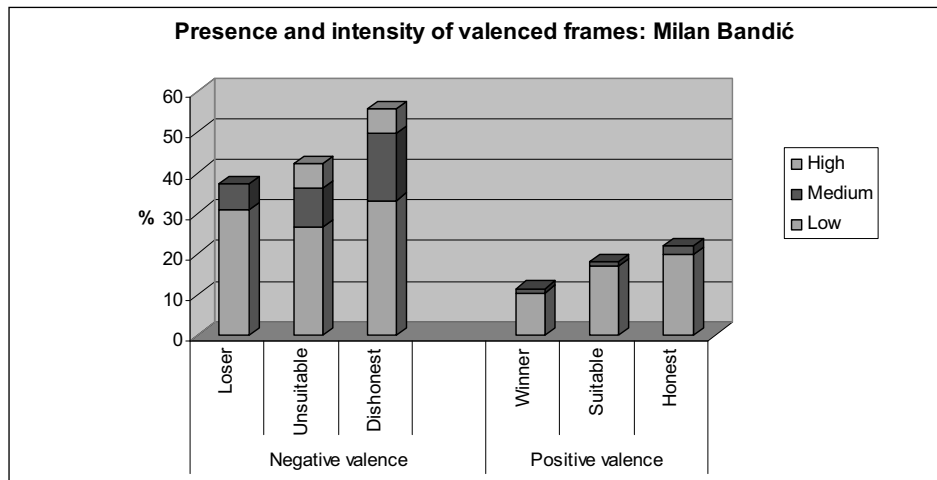
p< 0.0005, α=0.05

Exactly the opposite applies to Josipović. 'Suitability' was not only systematically the most visible frame when reporting about Josipović but also the strongest. 'Medium' and 'high' strength of the suitability frame was recorded in 20.5% of the stories about this candidate (see Chart 2 on the next page).

Interestingly, there were no significant differences either in the presence nor in the intensity of the frames across newspapers.

Acknowledging that certain elements of the news text present powerful framing devices, articles were tested for the presence of framing indicators in headlines and images. The results have revealed that the *integrity frame* was most readily emphasized in the headlines. As for Milan Bandić, indicators of the 'dishonesty' frame are most common and appear in 13.9% of the headlines. On the contrary, indicators of the 'honesty' frame are most prominent in Josipović's case and appear in 12% of the headlines. Headlines such as 'Campaign expenses under the veil of secrecy'

Chart 2: Valence framing of Ivo Josipović

Presence and intensity of valenced frames: Ivo Josipović
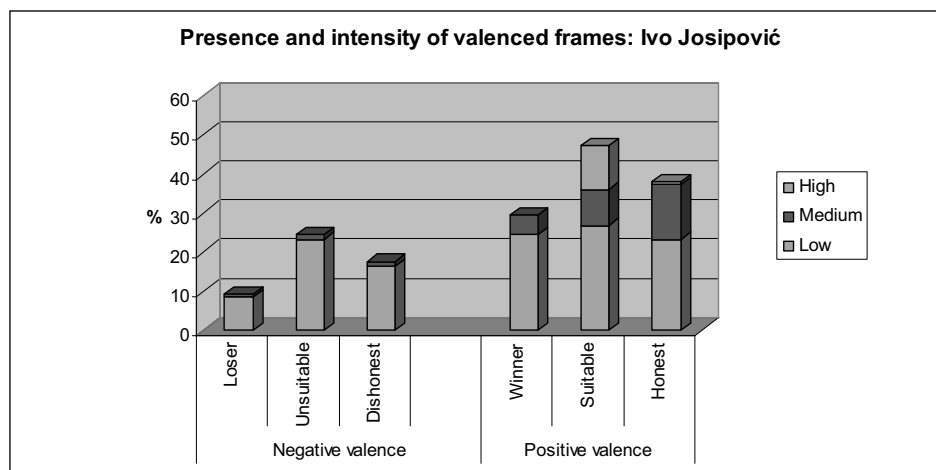
p< 0.0005, α=0.05

(28-12-10, NL) as opposed to 'Presidential campaign for justice deprived of dirty tricks' (29-12-10, NL) indicate a strong ambivalence within the *integrity frame*.

