

Media Literacy and Divisions in Montenegro

Nikola Radunović*

SUMMARY

At the end of the first decade of the XXI century, following trends of developed societies, Montenegro had included in the school system the media literacy subject. However, the subject is not an obligatory part of the school program but is designed as an optional for students of 2nd and 3rd year of high school. Although the great effort is being done in order to satisfy the conditions to enable faster accession of Montenegro to the European Union, at the same time, Montenegrin society is still deeply divided on several issues - political and identity issues, among others. Media image, unfortunately, is not an exception in this regard, and it is absolutely clear which of the power centers is in favor of each media. Research shows that citizens do indeed recognize that. Even though the citizens generally are aware of the role of each media, the question is whether they are ready to hear the other side, or just blindly believe the media that is in favor of political group they sympathize, vote for or belong to as members. Recently conducted research, whose aim was to determine the behavior of the readers of daily newspapers in Montenegro, included Montenegrin citizens from several cities in southern, central and northern regions, showed that only about one-quarter of the readers wanted to inform themselves from the two tentatively different sources. Most readers were interested in the information that is offered by „one side“ only. What is an educational practice in Montenegro, how is studied media literacy and to what extent it can contribute to the strengthening of political culture and democracy, and for a better understanding of media content?

* Nikola Radunović, MSc, PhD candidate at Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro, email: indoktrinacija@yahoo.com, phone: +382-67-656-888, address: Medovina bb, Cetinje, Montenegro

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Introduction

The last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, in a way, have brought a revolution in the way media communicate with the public and how the public uses the media. The model of access to information and the importance of the information we get from various media has significantly changed. With the advent of the Internet as the fastest evolving medium in history, the speed of placement and dissemination of information has reached unimaginable dimensions. Thus now is possible to be informed about various events in real time, regardless of whether something is happening in the close environment or on some distant part of the world. Distinctions from being here or there no longer matter (Virilio 2011: 9). Social networks, whose number of users increases rapidly, enables everyone to publish any information whenever he/she desires, and spreads that information to target groups in the shortest possible period of time. The main reason for this is rapid development of technology and easy access to media content through smartphones, tablets and other mobile and portable devices. Thus, the limits that previously existed are practically eliminated, and a possibility to send or receive information anywhere at any moment has become a reality. But do we question the credibility of the information this way? Anyone can send any message or information without having to check the authenticity of such information. For this reason, the role of media as mean that should filter the accuracy and authentication of information, it seems very important (Center for Democracy and Governance 1999: 7). However, it is known that the TV and radio stations broadcast daily news at pre-defined time schedule, and the interruption of the regular program to give the public some important information are extremely rare, except in extraordinary circumstances. Slightly faster model for getting information exists on the internet portals, so part of the population can be timely informed about the various events this way. As Bauman (2009) noted "what is important is speed, not the duration".

Although the timeliness of information is one of the important factors, there is another aspect that seems to be more important and more interesting. It is not scarce that different media in a completely different way inform the public about the same event, which raises the question of professionalism and responsibility for putting information in a context that is not objectively correct, or it is not the only one. According to certain scholars it has become very difficult to answer who is a journalist and who is not (e.g. Deuze, 2009; McNair, 2009; Hallin, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Gitlin, 2009).

How can we get a reliable information and objective feedback on the news placed in such a state of affairs? Can media literacy help to ensure that citizens become more aware of the possible misuse of the media and to help them seek for objective information? “Media literacy is a set of views that we actively apply when we consume media in order to interpret the meaning of the messages that we receive.” (Potter 2011: 47). It is evident that the media is under the influence of different centers of power, and thus disseminate the information differently. According to Joseph Turow (2011: 22), the goal of media literacy is not to make the audience “cynical and distrustful of all mass media” but provide participants with the tool to understand media contents. So media literacy is “the ability to apply critical thinking skills to the mass media, thereby becoming a more aware and responsible citizen - parent, voter, worker and our media - driven society.” (Turow 2011: 24).

Divided society

Montenegrin society has still not found a way to cope with deep divisions on many issues. Although it has been along time since Montenegro entered the so-called transition period, there are intense debates about almost all topics concerning the identity, responsibility, dealing with the past, the role of different socio-political events, historical plots and everyday questions. In regard to any choice, the state is fully divided on those who are „for“ and those who are „against“ the proposed solution. Every day we are witnessing mutual accusation between two feuding Orthodox Churches - Montenegrin and Serbian, or two of the Academies of Arts and Sciences, as well as in particular sports there are two quarreling unions. Having in mind this, in fact there are also two kind of people - almost half declare themselves as Serbs that speak Serbian language, and half as Montenegrins that speak Montenegrin language.¹ Since such division exists within the same family, that clearly indicates that there is a huge level of politicization of the state and society in all its segments. This impression is even stronger if we know the fact that a large part of the population does not respect the state symbols, and the fact that part of the parliamentary opposition in the Parliament either sit or leave the room during the intonation of Montenegrin anthem. Occasionally, during the basketball, soccer or waterpolo matches, Montenegrin citizens cheer against Montenegrin clubs or against national team of Montenegro, especially when they play against Serbia national team or a Serbian club.²

In such situation, it is inevitable that the media are the ones who are more or less clearly on the side of „one“ or „the other.“ In contemporary media and journalism studies, there are many theoretical and empirical investigations that have been loo-

king for answers to the questions as to the role of journalism in society (e.g. Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Gitlin, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Christians et al, 2009) and how journalists perceive themselves as subjects of societal processes (e.g. Donsbach and Klett, 1993; Deuze, 2005; Hallin, 2009).

