

**MEDIACENTAR
SARAJEVO**

MEDIA USAGE
in the Birač region
and Kalesija

Media usage in the Birač region and Kalesija

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1.

About the research

Birač is a region in Republika Srpska, in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, which includes the municipalities of Bratunac, Milići, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Zvornik, and Šekovići. It is a socio-economically disadvantaged region with high unemployment rates, particularly of young people, a poor business environment, a largely destroyed industrial infrastructure and a lack of entrepreneurial activities and investments. The region is known for its heavy war heritage, mutually exclusive ethno-national memory politics, silence and impunity over war crimes and difficult reconciliation processes.¹ Even though people of non-Serb ethnicity have been returning to their homes since the war ended, particularly to Srebrenica and Zvornik, reconciliation between ethnic groups has not been successful and is marred by divisive local ethno-national politics and a lack of solutions for sustainable return and long-term employment. Most returnees live in separate areas from, and are generally poorer than, the general population.² Particularly vulnerable are young people of all ethnic groups. They live in a deeply polarised and divisive socio-political context, under poor socio-economic conditions and they struggle to find employment. Many are leaving the region for better employment opportunities.

Media content has an important role in the standpoints and values that young people adopt. The media also play a key role in strengthening either social polarization or social cohesion. The media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still marked by persistent entity and ethno-national polarisation and lack of pluralism, which is manifested in the different interpretations of controversial issues and stark differences in the presentation and selection of topics, collocutors and standpoints. The Birač region can be considered one of the regions that, due to its low socio-economic development and difficult war heritage, is particularly sensitive to potentially polarizing and radicalizing media content. The dangers are even greater inasmuch as there are no systemic programs for increasing

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- 1 About divisive memory politics see for example the case study of Potočari Memorial Center. Tepić, Jasmina. (2012).
 - 2 Investments have been aimed at financial aid and the reconstruction of homes of returnees, but as solutions for long term employment have not been found, young people of returnee families are leaving the region. See for example: <https://zvornicki.ba/problemi-povratnika-u-zvorniku-nezaposlenost-otjeruje-bosnjake-iz-ovog-grad/>.

the media literacy of BH citizens, and thus it can be assumed that citizens lack the skills necessary for critical understanding and constructive engagement in communication.³

The media use habits of citizens of the Birač region and Kalesija, particularly of young people, have never been explored, and there is generally a serious lack of insight into the media use habits, preferences and needs of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Existing audience research is fractional, its quality and credibility have been questioned, its results are not widely available and its scope is limited to commercial purposes, thereby not enabling in-depth insights into the reasons for particular audience choices, preferences and needs, which could inform public-interest policies and interventions. Partial data suggest that BH citizens are in general dissatisfied with media content,⁴ but trust in the media in BiH remains relatively high.⁵

With this research we recognize, on the one hand, the dangers associated with polarizing media messages, which are ample in the circumstances of high political clientelism and commercialization, but also, on the other hand, the opportunities for (re)constructing, negotiating and providing pluralistic and alternative narratives on current socio-political and economic issues, the past war and ethno-national relations, which can contribute to reconciliation and democratic developments. Particularly, constructive youth-oriented media content could contribute to the engagement of youth in their local communities and raise their media literacy skills.⁶

This research report provides insights into which media content and which media sources and platforms are used by the citizens (mainly the youth) of the Birač region (Bratunac, Milići, Srebrenica, Vlasenica and Zvornik) and Kalesija, as well as when, how and for which purposes, and whether media content and content available on social platforms corresponds to their communication needs. The report also provides insights into the

3 See for example Ibrahimbegović-Tihak (2014) at https://issuu.com/internewsbih/docs/zbornik-a5_final and Hodžić, Petković, Hrvatinić (2019) at http://www.cimusee.org/media/18447/plusbih_medijska_i_informacijska_pismenost_u_bosni_i_hercegovini_final.pdf.

4 For example, results of research on cultural needs in Banja Luka show that 54.3% of citizens are not satisfied with the programs concerning culture provided by the media in the country. Istraživanje o kulturnim potrebama publike u Banjoj Luci (2018). Available at: <http://www.pm.rs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Istraz%CC%8Civanje-o-kulturnim-potrebama-publike-u-Banjoj-Luci-Finalno-2.pdf>, p. 32.

5 In 2017, 57.3% of respondents in FBiH and 41% in RS reported that they trust the media, in Skoko and Lučka (2017: 19). Available at: <http://bhnovinari.ba/fes/dokumenti/Skoko-Lucka-Povjerenje-u-medije.pdf>.

6 On constructive journalism see for example: Delić (2019) at: <https://analiziraj.ba/2019/06/21/konstruktivno-novinarstvo-problema-ima-a-gdje-su-rjesenja/>

profiles of both the media based in the Birač region and Kalesija, and media seated outside of, but widely used in, the region.

More specifically, the research objectives include:

- Obtaining data on the media use habits of the citizens of the Birač region and Kalesija, in particular among young people
- Obtaining data on the needs and preferences of the citizens of the Birač region and Kalesija with regard to media content
- Providing analysis of the profiles of the dominant media sources and platforms used in the Birač region and Kalesija
- Raising awareness on media use habits and preferences in the Birač region and Kalesija among key stakeholders (media policymakers, media managers, journalists, donors) and the general public.

Note: The activities concerning objective d. are limited to the dissemination of research results.

This research on media habits and preferences in Birač and Kalesija can inform policy makers and give direction to future interventions aimed at media development, improvement of public communication, online safety, countering radicalization and other related areas. The report could serve as a relevant source of information for researchers, media analysts, civil society organizations, media outlets and other actors active and/or interested in communication processes in the Birač region and beyond.

1.1. Methodological framework

The research, conducted in the period May-July 2019, is based on **qualitative research design** and involved the following methods and techniques:

- Secondary, desktop research** and analysis of a) previous research reports concerning media in BiH, media literacy, the youth and (problematic) media content in BiH; b) data published by the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), the Press Council (PC), and watchdog media platforms such as raskrinkavanje.ba, analiziraj.ba and media.ba; d) additional data on media outlets held by CRA, PC, Mediacentar Sarajevo, registries of business entities, and media outlets; e) audience measurement data provided by the agencies IPSOS

and Fabrika; d) Facebook insights data of the 20 most relevant platforms per town in the Birač region and Kalesija, e) information published on the websites of the media outlets. For instance, various sources were used for background information on the media environment and audience behaviour. Facebook Insights and a brief overview of content published on the websites of media outlets were used to map the media sources and platforms based and/or used in the region Birač and Kalesija, while information on media ownership, dominant funding patterns, mission and editorial policy were collected online and through interviews (more below). Special focus was placed on controversies concerning the content of these media, in particular content involving hate speech or ethno-national bias, and content conducive to radicalization and violent extremism. Similarly, the research was focused on patterns of media funding that could entail political and other influences on the media.

- b)** A survey based on **three focus groups** of Birač citizens organized in Srebrenica, Vlasenica and Zvornik, with 42 participants aged between 17 and 35 years. The focus groups involved young citizens of Birač and Kalesija as the population most vulnerable to unwanted influences, and also the most likely to participate in programs aimed at strengthening their resilience towards radical political and religious ideologies and improving positive engagement in their communities. The focus group in Srebrenica (June 8, 2019) was attended by 7 participants from Bratunac and 7 from Srebrenica, the focus group in Vlasenica (June 20, 2019) involved 4 participants from Milići and 10 from Vlasenica, while the focus group in Zvornik (June 22) included 8 participants from Zvornik and 6 from Kalesija.⁷ Demographic diversity of participants was sought primarily with regard to sex (23 male and 19 female participants), age, education level (10 with primary education, 13 with high school education, 19 with a university degree, employment status (11 employed, 16 unemployed, 15 students) and inclusion of rural/urban areas. A number of participants came from rural areas such as Memići Kalesija, Križevići Zvornik, Brdo Kalesija, Hidani Kalesija, Čelopek Zvornik and Tabana Vlasenica. *Detailed information on the composition of the focus groups is provided in Annex 1.*

The recruitment was based on published calls for participants and assistance by local partners. The calls for participation in the focus groups were published on the website and social network accounts of Mediacentar Sarajevo. Local partners contributed to the recruitment process by publishing the call on their websites

7 The focus on the region of Birač and the selection of municipalities that are included in the research were influenced by the specific geographical focus and engagement of IOM. The Municipality of Kalesija was therefore included instead of the Municipality of Šekovići.

and social network accounts and by distributing it to their contacts. Local partners were also engaged with the aim of reaching target profiles through offline recruitment (face-to-face and telephone). The recruitment relied on snowball recruitment techniques.⁸ The focus groups enabled the identification of patterns of media use and in-depth insights into preferences and needs, as well as the reasons behind particular patterns of media usage among participants.

- c) **Twenty-one in-depth interviews** with media representatives, journalists and editors from the Birač region and Kalesija, representatives of the civil sector and persons working with young people, persons from the press offices of the local municipalities, academics and media experts. The respondents provided additional insights and analysis of the media consumption habits of young people, the possible influences of problematic media content, as well as the need and ways to provide more constructive media messages for young people. Additional information was obtained through telephone and email correspondence, including the local news portals Birač danas, Za Srebrenicu and Neon TV and the Press Council of BiH. *A list of the interviewees is provided in Annex 2.*

8 Snowball or network-referral recruitment starts with acquaintances, who then refer to their acquaintances and widen the group from which the participants are selected.

2. Mapping of the media and social platforms in the Birač region and Kalesija

It is widely reported that the majority of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina show numerous negative trends, including political clientelism,⁹ entity and ethnic polarization, commercialization and/or lack of resources, a growing presence of foreign powers in the media market,¹⁰ etc. Consequently, the level of pluralism and quality of media reporting are low¹¹ and the media are likely to be contributing to socio-political problems instead of acting in the public interest. The potential dangers of such politicized and biased media reporting were exemplified in the war propaganda prior to and during the Yugoslav wars,¹² as well as in the numerous post-war political crises, such as those related to the mass citizen protests that took place in BiH in 2014. Online platforms are also a very powerful tool for the dissemination of radical and extremist ideas, due to easy access and lack of (self)regulation. On the other hand, there are also examples of media both inside and outside BiH which contribute to both pluralism and social cohesion.¹³ Online platforms in particular have proven to be pivotal for relevant citizen initiatives, including cross-entity and cross-ethnic mobilisation.¹⁴

In the next sections we analyse the profiles of both mainstream media and various websites and Facebook pages from the Birač region and Kalesija. Based on interviews

9 See for example this article on media bias in the coverage of the protests concerning the death of David Dragičević. Available at: <https://www.rtvbn.com/3922189/rtrs-promocija-na-mrtvom-sinu>.

10 See for example Vučićević (2016). Available at: <http://mediaobservatory.net/radar/growing-influence-global-media-region>.

11 See Hodžić and Sokol (2018), MSI Irex. Available at: <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2018-bosnia.pdf>.

12 For more on national ideologies in the media in the region, see for example in Džihana and Volčić (2011), available at: https://pescanik.net/wp-content/PDF/MEDIA_AND_NATIONAL_IDEOLOGIES_-_za_web.pdf.

13 For more, see for example in Hodžić and Pajnik (2016). Available at: http://www.media.ba/sites/default/files/komuniciranje_gradjanskih_protesta_i_javne_odgovornosti_u_bih_studija_slucaja.pdf.

14 See Cvjetičanin (2016). Available at: http://www.media.ba/sites/default/files/komuniciranje_gradjanskih_protesta_i_javne_odgovornosti_u_bih_studija_slucaja.pdf.

with media representatives, we identify and analyse possible positive and negative influences on communication and democratization in the region. We also provide data about the media and Facebook pages that have the highest reach in the region.

2.1. Media seated in Birač and Kalesija

Local media are very important for local democracies and can inform the local public about political decisions and problems that their communities face. They should also be a place where people can express their concerns and problems and access information of local importance that is not available in the larger media. Their mission is even more important in communities that face a difficult war heritage, ethno-national divisions and socio-economic drawbacks.¹⁵

The Birač region and Kalesija are relatively disadvantaged in terms of mainstream communication platforms, with only a handful of media based in the region. These media are mainly privately owned and unevenly distributed, as some of the municipalities, such as Šekovići, lack a media outlet. Besides broadcasting music and some entertainment programs, the mission self-articulated by these media outlets is mainly to provide local news and information on political, cultural and sports events.

Radio and television stations. There are six radio stations and one television station seated in the Birač region and Kalesija.

15 On local public media in BiH see: Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://www.media.ba/sites/default/files/javni_lokalni_mediji_izmedu_javnog_interesa_i_finansijske_ovisnosti_final_za_stampu.pdf

Table 1. Broadcasters in Birač and Kalesija

Town	Broadcaster	Type of ownership
Zvornik	Radio Osvit	Private
Milići	Radio Magic, Radio Birač	Private Private
Srebrenica	(Radio) RTV Srebrenica, ¹⁶ (Radio) UPS Media	Public Community radio (NGO ownership)
Kalesija	Radio Feral; (Television) Neon TV ¹⁷	Private Private

Their frequencies mostly cover parts or all of the Birač region and some also cover the surrounding areas.¹⁸ They mainly provide entertainment programs, broadcast local and global news and also invite quests from the region into their studios. Their sources of revenue vary from advertising to donor support. In addition, the majority of broadcasters seated in the region receive some financial support from, or have commercial contracts with, local governments (see tables below).

All of the broadcasters, except Radio Birač, have webpages, where they mainly publish local news. Information on their ownership and financing, even though of public interest, is not proactively published either by the media or by local governments. For the purpose of this research, these data were obtained from the Regulatory Agency of Communication and through interviews and email correspondence with editors and journalists of the local media. Most media outlets also do not have an impressum on their webpages. The tables below provide basic information on the local broadcasters in the Birač region and Kalesija, including information on funding, ownership patterns and editorial policies.

16 The five-hour program of RTV Srebrenica is broadcast through Radio Glas Drine, located in Sapna, Tuzla Canton (Interview Marinko Sekulić, editor-in-chief, RTV Srebrenica). UPS Media, which was set up as community radio, uses the frequency of the radio of the Republika Srpska's public service broadcaster, RTRS. (Interview with Dragana Jovanović, director and editor-in-chief, Association Friends of Srebrenica). These two broadcasters thus do not have their own broadcasting licences.

17 Neon TV is part of the internet provider Neon Solucije. See: <http://www.ntv.ba/info/>

18 Radio Magic's signals, for example, reach almost the entire Birač region, while Radio Feral covers Tuzla, Živinica, Kalesija, Banovići, Lukavac, Gračanica, Osmaci and Zvornik, and Radio Osvit Zvornik covers parts of the Birač region as well as municipalities in Serbia that are close to the border, such as Mali Zvornik and Loznica. Information was obtained through interviews.

Tables 2: Basic information on the local broadcasters in the Birač region and Kalesija**Radio Osvit, Zvornik****Website and Facebook page**

Website: <https://www.radioosvit.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/osvitradio.zvornik/>

Ownership data and other background info

Private

Owners: Zorana Petković (50%) and Pajo Petković (50%)

Director and editor-in-chief: Zorana Petković

Funding

Marketing revenues, grants obtained through projects funded by foreign donors,¹⁹ contracts with the administration of the Town of Zvornik²⁰ and some donor supported projects designed for young people.²¹

Mission and additional info

To provide local news and informative, educational and documentary programs and entertainment. Besides broadcasting news and music, programs include, for example, *Pesnički Kutak* (Poets Corner), *Ginsovi rekordi* (Guinness Records), *Horoskop* (Horoscope), *Na današnji dan* (On this Day).

Their target audience is mainly the over 40 population.

They cover parts of the Birač region, including Šekovići, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Zvornik and also nearby municipalities in Serbia, such as Mali Zvornik and Loznica.²²

They also publish reportages made by young people, *Mladi sa stavom* (Youth with Attitude) together with Radio Feral, funded by IOM.

Number of FB followers: 4,764

19 Interview with Zorana Petković, editor-in-chief, Radio Osvit.

20 Interview with Gospava Jeremić, advisor to the mayor, the Town of Zvornik.

21 Interview with Zorana Petković.

22 Ibid.

Radio Birač, Milići

Website and Facebook page

Does not have its own web page, but some information can be obtained from the Boksit company's website. https://www.ad-boksit.com/o_nama#informisanje

Ownership data and other background info

Private

Owners: individual stakeholders of the Boksit company²³

Director: Gordana Zarić, editor-in-chief: Jelena Pantić

The director of Boksit is known for affiliations with the leading party, SNSD, and labour-related controversies²⁴

Funding

Presumably through marketing and Boksit.

Mission and additional info

Media outlet of the Boksit company. It has a studio in Milići and one in Han Pijesak and its radio frequency reaches 13 municipalities in the Federation and RS.²⁵ According to one interviewee, it produces too much content about the Boksit company.²⁶

23 Central Securities Depository as of 31.12.2013

24 The director of Boksit, Rajko Dukić, is involved in a series of controversies including accusations of assaults on his workers, mobbing, and involvement in war crimes. He is also connected with and has support from Milorad Dodik.

25 See http://ad-boksit.com/o_nama#informisanje

26 Interview with Filip Mičić, president of the Youth Center in Milići. See for example, the interview with Dukić for the Birač region. <http://ad-boksit.com/novosti/1378-12-06-2019-intervju-predsjednika-kompanije-boksit-mr-rajka-dukica-za-radio-birac>. About Rajko Dukić see: <http://imovinapoliticara.cin.ba/profil.php?profil=193>.

