

POLICY BRIEF KOSOVO



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“Media Situation in Kosovo” –Gender Representation –

Jeta Abazi
University of Prishtina

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1.1 General Background

Media are the main source of information for citizens and they are supposed to do their work as accurately, impartially, correctly and fairly as possible. In Kosovo's case, media are in a fragile financial situation, often depending on and influenced by the those in power and business groups, and often criticized for their lack of professionalism. Organizations that measure levels of freedom of speech around the world give Kosovo a low rank. The latest report by *Freedom House*, headquartered in Washington, ranks Kosovo 98th with regard to freedom of speech. Below Kosovo as countries with partial freedom are listed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and China, with North Korea being at the bottom¹. *Reporters Without Border*, established in France in 1995, in their 2014 report rank Kosovo 80th out of 180 countries².

Kosovo media face difficulties in obtaining information from the Government and public institutions, accompanied with the failure of the Government to assign a spokesperson since 2010³. In a difficult environment for journalists, the issue of gender respect may sound as a luxury aspect vis-à-vis issues that media faces, but respect for gender equality is a key element of professional media.

Institutions which create public opinion must respect and address adequately the gender aspect of their functioning because this affects the respect for and commitment to human rights that are guaranteed by Kosovo's constitution.

Women in Kosovo formally enjoy the same legal rights as men, but due to a relatively traditional environment, they are faced with social pressure and discrimination. Media are not free of this discrimination either.

In Kosovo, television remains the main source of information, but newspapers are considered as more reliable sources of information. Thus, this policy brief will present the results obtained from monitoring three Kosovo dailies, in order to provide the most accurate and original assessment with regard to dailies' reporting and gender representation. Three different dailies were monitored from March 5, 2014 to March 15, 2014. Since the gender aspect was the focus of the analysis, dailies are used only as samples and their names will not be mentioned (in the analysis, they will be referred to as, **newspaper number 1**, **newspaper number 2** and **newspaper number 3**).

¹ 2014 *Freedom House Report*, accessed on May 1, 2014 at: freedomhouse.org.

² *Reporters Without Borders Report*, retrieved from official website, accessed on May 10, 2014, at: rsf.org.

³ 2013 *US Department of State Report*, accessed on February 27, 2014 at: state.gov.

There are very few quantitative media studies in Kosovo and their paucity poses a challenge for researchers. As part of the Law on Gender Equality, a Government Plan on Gender Equality was developed, and based on that plan, the Agency on Gender Equality is required to conduct research in the field of media. So far, there is only one study on the website of this institution, conducted during the period 2010-2011, which examined dailies to see women representation in print media⁴.

In our analysis on gender representation in Kosovo dailies, monitoring will address the following questions:

- *How much space is given to women in daily newspapers?*
- *How are women represented in articles of daily newspapers?*
- *In which rubrics and journalistic genres are women represented most frequently?*

1.2 Kosovo Media Background

Media market in Kosovo includes twenty-one televisions and eighty-three radio stations, which air their programs only through cable networks. Based on broadcasting language, there are radio and TV stations in Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Turkish⁵. There is only one public broadcaster – Radio and Television of Kosovo (RTK) that has three television

channels and two radio stations (in Albanian and Serbian)⁶. Regarding private televisions that have national coverage, there are Koha Vision (KTV) and Television 21 (TV21). Two public broadcasters, Klan Kosova and Rrokum TV, can be viewed in the entire country through cable networks.

Print media market includes eight daily newspapers: Koha Ditore, Kosova Sot, Zëri, Tribuna, Epoka e Re Lajm, Bota Sot and Bota Press. In March 2013 one daily newspaper was transformed into an online news portal (Gazeta Express).

In fact, the number of daily newspapers and electronic portals is constantly growing. Regarding the number of issues of newspapers, they are sometimes revealed by the newspapers themselves, but that information has not been corroborated by an independent body and cannot be found in the dailies' official websites either. There is no state regulatory body that is specifically in place for print media only, but, instead, a number of dailies have joined to establish the Council for Printed Media⁷. Audio-visual broadcast services are monitored by the Independent Media Commission, whose members are elected by the Kosovo Assembly. However, this body that is so important for media has been criticized for coming under political influence and for a lack of

⁴ *Women representation in print media, 2012, retrieved from Agency on Gender Equality, accessed on April 12, 2014, at: abqi.rks-gov.net.*

⁵ *Additional note: According to IMC, there are fourteen TV stations in Albanian, five in Serbian and one in Turkish. From eighty-three radio stations, two are public ones, while forty-five radio stations broadcast in Albanian, twenty-five in Serbian, and three in Bosnian.*

⁶ *IMC Annual Report for 2013 submitted to the Kosovo Assembly, accessed on December 1, 2013, at: kpm-ks.org.*

⁷ *International Mission Final Report –ENEMO on municipal elections 2013 in Kosovo, submitted to media on March 4, 2014.*

transparency in its decision-making during the past municipal elections.