Results of the survey conducted in 2012 by the Center for Democracy (CEDEM) under the sponsorship of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, show more than obviously that citizens are fully aware of the impact that individual power centers have on certain media in Montenegro. Also it is quite well recognized which of the media are under the influence of the government, and which are under the influence of opposition (Bešić 2012: 27).³

It is absolutely clear that citizens in general can hardly be excluded from the overall picture of society and the imposed divisions. They also mainly support one side or another and pull information mainly from the media who are close to their own political option. Being informed mainly from the sources which by their belief can only be trusted, because the others „are paid to write and speak untruths“ and inform in a way that does not correspond to reality, society as a whole fell into the trap of believing the only truth that they just want to hear. Only a few individuals who have sufficient political and media literacy, taking multiple sources of information into account, are ready to be informed in a relatively objective way. However, the question is, is this enough in a small country with just over 600,000 inhabitants that is trying to emerge from the deep socio-economic crisis? Also, is it possible with media literacy to influence the citizens to the extent that the family habits, tradition, culture, history and heritage are put aside even for a moment, and to try to suppress *a priori* conclusions about the certain media.

Modern education and media literacy

Certain developed countries, for some time, have been seriously working on programs to increase media literacy. The focus of these programs are developing the critical and creative skills, which are aimed at gaining knowledge on how to constantly ask questions and identify misconceptions that media are offering. As Baldwin (1998: 678) put it, “The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions ...”, (see Scheibe-Rogow, 2012: 292).

The current education system is mainly based on learning facts, but the most advanced schools replaced such a system with a new paradigm, because today almost all data are available at the moment via Internet. The new goal is to teach students how to find what they need at a given time, while they develop the skills of deli-

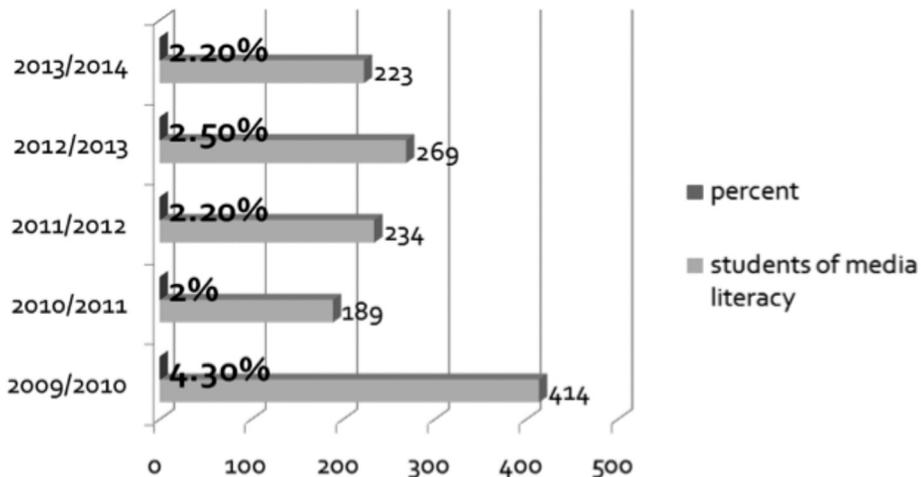
beration in order to analyze and assess whether the information that they find are useful. Thus, modern schools should aim to teach students how to explore, examine, experiment and discover. Learning should be clearly distinguished from mere overwhelming with the information. For so-called ordinary people can be said that they only represent a passive targets affected by particular text or speech, in order to be told by authority what should they believe in or what should do (Van Dijk, 1998: 355). In this sense the concept of media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and transmit the messages through the media.⁴ It should allow us to understand who is placing certain information and whose interest is it for, and how to find an alternative. As Scheibe and Rogow reckon (2012: 268) “we think of literacy as the broad set of skills and habits that enable one to engage thoughtfully with the community and the world”. This broad set of skills requires eager accessing, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making.

Some education systems around the world generally offer Media Literacy to students only in high school. Therefore, Montenegro as well, in 2009 introduced in the education system the opportunity to attend this course for students of second and third year of high school, but as an optional class.⁵ In countries such as Australia, Denmark, Canada and some other, Media Literacy is mandatory. In Austria, the Netherlands and the U.S. Media Literacy depends on the activity of individual teachers and on help from some other institutions that are financing it through various projects.

What the official figures say on the manner and extent of the course Media Literacy in Montenegro? During the year of 2009 when the course was firstly implemented in the education system, 414 students in total or 4.3% of the total number of high school students chose to study this subject. For the next year 2010, proportion of students who selected this subject was more than halved and this subject was studied by 189 or 2% of the total students. During the next two school years, 2011/12 and 2012/13, the number of interested students for this subject was 234 and 269 respectively, or in percentage 2.2% and 2.5%.