Radio Magic, Milići**Website and Facebook page**

Website: <http://www.magic.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://sr-rs.facebook.com/radiomagicmilici/>

Ownership data and other background info

Owner: Rada Bačić – 100%

Director: Aleksandar Bačić, editor-in-chief: Dalibor Bačić

Funding

95% of income from marketing revenues, the remaining 5% through contracts with municipalities, currently with the municipality of Vlasenica.²⁷

Mission and editorial policy

To broadcast local information and themes, folk and other music and provide marketing services. They cover the whole area of Birač. They do not have a defined target audience but their content is mostly for citizens between 35 and 45 years.²⁸

Number of FB followers: 3,370

27 Interview with Dalibor Bačić, editor-in-chief, Radio Magic.

28 Ibid.

Radio Feral, Kalesija

Website and Facebook page

Website: <http://radioferal.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/radio.feral>

Ownership data and other background info

Private Owner: Halilović Fuad – 100%

Director and editor-in-chief: Fuad Halilović

Funding

Marketing revenues, contracts with the municipalities of Kalesija and Živinice and grants obtained through projects with foreign donors.

Mission and editorial policy

To broadcast local news from Kalesija, Zvornik, Osmaci, Živinice, Tuzla. Their radio frequencies cover the area of Zvornik, Osmaci, Živinice, Tuzla, Kalesija, Lukavac, Banovići, Gračanica. They have informative and entertainment programs, for example, *Gost sedmično* (Guest of the Week), an *Bezvazdušni proctor* (Airless Space).²⁹ They also publish reportages made by young people, *Mladi sa stavom* (Youth with Attitude) together with Radio Osvit, funded by IOM.³⁰

Number of FB followers: 3,425

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ About the project see: <https://radio-feral.ba/snaga-mladosti/mladi-sa-stavom>

RTV Srebrenica (Radio), Srebrenica

Website and Facebook page

Website: <https://rtvsrebrenica.org/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/rtvsrebrenica/>.

Ownership data and other background info

Public; broadcast through Radio Glas Drine, every day from 9:00 to 14:00.

Radio Glas Drine Director: Mediha Smajić

Editor-in-chief: Marinko Sekulić

Funding

Yearly subsidies from the municipality of Srebrenica and some advertising revenues. In 2019 the government subsidy amounted to 146,000 BAM and in 2018 to 120,000 BAM.³¹

Mission and editorial policy

As a government funded and owned radio, their mission is to broadcast local news and information for the local population. They produce both informative and entertainment content.³² They are affiliated with the political parties in the municipality, currently with SDA.³³

Number of FB followers: 4,232

31 Interview with Vladimir Kojić, Municipality of Srebrenica.

32 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

33 Ibid.

Neon TV, Kalesija

Website and Facebook page

Website: <http://www.ntv.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/neontelevizija>

Ownership data and other background info

Private owners: Jasmin Ćurtović, Senad Fazlić, Emir Mujanović and Nermin Sinanović (shares N/A³⁴)

Part of Neon Solucije, internet provider for the Municipality of Kalesija

Director: Jasmin Ćurtović; editor-in-chief: Ramo Abidović

Funding

Marketing revenues and contracts with the Municipality of Kalesija. Information on the amount of revenues were not revealed to the researcher.³⁵

Mission and editorial policy

Daily reporting on activities and news from the Municipality of Kalesija, Živinice and the Podrinje Region. Besides informative programs such as news and *Sedmična hronika* (Weekly Chronicles), they broadcast educative and entertainment programs such as *Super žena* (Super Woman) and the sports program *Time Out*. Their target audience is people over 30 years old.³⁶ Through terrestrial broadcasting they cover Osmaci, Živinice and Kalesija.³⁷

Number of followers: 11,095

34 N/A is used across the report as an abbreviation for “not available”.

35 Telephone interview, Aldina Ćurtović, journalist and editor, Neon TV.

36 Ibid.

37 See <http://www.neon.ba/televizija/>.

UPS Media, Srebrenica

Website and Facebook page

Website <https://www.upsmedia.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/upsmedia/>

Ownership data and other background info

Publisher is the Association Prijatelji Srebrenice (Friends of Srebrenica)

Status is of RTRS affiliate; they use the RS radio frequency for several hours.

President of the association and editor-in-chief: Dragana Jovanović

Funding

Marketing revenues, correspondence and radio and video production services for different media, including Voice of America, BHT, FTV, RTRS, ATV, TV1, Al Jazeera and N1. This year they received a grant from the municipality of Srebrenica in the amount of 6000 BAM.³⁸

Mission and editorial policy

Designed with the intention to become a community radio station from the Municipality of Bratunac. They were offered the free radio frequency of RTRS, since the local Bratunac radio station closed down. They have two studios, one in Bratunac and one in Srebrenica. They produce informative, educational and entertainment content, with a focus on youth.³⁹

Number of FB followers: 12,159

Online news media. We identified 13 online news media in the Birač region and Kalesija. This number may not be comprehensive, as there is no official register of online media and professional online news media are not easily distinguishable from blogs, unedited content and other webpages. The Press Council of BiH provides a list of online media in BiH with some basic information, but the list includes only one (eSrebrenica.ba) out of 13 news websites from the region of Birač and Kalesija that we identified. Similarly, the majority of the identified online media do not actively publish information on their ownership and financing patterns and the information we gathered was taken from the internal data bases of Mediacentar, online search and interviews with media representatives from the region.⁴⁰

38 Interview with Dragana Jovanović.

39 Ibid.

40 About anonymous websites, i.e. websites that do not provide information about the responsible persons or contact info, see for example: Zulejhić (2019). Available at: <https://media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/portal-kao-brza-zarada>.

Table 3. *Online media in Birač and Kalesija*

Town	Online outlet	Ownership
Srebrenica	eSrebrenica	Private
	Za Srebrenicu	Private
	Srebrenički portal	N/A
Bratunac	Despotovina.info	Owned by the association Despotovina
Zvornik	Zvornik Danas	Owned by the association Multimedial Youth Center
	Zvornik.ba	Private
	Zvornik.info	N/A
	InfoBirač	Private
Kalesija	Kalesijske novine	Private
	Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal	Private
	Infoplus.ba	Private
Vlasenica	Vlasenica24.info	Public (founded by the Municipality of Vlasenica)
	Birač Danas	Private

Like many online platforms across the country, some online media outlets in the region lack transparency. Some do not publish information on responsible persons, such as Srebrenički portal, Kalesijske novine and Despotovina.info, while some publish only contact information, such as Zvornik Danas, or have information on the editors and mission published only on their Facebook pages, such as Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal. The interviewees thus do not consider many of these platforms as professional media outlets.⁴¹ Most of them publish local news, various sports content and entertainment. Only a minority of these platforms include clearly problematic content, but the majority show some ethno-national selectiveness in terms of the topics and events they cover (see more in the tables below).

41 Interview with Emir Zulejhić, editor-in-chief, Raskrinkavanje.

Table 4. Basic information on the online media in Birač and Kalesija

eSrebrenica, Srebrenica
Website and Facebook page
Website: https://www.esrebrenica.ba/ Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/srebrenica/
Ownership data and other background info
Founded as part of an association with the support of the Council of Europe BiH in 2013. In 2018 the association was closed due to lack of grants. Now it is privately owned. Owners: Anes Begić, Nihad Kadić, Mladen Kojić ⁴² Editor: Mladen Kojić
Funding
Marketing and previously donor support. Last year they received small amounts from the Municipality of Srebrenica.
Mission and editorial policy
To promote positive stories and publish local news on sports, tourism, the economy, youth and entertainment, also using video and photography. ⁴³ They support the No Hate Speech Movement of the Council of Europe.
Number of FB followers: 17,000 people

42 Interview with Mladen Kojić, editor-in-chief, eSrebrenica.

43 Ibid.

Za Srebrenicu, Srebrenica

Website and Facebook page

Website: <https://www.zasrebrenicu.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/vrijemejezasrebrenicu/>

Ownership data and other background info

Owner: Mehmedalija Bešić

Editor-in-chief: Mehmedalija Bešić;

Journalists: Mirnes Đozić (Sarajevo) and Amar Halilović (Helsingborg)

Funding

N/A

Mission and editorial policy

According to the owner, the aim of the website was to create a base for all people from Srebrenica for the election campaign. Later it was redesigned as a news portal with the aim of providing the truth about the genocide in Srebrenica and publishing the stories of those who survived.⁴⁴ It is a Bosniak led webpage and publishes news about Srebrenica, predominantly in opposition to Serb politicians and Republika Srpska. It also has sections called Islamic Topics⁴⁵, Heroes of the Army of BiH and Diaspora.

Number of FB followers: 26,422

44 Email correspondence, Mehmedalija Bešić, editor-in-chief of Za Srebrenicu.

45 See <https://www.zasrebrenicu.ba/kategorija/novosti/islamske-teme> <https://www.zasrebrenicu.ba/kategorija/novosti/heroji-armije-bih>

Srebrenički portal, Srebrenica**Website and Facebook page**

Website: www.srebrenica.ba

Ownership data and other background info

N/A

Funding

N/A

Mission and editorial policy

The page lacks an impressum and contacts. Its last news piece was published in February. It is focused on news about, for example, the anniversary of Muslim brigades and the SDA party and its officials.⁴⁶

46 See for example: <https://www.srebrenica.ba/index.php/vijesti/324-u-kladnju-obiljezana-26-godisnjica-formiranja-prve-muslimanske-podrinjske-brdske-brigade>, and <https://www.srebrenica.ba/index.php/vijesti/318-bakir-izetbegovic-budemo-li-primorani-povlacic-cemo-poteze-kakve-do-sadanikad-nismo>

Despotovina.info, Bratunac

Website and Facebook page

Website: Despotovina.info

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/%D0%94%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0-205047956606029/>

Ownership data and other background info

Association Despotovina⁴⁷

Led by the local priest Aleksandar Mlađenović.⁴⁸

Funding

Financed by the Church and the Government of Serbia. In 2019, they received a grant of 1500 BAM from the Municipality of Srebrenica.⁴⁹

Mission and editorial policy

Appears to be a news portal, but the frequency of publishing is low, and the information one-sided. They publish content about local events, humanitarian actions, but also about Serb war heroes and Serb victims. The section “about us” indicates its ethno-nationalistic background (mentioning love towards “our people”, the common cultural space that connects the Serb land on both sides of the Drina river). Interviewees mentioned that it is a problematic site and that it has raised tensions among the people in Srebrenica.⁵⁰ On June 30 2019, on their webpage, they announced that they were ceasing their work.

Number of FB followers: 12,233

47 The title of the website is reminiscent of the medieval Serbian state Srpska despotovina, which is also suggestive of the ideological background of the outlet.

48 See the article published by Slobodna Bosna: https://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/102454/tenzije_u_srebrenici_zbog_incidenta_na_badnje_vece_ovo_je_svestenik_iz_srebrenice_koji_je_predvodio_kolonu_i_s_posebnim_zanosom_pjevao_chetnichke_pjesme.html

49 Interviews with Marinko Sekulić, Valentina Gagić, member of the Sara Association, and Vladimir Kojić. See also: <https://www.radiosarajevo.ba/vijesti/bosna-i-hercegovina/portal-podrzan-od-vlade-srbije-cestitao-badnje-vece-uz-rijeci-zlocinca-mladica/323651>

50 Interview with Valentina Gagić.

Vlasenica 24.info, Vlasenica

Website and Facebook page

Website: <https://vlasenica24.info/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/vlasenica24/>

Ownership data and other background info

Public, the founder is the Public Institution Vlasenica Cultural Center

Editor-in-chief: Ozrenko Draškić

Funding

Yearly grants from the municipality and advertising

Mission and editorial policy

Local news media focused on providing information from the Municipality of Vlasenica. It was established due to the lack of a media outlet in Vlasenica.⁵¹ They follow and report on the activities of the local assembly and also on positive stories from the municipality and beyond.

Number of FB followers: 3,284

Zvornički.ba, Zvornik

Website and Facebook page

Website: <http://zvornicki.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Zvornicki.ba/>

Ownership data and other background info

Private, the publisher is Z Media Zvornik

Director and editor-in-chief: Ilijaz Miralemović

Funding

Advertising, Google Ads and grants from the Town of Zvornik.

Mission and editorial policy

Focused on news from Zvornik, including politics, culture, sports, and the surrounding area. A lot of followers come from the diaspora, presumably of Bosniak descent. The most read sections are about crime and car accidents (*crna hronika*), and also about successful people and stories from Zvornik.⁵²

Number of FB followers: 9,452

51 Interview with Tanja Rikanović, journalist, Vlasenica24.info.

52 Interview with Ilijaz Miralemović, editor-in-chief, Zvornički.ba.

Zvornik Danas, Zvornik

Website and Facebook page

Website: <https://www.zvornikdanas.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/zvorniktoday/>

Ownership data and other background info

Founded by the Association Multimedial Youth Center

Editor-in-chief: Igor Golubović

Funding

Marketing and grants from the Town of Zvornik

Mission and editorial policy

To inform the public about the news from Zvornik with a focus on informative, entertainment and educational content. The most read content is about crime and car accidents (crna hronika), and also local information. 30% of the readers are from outside the country.⁵³

Number of FB followers: 19,638

Zvornik info, Zvornik

Website and Facebook page

Website: <http://www.infozvornik.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/infozvornik/posts/10153895760112554>

Ownership data and other background info

N/A, but the address is the same as that of the marketing agency VIP marketing

Has not been active for over a year. News items on the front page are from 2016.

Editor: Tanja Prodanović

Funding

N/A

Mission and editorial policy

Focused on news from Zvornik and the Birač region. Titles such as: “Bosniaks not willing to work in companies from Srpska”, include over generalisations and indicate possible ethno-national bias. The editor confirmed that the online news portal is no longer active.

Number of FB followers: 3,304

53 Interview with Igor Golubović, editor-in-chief, Zvornik Danas.

Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal, Kalesija

Website and Facebook page

Webpage: <https://www.nkp.ba/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kalesijski>

Ownership data and other background info

Director, owner and editor-in-chief: Admir Karić

Funding

Marketing

Mission and editorial policy

Focus on news from Kalesija, including daily events. Led by one person who is very critical of the local government.⁵⁴ Has some critical pieces, for example, on corruption in employment in public institutions,⁵⁵ and on discrimination against migrants⁵⁶ but based on non-transparent sources and posts obtained from, for example, Twitter.

Number of FB followers: 43,007

Kalesijske novine, Kalesija

Website and Facebook page

Webpage: <https://kalesijske-novine.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kalesijainfo>

Ownership data and other background info

Director, owner, editor-in-chief: Fahrudin Sinanović

Funding

Marketing

Mission and editorial policy

Focused on news from Kalesija and the region. Led by one person, Fahrudin Sinanović, currently the director of the Bosnian cultural center Alija Izetbegović in Kalesija. Former Avaz journalist.⁵⁷ Also has a section on religion.

Number of FB followers: 2,786

54 Interview with Admir Karić, editor-in-chief, Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal.

55 See, for example, <https://www.nkp.ba/veliko-interesovanje-za-radno-mjesto-u-czsr-kalesija-prijavilo-se-vise-kandidata-ali-se-vec-odavno-zna-ciji-je-to-izborni-plijen/>

56 See: <https://www.nkp.ba/foto-aparthejd-u-autobusu-na-relaciji-tuzla-sarajevo-bijeli-ljudi-sjedaju-naprijed-ostali-nazad/>

57 Interview with Fahrudin Sinanović, editor-in-chief of Kalesijske novine.

Infoplus.ba, Kalesija

Website and Facebook page

Webpage: <http://infoplus.ba/>

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/infoplusagencija/?epa=SEARCH_BOX

Ownership data and other background info

Director, owner, editor-in-chief: Ramo Abidović

Funding

Marketing

Mission and editorial policy

Focused on news from Kalesija and the Tuzla Canton. Articles about the activities of the mayor and promotion of his results, which implies political affiliation to SDA.

Number of FB followers: 10,068

Birač danas, Vlasenica

Website and Facebook page

Website: <https://novitetinovosti.blogspot.com/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BIRA%C4%8C-DANAS-208391136576491/>

Ownership data and other background info

Owner and editor: Marko Đurić

Funding

AD SENSE ads,⁵⁸ which managed to obtain 600 BAM in two years.⁵⁹

Mission and editorial policy

Content is focused on the region, and according to the editor, its mission is to provide information on important topics and events from the sphere of politics and the economy and promote the Birač region. However it clearly has nationalistic content and is oriented towards the Serb ethno-national community. Some content celebrates Serb heroism, for example statements from the convicted Serb general, Vladimir Lazarević.⁶⁰

Number of FB followers: 8,207

58 AdSense, a program that allows website owners to make money by displaying Google ads.

59 Email correspondence, Marko Đurić, editor-in-chief, Birač danas.

60 See: <https://novitetinovosti.blogspot.com/>

Info Birač, Zvornik

Website and Facebook page

Website: <http://infobirac.net/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/infobirac2018/>

Ownership data and other background info

Ownership: N/A

Editor-in-chief: Zoran Kuljić

Funding

Contains online ads, including those of the Alumina company and local hotels. Receives support from the administration of the Town of Zvornik.