Suitability frame with the indicators of 'suitability' appeared in 9.9% of the head-lines referring to Josipović and the indicators of 'unsuitability' appeared in 8% of the headlines related to Bandić. Finally, the indicators of the 'loser' frame were found in 7.5% of the headlines referring to Bandić and the indicators of the 'winner' frame were found in 6.3% of the headlines referring to Josipović.

Indicators of the positively valenced frames referring to Bandić were found in a small number of headlines (each frame scored less than 5%) and indicators of the negatively valenced frames referring to Josipović were found in a negligible number of cases (with the highest score being as low as 2.1% for the 'unsuitability' frame).

Scores worth noting in the image category emerged only for the 'winner' frame for Josipović (6.3% of the articles) and 'dishonesty' frame for Bandić (6.4%). The former result refers mostly to the images portraying Josipović celebrating victory in the first round and the latter to the images depicting Bandić in the company of 'suspicious' or at least controversial people.

Finally, let us take a closer look at the structure of individual valenced frames. As Table 2 on the next page indicates, the most salient indicator in the 'winner' frame used to portray Josipović was the wording referring to the winning mood and general assumption that he is going to win the elections (26.1%). Interestingly, sur-

Table 2: Indicators of the success frame (%)

		Milan Bandić	**Ivo Josipović**
Winner frame	1. References to accomplishments	5.9	3.5
	2. Winning mood	5.9	**26.1**
	3. Survey results implicating victory	0.5	4.9
Loser frame	1. References to fiascos	**25.7**	7.7
	2. Mood of defeat	15.5	2.1
	3. Survey results implicating defeat	2.7	0

vey results supporting these assumptions were quoted in only a few articles deducting again from the strength of the 'horse-race' focus of the news coverage.

The most salient indicator in the 'loser' frame used to depict Bandić were the references to his fiascos, fall-outs etc. (25.7%). However, another interesting finding becomes visible once this frame is deconstructed: the 'accomplishments' indicator was stronger for Milan Bandić than for Ivo Josipović (5.9 % compared to 3.5%). This implies that Josipović was framed as a winner rather by accentuating his general winning prospects and not by depicting him as a man of accomplishments.

Detailed analysis of the content structure of the *suitability frame* revealed that the candidates were primarily framed in terms of their presentability, decency and their general suitability for the position and to a much lesser degree in terms of their actual competency or indeed incompetency for the job (see Table 3).

In this respect, the most pertinent indicator of 'suitability' on the affirmative side were general references to Ivo Josipović as an adequate and presentable choice (40.1% and 22.5% respectively) and references to Milan Bandić as generally inade-

Table 3: Indicators of the suitability frame (%)

		Milan Bandić	**Ivo Josipović**
Suitability frame	1. References to adequacy and recommendation to support	16.6	**40.1**
	2. References to decency and presentability	1.1	22.5
	3. Positive comments about competency	1.6	16.2
Unsuitability frame	1. References to inadequacy and recommendation not to support	**36.9**	24.6
	2. References to indecency and primitivism	18.7	1.4
	3. Negative comments about competency	8.0	0

quate and primitive on the negative side (36.9% and 18.7% respectively). Headlines such as 'Be whatever just not a president' (08-01-10, JL) and comments like 'I cannot imagine someone who is afraid of a piano to become president' (08-01-10, JL) probably illustrate the case well. Finally, it should be noted that the references to competency, as the most substantial indicator within the *suitability frame* scored the lowest. Positive comments about Josipović's competency appeared in 16.2% of the articles with no negative comments whatsoever. Comments about Bandić's incompetency appeared in 8% of the articles while his competencies were positively addressed in as few as 1.6% of the articles. The debate was evolving mainly around education, praising Josipović as a man of books and arts and bashing Bandić for not even speaking English ('It is very awkward if a president does not speak English', 29-12-10, SD). This all implies that the actual competencies that make candidates substantially qualified for the position were not the main concern of the newspapers. Instead, the structure of the *suitability* frames was decisively defined by the newspapers' general assessments – or rather impressions – of 'who is hot and who is not'.

Finally, the deconstruction of the *integrity frame* has revealed that support of people who have a positive image in public contributed the most to the 'honest' framing of Josipović (28.9%) (e.g. 'Cro Cop supports Josipović', 08-01-10, JL), followed by the references which describe him as honest, moral and just (20.4%). On the other hand, the most prominent indicator of his opponent's tarnished integrity, appearing in more than one third of the articles mentioning Bandić, are explicit references to this man's dishonesty, immorality, sinfulness and corruption (see Table 4).