Chart 1 Yearly overview of the students attended the Media Literacy in Montenegro

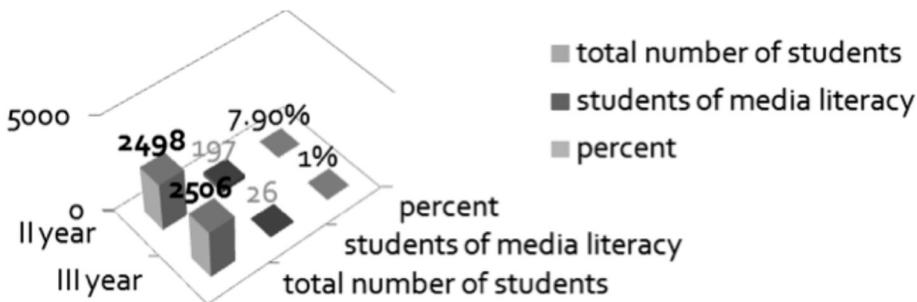
Graf 1. Pregled po godinama broja učenika koji pohađaju predmet Medijska pismenost u Crnoj Gori



Data for the academic year 2013/14 shows that in second grade of altogether 2498 students, Media Literacy is attended by 197 students or 7.9% divided in 11 groups. But, because in the third grade out of 2506 students only 26 of them selected to study Media Literacy divided into 4 groups, which is about 1%, the overall percentage of only about 2.2% of high school students are choosing this subject.

Chart 2 Overview of the students attended the Media Literacy in Montenegro for 2013/2014

Graf 2. Pregled broja učenika koji pohađaju predmet Medijska pismenost u Crnoj Gori za 2013/2014 godinu



This puts the interest for Media Literacy on the very low 28 position out of 38 possible optional subjects. Bearing in mind that a lower percentage of selected subjects is only: the Latin language, the syntax of the Latin language, problem solving physics, mathematical functions in physics, methods and techniques of research in chemistry, chemistry and life, economical and financial mathematics, and a few others, it is obvious that high school students do not find particularly attractive and necessary Media Literacy course. The classis organized twice per week. The fact that the Department of Education and The Ministry of Education and Science does not have precise data in which schools and in what percentage these classes are attended, that obviously reinforce the thesis that the institutions also do not show excessive interest in media literacy.

The research framework

In order to indicate the method of reporting of the certain Montenegrin media, to understand discourse and to try to draw conclusions based on the behavior of citizens, for the purpose of this paper, a study was made. In addition to observing readers choice, the study contains a comparison in the approach to certain issues through the analysis of the titles and the content of the articles in daily newspapers *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti*, which are also published by their informative Internet portals. The chosen topics were those that recently have preoccupied attention of national and international public. These two newspapers were chosen because citizens recognize that they are under very diverse impact of power (Bešić, 2012). Also the editorial board of both newspapers often publicly criticize each other for the lack of professionalism and misleading the public.⁶ In order to obtain an objective impression of the writings of the above mentioned media, articles with the focus on public figures and themes from Montenegro were analyzed, as well as articles regarding individuals from the region and Europe, but also topics with the focus on other issues, such as ecology.

In order to obtain information regarding the behavior and preferences of citizens about their choice of media from which they inform themselves, the research was carried out in cafes which have provided daily newspapers for the visitors.⁷ The data were taken in several Montenegrin towns of central, southern and northern part - in Kotor on November 8, 9 and 10, 2013; in Budva on November 12, 13 and 14, 2013; in Cetinje on November 19, 20 and 21, 2013; in Podgorica on November 23, 24 and 25, 2013; in Pljevlja on November 27 and 28, 2013. The analysis are based on the data of a random sample of 300 groups⁸ of guests in a total of 15 cafes (3 cafes in each city) – 48 groups of guests in Kotor, 36 groups in Budva, 60 groups in Cetinje,

90 groups in Podgorica and 66 groups in Pljevlja. Groups of visitors that have been observed are comprised of at least 3 and up to 5 persons, whereby it was taken into account groups consisting of a majority of the local population.⁹ The total number of visitors involved in the survey was 1146. There were 888 of males and 258 of females. This difference can be explained by the fact that the most groups with the predominant number of men were interested in an overview of the daily press, and almost no group composed solely of women wanted to review the daily press. Therefore, the structure of the observed group consisted of the groups composed exclusively of men (81% of the sample), or of men and women together (19%). In each of the cafes there were more than one daily newspaper available: in six cafes - two newspapers, in five cafes - three daily newspapers, in four cafes - all four daily newspapers!¹⁰

How certain media reports?

The discourse is not isolated textual or dialogic structure but a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context, featuring participants as well as production and reception processes (Sheyholislami 2001:3). Daily newspapers *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti* generally, in the public eye, have completely different editorial policy. While the first one, for a long period of time the only daily newspaper in Montenegro, recognized as an extended arm of the regime, the second one is recognized as the harshest critics of the authorities. Editors and reporters of those two opposite media often accuse each other for lack of professionalism and servility. While *Pobjeda* is accused to be a blind servant of the governing structure, for *Vijesti* we often hear claims from the government side, that they are proponents of foreign interest groups working against the interests of Montenegro.¹¹ However, what citizens that are reading both newspapers confuses the most, is the publication of contrary information. From the first media we get the information from one angle, while from the view of the second newspaper can be concluded quite the opposite.¹² This practice is itself unacceptable and reflects a very complicated conditions and opportunities in Montenegro, which is affected by several big scandals for the last ten years. The highest government officials are accused of involvement and to be responsible for various criminal affairs, tobacco smuggling, trafficking, war crimes, illicit enrichment, discrimination in employment and similar issues. And while one of the media gives emphasis to the affirmative writings, the other quite the opposite offer information that cast a completely different light on the same events.