Mission and editorial policy

Provides news from Zvornik, the Birač region, focusing mostly on Republika Srpska and Serbia. Also contains interviews with successful sportsmen, the mayor of Zvornik, etc. The online news has content about Serb victims but lacks news, for example, on the commemoration of the genocide in Srebrenica.⁶¹

Number of FB followers: 2,549

2.1.1. Political influences through financing patterns

The main issue that the local media in the Birač region and Kalesija face is lack of revenues. Most depend on revenues from marketing services, usually by placing ads of local firms, but these are not sufficient to cover the expenses of field work and professional investigative reporting.

Some media, such as RTV Srebrenica and Vlasenica24.info, were founded by, and are funded by, the municipalities, receiving yearly subsidies. For example, this year the subsidy for RTV Srebrenica amounted to 146,000 BAM, and last year to 120,000 BAM. The local public broadcasters in BiH are generally considered to be closely affiliated with the ruling political parties, which decide on their funding and on the appointments of the managerial staff.⁶² The editor-in-chief of RTV Srebrenica notes that in terms of appointments of its managerial staff this radio station “belongs to SDA”, and that this

61 See; <http://infobirac.net/2019/07/27/sluzen-parastos-djeca%d0%bau-slobodanu-stojanovicu/>, <http://infobirac.net/2019/07/06/bratunac-obiljezavanje-27-godina-od-stradanja-srba-u-podrinju-zlocin-za-koji-niko-nije-odgovarao/>

62 See Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: <https://www.media.ba/bs/vijesti-i-dogadaji-vijesti/javni-lokalni-mediji-izmedu-javnog-interesa-i-finansijske-ovisnosti>

affiliation translates into the director's aspiration for this media to cover "the whereabouts of the President of the Assembly and the Deputy Mayor,"⁶³ but that there are no other influences or political pressures on the outlet. Government-funded Vlasenica24.info also covers the meetings of the assembly of the municipality of Vlasenica, posting the recordings on their YouTube channel, for which a representative of the media outlet notes, "People love to watch it and it is all public and transparent and I think it is good."⁶⁴

Municipalities in the region also have commercial contracts with and/or give donations to private media to report on their activities. This year, for example, the Town of Zvornik has allocated around 90,000 BAM, through public procurement procedures, to media reporting on the activities of the mayor and public administration. They have contracts with three television stations (ATV Banja Luka, BN (Bijeljina), and TV Podrinje from Serbia) and one local radio station (Radio Osvit). Aside from these contracts, they also provide financial support to the local online news media Info.birač, Zvornik Danas and Zvornički.ba to report on certain local projects and topics, such as on the empowerment of women in rural areas and health. The interviewed representatives of the municipality said that they have good collaboration with the media and their officials are always available to give statements.⁶⁵

The Municipality of Kalesija allocated 34,000 BAM through procurement procedures last year to the electronic media to report on the work of the local assembly, the mayor and their activities, with the request that the mayor or a person designated by him be invited as a guest on radio and television programs.⁶⁶ Based on this call for the public procurement of media services, the radio station was to broadcast "Viječničke hronike" (Councilor Chronicles) after every session of the local assembly, and the TV station was obligated to prepare a one-hour report on the completed projects of the municipality. For the editor-in-chief of Radio Feral these contracts are necessary for assuring minimum salaries. His radio station also has contracts with the Municipality of Živinice and reports on the meetings of the mayor.⁶⁷ Similarly, Radio Magic has a contract with the nearby Municipality of Vlasenica and invites an official from public institutions of Vlasenica to their station twice a month to answer listeners' questions. "I really believe that this is the best way to keep citizens well informed", the editor-in-chief of Radio Magic said. Likewise,

63 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

64 Interview Tanja Rikanović, journalist, Vlasenica24.info.

65 Interview, Danica Pelemić Subotić and Gospava Jeremić, advisors to the mayor, Zvornik.

66 Grbešić (2018). Available at: <https://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/kalesija-medijsko-izjestavanje-kako-odredi-nacelnik>

67 Interview with Fuad Halilović.

eSrebrenica received 500 BAM for two years in a row to report on the sports and cultural event *Dani Srebrenice*.⁶⁸

Interviewed media representatives generally confirm the absence of open political pressures on their media outlets, despite the funding provided by the local governments.⁶⁹ A journalist of Vlasencia24.info, for example, notes that despite being funded by the Municipality of Vlasenica, this outlet does not focus on the ruling political party in Vlasenica, SNSD, but rather on general local information, including positive stories. Similarly, a journalist of the private station Neon TV from Kalesija said that the contracts between media and the government do not necessarily entail political affiliations. She moreover noted that Neon TV is not interested in politics but publishes positive stories from the local communities. While political influences are not necessarily direct or asserted through direct pressures, previous research studies have shown that various kinds of government funding for media can generally be used for political meddling in editorial policies.⁷⁰ Given that the media are in need of this funding and that there are no safeguards against the politicization of government funding, these media outlets can simply allow their platforms to be used for the promotion of political officials, and can also be discouraged from any critical reporting on the activities of local governments in order to assure similar funding in the future. Government funding for the coverage of the activities of local governments may also imply that media outlets would otherwise not report on these activities, even though the role of the media, in particular the public media, should be to provide such information to the public. Public funding can also easily end with a change in the composition of the local government. After a change in the local government in Milići, for example, Radio Magic stopped receiving funding from this municipality.

In addition, some of the decisions on the allocation of government funding are questionable. In 2019, the Municipality of Srebrenica, for example, published a call for non-governmental organizations, through which they gave grants to associations that run media outlets, such as Prijatelji Srebrenica (UPS Media) and the association Despotovina (the website Despotovina). The decision of the Municipality to provide financial support to Despotovina can be criticised based on the fact that this association and its platform Despotovina have a reputation for producing problematic content and for stirring ethno-national tensions. In protest, the Association Sara from Srebrenica refused the grant that

68 Interview with Mladen Kojić.

69 Dalibor Bačić mentioned that political pressures were present in the 1990s.

70 See for example: Hodžić and Sokol (2017). Available at: <https://media.ba/bs/publication/oglasavanje-i-drugi-komercijalni-odnosi-izmedu-javnog-sektora-i-medija-smjernice-za>.

they had received through the same call. The overall rationale and aim of government funding in BiH is in general poorly articulated, and its effects and contribution to media quality and pluralism remain unmonitored.⁷¹

Furthermore, information on public funding is not proactively published and is difficult to obtain. From the yearly budgets of local governments it is not possible to see information on to whom the money is being allocated, while direct contracts are often used in public procurement procedures that do not require open calls.⁷² For instance, interviewees noted that in the previous year the Municipality of Srebrenica provided grants in the amount of 10,000 BAM to media outlets without publishing any information about them.⁷³ In addition, local municipalities lack credible criteria when allocating funds to the media, such as, for example, adherence to professional media reporting.⁷⁴

Some outlets, however, are managing to preserve their reputation of independence while receiving government funding. The only community media in the region, UPS Media, also obtained a grant from the Municipality of Srebrenica in the amount of 6000 BAM.⁷⁵ This media outlet produces informative, educational and entertainment content and has two youth studios, in Bratunac and in Srebrenica. It also obtains revenues through marketing and by providing correspondence and radio and video production services to various media, including Voice of America, BHT, FTV, RTRS, ATV, TV1, Al Jazeera and N1. Given that UPS Media is not registered as a community media broadcaster, it is not subject to the rule 76/2015 of the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), which stipulates that community media cannot have paid commercials.⁷⁶

Finally, some interviewed media representatives said that they are not exposed to direct pressures from local governments, but rather to indirect financial pressures through certain firms and clients who avoid placing their ads in specific media outlets.⁷⁷ Some interviewees confirmed that the independence of the media in the Birač region is limited

71 See Hodžić and Sokol 2018.

72 Ibid.

73 Interview with Mladen Kojić.

74 Radio Sarajevo wrote about connections between the Mayor of Srebrenica and the local priest.

75 Interview with Dragana Jovanović.

76 Non-profit media or community media that are non-profit, are focused on a community or a group, and many function on a volunteer basis. Today they have an important role in media sectors in Europe. In BiH there are only three registered non-profit radio stations (Mreža Mira, Radio Marija and Radio Active Zenica).

77 Interview with Ilijaz Muretović; Interview with Fuad Halilović.

in general,⁷⁸ and that all media operate under some kind of political background and will not write critically about those who are financing them.⁷⁹

Other sources of funding for media in Birač and Kalesija are scarce. The lack of opportunities for funding limits the quality and depth of their reporting. Some respondents also noted that none of the media publish their advertising prices and that they lower them in order to gain more ads, which negatively affects the whole media sector in the region.⁸⁰ The marketing revenues they receive from Google Ads are also relatively small, and one media representative mentioned that his online platform only managed to gain 600 BAM from them in two years.⁸¹ Others also lamented the fact that foreign donor support to the media (such as by OSCE and USAID) is not as substantial as before. The editor-in-chief of Radio Feral also noted that support from the US Embassy, for example, in effect provided some media protection against local politicians.⁸² The editor-in-chief of Radio Osvit criticized foreign donors for demanding that the media promote the engagement of NGOs, without allocating funds to the media for that purpose.⁸³

2.1.2. Divisive ethno-national media content and lack of investigative reporting

The media in the Birač region, much like the media in other parts of BiH, lack quality content, investigative stories and constructive media reports. Many are understaffed and do not have adequate equipment. For example, journalists from Vlasenica24.info work in rooms without heating in the building of the Cultural Center of Vlasenica and have only one computer and one camera, with which they also produce videos for their YouTube channel.⁸⁴ In particular, there is a lack of specialized journalists covering specific fields, such as the economy and agriculture. Some online news media are managed by only one person, such as Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal, Kalesijske novine and Zvornički danas.

This is the main reason why the production of content of the media outlets is of rather limited scope and quality. Besides broadcasting music and some entertainment and educative programs, local broadcasters mainly provide local news and information

78 Interview with Dragana Jovanović.

79 Interview with Igor Golubović.

80 Ibid.

81 Email correspondence with Marko Đurić.

82 Interview with Fuad Halilović.

83 Interview with Zorana Petković.

84 Interview, Tanja Rikanović, journalist, Vlasenica24.info.

(*servisne informacije*) from municipalities, hospitals, the police and public utilities companies, including information on crime, car accidents, the number of new-born babies, traffic jams, power cuts and weather conditions. They also broadcast regional and global news and many broadcast the morning program of Radio Slobodna Evropa, titled Radio 27.⁸⁵ Some have programs with various guests, including politicians and successful people from the region. Similarly, online news media provide local news and information, positive stories from the region and announcements of cultural and sports events.

Overall, due to the fact that the media in the Birač region do not generally engage in investigative reporting and reporting that is critical of local power holders, there are no heavy political pressures. The editor-in-chief of Radio Magic described the content of local broadcasters as moderate and stated that the content of online news media is more problematic. The editor-in-chief of Zvornički.ba pointed out that investigative reporting is not viable, given that it does not attract the public and only discourages firms from advertising.⁸⁶

None of the local media outlets, for example, have investigated the issues of the court proceedings against Alumina Ltd⁸⁷ and claims held by the Lithuanian Ukio Bank and the public company Pavgord from Foča.⁸⁸ They published Alumina press statements against the media that reported on the case, while online news media from Zvornik published articles about the positive business results of Alumina.⁸⁹ Similarly, the media in the region do not write about the controversies and political influences of the director of the Boksit company in Milići, Rajko Dukić, who is accused of mobbing and involvement in war crimes.⁹⁰

85 For example, Radio Magic and Radio Osvit.

86 Ilijaz Miralemović, Zvornicki.ba

87 Alumina Ltd. is a manufacturer of different types of aluminum, hydrates, zeolites and water glass (sodium silicate) applicable in the industry of aluminum, cements, refractories, aluminum salts, and in the production of powder and liquid detergents, molecular sieves, etc. It is based in Zvornik.

88 In 2015 the Pavgord company bought the debt of the Birač factory from Ukio Bank, and has since been trying through numerous court proceedings to capitalise on the claims against Alumina, which is a daughter company of Birač (Birač is now under bankruptcy). See more in articles published by Capital.ba, at: <https://www.capital.ba/?s=Alumina>.

89 See, for example, <http://infobirac.net/2019/07/28/alumina-osvaja-trzista/>; <https://www.zvornikdanas.com/2018/10/40-godina-rada-i-postojanja-fg-alumina-foto/>; <https://www.radioosvit.com/kompanija-alumina-pet-godina-uzastopno-dobija-pozitivno-misljenje-revizora-na-finansijske-izvjestaje/>; <https://www.radioosvit.com/alumina-apelujemo-na-korektnost-u-medijskom-izvjestavanju/>.

90 See for example: <http://ba.n1info.com/tag7100/rajko-dukic/1>. The radio station Radio Birač has two studios, one in Han Pijesak and one in Milići, whose radio frequencies reach 13 municipalities in RS and the Federation.

Local media also do not investigate crime and police structures in the region. Instead, they mainly base their reporting on official police information, thus not exercising media freedoms in full.⁹¹ Obtaining information apart from official statements is difficult. A journalist from Kalesija also spoke about the difficulties, for example, in obtaining the Official Gazette of the Municipality of Kalesija, where all decisions of the local assembly, including yearly budgets, are published. The Official Gazette was not available online, nor upon the journalist's request.⁹²

Kalesijski Nezavisni Portal provides some critical pieces, such as reports on corruption in employment, but such reporting is rare, often based on limited research and conducted with minimal resources. Many local news portals copy-paste material, a trend enabled with the lack of regulation of copyright in BiH. In addition, there is also a lack of analysis, expert views and opinion columns. One interviewee thinks that people working in online media, particularly in Kalesija, do not have sufficient journalistic skills and expertise to produce more demanding media content and analysis. Broadcasters tend instead to publish entertainment content and interviews with politicians which usually do not involve sensitive questions, while online media often serve either as mouthpieces for the local government or for the promotion of other particular interests.⁹³

Some media reporting from the region indicates ethno-national bias, primarily visible in selective coverage of the commemoration of war victims, sometimes involving the glorification of the armies and heroes of one ethno-national group, and partial and/or one-sided interpretations of war events. Illustrative examples of media reports indicate that Info Birač, for example, primarily mentions Serb victims and crimes against the Serbs, while Srebrenički portal focuses on Bosniak victims and the genocide in Srebrenica.⁹⁴ Reporting on current affairs is also considered selective, including negligence and/or a critical stance towards other ethnic groups and their representatives, a focus on and lack of criticism towards the leading parties of their own ethnic group and overall emphasis on the issues involved in the agenda of one's own ethnic group. Among the Serb-led media there is also a tendency to report on Serbia and Republika Srpska while

91 For example, a journalist from Vlasenica reports on the media's cooperation with the police department in Zvornik and noted that the head of the administration instructed them not to publish articles about crime in the region without official police information. Interview with Tanja Rikanović.

92 Interview with Admir Karić.

93 A respondent noted that this is the case in Kalesija, for example, where online portals are either favorable or critical towards the mayor. Interview with Amela Delić, assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla.

94 See <https://www.srebrenica.ba/index.php/magazin/228-foto-potresne-fotografije-iz-ratne-srebrenice-preziviljavanje-turniri-proizvodnja-struje-i-kopanje-po-deponiji>

neglecting the BiH state-level governance and related issues. Ethno-national polarization is also illustrated by religious content on some online news media. Some interviewees, for example pointed out that there is much unnecessary, unproductive religious content in the media from Kalesija.⁹⁵

Despotovina.info, which interviewees mentioned as one of the most problematic sites, publishes content including glorification of Serb war heroes and open provocation towards other ethno-national groups. They published, for example, content stating that the children from Srebrenica and Bratunac who went to Turkey for a cultural event were a disgrace to the Serb nation,⁹⁶ and posted pictures of the celebration of the Orthodox Christmas in Srebrenica using the words of the Serb war criminal Ratko Mladić from 1995: "Here we are in Srebrenica on the eve of another great Serbian holiday."⁹⁷ They also called on citizens to bring flags of Republika Srpska to a concert held in Bratunac in 2018.⁹⁸ Instead of criticizing such standpoints, the local government and the Church provide funding for this website, which was identified by one of our interview respondents as an extremely worrying practice.⁹⁹

Although some problematic content in the media of the Birač region and Kalesija has been identified by other actors (primarily the watchdog platform Raskrinkavanje.ba), neither the Press Council nor the Regulatory Agency for Communication has recorded any complaints from the region.¹⁰⁰ This could indicate citizens' lack of knowledge about the possibilities of reporting problematic media content. The watchdog platform Raskrinkavanje has identified 16 articles overall with problematic media content on five online news portals from the Birač region and Kalesija, all of which are fake news and manipulative content that have been copy-pasted from other media. The local media that have copy-pasted at least one item of fake news are: Za Srebrenicu.ba, Nezavisni

95 Interview with Amra Salihčehajić, president of the Youth Center Kalesija; Interview with Fuad Halilović.

96 Interview with Valentina Gagić.

97 See, for example, <https://www.radiosarajevo.ba/vijesti/bosna-i-hercegovina/portal-podrzan-od-vlade-srbije-cestitao-badnje-vece-uz-rijeci-zlocinca-mladica/323651>

98 Interview with Valentina Gagić.

99 Ibid.

100 Email correspondence with Ljiljana Zurovac, program director of the Press Council of BiH and Helena Mandić, assistant broadcasting director, Regulatory Agency for Communication.