IMC has failed to exercise its legal responsibility on monitoring the media work and on reviewing and making decisions with regard to media-related complaints⁸.

Other groups or organizations that operate on behalf of defending media and journalists have not been able to avoid political influence and have not been able to be functional. The Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (AGPK) has faced various problems.

An important note for readers of this policy brief analysis: Kosovo media have journalists that try to do their work professionally, but they remain under the shadow of problems their media faces.

1.3 Gender Aspect

The way in which women are presented in Kosovo media is not the focus of continued analyses and critiques, even though recent initiatives of some individuals and organizations have shown that there is hope that citizens will not remain silent when women are discriminated against, and when they are not represented fairly in the public and in the media.

A reaction campaign against advertisements of a refreshment drink company forced a private company to remove provoking ads, which

portrayed women in a discriminatory way⁹. While this may seem as a small step towards significant potential changes, this may remind us of the reaction of many Vienna citizens in 2007, who did not allow that information put on trams of the city included only female models to indicate reserved seats for the handicapped, the elderly and parents with children. Instead, they insisted that the parent model that held a child in the arms was a man, and that male model is what remains in the city trams today¹⁰.

Kosovo women are discriminated against due to several factors, including tradition, economic circumstances, education of citizens (men and women), rule of law and weak judicial institutions. Unemployment is much higher for women than for men, 40% compared to 28¹¹. According to the Agency for Registration of Businesses, only 5% of businesses registered in Kosovo are run by women¹². Meanwhile, out of 22 ambassadors that represent Kosovo's foreign policy, only 5 are women; in the Government cabinet there are two women (there used to be three), including one deputy-prime minister and one minister. However, as part of the election system, there is a 30% gender quota for the Parliament and the president of the country is a woman.

⁹ For more read the article titles "Reklama e "Schweppes-it" Më e Hidhët se Shija", accessed on April 17, 2014, at: <http://gazetajnk.com>.

¹⁰ For more, read the article in German, accessed on April 2, 2014, at: genderblog.de.

¹¹ Agency of Statistics of Kosovo, Results of the Survey on Labour Force in Kosovo 2012, accessed on April 2, 2014, at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net>

¹² 2013 US Department of State Report, accessed on February 27, 2014, at: state.gov.

⁸ Final report of the European Mission for Elections Monitoring, January 2014, retrieved from the official website of the institution: eueom.eu.

Regarding the municipal level, the last elections have offered other nuances of discrimination. "It was assessed that women have played a low profile role during the elections. From 224 candidates that ran for mayor's office, only nine were women, and only one of them was elected in office, the one in Gjakova"¹³. In this regard, media can either help or aggravate the situation. The number of women moderators in private televisions that run political debates is very low, compared to men moderators. There are up to four women moderators that run political shows in four television stations with national coverage. One daily newspaper is run by a woman and one daily has a woman as its editor-in-chief.

The Caucus of Women Assembly Members had reacted for the misrepresentation of them by one of the private televisions in Kosovo – while the TV was reporting on one of their gatherings in a news edition, the report was accompanied with a folk-music song with mocking tones. The Caucus of Women Assembly Members reacted, but the TV in question not only did not apologize, but repeated the same mocking language.¹⁴

Journalists and reporters come from an environment that is loaded with stereotypes that discriminate against women, and thus,

that reality may be reflected into their work.¹⁵ With a provoking title "Oops President", a denigrating image of Kosovo's president was published in one of the information portals (in September 2013), and the court had to intervene to stop the further publication of the image. Both of these cases of denigration and misrepresentation of women would not have occurred if the reporting was about men leaders.

1.4. Current Legal Framework

The Republic of Kosovo guarantees gender equality as a core value for democratic development of the society, equal opportunities for women and men to participate in political, economic, social and cultural life¹⁶.