Although this method of reporting is more or less recognized in public, in most cases readers select as the source of information only one of the options. Usually this is an option that is close to the political structure supported by the reader, and

so it seems that *Pobjeda* is mandatory everyday choice for those close to the government, while *Vijesti* is indispensable for critics of the regime. Also, *Dan* is a newspaper which sharply criticize the government and it is considered like pro-Serbian newspaper, while the latest daily newspaper published in Montenegro among these four - *Dnevne novine*, were accused of being established by the regime in order to weaken so-called independent newspapers because of its low price.¹³

To get an impression of the differences in reporting *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti*, we need to analyze the titles and articles about several important topics that have been dealt with in these media lately.

On the fifth anniversary of Montenegrin independence, both papers wrote extensively on progress in those first five years, but even without a deeper discourse analysis and without looking at the content of what was written, we can easily draw the conclusion only by paying attention to the cover sheet of both newspapers. So, *Pobjeda* on May 21, 2011 published on the front page in large letters, „No one in five years did more“, while *Vijesti's* headlines, equally in large letters, says „Five years without progress.“ It was an obvious intention of both, but what is interesting is actually a huge difference in the experience and the presentation of government work in the past five years. In the article published in *Pobjeda*, it is almost impossible to find a critical perception or highlight of some specific gaps in the first five years of the renewal of independence, while *Vijesti*, insisting mainly on mistakes and the lack of progress, forgot to point out to some good things.

In Montenegro, presidential elections were held in April 2013, followed by a number of controversies. Although the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) comprise the governance, smaller coalition partner SDP openly opposed the nomination of Filip Vujanović - the candidate of the larger coalition partner DPS and President of Montenegro at that time. Even the President of the SDP publicly urged voters not to support Vujanović in the elections. SDP also appealed to the Constitutional Court against the nomination of Vujanović. They claimed he had no legal rights to be the President of the country for the third time, since he was twice elected for that role since 2003 until 2013, and because of the Constitution principle that the same person may be the President of Montenegro twice, the most. While the Constitutional Court with the unconvincing explanation accepted third nomination of Vujanović, despite different expectations and announcements of convincing triumph, Vujanović scarcely won the election with only a few percent ahead of independent candidate Miodrag Lekić. This election result, which was later confirmed by the State Election Commission, has remained to this day essentially unrecognized by almost half of the population of Montenegro. Even Lekić's camp

supporters, made up mainly of the opposition leaders, in the election night publicly declared victory of Lekić based on approximately 97% of counted votes. Suspecting that in counting of the last three percentages of the ballots had been numerous irregularities, which led to a narrow victory of Vujanović, had been a lot of complaints and objections, but the State Election Commission rejected all of it.

One of the scandals related to the election events is associated with Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy. At a conference in Brussels, seeing himself misused by the Montenegrin media, Füle speaking to a large audience said: „This morning I spoke about the need to work toward media progress in terms of professionalism and ethics“. Then he showed two slides from the portals of *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti*, and he gave the statement: „This is the proof that I was right when I said that we have to improve on these issues. Example of this behind me illustrate what I’m talking about.“¹⁴ In the editor’s article in *Vijesti*, it was indicated that one of European officials stated that he himself evidenced that on the presidential election actually won candidate Lekić. The day after, *Pobjeda* published an article titled „Füle denied tabloid *Vijesti*“¹⁵ and the very next day, the *Vijesti* published response: „Štefan Füle: *Pobjeda* is an example of how ethics is violated.“ Of course, both articles bring a lot of the opposite arguments, using the high European officials from their own point of view only for mutual disputes in order to reach own goals. By extracting individual segments of someone’s messages from the context, it seems that the message itself is less important, and the only important thing is to present the competition as an ordinary forger and as a media that clearly serves to centers of power.

The same case is when it comes to the articles concerned with the public figures from the region. One of the recent scandals is so-called attack on journalists of *Vijesti* by Vladimir Beba Popović. Popović is a former head of the Bureau of Public Affairs of the Republic of Serbia at the time of the assassinated Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. Most recently he became the director of the Institute for Public Policy in Montenegro. *Vijesti* for days reported on how Popović roughly attacked their team on a mission, what he denied and sought protection from such charges. The public was able to see what had really happened by reviewing video publicly available from the surveillance of the building in front of whose entrance the event has occurred.¹⁶ However, it is interesting to see how these two newspapers, *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti*, for over the days reported on the event. Titles that have dominated in *Vijesti* were: „The U.S. Embassy and the OSCE: This has to be investigated“, „Beba will not get an apology, he as an individual nor his work deserve to be written about“, „The officer watched while Popović was cursing, insulting and stealing“, „Vladimir Popović cries again and cheats“. By doing so, *Vijesti* published

mostly what comes from one side, but *Pobjeda*, on the other hand, had enough space for the other side of the story. So, in *Pobjeda* it could be mainly read opposite statements, and the titles spoke for themselves: „Popović to *Vijesti*: These are just ridiculous copies of my old customers“, „The prosecution rejected the application of journalists and news photographers against Vladimir Popović: disclosed hoax of tabloid“, „Facts again denied tabloid“. ¹⁷ The reader who reads only one source will get very different information from the reader who reads only the other source! ¹⁸