Kalesijski Portal, eSrebrenica, Zvornički.ba, and Zvornik Danas.¹⁰¹ Zvornik Danas has copy-pasted fake news materials from RTRS and Srna, which are some of the main sources of disinformation in BiH,¹⁰² while Za Srebrenicu has the most copy-pasted content proven to be false and also uses clickbait titles on false content about politicians such as Milorad Dodik and Čamil Duraković.¹⁰³

The fact-checking platform Raskrinkavanje thus points to some of the problematic content. While broadcasting is at least partly regulated through the work of the Regulatory Agency of Communication, problematic content of online media remains largely out of the reach of self-regulation mechanisms. What is more worrisome is that the local governments and state institutions have done little to condemn nationalistic practices, particularly the glorification of war criminals and disrespect towards the victims.

2.2. Media with the highest reach and the most popular media content in the Birač region and Kalesija

News and information in BiH are still accessed most often through television, but increasingly through the internet, while radio is used for entertainment. Print readership, which has always been low in BiH, has been declining further over the past decades. Younger generations increasingly rely on news that they obtain from internet news portals and social media, as was also evident during the focus groups.¹⁰⁴ According to one

101 Some of the copy-pasted problematic media content included, for example, false news about Gallup's research on corruption in BiH (eSrebrenica), content about a bear on Grmeč Mountain (Zvornički.ba), and content about an incident at the Banja Luka airport (Nezavisni Kalesijski Portal). See the examples at: <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/kako-se-prosirila-dezinformacija-o-istrazivanju-korupcije-u-bih> <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/od-lazne-prijave-do-tumacenja-genetskog-koda-obracun-sa-migrantima-koji-se-nikada-nije-desio>, <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/davor-dragicevic-nije-nestao>; <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/nakon-krvnika-imamo-i-agenta-kako-je-dugogodisnji-banjalucki-zet-postao-strasni-britanski-operativac>; <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/kad-laze-srna-laze-i-mup>

102 See the research of Zašto ne (2019), at https://zastone.ba/app/uploads/2019/05/Disinformation_in_the_online_sphere_The_case_of_BiH_ENG.pdf

103 Interview with Emir Zulejhić, editor of Raskrinkavanje.

104 See more in MSI Irex yearly reports, at: <https://www.irex.org/resource/media-sustainability-index-msi>, see also Džihana et al. (2012: 7). Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/mapping-digital-media-bosnia-20120706.pdf>

interviewee people trust television the most, while the radio is listened to more in rural areas, mostly when people travel to work, and by generations over 35.¹⁰⁵

Broadcast ratings and newspaper circulation statistics in BiH are not made widely available to the public. Only larger TV outlets that can afford to commission audience measurement have access to detailed information about their reach, while local broadcasters, including those from the Birač region, cannot afford such research and rely on other sources, for example, on information about their social network account followers. The majority of online news media use free tools - Google Analytics and/or Alexa - but these cannot provide detailed information on audience demographics. The agency IPSOS conducts audience research on the radio and print media sectors based on the diary method (i.e. self-reporting of a sample of citizens on their media habits). Only a minority of media have ordered these data.

Data that were obtained for the research show that in the first 4 months of 2019 in the region of East Republika Srpska,¹⁰⁶ to which Birač belongs, the television broadcasters with the highest audience share¹⁰⁷ were the public service broadcaster of Republika Srpska, RTRS, and the private station BNTV (Annex 3).¹⁰⁸ This was confirmed by interviewees, who noted that RTRS is the most popular, followed by BN, Radio Television of Serbia, ATV, FTV and BHT.¹⁰⁹ Among these broadcasters, for example, BN is particularly viewed in Zvornik, where they have their correspondence team.¹¹⁰ One interviewee also mentioned that N1 is followed in Srebrenica.¹¹¹ In the whole of East Republika Srpska, RTRS and BN have the highest viewership, with 12.5% audience share. This is problematic since RTRS has been known for distinctly favorable reporting on the leading SNSD party, and broadcasts reports on the marginalisation of Serbs and on Islamic terrorism, of questionable reliability.¹¹² BNTV is mostly oriented to the public in Republika Srpska and its content involves critical reporting on the RS government/SNDS party; it is considered

105 Interview with Marinko Sekulić; interview with Fuad Halilović.

106 This region includes Bijeljina, Zvornik, Pale and East Herzegovina. Data for smaller administrative units are not available. Data are courtesy of the Fabrika agency.

107 Share is percentage of the total audience share per TV channel.

108 The main background information on these media is provided in the annexes.

109 Data was taken from all of the interviews. Some also mentioned Pink.

110 Interview with Ilijaz Miralemović.

111 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

112 See: <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/medij/rtrs>. See also the weekly analysis of RTRS news conducted by the watchdog site analiziraj.ba. <https://analiziraj.ba/category/tv/>

more favorable to SDS.¹¹³ The next is Nova BH, with 6.8% share, a television station that mostly provides entertainment and some light information content. Four other TV stations, including the public service broadcasters FTV and BH1, and two private outlets, OBN and ATV, have a reach of between 1 and 2 %. (See Annex 3).

Regarding the Tuzla Canton, to which Kalesija belongs, in the first 4 months of 2019, the television broadcasters with the highest audience share were FTV, Nova BH, BH 1, and OBN.¹¹⁴ The public service broadcasters FTV and BHRT have considerable audience share in the Tuzla Canton (FTV 18.58 % and BHRT 10.49 %). Even though their reporting is more balanced than that of RTRS, they have also been criticised for political influence, particularly through the appointments of their boards and managerial staff; FTV has also been criticised for overt commercialization and BHRT for lack of critical reporting.¹¹⁵ Nova TV (10.49%) and OBN (5.88%) mainly provide entertainment and some informative programs (See Annex 4). One interviewee also indicated that the most followed broadcasters in Kalesija are the local private TV and radio station RTV7 and private radio station RTV Slon, and the most followed online media is tuzlanski.ba.¹¹⁶

The radio audience measurement data from 2017¹¹⁷ show that all radio stations together had a daily average reach of 27.7% of people in East Republika Srpska and 37.5% in Tuzla Canton (see Annex 5). Radio BN had the highest daily reach in Republika Srpska with 11.8%, while Radio Kameleon had the highest reach in Federation BiH, although it does not exceed 6%. The data also show a striking difference between the region of Birač and Tuzla Canton. The Tuzla Canton audience is oriented towards the private media based in Tuzla and Sarajevo, while the audience from the Birač region opts mostly for radio stations from Bijeljina and Banja Luka. However Radio BN, Radio Stari Grad Sarajevo and Radio Glas Drine had more than 1% of daily reach in “other” regions as well.

A similar divide between the two regions is noticeable in differences in the reach of the print media (see Annex 6). However, *Dnevni Avaz*, by far the most read newspaper in

113 See Hodžić (2014). Available at: https://www.media.ba/sites/default/files/znacaj_medijskog_integriteta_vracanje_medija_i_novinarstva_u_sluzbu_javnosti.pdf.

114 Data are courtesy of the agency Fabrika.

115 About appointments of managerial staff see: Hodžić (2017). Available at: https://www.media.ba/sites/default/files/media_integrity_matters_za_web_final_0.pdf. On news reporting of FTV and BHRT see the analyses of analiziraj.ba.

116 Interview with Amra Salihčehajić.

117 These data are courtesy of the IPSOS agency. The data are fragmented by regions: East Republika Srpska (to which Birač belongs) and Tuzla Canton (to which Kalesija belongs). Separate data for smaller administrative-territorial units are not available.

Tuzla Canton, had significant, although much lower, reach in East Republika Srpska. In addition, the differences between the two regions were not as striking when it comes to the reach of health, lifestyle and women's magazines such as *Ljepota i zdravlje* (Beauty and Health),¹¹⁸ which are not in the focus of this research. The four most read print media for the two regions (East Republika Srpska and Tuzla Canton) were *Dnevni avaz* (Sarajevo), *Euro Blic* (Belgrade), *Glas Srpske* (Banja Luka), *Preporod* (Sarajevo), *Oslobođenje* (Sarajevo), *Dnevni list* (Mostar) and *Nezavisne novine*, (Banja Luka) (see Annex 6). The data indicate that in 2017 all newspapers together had a daily average reach of 22.6% of people in East Republika Srpska and 25.3% in Tuzla Canton. Insights from the interviews and focus groups mostly point to similar conclusions and indicate *Blic*, *Novosti*, *Glas Srpske*, *Nezavisne*, and *Dnevni avaz* as the most popular print media in the region.¹¹⁹

Unlike with print media and radio stations, in the online sphere the media with the highest readership in the two regions largely overlap. Among the most visited online media in Tuzla Canton, to which Kalesija belongs, were *klix.ba* and *avaz.ba* (the latter is affiliated with the SBB party and its leader Fahrudin Radončić), each reaching more than 110,000 unique users in November-December 2017 (See Annex 7).¹²⁰ These media were also among the most visited in East Republika Srpska (to which Birač belongs), although they reach around half that number of unique users. Among the media with considerable viewership, the website *Saff.ba* is known for its conservative political ideology and intolerance towards the LGBTIQ population. In November-December 2017, this website reached 6,429 unique visitors and had 140,212 page views in Tuzla Canton and 2,417 unique visitors and 18,382 page views in the region East Republika Srpska. In contrast, inputs from the interviewees and focus groups suggest that the most followed online media are local media.¹²¹

Media representatives from the region say that the most popular content is entertainment content and local news. The most followed content on radio stations is entertainment programs and morning news, and on online media it is local news and news on accidents and crime. According to the editor-in-chief of Radio Feral the most popular radio show in Tuzla Canton is their comedy/satire show *Bezvazdušni proctor*, which uses humour

118 *Ljepota i zdravlje* had almost 8% reach in Sarajevo Canton, and almost 9% in East Republika Srpska in 2017. Other magazines such as *Zdravlje u kući* and *Gracija* had a lower reach of around 3/4% in these regions, *Auto Shop Magazine* 2/3%, etc.

119 Interview with Mladen Kojić.

120 More recent data are not available. Data from 2017 are courtesy of the agency IPSOS. Email correspondence 23.04.2019.

121 More in the section on youth and the media.

and music to mock politicians.¹²² On Radio Magic the most popular program is the morning program that provides local and regional information.¹²³ Editors of online media emphasize the fact that people mostly like to read news on crimes and accidents: "When we see that something bad has happened we want to make sure that it is not one of ours. Unfortunately, this is the most read information, and is the easiest to post because it does not contain much text... it is essentially copy-paste", said the editor-in-chief of Zvornički.ba. To illustrate, in Kalesijske novine a story about a bread price increase had far fewer page views than a story about a car accident that was published the same day. "The bread price increase had 120 views in about seven days, and that news of a car accident had a couple thousand views in less than an hour."¹²⁴

The interviewees also mentioned that local information is largely popular, particularly information on issues that directly affect the lives of people in the region. As one interviewee said: "news that directly concerns citizens in the local community itself and then, what can improve their lives, or either harm them in some way or benefit them."¹²⁵ As noted by one respondent from Kalesija, people also follow events, humanitarian actions, and articles with practical information, such as the conditions on the roads.¹²⁶

Stories about successful people (in education, sports, business etc.) are also very popular. In the experience of the editor-in-chief of Zvornicki.ba the most read are affirmative stories about successful people from Zvornik and its surroundings, which, however, require more time to prepare.¹²⁷ Similarly, on Vlasenica24.info the most popular are positive stories, particularly about successful young people and children, which are followed most by citizens from Vlasenica who live abroad. "If I hear a story about a successful kid somewhere, who goes to school here, and plays basketball at a club and wins a trophy, then I call him (...), make a story out of it and it is the most read. Because people love to see their children," a journalist from Vlasenica said.¹²⁸ The fact that local media in the region have a high readership from abroad was also emphasized by other media representatives. For example, 30% of the readers of Zvornik danas come from abroad, mainly Serbia.¹²⁹

122 Interview with Fuad Halilović.

123 Interview with Dalibor Bačić.

124 Interview with Fahrudin Sinanović.

125 Ibid.

126 Interview with Amra Salihčehajić.

127 Interview with Ilijaz Miralemović.

128 Interview with Tanja Rikanović.

129 Interview with Igor Golubović.

Apart from local news, entertainment and news on crime and successful people, other topics do not attract much audience. News on culture, for example, is not considered popular.¹³⁰

2.3. Relevant Facebook platforms in the Birač region and Kalesija

Facebook is the most popular social platform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly among young people, despite the rise of Instagram, which is followed more by the younger generations.¹³¹ Facebook is significant as a platform for the dissemination of news and content from various news media, but this also includes the circulation of disinformation.¹³² Previous research has shown that online platforms and social networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Facebook, serve to spread hate speech and ethno-nationalist rhetoric, which increases the sense of alertness and division within BiH and curiosity towards extremist ideas.¹³³

Young people spend a lot of their free time on Facebook, through which they also access news. The practice of fast skipping and scrolling instead of detailed reading of the content is widespread, as was pointed out during the focus groups. The interviewees and participants of the focus groups noted the presence of hate speech and heated discussions over issues such as ethnicity, war heroes and politicians. According to one interviewee, Facebook groups and profiles are particularly used for political campaigns and promotions.¹³⁴

There are numerous Facebook groups from the Birač region and Kalesija. The most popular Facebook platforms include those of various businesses, restaurants and cafes, but also of media, religious and governmental organizations, and community groups. Some provide background information, with mission statements or the names of the persons responsible for the group, but full details about the background of some pages

130 Interview with Admir Kadrić.

131 See Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematicni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf

132 See: Zašto ne (2019). Available at: https://zastone.ba/app/uploads/2019/05/Disinformation_in_the_online_sphere_The_case_of_BiH_ENG.pdf Disinformation in the online sphere

133 Actis 2018, 5.

134 Interview with Zorana Petković.

are difficult to obtain. Below are the c. 20 most popular Facebook pages per town, listed in order of Facebook Insights relevance:¹³⁵

- **Bratunac:** Kafana Tamo daleko, Diskoteka M.Bratunac, Bratunac INFO, Caffe Bar Galija, Foto Djole Dj., Opština Srebrenica, Udruženje "Prijatelji Srebrenice", Video Studio Ogi, Bratunac (city profile, at: <https://www.facebook.com/bratunac/>), Svetosavska Omladinska Zajednica Bratunac, Bratunačke price, Zajedno za srebrenicu, Butik Bob Bratunac, Bratunac (on places to visit in Bratunac: <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Bratunac/108650812491853/>), UPS Media, Cilj Bratunac, Despotovina, RTV Srebrenica, Infuzija, Tetovirane-tetovaže-Art-Tattoo Celtic Ljubovia. *The most popular media outlets on Facebook (based on FB Insights data) include:* USP Media, Despotovina, RTV Srebrenica, e-Srebrenica and to lesser extent Radio-Ljubovija Tup-Tup (the last is listed as the most popular page of a radio station).
- **Srebrenica:** Opština Srebrenica, RTV Srebrenica, Udruženje Prijatelji Srebrenice, Zajedno za Srebrenicu, Medžlis IZ Srebrnica, Vijesti iz Srebrenice, Narodna biblioteka Srebrenica, UPS Media, Srebrenica Srebrenica, Srebrenica Photo, Podrinje moje Podrinje, eSrebrenica, Kafana Tamo daleko, Srebrenica 117, Perućac jezero Official, Povratnici Bratunca, Butik Bob Bratunac, Manastir Karno Srebrenica, Cilj Bratunac etc. *The most popular media outlets on Facebook (based on FB Insights data) include:* RTV Srebrenica, UPS Media, eSrebrenica and Despotovina.
- **Zvornik:** Foto ozon, ZMAG Zvornički magazin, Old Bridge Pub Zvornik, Slikarska radionica Paleta, Mobil Shop Hallo Zvornik, Zvornik Grad Srpski Grad, Foto Klik Zvornik, Sport Line Zvornik, Kandinsky Foto, Sparta Zvornik, Nisi iz Zvornika?? Eh pa ne može svako biti savršen :)), Taverna club, Info Birač, Vremeplov, Dnevna doza prosječnog Zvorničanina, Naš zvornik etc. *The most popular media outlets on Facebook (based on FB Insights data) include:* Radio Osvit Zvornik, Info Birač, Info Zvornik, Sport DC and Bijeljina Danas.
- **Kalesija:** Auto škola Volan, Ovo je moj grad (Kalesija), Frizerski salon Azra, Zeman Kalesija, Kalesijske ljepote, Restoran Ervika – Piemonte, Eto avlija "Miljanovići", Autopraona A1, FK Bosna Kalesija, Disko klub Kameleon, A3 Promet Kalesija, Auto salon auto servis Munja, Bajakomerc, Infoplus, Polo doo. Kalesija, Kalesija, SDA Kalesija – Stranka demokratske akcije, TR ASA Kalesija njemačka garderoba, Kalesijske novine. *The most popular media outlets on Facebook (based on FB Insights data) include:* Zeman Kalesija, Infoplus, Kalesijske novine, Neon TV, Kalesijski.ba, Radio Feral, Kalesija online (connected to Neon TV).

¹³⁵ Facebook Insights differentiate webpages by pre-defined categories (NGO, media, TV etc.) and by relevance – i.e. audience, MAP – i.e. monthly active people, affinity – i.e. number of people that liked the page.