The Agency for Gender Equality was established as part of the Law on Gender Equality. The Agency is responsible for monitoring gender issues in all fields, including media. The Agency drafts and proposes policies for promotion of gender equality and supervises their implementation.¹⁷ But, besides a report on media during 2010-2011, there are no other publications or updated recommendations for gender representation in Kosovo media.

The Independent Media Commission is also responsible for respecting gender-related aspects for all broadcasting services in

¹³ Final report of the European Mission for Elections Monitoring, January 2014, retrieved from the official website of the institution: eueom.eu.

¹⁴ Press Release of the Caucus of Women Assembly Members, February 21, 2012.

¹⁵ Government Plan on Gender Equality, retrieved from the website of the Agency on Gender Equality, accessed on April 12, 2013, at: abgj.rks-gov.net.

¹⁶ The Kosovo Constitution, retrieved from the Kosovo Assembly website, accessed on April 2, 2014, at: kuvendikosoves.org.

¹⁷ The Law on Gender Equality, retrieved from the Kosovo Assembly website on April 12, 2014, at: kuvendikosoves.org.

Kosovo¹⁸. The Council for Printed Media has also underlined the prohibition of the use of hate speech and biased treatment of an individual biased due to their gender¹⁹.

1.5. Women Representation in Daily Newspapers

Of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful.²⁰ Cases when media present women only as sex symbols, in provocative photos and semi-naked are frequent, especially in entertaining and advertising journalism. In media, someone who is taking care of a child is almost always a woman.²¹ Also, the tendency that women are represented talking about their relations with men is frequent. Media create several categories of women. The category of "mother, wife, girlfriend", "slim, fat, old, young", "sex objects" etc. Women are represented in the category of a mother, wife or girlfriend of a man in media reports due to their relations they have with their children or husband or as a girlfriend of an important person. In the second category that is created by media when women's weight or age is discussed, successful actresses or models are presented, and in their cases age is discussed, how they manage to look young, how they manage to maintain slim

lines, etc. The third category is self-explanatory.

Because media pervades our lives, the ways they misrepresent genders may distort how we see our-selves and how we perceive men and women.²² Based on our monitoring that lasted for ten days, we observed that women are less present in front pages and rubrics on important topics such as politics, economy, education, health, justice, sports and culture, while in advertisement and in entertaining rubrics known as show-biz news they are over-represented and also semi-naked. While this may be done to attract readers and to increase their readership, we must remember that besides their information role, media also serve the function of educating citizens.

There is a media tendency that when there are women as sources of information within the text, then only one woman is quoted or interviewed.

Addressing this tendency is similar to *Bechtel* test, which is applied in cinemas in Sweden to identify forms of gender discrimination in movies. To pass this test, the movie has to have at least two women characters that speak to one another, but their conversation must not be about a man.

The indicators that they have set has revealed responses that show that movies very rarely have roles when two women talk to one another, and even if there are cases when they

¹⁸ The Law on IMC, retrieved from the IMC official website, accessed on April 12, 2014 at: kpm-ks.org

¹⁹ The Print Media Council, the Kosovo Print Media Code, accessed on March 15, 2014, at: presscouncil-ks.org.

²⁰ Article: Media influence in gender observations, Department of Communication, University of North Carolina, written by Julia T. Wood, 1994, accessed on January 20, 2014, at: esathigh.org.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

talk to one another, then the topic is about men. If women are represented in smaller numbers, they seem lonelier and less supported by other women. Therefore, motivated by this test, we have analysed newspapers to also see how many women are there within an article or in a picture in the newspaper.

In the front-page of **newspaper number 1**, women were represented only 6 times in ten days of monitoring, in politics 9, in education 11, in national topics 17, in Opinion Pieces 4, in sports 3, in marketing 9, in culture 15, in crosswords 6, while they were present the most in show-biz sections, 35 times in total. They were represented as sex symbols in 21% of the articles, in mothers or wives role 14%, and their body mass, age or weight was discussed in 7% of articles of the newspaper. Newspaper **number 1**, therefore, has presented a woman as a sex symbol (singer, model or actress), such that engage in sports very little, is closed on itself as a picture in a crossword, and even when she makes statements on national issues, she rarely comments on the events.