The situation does not differ much when the focus is on locally based individuals which is clear if we look at these two media's reporting on one of the recent scandals that saw the light of the day in Montenegro. Namely, one of the former member of the special anti-terrorist units Brajuško Brajušković publically spoke about the accusations of the former Director of Police Veselin Veljović, about how the associates organized the so-called „The black trio“, who was tasked to frighten and beat up the political opponents of government. In *Vijesti*, similarly as in the previous examples, the articles reported about the affair: „Brajušković pressed charges against Perović“, „Đurović, Lazović and Kalezić spearheads of beating squad“, „SWAT still loyal to the old commander“, „Brajušković: Regime media defaming me as per Veljović's order“. *Pobjeda* on the other side wrote the articles: „SSP: Brajušković's accusations without proof“, „Confirmed that Brajušković bluffed the public“, „Veljović expected institute proceedings against Brajušković“, „Rakočević: Brajušković racketeered prisoners and their families“, with rarely giving space to another side. Thus, again the impression is that neither *Pobjeda* nor *Vijesti* does have the capacity to professionally communicate statements of both sides, without indentation in editorial discourse which is obvious. The analysis of the articles concludes that *Pobjeda* does everything to preserve the reputation of certain individuals in power or close to them, while *Vijesti* does exactly the opposite and without hesitation takes every opportunity to show the same person in the problematical context.

To make the matter worse, a similar approach to reporting is present even when it comes to topics that at first glance do not have a direct relationship with politicians and authorities, so both newspapers on September 20, 2013 wrote about Montenegro as the first ecological state in the world. *Pobjeda* brought a story headlined, „Twenty-two years after the proclamation of Montenegro as the first ecological state in the world“ with the photo of the beautiful scenery of Scadar Lake. Description in the subtitle where interlocutors from the Agency for Environmental Protection believe that this idea „even after 22 years is not fully realized“. ¹⁹ On the same day we have in *Vijesti*: „22 years of Ecological state of Montenegro: Collapse of an idea“ with a headline „Anniversary without a pride“. Beneath the article there was a photo of cleaning trash from the same lake. ²⁰

Thus, the reader who receives information from one of these two media will be informed drastically different in comparison to reader whose choice is the other daily newspaper. The readers will have a completely different perception of what is going on regarding a certain event, who is wrong who is right, whether an idea was realized or not, has the certain event occurred or not, who is responsible and who is not etc. The question is how to be objectively informed in such circumstances, and what media literacy can help us with this situation?

Mentality as a barrier

History and tradition are very important part in the life of elderly as well as modern Montenegrins. It is well known that Montenegrins are one of the Balkan nation which were organized in tribal communities where each tribe had its own characteristics and traits that pre-determine each member of a tribal clans (brotherhood) in many cases. Thus, some tribal clans are considered to be self-interested, others are known for exceptional courage and so on. It is not rare that individuals want to be recognized by their grandfathers or great grandfathers, which instantly labels them, either recommends or disqualifies them in the eyes of the others. The past therefore largely determines almost every modern Montenegrin and somehow everyone carries on their own shoulders the inheritance of their ancestors, whether it is comfortable and helps in different circumstances, or that it is a burden. Also, in the last hundred years, Montenegro is marked by many unexplained events which some characterized with one connotation, while others saw the same event in a completely different way. This circumstances has led to the fact that the Montenegrin society is deeply divided and this division is mainly dating from the early twentieth century. At that time Montenegro lost its independence by decision of the controversial Podgorica Assembly, by joining then to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Later, during the Second World War also a big division was created between the Chetniks and Partisans. All of these, and especially later on divisions made over the issue of sovereignty of Montenegro before the independence referendum held in May of 2006, and up to date, have not lost intensity and we can see that almost every day. We still have those who were against independence and in a way are treated as enemies of the state. On the other hand, there is quite a number of those who were proficiently floating and changing sides, and at the end supported the current government and therefore were among “deserved ones”. Some are accused from the opposition and from a large number of citizens for illicit enrichment. So, during the transition period from the last decade of the twentieth century to the present, as opposed to individuals who are enormously ri-

ch, a good portion of the population became only poorer. Today, Montenegrin and international public are witness of the affair „Snimak [The record]“. That affair enabled citizens to hear audio recordings of the meetings of the governing party DPS and their plans and activities on, which is claimed to be misuse of state resources in order to support employment for only their members and supporters, and about different pressures in order to maintain the power. All of this further emphasizes the foreground of influence and embedded sense of belonging to a particular group, family, clan, or political opinion in all circumstances and situations in life. Therefore this model of behavior consequently is reflected in the field of information, and the fact is that consumers generally believe the only information source for which they know in advance that mainly represents their own views and political ambitions. It is well known that the „culture of dialogue requires not only the culture of participants, but also assumes a democratic consciousness, developed and emancipated environment and finally a habit to check all relevant, all that is implied“ (Božović 2010: 193). In order to verify to what extent at this moment in time we really have the situation we described when selection of information sources are about, we have carried out the research which should give the answer to question of whether and to what extent the readers of daily newspapers want to hear the other side, or how many of them have practice to get information from more than one source of information.

Findings of the research regarding the readers' choice of daily newspapers

In the majority of facilities (14 out of 15) guests could have read the newspaper *Vijesti*. Besides, the newspaper *Dan* was offered in 12, *Pobjeda* in 9, and *Dnevne novine* in 8 cafes.