- **Milići:** *N/A (not enough user data to create an FB Insights chart)*
- **Vlasenica:** Kafe Bar Nirvana, Frizerski salon Smiley Vlasenica, Baš Kafanica, Restoran Grand Vlasenica, Infoportal Vlasenica 24, No, Biciklistički klub Kpl Vlasenica, Klub Sky, Turistička organizacija opštine Vlasenica, Sloboda Dzinic Brani, DJ Vedran Veliki, Radio Magic Milići, Foto Vaske Milići, Mr. Rajko Dukić, Birač danas. *The most popular media outlets on Facebook (based on FB Insights data) include: Vlasenica 24, Radio Magic Milići, Birač Danas, UPS Media, Despotovina, Zvornik Danas.*

The most followed pages that have some socially and politically relevant content include those of religious, political, media and government organizations as well as community pages.¹³⁶

The community page Zajedno za Srebrenicu, for example, (relevant to Srebrenica and Bratunac) promotes the activities of the mayor of Srebrenica Mladen Grujičić, and the official page of SDA Kalesija posts content about the party, its meetings and officials. The page of the Municipality of Srebrenica also posts content on the activities of the municipality structures and the mayor of Srebrenica. The Facebook page of the controversial businessman Rajko Dukić is among the most relevant in Vlasenica (in terms of Facebook Insights), and it has content involving controversial statements, such as the claim that the Boksit company has a right to fire people whose relatives have left the company. Also relevant are pages of religious communities such as Svetosavska omladinska zajednica Bratunac in Bratunac, and Medžilil IZ Srebrenica, the official page of the Islamic community Srebrenica. In the former there is some content that highlights connections with other Orthodox nations, for example with references to Tsar Nikolaj Romanov and the Russian Army. Another article posted on that page glorifies the Cyrillic alphabet and criticizes Serbs who use the Latin alphabet. On the page Birač danas (Vlasenica) some of the posts reflect Serb nationalism, including accusations about the unjust “Sarajevo judiciary” acting against the “honourable and decent fighters” of the Army and police of RS. The page Neću ti dozvoliti da rušiš Zvornik (I will not allow you to tear down Zvornik) is focused entirely on the glorification of Serbs and Republika Srpska, including the glorification of Ratko Mladić. An overview of the background information and a brief overview of the content of c. 5 FB pages per town is provided in Annex 8.

136 For the purpose of the research, in table 4 in the annexes we provide an overview of the background information and a brief overview of the content of c. 5 FB pages per town, including those listed as the most popular by FB, but excluding purely entertainment pages, pages of business entities (cafes, discotheques, photo studios, etc.) and pages giving profiles of towns.

Among the most popular Facebook pages are also those of media organizations, including UPS Media, RTV Srebrenica, Radio Osvit, Radio Magic, Info Birač, Info plus, Kalesijske novine and Neon TV.¹³⁷ They post articles from their online news media that mostly contain local news. Some imply favoritism towards certain political options or ethno-national orientation, such as the page of Info plus, which has content on SDA, or Kalesijske novine, which contains articles on Muslim religious holidays, gatherings and greetings.¹³⁸ We also found some hate speech content against migrants among user comments on the profile of Neon TV (Annex 8).

The Facebook pages of the local media are the most popular among news organizations' Facebook pages in the selected towns. For Bratunac and Srebrenica these include UPS Media, Despotovina, RTV Srebrenica, and eSrebrenica. UPS Media and Despotovina are also among the most popular Facebook pages in Vlasenica, along with Vlasenica24.info, Radio Magic and Zvornik Danas. In Zvornik, apart from local Radio Osvit Zvornik, Info Birač and Info Zvornik's Facebook pages, these also include some not seated in the region, Sport DC and Bijeljina Danas. In Kalesija the most viewed Facebook pages are those of the local media: Zeman Kalesija,¹³⁹ Infoplus, Kalesijske novine, Neon TV, Kalesijski.ba, Radio Feral and Kalesija online (connected to Neon TV).

In sum, the results show that the social platforms of local media and other local actors are the most popular in the local communities. This also implies the prominence of pages that contain problematic content, mainly including ethno-national bias, one-sided content and lack of pluralism.

137 The profiles of these media are provided in the sections above.

138 This favoritism was also pointed out by one of the interviewees, Amela Delić.

139 The website can no longer be accessed.

3.

Young people in BiH and the Birač region

Young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina live in poor socio-economic conditions, lack employment and are departing in large numbers to foreign countries.¹⁴⁰ Generally they are not happy with the political, economic and social situation in BiH but do not show much interest in political events, have very low levels of political engagement and have insufficient knowledge about local and global political issues, events and activities.¹⁴¹ Even though they do not engage in politics they mostly identify with the prevailing ethno-national discourses, which are generally divisive and obstruct reconciliation processes and the overall political and economic development of the country.¹⁴²

As young people in the Birač region and Kalesija in particular are faced with long-term unemployment, many are leaving the region. Both in the focus groups and interviews, long-term employment was identified as the most urgent need of young people “Young people in Srebrenica, those who have finished their education or could do something, primarily lack jobs, sources of livelihood, and they lack everything else, fun, because Srebrenica is a dead city. There is nothing here. Once ... a month ... Srebrenica organizes concerts in that old brewery ... they manage to bring ... a bit more famous groups, but the number of visitors who come to Srebrenica is small.”¹⁴³

Some of the reasons behind the lack of long-term employment solutions that the interviewees¹⁴⁴ mentioned are corruption and lack of business opportunities and investment in natural resources and tourism development, which could generate income and provide employment.¹⁴⁵ They also pointed to the lack of cultural events, activities for youth and investment in youth initiatives and policies.¹⁴⁶ Even though there have been

140 See Turčilo et al. (2019). Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/15288.pdf>; Prism Research at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bosnia_and_herzegovina/docs/Publications/Socio-ekonomske%20percepcije%20mladih%20u%20BiH_ENG_priprema.pdf.

141 Đipa et al. (2016). Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/bih/media/856/file/Glasovi%20mladih.pdf>

142 Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013).

143 Interview with Mariko Sekulić.

144 For example, in Vlasenica. Interview with Tanja Rikanović.

145 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

146 Interview Tanja Rikanović, interview with Filip Mičić, interview with Marinko Sekulić.

a number of activities run by non-governmental organizations aimed at young people in the region, particularly in Srebrenica and Bratunac, their impact has been limited, and in recent years they have been declining. In addition to foreign donations, local governments have also allocated funds for youth activities. The Town of Zvornik allocates funds for sports initiatives and youth activities in particular, such as, for example, *Dani omladinske kulture*, in collaboration with foreign donors. However, there have been fewer activities and less support in other municipalities.¹⁴⁷ Youth centers are either non-existent, like in Vlasenica where the youth center has closed, or partially active, as in Milići.¹⁴⁸ Interviewees stated the disinterest of young people and their en masse departure as some of the reasons.

The president of the Youth Council in Milići stated, “We worked at a good level until recently ... we had a lot of activities, from organizing concerts, seminars, various trips, gatherings, we did very well, but over time ... the youth disperses ... and now there is a lack of youth and activities.”

The support of local actors for youth initiatives, according to some interviewees, has a political context.¹⁴⁹ The President of the Association Prijatelji Srebrenice thinks that young people are seen only as potential voters and there is a lack of genuine concern about young people as individuals. “... [We] have extremely talented young people and a large number of young graduates from BiH and Serbia... However, the environment does not see them as people with skills and does not see them as individuals, but sees them simply as future voters”¹⁵⁰

Participants of focus groups also point out that there are no political alternatives and no “new voices” in the region.¹⁵¹ The Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) is the ruling party in the Birač region. In the General Elections of 2018 Milorad Dodik, the president of SNSD, won the largest number of votes of all the other candidates in all the municipalities for the Serb member of the BiH presidency. All the current local mayors also come from or are affiliated to SNSD, except for the mayor of the Municipality of Bratunac, Nedeljko Mladenović, who is a member of the opposition coalition, Savez

147 <https://www.zvornikdanas.com/2018/09/dani-mladih-zvornik-2018-dani-omladinske-kulture-u-zvorniku/>

148 Interview with Vladimir Kojić.

149 Zorana Petković

150 Interview with Dragana Jovanović.

151 For example, participants in the focus group in Srebrenica.

za promjene.¹⁵² Most people do not vote and even more do not want to enter politics.¹⁵³ Even though many young people are not interested in politics, participants in the focus groups stated that they cannot avoid politics because it is overly represented in the media content and in public discourse.¹⁵⁴ "Politics is ubiquitous in our society. If you don't sign on to a political party, you cannot find a job ... everything goes through politics," another participant stated.¹⁵⁵

3.1. Youth as a neglected target audience of the local media

In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a lack of educational, documentary and entertaining programs for young people in traditional media, and resources are not being allocated for the development of special programs for this age group. Some television and radio programs offer cultural content, mainly music shows, and publish positive stories about successful young individuals, while popular online youth platforms provide practical tips such as how to find a job or internship.¹⁵⁶ In addition, apart from some online media platforms,¹⁵⁷ traditional media in BiH do not provide educational content with the aim of enhancing the media literacy skills of young people.

Media in the Birač region and Kalesija, according to interviewees, lack content specifically designed for young people, particularly informative and educational content, and content that tackles the issues of youth policies, provides practical information for young people and discusses the issues that they face. One of the reasons is the lack of profitability of such content and the lack of resources for the production of such content. In a period of financial crisis of the media, content for young people, according to the editor-in-chief of Radio Feral, is not profitable for the local media: "We do not live off attracting young people, we live off attracting advertising. I have to feed my children."¹⁵⁸

152 All data was taken from the Official page of CIK.

153 F, 27, Bratunac.

154 Focus group in Vlasenica and Srebrenica.

155 10, Srebrenica.

156 See Sokol (2019). Available at: <https://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/medijski-sadrzaji-za-mlade-malo-nedovoljno-prostora>

157 These platforms include: raskrinkavanje.ba, analiziraj.ba and media.ba

158 Interview with Fuad Halilović.

However, most of the reasons given by interviewees for this lack of content come down to the lack of young people's interest in media production and use, particularly of traditional media. Even though most media do not target a specific age group, representatives of local broadcasters say that they produce content mostly for generations over 35.¹⁵⁹ For example, the target group of Radio Osvit is mainly people over 40, even though they have some donor supported projects specifically designed for young people and some programs that could be informative, for example the music show *Vremenoplov*.¹⁶⁰ Both eSrebrenica and Neon TV attempted to collaborate with young people in the production of their content, but eSrebrenica could not find young people willing to work for the media and publish signed articles,¹⁶¹ while Neon TV produced a section called *Glas Mladih* (Voices of Youth), but due to lack of interest only seven articles were produced, mostly focused on music, and not involving any analysis of the issues regarding the position of young people in the community.¹⁶² Radio Magic collaborated with the news section in the local school by obtaining and publishing information from them, but this also ended.¹⁶³ RTV Srebrenica had an informative and entertainment show that was produced by young people and broadcast once a week, but due to disinterest and the fact that many of the participants left the town, the show is no longer being produced. RTV Srebrenica still has good collaboration with youth organizations, for example, Srebrenica Wave, which organizes concerts and cultural events for young people who are also often guests on the radio's programs.¹⁶⁴ Radio Feral collaborated with the University of Tuzla by offering an internship for journalism students, but their experience was that the students were only interested in broadcasting music, and not in producing news.

Broadcasters and the media in the region still publish some content about young people and manage to engage them through donor supported projects. Radio Osvit and Kalesija have implemented two donor supported projects aimed at the prevention of violence and radicalism in local communities. They also broadcast stories produced by young people from Zvornik and Kalesija.¹⁶⁵ A journalist from Vlasenica24.info said that she tries to write positive stories about young people in Vlasenica, which are followed by a large

159 Radio Magic, Radio Feral and Radio Osvit.

160 Interview with Zorana Petković

161 Interview with Mladen Kojić.

162 Telephone interview with Aldina Čurtović.

163 Interview with Dalibor Bačić.

164 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

165 About the projects see: [https://www.radioosvit.com/snaga-mladosti-kalesije- i zvornika/](https://www.radioosvit.com/snaga-mladosti-kalesije-i-zvornika/)<https://www.radioosvit.com/mladi-sa-stavom-prva-emisija/>

audience, and a representative of Neon TV said that they try to invite young people as their guests on the morning programs.

Unlike the other media in the region, UPS Media is primarily oriented towards young people. Young journalists work in USP Media and produce content with a focus on youth, providing information on culture, sports, business, education and politics with the aim of halting the brain-drain of young people from the region. It was also singled out as one of the most followed local media among the participants of the focus groups, and their FB profile is among the most popular in the region, as seen in Facebook Insights.

3.2. Media habits of young people in the Birač region and Kalesija

Previous research studies have shown that young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina spend a lot of their free time on media-related activities, for the most part on social networks such as Facebook and Instagram.¹⁶⁶ For news and information they mostly follow online media, particularly local media, which they trust the most. Even though they spend a lot of their free time following the media and social networks, they generally lack media literacy skills, are not acquainted with the role of the media in society or basic journalistic standards and forms, and struggle to identify problematic media content such as non-objective and one-sided reporting.¹⁶⁷

3.2.1. TV, radio, print, and online media

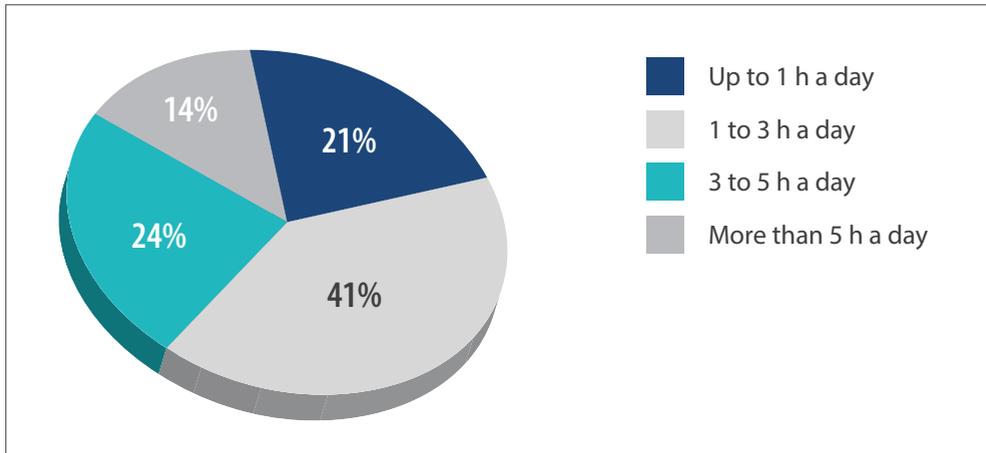
Based on the insights gained from the focus groups in this research, young people in the region of Birač and Kalesija similarly spend a lot of their time following the media, primarily social networks and online media. A large proportion of the focus group participants spend between one and three hours a day following TV, radio, print and online media (around 40 percent, 17 out of 42 participants). 21 percent (9 people) spend one hour or less a day, around 24 percent (10 people) between three and five hours, and

166 Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: <https://media.ba/bs/preporuka/surfanje-po-tankom-ledu-mladi-mediji-problematicni-sadrzaji>

167 Hodžić i Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematicni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf

fourteen percent (6 people) spend more than five hours a day following TV, radio, print and online media.¹⁶⁸

Table 5: Time spent consuming media (TV, Radio, Print, Online)



The respondents follow online media mainly for information and entertainment, many through social networks and scrolling. TV is usually watched for sports and entertainment, movies or children's programs (in the case of those participants who are parents) and radio used during work or relaxation. The main medium for young people, and where they obtain information, is the internet, including social networks and online media. As one participant stated: "Well now you can follow everything online and ... it's more affordable and easier than waiting for 11 hours to watch what interests you."¹⁶⁹

As the most popular media in their local communities, participants from Srebrenica and Bratunac mentioned local online media eSrebrenica, UPS Media, Despotovina and Zvornički.ba. The media from other parts of BiH and Serbia that they follow include Buka (Banja Luka), Radio Slobodna Evropa, Al Jazeera Balkans (Sarajevo) and B92 (Serbia). According to their answers to the questionnaire their favorite media from Serbia are Telegraf, Blic, Kurir, Danas and the Serbian public broadcaster RTS, and other favorites include a radio station from Bijeljina, Bobar radio, Sarajevo-based Klix.ba, the online sports news media Sport klub and the TV channel Arena Sport. One participant mentioned that she follows media from Croatia, Index.hr and Jutarnji, and from Serbia the online news

¹⁶⁸ The data are based on the results of the questionnaire that was distributed among the focus group participants prior to the discussion.

¹⁶⁹ M, 24, Vlasenica.

media Bratoljub, which publishes information from Bratunac.¹⁷⁰ The fact that media from nearby Serbian municipalities are followed by the population in Birač was also mentioned by some interviewees; for example Loznica media are followed in Zvornik.¹⁷¹

Participants from Vlasenica and Milići follow the local media UPS Media, Radio Magic and Info portal 24, but also media from other parts of Republika Srpska including ATV, BN and Serbia RTS. Participants also follow a youth oriented online media from Banja Luka, e-trafika, the public broadcaster BHT and the regional media, N1, seated in Sarajevo. In the questionnaire they also singled out the local online blog Birač danas, Serbian TV and radio stations RTS, RTS1, Radio S, and 02,¹⁷² the Republika Srpska public broadcaster RTRS, Serbian print and online media Blic, Politika, Večernje novosti, Bosnian and Herzegovinian print and online media Dnevni avaz (Sarajevo) and Nezavisne novine (Banja Luka), and entertainment TV channels Prva TV (Serbia), PINK (Serbia) and OBN (BiH). Those from Kalesija follow online media from Tuzla, Tuzlanski.ba and Tuzlarije, and Al Jazeera Balkans, and respondents from Zvornik follow the local online news media Zvornički danas, Zvornički.ba, Info Birač (Birač danas), Bijeljina danas and Radio Osvit. In the questionnaire they also mentioned Radio Slobomir (Bijeljina), BN (Bijeljina), Avaz (Sarajevo), Klix.ba (Sarajevo), Radio Sarajevo (Sarajevo), Glas Drine (Sapna) and Serbian media Blic and B92.