Support of infamous people strongly contributes to this frame with its 24.6% as do comments about murky business related to Bandić's presidential campaign (e.g. 'War criminal supports Bandić', 07-01-10, JL).

Table 4: Indicators of the integrity frame (%)

		Milan Bandić	Ivo Josipović
Honesty frame	1. References to honesty, morality, righteousness, justness etc.	4.8	20.4
	2. Support by people holding a positive public image	18.7	**28.9**
	3. References to a fair campaign	0.5	4.2
Dishonesty frame	1. References to dishonesty, immorality, sinfulness, corruption etc.	**35.8**	12
	2. Support by people holding a negative public image	24.6	2.1
	3. References to a dirty campaign	23.5	4.9

Discussion of the Findings

This analysis provided evidence that the 2010 presidential election was in the newspapers systematically framed as a battle between a good guy and a bad guy. Three dominant frames were used to enforce this dichotomy all the way through the campaign: the success frame, the suitability frame, and the integrity frame. While Ivo Josipović was systematically framed as 'suitable', 'honest' and the 'winner', Milan Bandić was framed as 'dishonest', 'unsuitable' and the 'loser'.

Although the presence and intensity of the frames have been established in the study, the question remains: with what effect?

The task of determining the nature and reach of the framing effects is by no means an easy one and yet there is little doubt that framing does exercise certain effects on audiences. On the other hand, empirical evidence on the influence of the electoral coverage on voters' preferences have often established nothing more than reinforcing effects (Norris et al., 1999). Acknowledging both perspectives, I believe that empirical evidence obtained in previous studies along with theoretical arguments still provide solid ground to argue that the news framing of the president might have affected the outcome of the 2010 elections.

Entman (1993: 54) argues that the process of framing essentially comes down to selection and salience: 'Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience'. The case presented in this paper demonstrates that bits of information belonging to certain valenced frames, as they were defined in this paper, were perpetually repeated and emphasized, while others were omitted. Through the process of repetition, omission and emphasis, the analysed newspapers created 'interpretative frames' through which the voters perceived information, unfolded meanings and made judgements about the candidates. A repeated focus on the suitability of the candidates, or accentuated comments about the integrity of the candidates might have provided interpretative frames for audiences to make meaning out of the old players in the new context. In a different context the understanding of Milan Bandić might have been the one of a hard working dexterous sheriff. In the context of presidential elections the newspapers offered a clearly biased understanding of a candidate who is corrupt and unsuitable to be a president thus generating, as one journalist put it, a true 'movement of resistance' (02-01-10, JL).

In his widely quoted study on the effects of bias in television news Philo (1990: 205) argues that our political views are not 'inviolate or "sealed off" in a private conceptual space. They are instead subject to being challenged and reworked in relation to new information'. And this is exactly what the newspapers in the 2010

presidential elections offered to audiences: vehicles to rework their evaluations and create meanings in relation to a new situation.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to examine how the press covering the 2010 presidential elections in Croatia framed the two front-running candidates. My findings are three-fold. First, there were significant differences in the framing of the candidates: Milan Bandić was systematically portrayed as 'dishonest', 'unsuitable' and the 'loser', while Ivo Josipović was consistently framed as 'suitable', 'honest' and the 'winner'. Second, analysis of the frame indicators has revealed that the *suitability* frame was not mainly built on substantial information on the competencies of the candidates but rather on journalists' general impressions that one man suits their imagined picture of the president better than the other. In addition, the exploration of the success frame revealed that references to the candidates' actual accomplishments were so low in number that they did not significantly contribute to the positive framing of Ivo Josipović. Finally, contrary to my initial assumption based on a number of earlier studies which have examined how frames function in horse-race election coverage, the success frame was the least visible one.

To conclude, the concept of framing consists of selective emphasis and repetition of some elements of the story and omission of others. Through these routines newspapers create 'interpretative frames' through which voters may judge candidates. The black and white presentation of the candidates in the 2010 presidential elections in Croatia provided ready interpretative frames for voters. The pertinence and intensity of valenced framing gives me reason to suggest it might have some role in voters' decision to choose Josipović as president.