For all groups of people that have been observed, the selected cafes were the ones with higher attendance and those located in frequently visited places in the city center.²¹

In Kotor, sample consisted of 48 groups with a total of 204 visitors, of whom there were 162 men and 42 women. Of the total number of observed, *Vijesti* was read by 102 men. Out of these 102, 42 have read the newspapers in the first cafe, 36 in the second and 24 in the third cafe. By doing so, in the first cafe are observed 18 groups, in the second also 18 and in the third 12 groups. The visitors in the first cafe, 30 of them, read the two daily newspapers, while the remaining 12 in the first cafe did not read except for one newspaper. In the second cafe there were a total of 36 readers, and 12 of them were seen two different newspapers, while the remaining

24 reviewed only one newspaper. In the third cafe, only 6 readers reviewed two papers, and the remaining 18 read only one daily newspaper. So, 54 out of 102 readers did not review except for one newspaper while the rest of 48 reviewed two. It is interesting that none of the observed visitors did not read the third daily newspaper, although it was available in two cafes. More interesting is that among 48 observed visitors who looked at two different sources, 30 of them read *Vijesti* and *Dan* (both papers are considered like government critics), 12 read *Vijesti* and *Pobjeda*, and 6 read *Pobjeda* and *Dnevne novine* (both papers are not perceived as critics of government, but opposite). Results in Kotor showed that in fact out of 102 readers only 12 readers had read both sources, while others wanted to read either just criticism, or just praisal.

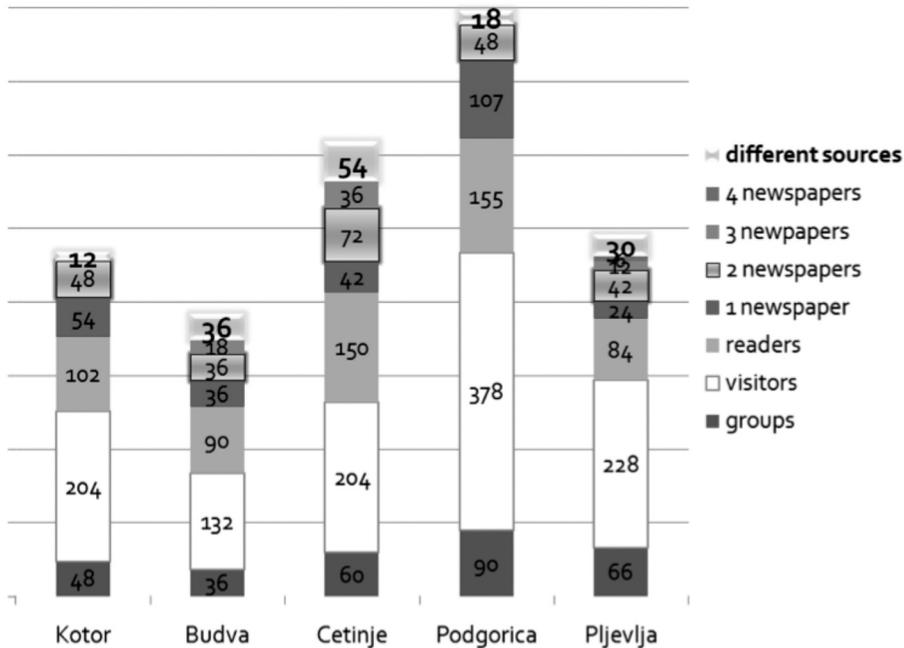
In three cafes in Budva, 12 groups were observed per each of them. The total number of guests in each of 36 groups was 132, out of which 84 men and 48 women. The newspapers were read from a total of 90 visitors, 66 men and 24 women. Each of the 24 women read only one daily newspaper, while out of 66 male readers only 12 of them did not read more than one newspaper. Of the 54 remaining male readers, 18 reviewed 3 daily newspapers and the rest of 36 have read two newspapers. Unlike in Kotor, 18 who read the two newspapers selected *Vijesti* and *Pobjeda*, and it can be said that together with those who have reviewed three newspapers, 36 out of 90 readers wish to be informed by receiving information from, so to say, different angles. It is interesting that although in one cafe were all four daily newspapers, nobody from the observed groups reviewed all four newspapers.

In Cetinje, there were 60 groups with 204 guests, 168 men and 36 women. The daily press was reviewed by total of 150 guests. Single newspaper were reviewed by 42 visitors, and the 72 of them reviewed two newspapers, while 36 guests reviewed the three newspapers. Of those 72 who read the two newspapers, 18 read *Vijesti* and *Dnevne novine*, while 54 reviewed *Dan* and *Vijesti*. So, at first glance, the total number of those interested in information from two opposing discourses was 54.

Results in Podgorica are more interesting due the fact that from the observed 90 groups with a total number of 378 visitors out of which 102 were women, only five women reviewed the one newspaper. Of the total of 150 male readers, only 48 of them reviewed the two newspapers and the others reviewed only one. 30 readers reviewed *Vijesti* and *Dan*, and 18 read *Pobjeda* and *Dan*. It could be concluded that only 18 readers of the last mentioned case expressed a desire to read the information from the two relatively different sources. Although all four daily newspapers were available in two cafes, among observed groups, no case was recorded where a visitor reviewed more than two newspapers.

Chart 3 Findings of the research regarding the readers' choice of daily newspapers

Graf 3. Rezultati istraživanja izbora čitalaca dnevnih novina



In Pljevlja, the only municipality in the northern part of country among those chosen for this research, 66 groups with a total of 228 visitors were observed. Out of 198 men and 30 women, only 84 men read the daily press. 42 of them had read two newspapers, 12 read the 3 newspapers and 6 readers reviewed all four daily editions. Of those who read two newspapers, only 12 of them have read *Dan* and *Pobjeda*, and the others tentatively similar source. Thus, for a total of 30 readers could be said that have informed themselves from the various sources of information.