Table 6: Most popular media among focus group participants

	Most popular	Also mentioned in the questionnaire
Srebrenica and Bratunac	eSrebrenica, UPS Media , Despotovina.info, Zvornički.ba	Buka, Slobodna Evropa, Index.hr, Jutarnji, B92 , Al Jazeera Balkans , Telegraf, Blic , Klix , Sport klub, Arena, RTS , Bobar radio, Kurir
Vlasenica and Milići	UPS Media , Radio Magic, Info portal 24, ATV, BN , RTRS	RTS , Radio S, Blic , Politika, Večernje novosti, Birač danas, RTRS, Dnevni avaz, Nezavisne novine, Prva TV, Pink, OBN
Zvornik and Kalesija	Tuzlanski.ba, Tuzlarije, Zvornički danas, Zvornički.ba , Bijeljina danas, Al Jazeera Balkans	Radio Osvit, Radio Slobomir, Blic , B92 , Avaz, Klix , Radio Sarajevo, BN , and Glase Drine

170 F, 27, Srebrenica; F, 25, Bratunac.

171 Interview with Zorana Petković

172 Radio section of the TV station B92.

In sum, the most followed media among the participants are local online media, from their own or surrounding municipalities, as well as some larger, mostly commercial online media and TV broadcasters from Serbia, Bijeljina, Banja Luka, and Sarajevo.¹⁷³ Among the most popular local media across all focus groups are UPS Media and Zvornički.ba and among the most popular non-regional are media Blic, B92¹⁷⁴ and RTS from Serbia, BN from Bijeljina, and Sarajevo based klix.ba and Al Jazeera Balkans. All of these media except Al Jazeera and RTS are larger commercial media that provide hard and soft news. Some, such as Blic, have been identified as distributors of political disinformation in a recent study.¹⁷⁵ The public service broadcaster in Serbia is under the influence of the ruling political party in Serbia (SNS), while Al Jazeera, whose output has been identified as more professional, is a media outlet from Qatar.¹⁷⁶ Aside from e-trafika and Buka (media of non-governmental organizations) participants did not mention other smaller independent media from Serbia or BiH that provide alternative news or investigative reporting. Some participants follow local media such as Despotovina and Birač danas, whose content has been assessed as problematic and one-sided.

In addition, participants of Serb ethnicity are more oriented towards media from Serbia and Banja Luka and those of Bosniak ethnicity towards those located in Sarajevo, although local news media and some regional media, such as N1 and Al Jazeera, were mentioned by participants of both groups.¹⁷⁷ Six participants in the questionnaire, however, did not single out any media and wrote generically that their favorite media are TV, radio, Facebook and Instagram. Ten participants (24%) in the questionnaire wrote that they do not follow local media and fifteen (30%) that they do not follow media from neighboring countries. Two wrote that they follow media from other countries only for sports. During the focus group discussions, as well, a number of participants failed to single out their preferred media. Some only read news and other content that they find interesting, mainly on social networks. As one participant stated: "I don't even pay attention to which media it is if the news is interesting to me. If the title and topic catch my attention..."¹⁷⁸

173 Tuzla based media are followed by participants from Kalesija.

174 The television station B92 has been renamed O2 with a change of ownership. Its webpage is still called B92. It is a commercial media outlet.

175 See recent research on disinformation in the online sphere conducted by Udruženje Zašto ne. Available at: https://zastone.ba/app/uploads/2019/05/Disinformation_in_the_online_sphere_The_case_of_BiH_ENG.pdf

176 See MSI reports on both Serbia and BiH for 2019. Available at: <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2019-full.pdf>

177 For example, participants in Vlasenica and Milići mentioned following Al Jazeera and N1.

178 F, 27, Srebrenica.

Responses to the questionnaire show that the main topics of interest among participants are diverse and include sports, entertainment, health, local themes and events, tourist destinations, culture and history, politics, religion, education, business, business opportunities, and also opportunities to leave the country. Regarding programs, some participants mentioned that they like quizzes, debates, and documentary and history programs. Some watch *Zabranjeni forum*, a debate show on Pink television, *Perspektive*, a program about BiH youth and their issues on Radio Slobodna Evropa, programs on Al Jazeera led by Goran Milić, and *Kulturni dnevnik*, a program about cultural events on RTS. However, only a small number of participants named TV programs and even more rarely they mentioned political shows or debates. Even though in the questionnaire respondents mentioned following certain entertainment TV channels such as OBN and PINK, during the discussions none mentioned following reality and showbiz shows. One participant said, however, that reality shows, and information about them, cannot be avoided because they are overly represented in the media.¹⁷⁹ Interviewees also said that reality shows are very popular in the region.¹⁸⁰

Many participants emphasized that they are interested in general and interesting information (*zanimljivosti*). Even though there is no precise definition of the term, some online media have sections entitled “*zanimljivosti*” which include diverse, often trivial information about various topics, such as Guinness records, food, health, diets, animals, tourism and showbiz. These topics often include clickbait titles and disinformation and can lead young people to unverified and fake content.¹⁸¹

3.2.2. Social networks and blogs

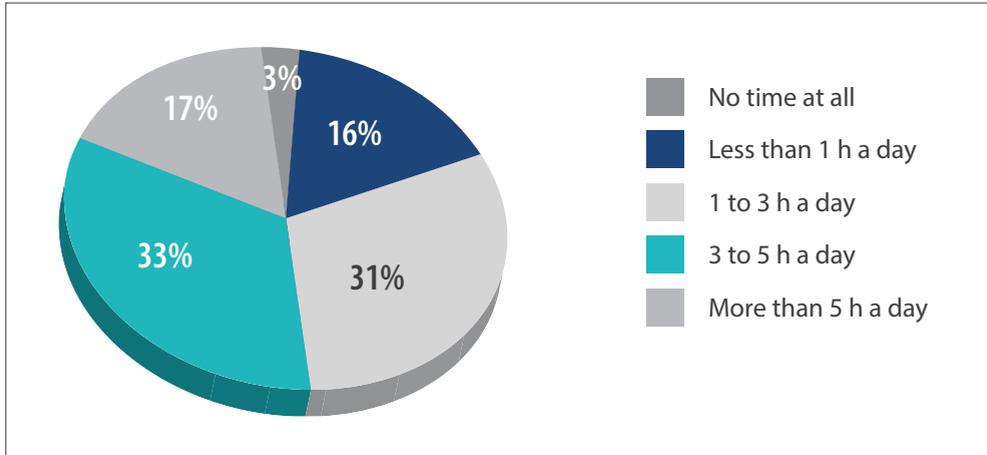
Participants in the focus groups use social networks on a daily basis. Around 33 percent (14 people) of the focus group participants spend more than three and less than five hours a day on social networks and blogs. 16 percent (7) spend less than one hour, around 31 percent (13 people) spend between one and three hours, and 17 percent (7) spend more than five hours. Only one person stated that he does not spend time on social networks.¹⁸²

179 M, 23, Srebrenica.

180 Interview with Vesna Drljić; interview with Zorana Petković.

181 See Vučetić (2019). Available at: <https://www.media.ba/bs/mediametar/clickbait-mamac-za-medije-ili-za-publiku>

182 M, 33, Bratunac.

Table 7: Time spent on social media

The most popular social network among participants is Facebook, followed by Instagram and YouTube. In other research studies, Instagram has been pointed as more popular among younger generations,¹⁸³ because it is more visual and less narrative, and two 18 year old focus group participants from Zvornik and Bratunac singled it out as their preferred social platform. One participant also mentioned that Instagram is used by young people who are skeptical about their privacy on Facebook.¹⁸⁴ Participants in the focus groups use YouTube to listen to music and to follow channels such as X Files, Balkan Info, Inkubator and Gastabajter. Some participants also stated that they use LinkedIn for professional purposes, while none of the participants mentioned Twitter. Many participants stressed that they are on social networks too many hours a day, some throughout the whole day, often through their mobile phones. One participant expressed feelings of anxiety when she is not able to check her phone and go online.¹⁸⁵

Participants use social networks for different reasons. Through social networks, primarily Facebook, they follow various online media looking for both informative content and entertainment. They also use social networks to communicate with friends, family and colleagues, to follow sports, music and comedy entertainment, and also their professional groups. Respondents from Vlasenica also see the positive role of social networks for the

183 Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematicni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf.

184 M, 33, Bratunac. Participants also use Viber and WhatsApp for communication.

185 F, 23, Zvornik.

promotion of their own businesses and one participant in Srebrenica said that she uses Facebook to learn a foreign language.¹⁸⁶

However, many say that they use social networks largely as a result of unemployment or boredom and do not find it useful: “I don’t know what to do and just scroll, but it doesn’t add up to anything, I just waste time on it, there is so much bad information,”¹⁸⁷ or as another participant notes: “As an unemployed person (...) literally from when I get up until I go to bed, my laptop is on and I am constantly online, or on the phone while I eat. And wherever I go, I’m always on Facebook and Instagram and YouTube. I come across one link, go in and look, then that link pulls me to another link, I go in and look, then I go back to the beginning.”¹⁸⁸

A previous study has shown that on the whole, young people are not searching for information but are rather consuming, mostly trivial, information on Facebook and Instagram, through the process of peer-sharing.¹⁸⁹ Studies have shown that social networks and online media in BiH spread hate speech and ethno-national rhetoric¹⁹⁰ and that the anonymous portals that are the main sources of disinformation in BiH use different Facebook groups and profiles and clickbait titles to attract more visitors.¹⁹¹ The phenomenon of scrolling and peer-sharing can lead young people to various kinds of unverified content, including fake news and disinformation, which are particularly present on social networks and on online media.¹⁹² The fact that young people lack media literacy skills and especially trust content that has been shared by their friends¹⁹³ makes them more vulnerable to manipulative, fake and even radical content. Researchers have also stressed the negative impact of scrolling on mental health and relationships, including

186 F, 27, Srebrenica.

187 F, 25, Bratunac.

188 M, 23, Čelopek, Zvornik.

189 Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematicni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf.

190 Aktis, Aktek, and Mediacentar Sarajevo. 2018. Radicalisation in Flux: Unpacking the Role of the Internet in Violent Extremism (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Unpublished report.

191 Udruženje Zašto ne. Available at: https://zastone.ba/app/uploads/2019/05/Disinformation_in_the_online_sphere_The_case_of_BiH_ENG.pdf

192 Ibid.

193 Researchers have pointed out that young people trust the content that has been shared by their friends. Turčilo, Lejla, Amer Osmić, and Jusuf Žiga (2017), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). Available at: http://www.fes.ba/files/fes/pdf/publikationen/2017/mladi,%20politika%20i%20mediji%20-%20web%20-%202018_1_3.pdf

feelings of depression and isolation, which can further discourage young people from social interaction and activism.¹⁹⁴

The participants in the research are members of and follow different groups and profiles on social networks, primarily Facebook. Based on the questionnaire results, the focus group participants' favorite platforms on social networks are music groups, sports groups, professional groups, humor groups, women's magazines, and the site Slavorum. As regards media organizations on social networks, participants in Srebrenica and Bratunac follow the profiles of Buka and UPS Media, in Vlasenica and Milići ATV and Birač Danas, in Zvornik and Kalesija Info portal 24, Zvornik danas and Bijeljina danas. The bloggers and personalities they mention are BH bloggers Srđan Puhalo and Dragan Bursać and Croatian adventurer Vedran Bađun.

Table 8: Social media profiles singled out by focus groups participants.

Social media profiles singled out by focus group participants	
Srebrenica and Bratunac	Platforms such as Slavorum, Buka, and UPS Media; music groups, sports groups
Vlasenica and Milići	ATV, Birač Danas, Info portal, sports and humor groups and women's magazines
Zvornik and Kalesija	Radio Osvit, Zvornički.ba, Zvornik danas, Bijeljina danas, bloggers Srđan Puhalo and Dragan Bursać
None mentioned pages of religious communities or political and governmental organizations, which are ranked as some of the most popular by Facebook Insights	

On social platforms the respondents share posts about events from their communities, seminars, their friends' businesses, humanitarian actions, content about animals and simply what they find interesting. Some write posts about their personal experiences or about politics. Most of the focus group participants do not post comments, in order to avoid conflict, as many believe online discussions only create tensions, especially in local communities, but many read user comments on social platforms and the media. One participant said that he prefers to read comments rather than news.¹⁹⁵ Some said, however, that they engage in discussions¹⁹⁶ out of their own frustration over certain issues, such as student bus ticket discounts.¹⁹⁷ They say that communication on social

194 See Desjarlais (2019).

195 M, 25, Srebrenica.

196 M, 32, Bratunac.

197 F, 28, Vlasenica.

networks involves discussions on topics such as ethnic groups, war heroes, and current political events and recognize that problematic content and hate speech are present on social networks in user comments. An interviewee mentioned that even in music groups on social networks there are heated discussions over issues such as ethnicity.¹⁹⁸ One participant in Vlasenica mentioned a group on Facebook, which has been removed, that wrote about possible terrorist attacks on Vlasenica, while another participant said that groups on social networks are created only as a backlash against individuals.¹⁹⁹ However, the participants did not single out individual pages or groups, which could point to their unwillingness to name sources and speak openly.

Interviewees think that only a small number of young people engage in the dissemination of problematic media content, and that they engage in discussions and write content that could include hate speech as a reaction to provocation over certain topics such as war heroes.²⁰⁰ Only one focus group participant said that he was interested in sensitive issues (*škakljive teme*) and in discussions about them.²⁰¹ Interviewees agree, however, that young people do not know how to resist problematic media content, particularly subtle, biased media reporting, and when they recognize hate speech it is mostly directed towards their own ethno-national group.²⁰² This has been demonstrated by previous research studies that point to the lack of media literacy skills among young people in BiH.²⁰³ Young people's media consumption habits, particularly peer sharing and scrolling, can lead them to consume problematic media content uncritically. Furthermore, when asked how they would react to problematic media content most participants said that they would just ignore it. As previous studies have also shown, young people do not know how to resist, react to or report problematic media content and are not acquainted with the role of the Regulatory Agency for Communication and the Press Council BiH. All of this points to the need to teach young people media literacy skills through both formal and non-formal education.²⁰⁴

198 Interview with Vesna Drljić, English language professor, Vlasenica.

199 F, 28, Vlasenica; M, 33, Srebrenica.

200 Interview with Amela Delić.

201 M, 28, Srebrenica.

202 Ibid.

203 Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematichni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf.

204 Hodžić and Sokol (2019). Available at: https://media.ba/sites/default/files/mladi_mediji_problematichni_medijski_sadrzaji_web.pdf.

3.2.3. Youth's perceptions about the media

The focus group participants in Srebrenica believe that the media influence people's understanding of vaccination, people's attitudes towards refugees and migrants, and elections, and they believe that social media are overly used for political campaigns.²⁰⁵ In the focus group in Zvornik, participants noted that media reporting and online posts can influence their feeling of safety, and one mentioned, for example, that the coverage of the death of Davor Dragičević had a huge impact on him.²⁰⁶

Participants in the focus groups were generally critical towards the media, mainly because they feel that the media are too connected with particular political parties, that they copy-paste materials from other sources (particularly local online media), and are oversaturated with political figures and reality shows. They also problematize the fact that today anyone can open a web page and write about anything without any journalistic skills or ethical norms.

They also said that the media do not provide enough expert opinions and discussions, or practical information on seminars, job opportunities and internships. They believe the media should give more space to common people, culture, and certain taboo topics, such as mental health. For example, one of the respondents said:

"Depression is very prevalent; many people are depressed and they don't even know how to recognize it because it's not talked about. ... especially high school students, for example. They are in deep turmoil ... and very susceptible to external influences."²⁰⁷

Generally, respondents do not believe the media, and claim that the media are under political influences, but mentioned some media as the most trustworthy (Al Jazeera and N1 were mentioned in Srebrenica and Zvornik, and in Vlasenica one respondent mentioned Blic); however, they failed to elaborate on what makes these media reliable.

Some said that they rely on their gut when judging the reliability of media²⁰⁸ or on the comments of members of their online social networks. Participants in Srebrenica also said that they mainly trust the local media (such as, in Srebrenica, UPS Media, RTV Srebrenica

205 That political parties are heavily promoted on social networks was pointed out by some interviewees. Interview with Zorana Petković.

206 M, 25, Zvornik.

207 F, 25, Bratunac

208 F, 18, Bratunac.

and eSrebrenica) and do not believe that they are under political influence. The reason they trust the local media more than others is that they provide information that they can verify, such as various happenings in the town. One participant believes that the local media are followed because people do not have adequate alternatives.²⁰⁹ The positive aspects of the local media that the participants mentioned is that they provide local information, and can have an important role in emergency situations, such as when a boy recently went missing in Srebrenica.²¹⁰ They also appreciate information on successful people from the local community. Others mentioned that the local portals are up to date (providing at least 15 articles a day) such as *zvornik.ba*²¹¹ and praised the youth program of USP Media. Some respondents noted that in smaller communities, such as Šekovići and Osmaci, there is a lack of media outlets as a result of lack of media funding sources.²¹² Participants in Milići and Vlasenica on the other hand were critical towards television stations and local radio stations for their program schemes since prime time is reserved for news programs and not for programs of interest to young people.