Finally, having that in mind, it should be noted that some important questions in this paper remained unanswered and should be addressed in future research. For instance, more exhaustive study of framing should concentrate on the differential involvement and role of various actors in the formation of frames (e.g. journalists, editors, media owners, spin doctors, political institutions). On the other hand, a more comprehensive research should seek to establish the extent to which frames actually inform voters' decisions and behaviour. In particular it would be considerably valuable to examine how frames operate in the specific Croatian context and the particular political and communication culture where issues of ownership, corruption and problematic relationship between journalists and politicians persist.

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APPENDIX

CODE SHEET

I. Structure

1.   In what newspaper did the article appear?
     1. Jutarnji list
     2. Večernji list
     3. Slobodna Dalmacija
     4. Novi list
2.   When did the article appear?
     1. First week of the campaign (28 December 2009 to 3 January 2010)
     2. Second week (4 January to 8 January 2010)
3.   What is the size of the article?
     1. up to 1/8 of the page
     2. more than 1/8 – 1/4 of the page
     3. more than 1/4 – 1/2 of the page
     4. more than 1/2 – 1 page
     5. more than 1 – 2 pages
     6. more than 2 pages

II. Milan Bandić

4.   How prominent is/are the reference(s) to Milan Bandić in relation to other content?
     1. Primary focus: the article is essentially focused on Milan Bandić (e.g. in terms of his issue stands, campaign conduct, electoral aftermath, his political or private profile etc.).
     2. Secondary focus: the main story is not evolving around Bandić nor is he the centre of the narrative, but is still a relatively significant element within it.
     3. Tertiary focus: Bandić is mentioned only in passing (i.e. not more than a couple of sentences) and does NOT play an important role in the article as a whole.

Success Frame

Loser

5.   Does it mention candidate's failures, fiascos, fall-outs?
     0. No
     1. Yes

6.   Does it use the wording which explicitly suggests that the candidate is likely to lose the elections or in any way conveys the mood of defeat (e.g. loser, crying, sorrow, disappointment)?
     0. No
     1. Yes

7.   Does it contain results of a survey which suggest that the candidate is likely to lose the elections?
     0. No
     1. Yes

8.   Was any of the items from 5 to 7 found in the image accompanying the text?
     0. No
     1. Yes

9.   Was any of the items from 5 to 7 found in the headline?
     0. No
     1. Yes

Winner

10.   Does it mention candidate's accomplishments, triumphs etc.?
      0. No
      1. Yes

11.   Does it use the wording which explicitly suggests that the candidate is likely to win the elections or in any way conveys the winning mood (e.g. winner, celebrating, celebration)?
      0. No
      1. Yes

12.   Does it contain results of a public opinion survey which suggest that the candidate is likely to win the elections?
      0. No
      1. Yes

13.   Was any of the items from 10 to 12 found in the image accompanying the text?
      0. No
      1. Yes

14.   Was any of the items from 10 to 12 found in the headline?
      0. No
      1. Yes

Suitability Frame

Unsuitable

15. Does it suggest that the candidate is politically or in any other way *unsuitable* and therefore should not be supported or voted for?
    0. No
    1. Yes

16. Does the article in any way imply that the candidate is *indecent*, *intolerable*, *primitive*?
    0. No
    1. Yes

17. Does the article contain negative comments about candidate's competency for the position (in terms of his education, knowledge or similar)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

18. Was any of the items from 15 to 17 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

19. Was any of the items from 15 to 17 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Suitable

20. Does it suggest that the candidate is politically or in any other way *suitable* and therefore should be supported or voted for?
    0. No
    1. Yes

21. Does the article in any way imply that the candidate is *decent*, *presentable*, *tolerant*?
    0. No
    1. Yes

22. Does the article contain positive comments about candidate's competency (in terms of his education, knowledge or similar)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

23. Was any of the items from 20 to 22 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

24. Was any of the items from 20 to 22 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Morality Frame

Dishonest

25. Does it contain wording which implies candidate's dishonesty (e.g. dishonest, sinful, corrupt) or does it imply that the candidate has been involved in certain dishonest activities?
    0. No
    1. Yes

26. Does it suggest that the candidate is being supported by people (individuals, groups) who have a troubling or controversial public image?
    0. No
    1. Yes