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the results obtained in five Montenegrin towns we can draw certain conclusions. The research was conducted on the 300 groups of visitors consisted of 3 to 5 people, in the total of 15 cafes. The cafes were supplied with two, three or four daily newspapers published in Montenegro and offered their guests the possibility to review the daily press. Obviously, the result shows that the confidence in just

„one“ source of information is dominant whether it is related to one that supports the government or one that is against it. The result of the research showed that out of total of 576 readers, just 150 of them wanted to look at the information from „a different angle“. This result, in which approximately one-quarter of the people want to be informed from various sources that report differently and which are under diverse influences of power, support the thesis that beliefs, cultural heritage, family tradition and pride represent a major barrier to citizens in an attempt to be objectively informed. Popular belief, pre-labeled media, and pandering to their own preferences, prevent to a large extent a good portion of the population from trying to be informed from different angles.

If we take into account the fact that there is a possibility that for one part of the readers who reviewed more than one daily newspaper from the „opposite“ source, the reason for reviewing was the section - death announcement (because Montenegro is small country and residents mainly know each other or have close family or friendship ties, and this is one of the reasons why they read *Pobjeda* or *Dan* newspapers), then it is possible that even this low percentage of those who use a variety of sources, is indeed much lower.

However, the results suggest that it is obviously necessary to work on breaking down stereotypes and prejudices and to try to use media literacy to affect the awareness of the need for understanding the media and messages they convey using an analytical approach and the ability to distinguish information from disinformation. It is important to analyse news discourse because journalists construct ideological meanings, which are concordant with the interests of influential elites (Van Dijk, 1988).

The research did not take into account how are individuals in Montenegro, and perhaps some of the observed people, informed via the web portals, and therefore the results relate only to the daily press and its review in public, just to show links between the cultural aspects of personality and membership in a particular group.²²

Due to the situation in the Montenegrin society that has for decades being divided along ethnic, cultural, religious, national, family and any other grounds, the question is whether the education system could affect that individuals become more media literate and thus to be able to indirectly influence the media owners to raise the professionalism in the journalism. A situation in which we have media educated citizen who is critical and without the prejudice towards the information that receives from various sources, should result in a more stylish reportings and less deliberate camouflage of any event. Then, paradigm would be a society in which the choice of media through which citizens would like to be informed is a matter of

greater affinity for the style of a particular columnist or editor, and not a matter of the reliability of information that we get from it.

However, experience suggests that this is not an easy task, nor positive results could be expected in the near future. The school itself and the education system are in a rather difficult situation, and the media are leading to significant debate about the quality of programs that books are filled with, especially those in elementary school. Montenegrin public is significantly divided on so many topics, where some are against studying of Serbian history and want more emphasis on Montenegrin history and its writers, poets and artists, others are quite loud in the fight against the Montenegrin language and its name as a subject in school. This led to a turbulent objections because of the content and the names of certain books and courses.²³ What current situation makes even more complex, are divided teachers and university professors that contribute to it, as well as academics from two Academies which mutually accuse and try to discredit each other. Additionally, politicians who have the greatest impact on the citizens are the leaders of the divisions in society.