Participants in Srebrenica also believe that the local media do not disseminate problematic media content but think that hate speech is highly present on Facebook.²¹³ Some participants, however, identified *Despotovina.info* as a problematic site that creates tensions in the town but do not see it as overly problematic and do not pay much attention to it. One participant said that *Despotovina* is popular, particularly among the elderly population, who spend most of their time on Facebook and “write all sorts of things and then a lot of noise is raised, so a problem arises, without a reason.”²¹⁴ Another respondent pointed out that tensions only bring more popularity to this platform. Only one of the participants, from Bratunac, said that he did not see anything problematic in the glorification of Serbdom, and he later also expressed intolerance towards immigrants.²¹⁵

Media content that respondents wish to see more of include reports on minority groups,²¹⁶ content on tourist offers, expert information and opinions, information about discussion

209 F, 29, Srebrenica.

210 Interviewees mentioned the positive role the local media played in Zvornik during the attack on the police stations and during the floods in 2014.

211 M, 30, Zvornik,.

212 M, 24, Vlasenica.

213 M, 33, Srebrenica.

214 F, 18, Bratunac.

215 M, 33, Bratunac.

216 F, 27, Vlasenica.

panels and events in the city, educational, entertainment and cultural content and reports on current developments and events in the lives of young people (such as regarding education, employment, entertainment-related events etc.). One participant thinks that the media should adjust their content in order to make laws, budgets, documents and strategies more comprehensible to the public.²¹⁷ None of the participants mentioned the relevance of media reports on corruption and the role of investigative reporting.

In Vlasenica participants said that media should engage young program editors and in Zvornik that they should give more space to young people. Participants also expressed their interest in quizzes and debates, as well as multimedia content, video, text and sound.

In addition, the interviewed experts said that more education aimed at improving media literacy should be provided to young people,²¹⁸ more media debates involving different opinions, and media reports on employment,²¹⁹ opportunities for young people to discuss issues that concern them, also through podcasts, for example.²²⁰ Some also pointed out the need to promote watchdog platforms, interesting bloggers and strong individuals,²²¹ and to provide restorative and constructive journalism.²²²

“Unemployment, the possibility of getting a job... starting one’s own business... marketing agricultural products and other such things, these are the kind of topics that most interest people - what they live for”, said one of the respondents.²²³

217 F, 27, Vlasenica.

218 Interview with Amela Delić.

219 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

220 Interview with Igor Golubović.

221 Interview with Valentina Gagić.

222 Interview with Amela Delić.

223 Interview with Marinko Sekulić.

4. Recommendations

The Birač region is disadvantaged in terms of mainstream communication platforms. The media seated in the region mostly provide entertainment and local news but lack quality media content, investigative stories and constructive media reports that would provide pluralistic and alternative narratives on current socio-political and economic issues, the past war and ethno-national relations. They also lack content specifically designed for young people, who are generally dissatisfied with the overall media production and think that the media should provide more space for issues such as mental health and employment opportunities.

The analysis of the media consumption habits among young people has demonstrated the high popularity of social networks and the local media among young people in the Birač region and Kalesija. It also showed that young people in the Birač region often consume news through scrolling that could lead them to various kinds of unverified content, including fake news and disinformation, which are particularly present on social networks and on online media. Even though the aim of the research was not to provide an analysis of media literacy skills of young people, focus groups' participants have demonstrated that they lack skills to judge the reliability of media and information that they consume. Communication in the region Birač and Kalesija remains largely ethnographically divided and polarized, the local online media are followed by participants of all ethnic groups, which should be taken into account when designing content production targeting young people.

Given that the media in the Birač region struggle with finances, support should be provided for content production for local media targeting young people, both by international donors and local governments. Given the popularity of social network platforms of the media outlets seated in the region, and the high use of Facebook among the youth, the production should necessarily engage placement and promotion on social networks.

In the same manner, international donors, public institutions and the media should engage and support bloggers, independent voices and thinkers who have the credibility and influence to engage the youth community towards constructive dialogue.

Given that this research confirms that communication in the region Birač and Kalesija remains largely ethno-nationally divided and polarized, the programs of support should particularly back initiatives that aim to provide a cross-ethnic perspective on the past and current events.

Civil society organizations from the region and beyond should work to develop a system of early warning concerning extremely problematic content, focusing primarily on the most popular media and other platforms identified in this research. The system would imply a wider network of people (parents, civil society actors, youth representatives etc.) who would point to particular problematic content and file complaints (to CRA and Press Council), while educators would discuss that content with youth.

The production of media content could involve constructive and restorative journalism, investigative reporting, and content for young people. Based on the inputs from the interviews and focus groups below are recommendations for media content:

- media content that would discuss the issues that young people face in the region particularly unemployment and mental health (number 1 issue is lack of long-term employment opportunities).
- offer practical information to young people about jobs opportunities, educational opportunities, business, agriculture, tourism, events nearby.
- report on youth activism, different activities, workshops, in particular those focused on critical thinking and communication.
- offer MIL education for young people (radio programs, online media) on how to understand and analyze media messages, about the media system and production, and how to engage in communication in local communities. Teach them how to report problematic media content.
- involve young people in the production of media content: for example, non-formal discussions about issues young people face in the region through podcasts.
- constructive and restorative journalism stories that would tackle issues such as devising memory politics, and reconciliation. Stories that would include, as suggested by one interviewee, for example, victims from both sides and people of different ethnic groups who collaborate or work together.
- investigative stories about corruption and political influences within different spheres of life, including religious authorities and different government institutions should be produced and promoted among young people in the region.

5. Annexes

Annex 1: Composition of focus groups, by demographic characteristics

Focus group in Srebrenica											
Age group	Sex		Education level			Employment status			Residence		Total no per group
	M	F	Prim.	Highs.	Univer.	Employ.	Unempl.	Student	Srebrenica	Bratunac	
17-23 (6)	3	3	4	1	1	1	1	4	3	3	14
24-30 (5)	2	3		2	3	1	3	1	2	3	
31-37 (3)	3			2	1	1	1	1	2	1	
Total:	8	6	4	5	5	3	5	6	7	7	

Focus group in Vlasenica											
Age group	Sex		Education level			Employment status			Residence		Total no per group
	M	F	Prim.	Highs.	Univer.	Employ.	Unempl.	Student	Vlasenica	Milici	
17-23 (4)	2	2	4			1		3	3	1	14
24-30 (5)	3	2		1	4	1	3	1	4	1	
31-37 (5)	3	2			5	4	1		3	2	
Total:	8	6	4	1	9	6	4	4	10	4	

Focus group in Zvornik											
Age group	Sex		Education level			Employment status			Residence		Total no per group
	M	F	Prim.	Highs.	Univer.	Employ.	Unempl.	Student	Zvornik	Kalesija	
17-23 (6)	2	4	2	3	1		3	4	2	4	14
24-30 (7)	4	3		4	3	2	4	1	5	2	
31-37 (1)	1				1		1		1		
Total:	7	7	2	7	5	2	7	5	8	6	

Annex 2: List of interviewees

Srebrenica and Bratunac:

1. Dragana Jovanović, director of Prijatelji Srebrenica;
2. Mladen Kojić, journalist and editor-in-chief of eSrebrenica.ba;
3. Marinko Sekulić Kokeza, editor-in-chief of RTV Srebrenica
4. Valentina Gagić – director of Sara Association
5. Vladimir Kojić - employee of the Srebrenica Municipality

Vlasenica:

6. Tanja Rikanović – journalist of Vlasenica 24. info
7. Vesna Drljić – professor of English Language in Vlasenica

Milići:

8. Dalibor Bačić, editor in chief of Radio Magić
9. Filip Mičić, president of the Youth Center Milići

Kalesija:

10. Fuad Halilović, editor in chief of Radio Feral
11. Admir Kadrić, editor in chief and journalist of Nezavisni kalesijski portal
12. Fahrudin Sinanović, editor in chief of Kalesijske novine
13. Amra Salihčehajić, president of the Youth Center Kalesija

Zvornik:

14. Zorana Petković, editor in chief of Radio Osvit
15. Igor Golubović, editor of Zvornik Danas
16. Ilijaz Miralemović, editor of zvornicki.ba
17. Danica Pelemić Subotić, advisor of the major
18. Gospava Jeremić, advisor of the major

Media experts:

19. Vuk Vučetić – professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Istočno Sarajevo
20. Amela Delić – assistant, Faculty of Philosophy, Tuzla
21. Emir Zulejhić – editor of Raskrinkavanje.ba

Annex 3: TV stations with the highest reach in East Republika Srpska in 2019

TV station	Ownership	Funding	Other background info	Editorial policy and mission
RTRS	Public, part of the PSB system	Mainly TV license fee, in part advertising and RS government funding; detailed info N/A		This PSB (radio and TV station) involves distinctively favourable reporting on leading SNSD ²²⁴ , and some reports on marginalisation of Serbs and Islamic terrorism of questionable reliability (see more in analyses here)
BNTV	Private, connected with family Trišić (Hodžić, 2014, p. 108)	N/A, But mainly advertising	No data on personnel on its website; Director: Vladimir Trišić, Editor in chief: Aleksandar Berić (source CRA); general contact info here .	News and entertainment program. It is mostly oriented to the public in Republika Srpska. Its content involves critical reporting on RS government/party SNDS, and it is considered more favorable to SDS (Hodžić 2014, 104) including for example coverage of "Pravda za Davida" (see here).
Nova BH	Private, previously operated by Pink media group; since October 2018 it is a part of United Media group, with business in media and telecommunication in SEE (more on the group here)	N/A, but mainly advertising	Director: Đorđo Sikimić, Editor in Chief: Jasmina Demirović (source CRA); general contact info here .	Mission is not specified on its website. Elaborate entertainment and some information content.
FTV	Public, part of the PSB system	Mainly TV license fee, in part advertising and FBiH government funding, detailed info N/A	Director: Džemal Šabić, Director of program: Zvonimir Jukić. The names of key personnel and contact info, general and specific here .	A public service broadcaster, which as a rule provides 40 percent of informative and educational content, out of which 10 percent dedicated to marginalized groups (Rule 77/2015)

224 See for example an overview of the CRA decision for February 2018, available at: <https://rak.ba/news/565>. Also see the analysis of raskrinkavanje.ba

OBN	Private, Open Broadcast Network; Majority owner: GRP Media Ltd. Sarajevo (source here), whose owners are OBN JV B.V., Netherlands, whose founders are Ivan Čaleta, controversial businessman (see some reporting on him here and here), Ferenc Vaczlavik, and Toth Csaba	N/A, but mainly advertising	Director: Csaba Szaniszló Janos; Editor in Chief: Esad Hećimović (source CRA) ²²⁵ ; Director of GRP Media is Ivan Čaleta, and executive directors are Vaczlavik and T.Csaba (source here). General contact info here .	Mission not specified on its website. Elaborate entertainment and some information content.
ATV	Private, majority owned by Integra inženjering, company owned by family of Slobodan Stanković; in part owned by Grand trade, company of Mile Radišić (source here). Both businessmen affiliated with SNSD party, Radišić was previously sentenced for manipulation of prices of stocks in the company Medicinska elektronika (more here)	N/A, but mainly advertising	Director: Vedran Škoro; Editor in Chief: Dragana Banjac (source CRA); contact info here . Previously ATV had been engaging in critical reporting inter alia about the criminal acts by Mile Radišić, now its co-owner.	Information and entertainment TV station. Self-proclaimed dedication to truth and the good (here).
BHT1	Public, part of the PSB system	Mainly TV license fee, in part advertising, detailed info N/A	Director: Belmin Karamehmedović; Director of program: Milan Trivić (source CRA); Contact info, general and specific, here .	A public service broadcaster, which as a rule provides 40 percent of informative and educational content, out of which 10 percent dedicated to marginalized groups (Rule 77/2015)

225 The fact that the data was not changed since April 2017 when Hećimović died, suggests that some of the information that CRA holds might be outdated.

Annex 4: TV stations with the highest reach in the Tuzla Canton

TV station	Ownership	Funding	Other background info	Editorial policy and mission
FTV	Public, part of the PSB system	Mainly TV license fee, in part advertising and FBiH government funding, detailed info N/A	Director: Džemal Šabić, Director of program: Zvonimir Jukić	Mission is not specified on its website. Elaborate entertainment and some information content
Nova BH	Private, previously operated by Pink media group; since October 2018 it is a part of United Media group, with business in media and telecommunication in SEE (more on the group here)	N/A, but mainly advertising	Director: Đorđo Sikimić, Editor in Chief: Jasmina Demirović (source CRA); general contact info here .	Mission is not specified on its website. Elaborate entertainment and some information content.
OBN	Private, Open Broadcast Network; Majority owner: GRP Media Ltd. Sarajevo (source here), whose owners are OBN JV B.V., Netherlands, whose founders are Ivan Čaleta, controversial businessman (see some reporting on him here and here), Ferenc Vaczlavik, and Toth Csaba	N/A, but mainly advertising	Director: Csaba Szaniszló Janos; Editor in Chief: Esad Hećimović (source CRA) ²²⁶ ; Director of GRP Media is Ivan Čaleta, and executive directors are Vaczlavik and T.Csaba (source here). General contact info here .	Mission not specified on its website. Elaborate entertainment and some information content.
BHT1	Public, part of the PSB system	Mainly TV license fee, in part advertising, detailed info N/A	Director: Belmin Karamehmedović; Director of program: Milan Trivić (source CRA); Contact info, general and specific, here .	A public service broadcaster, which as a rule provides 40 percent of informative and educational content, out of which 10 percent dedicated to marginalized groups (Rule 77/2015)

226 The fact that the data was not changed since April 2017 when Hećimović died, suggests that some of the information that CRA holds might be outdated.

Annex 5: Radio stations with highest reach in the region in 2017

Radio station	Daily reach*	Ownership	Funding	Other background information	Editorial policy and mission
<i>East Republika Srpska (E RS)</i>					
Radio BN (Bijeljina)	11,8	Private, connected with family Trišić (Hodžić, 2014 , p. 108)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	No data on personnel on its website; Director: Vladimir Trišić, Editor in chief: Aleksandar Berić (source CRA); general contact info here .	News and entertainment program. It is mostly oriented to the public in Republika Srpska. Its content involves critical reporting on RS government/party SNSD, and it is considered more favorable to SDS (Hodžić 2014 , 104) including for example coverage of "Pravda za Davida" (see here).
Radio Das (Bijeljina)	2,9	Private; "M.B. KOMPANI" Ltd Bijeljina <i>(TB amended)</i>	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	N/A on its website; Director and editor in Chief: Mihajlo Bojić (CRA); General contact info here .	Commercial-music radio, with 80 percent of music program (more here).
Radio Republike Srpske (Banja Luka)	2,2	Public, founded by Republika Srpska	In part from RTV fee, advertising and donations of the government of RS.	Director Draško Milinović; other info, on the Governing Board etc. here , contact info here .	This PSB (radio and TV station) involves distinctively favourable reporting on leading SNSD ²²⁷ , and some reports on the marginalisation of Serbs and Islamic terrorism of questionable reliability (see more in analyses here)
Radio Bobar (Bijeljina)	1,9	Private, indirectly belongs to the Bobar group, believed to be affiliated with SNSD (Hodžić 2014 , p. 113) <i>(TB updated, if needed)</i>	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director and editor in Chief: Milan Šijan, general contact info here	Program of music, entertainment and informative character (more here)

227 See for example overview of CRA decision for February 2018, available at: <https://rak.ba/news/565>. Also see analysis of raskrinkavanje.ba

Radio Slobomir (Bijeljina)	1,6	Private	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director Mladen Stojanović; Editor: Snježana Stojanović (CRA), general contact info here .	TV and radio including information and entertainment programming. Information on the mission and editorial policy not provided on its website.
Canton Tuzla (CT)					
Radio Kameleon (Tuzla)	6	Private, Owner: Berbić Zlatko (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Zlatko Berbić; editor in Chief: Kristina Gligorović (Kameleon and CRA); contacts here .	Entertainment and information program, stress on “investigative journalism”, educating and informing audience on multicultural community, promoting tolerance (more here)
Radio Glas Drine (Sapna)	5,7	Private Owners: Ismajil Smajlović and Hasan Omerović (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director and editor in Chief: Hasan Omerović (CRA); contacts here .	The goal, as defined on their website, is to provide “timely and objective information and excellent entertainment”. They started with test broadcasting of the TV program as well (more here)
RSG Radio (Sarajevo)	5,1	Private, owner Adnan Osmanagić (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Adnan Osmanagić; Editor in Chief: Adela Alagić-Đorđević (CRA); general contact info here .	Not specified on the website; Combination of entertainment and some information content.
Radio Kalman (Sarajevo)	3,8	Private, owner: Edin Kršo (source here and here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director Rabija Kršo; Editor in Chief: Jasmin Šabanović (CRA); general contact info here .	Combination of entertainment and some information content. As noted on the website it involves information on public significance in all sphere of social life; support for pluralism (more here)
Radio Studio D (Srebrenik)	3,7	Private, name of company Primat Plus Ltd, owner: Edis Džanić (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director and Editor in Chief: Dejan Djedović (CRA); general contact info here .	Includes entertainment and informative content, mission not clearly defined on its website (section About us here)

*Average reach is percentage of population i.e. sample that have been listening at least 5 minutes of the daily program of the previous day

Annex 6: Print media with the highest reach in 2017

Print outlet	Air* IRS	Air TK	Ownership	Funding	Other background	Editorial policy and mission
Dnevni avaz (Sarajevo)	3	15,3	Published by Avaz-roto press Ltd.; the ownership leads, through company Avaz Ltd. To Azra Radončić, ex-wife of F.Radončić (more here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Editor in Chief: Fadil Mandal; contact info here .	Reporting on daily socio-political issues; Involves reporting in favor of the SBB party and its leader Fahrudin Radončić (see more here , p. 106)
Euro Blic (Belgrade)	9,9	0,2	The owner is Ringier Axel Springer, Ltd., Srbija (info here), as part of the network present in other countries (Poland, Check Rep. and Slovakia). (Hodžić 2014 , p 107) ²²⁸	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Newspaper from Serbia, with edition for RS; contact info and info on key personnel in Belgrade here .	Reporting on daily socio-political issues in Serbia and Republika Srpska.
Glas Srpske (Banjaluka)	3,4	0,1	NIGD DNN, Ltd., connected with family Kopanja; Željko Kopanja (who died in 2017) was closely affiliated with SNSD and its president (Hodžić 2014 , page 107) ²²⁹ .	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Boris Dmitrašinić; Editor in chief: Borjana Radmanović Petrović (daughter of Nebojša Radmanović, SNSD)	Reporting on daily socio-political issues, oriented to audience in RS;
Preporod (Sarajevo)	0,3	3,1	Official newspaper of the Islamic community BiH	N/A; Probably from other revenues of Islamic community	Editor: Senada Tahirović, contact info here .	Online content on Bosnian Islamic community, Islamic teachings, but also Muslim war victims, although seemingly without problematic wording and demonization of other religious/ethnic groups.