27. Does it suggest that the candidate is going to run a dirty campaign (in terms of financing, rhetoric etc.)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

28. Was any of the items from 25 to 27 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

29. Was any of the items from 25 to 27 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Honest

30. Does it contain wording which implies candidate's honesty (e.g. virtuous, moral, just, honest, righteous)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

31. Does it imply that the candidate is being supported by people (individuals, groups) who have a positive public image?
    0. No
    1. Yes

32. Does it suggest that the candidate is going to run a fair and honest campaign?
    0. No
    1. Yes

33. Was any of the items from 30 to 32 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

34. Was any of the items from 30 to 32 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

II. Ivo Josipović

35. How prominent is/are the reference(s) to Ivo Josipović in relation to other content?

    1. Primary focus: the article is essentially focused on Ivo Josipović (e.g. in terms of his issue stands, campaign conduct, electoral aftermath, his political or private profile etc.).

    2. Secondary focus: the main story is not evolving around Josipović nor is he the centre of the narrative, but is still a relatively significant element within it.

    3. Tertiary focus: Josipović is mentioned only in passing (i.e. not more than a couple of sentences) and does NOT play an important role in the article as a whole.

Success Frame
/Horse-Race Generic Frame/

Loser

36. Does it mention candidate's failures, fiascos, fall-outs (e.g. with the party, family etc.)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

37. Does it use the wording which explicitly suggests that the candidate is likely to lose the elections or in any way conveys the mood of defeat (e.g. loser, crying, sorrow, disappointment)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

38. Does it contain results of a survey which suggest that the candidate is likely to lose the elections?
    0. No
    1. Yes

39. Was any of the items from 36 to 38 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

40. Was any of the items from 36 to 38 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Winner

41. Does it mention candidate's accomplishments, triumphs etc.?
    0. No
    1. Yes

42. Does it use the wording which explicitly suggests that the candidate is likely to win the elections or in any way conveys the winning mood (e.g. winner, celebrating, celebration)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

43. Does it contain results of a public opinion survey which suggest that the candidate is likely to win the elections?
    0. No
    1. Yes

44. Was any of the items from 41 to 43 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

45. Was any of the items from 41 to 43 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Suitability Frame

Unsuitable

46. Does it suggest that the candidate is politically or in any other way *unsuitable* and therefore should not be supported or voted for?
    0. No
    1. Yes

47. Does the article in any way imply that the candidate is *indecent*, *intolerable*, *primitive*?
    0. No
    1. Yes

48. Does the article contain negative comments about candidate's competency for the position (in terms of his education, knowledge or similar)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

49. Was any of the items from 46 to 48 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

50. Was any of the items from 46 to 48 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Suitable

51. Does it suggest that the candidate is politically or in any other way *suitable* and therefore should be supported or voted for?
    0. No
    1. Yes

52. Does the article in any way imply that the candidate is *decent*, *presentable*, *tolerant*?
    0. No
    1. Yes

53. Does the article contain positive comments about candidate's competency (in terms of his education, knowledge or similar)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

54. Was any of the items from 51 to 53 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

55. Was any of the items from 51 to 53 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Morality Frame

Dishonest

56. Does it contain wording which implies candidate's dishonesty (e.g. dishonest, sinful, corrupt) or does it imply that the candidate has been involved in certain dishonest activities?
    0. No
    1. Yes

57. Does it suggest that the candidate is being supported by people (individuals, groups) who have a troubling or controversial public image?
    0. No
    1. Yes

58. Does it suggest that the candidate is going to run a dirty campaign (in terms of financing, rhetoric etc.)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

59. Was any of the items from 56 to 58 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

60. Was any of the items from 56 to 58 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

Honest

61. Does it contain wording which implies candidate's honesty (e.g. virtuous, moral, just, honest, righteous)?
    0. No
    1. Yes

62. Does it imply that the candidate is being supported by people (individuals, groups) who have a positive public image?
    0. No
    1. Yes

63. Does it suggest that the candidate is going to run a fair and honest campaign?
    0. No
    1. Yes

64. Was any of the items from 61 to 63 found in the image accompanying the text?
    0. No
    1. Yes

65. Was any of the items from 61 to 63 found in the headline?
    0. No
    1. Yes

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