The current situation suggests that in near future there will be no significant change in media literacy and its impact on education in everyday life and on the general state of awareness in the media in Montenegro. However, it would be important to make the extra effort and to look for uniqueness and specificity that would help the education in general, including media literacy, for the students with different backgrounds and beliefs. Media education is a lifelong challenge (anywhere and everywhere, 24/7), taking the form of activity more or less formalized, individual efforts or institutional projects (Aqili, Nasiri, 2010: 452). The fact that only above 2% of the students for almost every school year decide to choose as an elective subject Media Literacy, it is not encouraging neither gives hope that this subject would have an effect on the experience of media content in traditional Montenegrin society. Since it is evident that the media, families and society in general are in crisis, the analysis of the situation is not encouraging, and taking overall condition into account, it seems that education still remains as the best hope that at some point things could change for better.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ According to the official census in 2011, the percentage of those who declare themselves as Montenegrins was almost 45%, Serbs almost 29%, but it should be taken into account that on the referendum in 2006, against Montenegrin independence was almost 45% and is considered that those are the voices generally inclined to pro-Serbian electorate.
- ² One typical example is the last European Women's Handball Championship, available at <http://www.pobjeda.me/2012/12/16/nasi-srbi-ne-vole-srbiju-no-mrze-sebe/#.UndqIt9hJWM> [3 Sep 2013]
- ³ The study was aimed to determine the attitudes of citizens about media freedom in Montenegro.
- ⁴ The study "Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe" with detailed insight into the terms and condition concerning media literacy published by the European Commission in 2007. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-literacy/studies_en.htm. [2 Oct 2013]
- ⁵ The subject is available only in gymnasium, not in other high schools. Statistical data and information presented in this paper were obtained by collecting data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro and the Institute for education.
- ⁶ Recently, the chief editor of *Pobjeda* became a head of the Bureau of Public Relations of the Government, which further increased the claims of the opponents about *Pobjeda* as a medium of the regime.
- ⁷ The idea was to notice the preferences of readers' choice of media by observing them and without their knowledge, because otherwise that would possibly affect the results. That is why the cafes that offer daily press to the visitors were the logical choice for this observation. Only groups of visitors among whom were readers of daily newspapers, were the subject of this research. The assumption is that the visitors primary objective was not to review daily press but to visit the cafe, since the visitors did not spend much time reading. The aim was not to analyze the opinion of the visitors regarding certain media, but only to determine the preferred media source.
- ⁸ During the research, apart from the observation non of the other methods were used such as focus groups or other surveys. The only question that was asked was regarding the place of living. After the group left the cafe, the author approached the members of observed groups asking them the above mentioned question, and explaining them what was the research about.
- ⁹ Information was obtained by surveying visitors when they left the cafes.
- ¹⁰ *Pobjeda*, *Dan*, *Vijesti* and *Dnevne novine*. Currently there are two more newspapers, but their headquarters are in Serbia.
- ¹¹ Very often the Prime Minister Milo Đukanović gives a very negative label to *Vijesti*, and in one of these statements he says: "*Vijesti* su se pretvorile u monstruma [*Vijesti* has just turned into a monster]", available at http://www.pobjeda.me/2012/04/28/dukanovic-vijesti-su-se-pretvorile-u-monstruma/#.UnVF-bvk_srl [28 Aug 2013]
- ¹² If we wish to have the reader who properly understands the context and discourse of certain media in a complex socio-cultural surrounding, the media literacy seems to be a crucial tool.
- ¹³ *Dan* and *Vijesti* are sold at a price of 0.70 €, while *Dnevne novine* costs 0.30€.
- ¹⁴ Ines Sabalić, Štefan Füle: *Pobjeda* is an example of how to violate ethics, available at <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/stefan-file-pobjeda-je-primjer-kako-se-krsi-etika-clanak-134828> [1 Oct 2013]
- ¹⁵ Available at <http://www.pobjeda.me/2013/06/20/file-demantovao-tabloid-vijesti/> [9 Sep 2013]
- ¹⁶ Video available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbWXgBux4f0> [11 Jun 2014]
- ¹⁷ Articles with these titles can be found on the portals of *Pobjeda* and *Vijesti*, and they are published in the first half of September 2013.

- ¹⁸ Media illiterate readers can hardly be able to get a true picture of what is really going on if they are reading only from one source.
- ¹⁹ Available at http://www.pobjeda.me/2013/09/20/dvadeset-dvije-godine-od-proglasenja-crne-gore-prvom-ekoloskom-drzavom-u-svijetu/#.UnVOhvk_srl [1 Oct 2013]
- ²⁰ Available at <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/crna-gora-danas-puni-22-godine-kao-ekoloska-drzava-krah-jedne-ideje-clanak-150418> [1 Oct 2013]
- ²¹ In Kotor - Forza, Mocca and San Giovanni, in Budva – Perla, Garden caffè and Horošo, in Cetinje – Dvor, Gradskakafana and Antib, in Podgorica – Dali, Sport caffè and Astoria, in Plevlja – Caesar, Dream, Sport caffè.
- ²² The author assumes that a portion of the observed visitors however has different habits when they are not in the company of so-called “like-minded”, since the expectations of the group force them to act in a predictable and expected way.
- ²³ One such example is a revolt against the Montenegrin language textbooks and the new spelling, available: <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/kultura.71.html:394976-Crnogorske-knjizare-bez-srpskog> [19 Sep 2013]
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Medijska pismenost i podjele u Crnoj Gori

Nikola Radunović

SAŽETAK

Na kraju prvoga desetljeća XXI stoljeća Crna Gora je, prateći stremljenja razvijeni-
jih društava, u svoj sustav školovanja uključila predmet Medijska pismenost. Ipak,
predmet nije obavezan dio obrazovnog programa već je programski koncipiran kao
izborni za učenike II i III razreda gimnazije. Istovremeno, iako se intenzivno radi
na zadovoljenju uvjeta koji bi omogućili brže pridruživanje Crne Gore Evropskoj
uniji, crnogorsko društvo je i dalje duboko podijeljeno po svim pitanjima – kako
političkim, tako i identitetskim. Medijska slika nažalost, nije izuzetak u tom smi-
slu, pa je potpuno očigledno kojim centrima moći su naklonjeni pojedini mediji.
Istraživanja pokazuju kako građani takvo stanje vrlo dobro prepoznaju. Međutim,
postavlja se pitanje jesu li građani i pored toga što su uglavnom svjesni uloge sva-
kog medija pojedinačno, spremni čuti i drugu stranu ili slijepo vjeruju medijima
koji su naklonjeni njihovoj političkoj opciji. Nedavno istraživanje koje je imalo za
cilj utvrditi ponašanje čitatelja dnevnog tiska u Crnoj Gori, obuhvatilo je građane
u nekoliko gradova iz južne, centralne i sjeverne regije i pokazalo je da je otprilike
svega jedna četvrtina čitatelja voljna informirati se iz dva, uvjetno rečeno različita
izvora. Većinu čitatelja zanimalo su informacije koje je nudila samo „jedna strana“.
Kakva je obrazovna praksa u Crnoj Gori, koliko se podučava medijska pismenost
i u kojoj mjeri ona može pridonijeti jačanju političke kulture i demokracije u cilju
boljeg razumijevanja medijskih sadržaja?

Ključne riječi: medijsko obrazovanje, mentalitet, podijeljeno društvo,
profesionalna etika