228 Since these information from 2014 might be outdated, we will try to update them through requests to media outlets.

229 Ibid.

Oslobođenje (Sarajevo)	0,8	2,6	Owned by: Lider press Ltd, (owned by Rimmo Invest, Slovakia) and Consulting and PR Ltd., owned by Mujo Selimović (more here). Family Selimović is believed to be affiliated with party SDA.	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director and editor in Chief: Vildana Selimbegović; general contact info here .	Reporting on daily socio-political issues; believed to include reporting favorable to SDA party.
Dnevni list (Mostar)	0,1	1,1	Owned by members of family Rašić (more here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Mirjana Rašić, Editor in Chief: Dario Lukić; General contact info here .	Reporting on daily socio-political issues, oriented primarily to audiences in the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton.
Nezavisne novine (Banjaluka)	1,0	0,5	NIGD DNN, Ltd., (here) connected with family Kopanja; Željko Kopanja (who died in 2017) was closely affiliated with SNSD and its president (Hodžić 2014 , page 107) ²³⁰ .	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Editor in chief: Sandra Gojković-Arbutina; contact info, general and of main personnel available here .	Reporting on daily socio-political issues, oriented primarily to audience in RS;

Annex 7: Mapping of online media with the highest number of visits in 2017

Media outlet	Unique users TK	Unique users East RS	Ownership data	Funding	Other background information	Editorial policy and mission
Klix.ba (Sarajevo)	126843	59552	Publisher, Intersoft Ltd., owners: Dario and Mario Šimić (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: D.Šimić, executive direct: Mario Šimić; names of six editors and journalists here ; Contact info here .	News and entertainment website. "BH portal", "pointing to social problems", "affirmation of positive values, events and persons"; more here .
Avaz.ba (Sarajevo)	111340	54371	Published by Avaz-roto press Ltd.; the ownership leads, to Azra Radončić, ex-wife of F.Radončić (more here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Editor of online edition: Ema Maslo; general contact info here .	News and entertainment website; Involves reporting in favor of SBB party and its leader Fahrudin Radončić (see more here , p. 106)
Radiosarajevo.ba (Sarajevo)	68430	34445	Publisher Zid Ltd., owner of which is advertising agency Fabrika Ltd., owner of which are Senad Zaimović and Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović (here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Suada Peštek; Four editors and journalists listed here ; contact info here .	News and entertainment website, which also involves columns by established authors, provides infographics; Section About us states particular attention to inclusion of marginalized groups and promotion of democratic values (more here)

Fokus.ba (Sarajevo)	63540	32587	Fokus Ltd., Owners Nermin Mahmunović and five other individuals (more here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Nermin Mahmutović; Executive Editor: Mahir Šahović; Names of other personnel and contact info here .	News and entertainment website, includes some columns. Mission and editorial policy not defined on its website.
ba.n1info.com	49725	21702	Owned by United Group, a leading media and telecommunication company in the region of SEE. The majority of ownership over United group was in 2019 transferred from KKR investment fund to international investment company BC Partners (source here).	N/A; probably from advertising and the CNN network	Partner of CNN; includes centers in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb.	News website, offering “fast and accurate information from the field” (more here)
Tuzlanski.ba (Tuzla)	49522	5363*	DSO “Unomedia” Tuzla; ownership data N/A. <i>TB explored further in the next month.</i>	N/A; probably mainly from advertising.	Director: Nermin Kržalić; Editor: Adnan Kržalić; Names of other personnel and contact info here .	News and entertainment website focused particularly on Tuzla region. More here .
Novi.ba (Sarajevo)	48241	28769	Owner: Mirza Džindo (source here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director: Damir Kaletović; general contact info here .	Not specified in their website. It is a news and entertainment website.

Hayat.ba (Sarajevo)	44191	12805*	Elvir Švrakić and others (more here)	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Director of digital sector: Igor Todorovac; Editor of digital media: Amir Saletović; Detailed contact info here .	News and entertainment website. Mission and policy not specified on the website.
Nezavisne.com (Banjaluka)	34136	46 621	NIGD DNN, Ltd., (here) connected with family Kopanja; Željko Kopanja (who died in 2017) was closely affiliated with SNSD and its president (Hodžić 2014 , page 107) ²³¹ .	N/A; probably mainly from advertising	Editor of website: Milan Šekara; contact info, general and of main personnel available here .	News website; mission and policy not specified on the website.
Buka.com (Banjaluka)	30848	21859	Publisher is NGO Centar za informativnu dekontaminaciju mladih Banja Luka	N/A; probably mainly from grants of international donors	Editor in Chief: Aleksandar Trifunović; Contributors and general contact info listed here .	News and entertainment website; includes columns, content that includes facing the past, critique of the government and promotion of democratic values. Mission and policy not defined on its website.

Annex 8: most relevant FB pages in the region – background information and content

BRATUNAC		
<i>FB page and category in which it is listed</i>	<i>Notes on the background and profile</i>	<i>Insights from an overview of the pages</i>
Bratunac info (as media/news company)	The page does not provide background information	<p>👍 2,914 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,919 people follow this</p> <p>Self-defined as a news platform focused on Bratunac; FB posts are however rare (in May one, in April 8 one), mostly showing photos, announcement of music events, religious holidays and similar.</p>
Association Friends of Srebrenica (Prijatelji Srebrenice); (as the most liked NGO, and also UPS media as the most liked news company)	Deals with problems of youth employment and media production. They have a Business Counseling Center for Youth and the Youth Studio for Srebrenica and Bratunac.	<p>Prijatelji Srebrenice:</p> <p>👍 2,517 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,516 people follow this</p> <p>Publishes info on projects and events, mostly of this association and partners. Several posts per month.</p> <p>UPS Media:</p> <p>👍 12,155 people like this</p> <p>👤 12,172 people follow this</p> <p>Posts including music, info on events, content on education etc.</p>
Svetosavska omladinska zajednica Bratunac (here) (as a religious organization)	Connected to a monastery (Hram uspenja presvete bogorodice Bratunac), Other background info is not provided	<p>👍 2,770 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,770 people follow this</p> <p>Mostly content on Ortodox faith and values, invites to sittings, and events, content of prayers. Some content underlines connection with other Ortodox nations, for example with references to tzar Nikolaj Romanov and Russian Army; an article glorifying ciliric letters and criticizing Serbs that use latin ones;</p>

<p>Bratunac (here) (As a community page)</p>	<p>No background info provided</p>	<p> 4,474 people like this  4,402 people follow this Posts are old, from 2016; mostly focused on light info, practical tips and announcements.</p>
<p>Bratunačke priče (here)</p>	<p>No background info provided It is written that the purpose of the page is to spread the truth about everything that the media lies about.</p>	<p> 4,913 people like this  4,741 people follow this Posts are old, from 2016; focused on the history of Bratunac. The page contains some peace messages but also in one post, for example, there are claims that war crimes against Serbs are ignored and are not condemned. An illustrative quote: "Ignoring Serb tragedies is part of a global project on reshuffling relations on the Balkans, and... Tribunal in Hague... or Tribunal for Serbs...the most unjust judicial institution in history".</p>
<p>Zajedno za Srebrenicu (here) (As a community page)</p>	<p>No background info provided</p>	<p> 1906 people like this  1919 people follow this The page promotes the Mayor of Srebrenica Mladen Grujičić, his picture is a profile picture of the page, his visits and activities are covered; also some articles of the local media (e-srebrenica, Glas srpske etc) are reposted.</p>

SREBRENICA		
<i>FB page and category in which it is listed</i>	<i>Notes on background and profile</i>	<i>Insight from an overview of the pages</i>
Opština Srebrenica (here) (as government organization)	Official FB page of the Srebrenica Municipality, provides mission statement, contact info and info about the website of the municipality	<p>👍 1,883 people like this</p> <p>👤 1,906 people follow this</p> <p>Posts on the activities of the Mayor and municipality, interviews with the Mayor, announcements, some information on weather, events etc. in Srebrenica.</p>
RTV Srebrenica (here) (as media organization)	The FB page of the public broadcaster RTV Srebrenica, it provides contact information and the link to its website.	<p>👍 4219 people like this</p> <p>👤 4241 people follow this</p> <p>Posts on local news from Srebrenica, mainly focusing on sports and cultural events, competitions, folclor and religious hollidays and greetings. As the monitoring was done during Eid, several posts were related to it.</p>
Udruženje Prijatelji Srebrenice (here) (as NGO)	Deal with problems of youth employment and media production. They have a Business Counseling Center for Youth and the Youth Studio for Srebrenica and Bratunac.	<p>Prijatelji Srebrenice:</p> <p>👍 2,517 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,516 people follow this</p> <p>Publishes info on projects and events, mostly of this association and partners. Several posts per month.</p>
Zajedno za Srebrenicu (here)	No background info provided	<p>👍 1906 people like this</p> <p>👤 1919 people follow this</p> <p>The page promotes the Mayor of Srebrenica Mladen Grujičić, his picture is a profile picture of the page, his visits and activities are covered; also some articles of the local media (e-srebrenica, Glas srpske etc) are reposted.</p>
Medžlis iz Srebrenica (here)	The official profile of the Islamic community Srebrenica. Provides information of leaders and contact information.	<p>👍 3,359 people like this</p> <p>👤 3,380 people follow this</p> <p>Mainly religious content, focused on religious hoidays and events. A short overveiw of the content does not reveal radical content. However, some content refers to the war, including announcements of the commemobration of Bosniaks killed in Bratunac.</p>

ZVORNIK		
Info Birač (here) (as a news page)	The FB page of the online news media; there is a link to the website and on the website information about the editor (Zoran Kuljić) and contact phone and e-mail, here .	<p>👍 2,500 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,255 people follow this</p> <p>Mostly posts from the online news media Info Brirač focused on Zvornik and the Birač region. We do not find extremely problematic content but there is some emphasis on Serbs and Serbhood, for example in a title « Serbs champions of European championship in robotics », « ...management of MIF FBiH includes not one Serb », other ethnicities are not mentioned in similar context in the latest posts.</p>
Istorija Zvornika (Zvornik History here) (as a community organization)	Self-proclaimed mission of promoting the history of Zvornik. There are no data on persons behind the page or contact information.	<p>👍 2,569 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,545 people follow this</p> <p>Involves posts and reports on the history of Yugoslavia, but also Serbia, Russia and other countries. The sources vary, including Blic RS and interestingly STAV, a pro-SDA magazine. There is almost no mentioning on the more recent history, including the war of th 1990s, excluding a post on the Dayton peace agreement.</p>
Neću ti dozvoliti da rušiš Zvornik (I will not allow you to tear down Zvornik, here) (as a cause page)	Stated mission: "All that are against fascism, abolition of Republika Srpska and false protests on poverty in the name of abolition of Republika Srpska". No background info or contact.	<p>👍 2,321 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,296 people follow this</p> <p>A Serb nationalistic page, focused entirely on glorification of Serbs and Republika Srpska, including glorification of Ratko Mladić etc.</p>
Pages: Zvornik Zvornik (here) and Zvornik 1410 (here) (as individual blogger and Non-profit organization)	No background information, except short claim about no relations to politics (Zvornik Zvornik) and a description of the history of Zvornik (in Zvornik 1410)	<p>👍 2,740 people like this/ 2,799</p> <p>👤 2,737 people follow this/ 2,802</p> <p>Posts are rare, mainly shered posts of other sources; they focus on humanitarian actions and light content, with some posts evoking the NATO attacks and Serb victims, others for example pointing how Musa Čazim Čatić was declaring himself as a Serb, or similar.</p>
Osvit Radio Zvornik (here) (as radio station)	Page includes email and telephone contact info, and refers to website of Radio Osvit. No further background info given	<p>👍 4,649 people like this</p> <p>👤 4,677 people follow this</p> <p>News content from the website shared, no visible ideological position or problematic content.</p>

KALESIJA		
<i>FB page and category in which it is listed</i>	<i>Notes on background and profile</i>	<i>Insight from an overview of the pages</i>
Zeman Kalesija (here) (as media/news company)	“Portal for a different Kalesija”, it directs to its website, name of the journalist written	<p>👍 1,865 people like this</p> <p>👤 1,826 people follow this</p> <p>Seems inactive since September 2018, shares news content from its website. Some bosniak partiotic content including promotion of books, anniversaries, and a lecture about the Army of BiH. Some content on religious events. Possible leanding to SDA (judged based on photos).</p>
Infoplus (here) (as media/news company)	“Agency and portal for dissemination of information from all spheres of life”. The name of the owner written, and a link to website .	<p>👍 9,195 people like this</p> <p>👤 9,896 people follow this</p> <p>Mostly soft news, but some recent content on SDA (possible favoritism towards SDA).</p>
SDA Kalesija (here) (as political organization)	Official FB page of SDA of Kalesija; phone contact and website link provided	<p>👍 2,656 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,651 people follow this</p> <p>Promotional content about the party, its meetings and officials, religious and patriotic</p>
Kalesijske novine (here) (as media/news organization)	“information website”, link to website provided, no background info	<p>👍 2,736 people like this</p> <p>👤 2,751 people follow this</p> <p>Recent content focused on Muslim religious Holidays, gatherings and greetings; some content refering to genocide over Bosniaks.</p>
NEON televizija (here) (as news and media website/ Television channel)	Provided phone contact and link to the website of the media outlet	<p>👍 10,712 people like this</p> <p>👤 11,049 people follow this</p> <p>In a recent post on physical fights between immigrants in Velika Kladuša, there are user comments that include explicit hate speech «kill the trash...set them on fire... they are animals (literate translation – Cattle», savages»</p>

VLASENICA		
FB page and category in which it is listed	Notes on background and profile	Insight from an overview of the pages
Vlasenica 24 (here) (as a Media/news company)	"...guide through current affairs in Vlasenica municipality". Contact phone provided, and link to the website.	<p> 3,097 people like this</p> <p> 3,171 people follow this</p> <p>Posting content from the website, daily news, including videos from the seating of the municipality assembly, as well a post on history of orthodox church. Other than that no clear ideological background detected.</p>
Radio Magic Milici (here) (as a radio station)	Page provides phone contact info and link to the website of the outlet; on the website there are more contact info, but no further background info.	<p> 3,300 people like this</p> <p> 3,277 people follow this</p> <p>Provides some news from the region and the country, including some announcement of the authorities, and promotion of some NGO organised events, and among recent content the announcement of an orthodox religious event reposted from Despotovina.</p>
Mr. Rajko Dukić (here) (as public figure)	Page of the controversial businessman (more info provided in description of Radio Boksit); It provides his bio.	<p> 2,399 people like this</p> <p> 2,409 people follow this</p> <p>Posts on company Boksit and Rajko Dukić, involving a controversial statements on right to fire people whose relatives have left the company. There are also some photos o Dukić with Milorad Dodik.</p>
Birač danas (here) (as a media/news company)	No background info, a link to Blog Spot here .	<p> 7,824 people like this</p> <p> 7,849 people follow this</p> <p>Some of the posts reflect Serb nationalism, including for example accusation about the unjust "Sarajevo judiciary" acting against "honourable and decent fighters" of Army and police of RS (here, also here). "Noone who...was fighting for RS is safe" "Should we allow that corrupted thrash prosecutes fighters..." are some of the problematic quotes.</p>
UPS Media (here) (as a media/news company)	"first and leading youth media, TV production, Radio, web, in the area of Srebrenica and Bratunac". Provides some contact info and link to the website. Connected to Prijatelji Srebrenice (NGO).	<p> 11,863 people like this</p> <p> 11,883 people follow this</p> <p>Posts including music, info on events, content on education and other content potentially relevant for youth.</p>

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