So, in **newspaper number 1**, within texts and pictures, in 82% of the articles involving women there is only one women, in 13% of articles there are two women, and in 5% more than two women. When women are presented in the media, in 23% of the cases they are only shown in an image, in 43% of the cases they are shown with image and text, and in 34% of the cases they are represented through text only. This serves the purpose of

examining whether they have a role in the article or are represented only as an image. Newspapers show images of the type where women are in assisting positions, while men are those who sign documents or instruct women.

In **newspaper number 2**, women were shown in the front-page 17 times; in the rubric for commentaries they were presented 23 times; in politics 19; in economy 5; and in marketing 44 times. There was a contrast between sports and show-biz sections. In sports, they were presented only 4 times, in culture 7, but they were presented the most in the sections on the world of film, fashion and music, with 2-4 pages, or a total of 92 times. Women that do not have any other role but only as sex objects were represented as such in 32% of the cases, as a mother or wife in 11%, while talking about women weight or age in 12% of the cases. Usually newspapers include rubrics with an advising role, where advice on women maintaining weight at appropriate levels or advice on how women may look younger is included. In 91% of the cases, there is only one woman in the article or picture, in 4% of cases there are two women in an article or picture, and in 5% of the cases there are more than two women. Media create an image of women as divisive with their colleagues, while the same does not happen for men. In show biz related texts, there are texts on gossip and disputes that female models or singers have among them. In this newspaper, women were presented the most with photo and text 55%, with photos 31%

and with text 14%. **Newspaper number 2**, created an image of the woman as a sex symbol, who is commented on for her weight or age. Usually she is alone in her statements and presentations and is often in the newspaper to advertise. She is present with commentaries on economy-related topics, while she is little represented in sports.

In the front-page of **newspaper number 3**, women were represented 9 times, in the section on rule of law 2, in economy 8, in opinion pieces 5, in current news 17, in advertisements 25, in politics 25 and the representation of women in show-biz section dominated in the newspaper with 58 times, as well as in the sections with advice on health and relations with men with 100 times. In the section on culture, women were presented 6 times and in sports only 4 times. The newspaper during the monitoring period published jokes that most of the times were offensive for women, referring to women cheating, women ignorance, and how they ask to be "beaten-up." I am sharing the joke of March 11 with the readers: "Husband says to his wife, 'you have to be thankful to the board that reads "Don't throw waste in the sea" otherwise I would have thrown you away long time ago". In this newspaper, women were presented as sex objects 27%, as mothers and wives 23%, while articles talked about women weight and age 17%. In journalistic articles where women are in the position of mother or wife, they are presented as weak, with phrases such as "while tears went down from her

eyes", "eyes filled with tears", "he cheated on me and I forgave him, "I begged him not to leave me, I grabbed his leg not to let him go". In 83% of the articles and pictures, only one woman was present, two women were present in 11% of cases and more than two only in 6% of cases. In newspaper **number 3**, women were represented only in pictures 15%, in pictures and text 62%, and only in text 21%.

Newspaper number 3, created the image of a mother, then of a woman that is present in the newspaper as a sex symbol, and as emotionally weak. Women were represented the most in the show-biz section, then in politics and less in commentaries and on the topics of rule of law and sports.

1.6. Recommendations

To improve women representation in newspapers and in media in general, this brief analysis offers the following recommendations to respective institutions:

- To seriously address gender aspects and media coverage should be balanced against a men-dominated landscape;
- Assembly committees on Media (etc.) and Gender Equality (etc.) should react to discriminatory language and images used by media against women;
- IMC should closely monitor broadcast services and start applying fines for cases not respecting the Code of Conduct;
- The Agency on Gender Equality should react to discrimination cases in media

and should conduct more frequent studies and analysis on gender representation in order to contribute to women emancipation;

- Council for Printed Media should be more attentive to gender representation in newspapers and portals;
- Newspapers should provide adequate space to women and to balance men and women in sections where they are placed as sex objects. They should invite women more often to speak in an expert capacity and should not use only women for aesthetic purposes;
- Media and civil society should discuss and react more often to discrimination cases and women inequality in public and media.

About the Author:

Jeta Abazi has a master's degree in Journalism and has also studied Political Science. Currently, she is a teaching assistant at the Department of Journalism, University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina". Abazi was recently awarded the Balkans Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence. She has experience in journalism and public communication.

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Contact:

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Office in Kosovo
Bulevardi Nëna Terezë 30-3/6
KO-10000, Prishtinë
Telephone +381 (0) 38 229 874
Prishtina@kas.de
www.kas.de/kosovo