

MA Davor Marko, PhD candidate

Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, Belgrade,
Republic of Serbia

Centre for Social Research Analitika, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina¹

Contested social role of the PSB: Many faces of pluralism as the central feature of PSB performance in democratic societies²

Abstract: This paper rethinks the role of Public service broadcasting (PSB) in promoting and forging pluralism and diversity for the sake of democratic wealth of one's society. Media pluralism is the central concept around which the role of the reformed public media has been created. This concept is contested today, along many lines, and this paper will elaborate the three main: pluralism in the structure, pluralism of content, and pluralism implying the active role of the audience. In a changing environment, where user-oriented contents are becoming popular, it seems that the PSB mission shouldn't be only about providing a diverse content from various sources, but also to provide the audience with more active role in using it. This leads us to the quite now concept of exposure diversity which is today considered as necessary addition to contemporary media policies. These three dimensions will be elaborated using the cases of two public broadcasters in Serbia – Radio-television of Serbia (RTS), and Radio-television of Vojvodina (RTV).

Key words: *Public service media, Pluralism, Diversity, Sources, Editorial policies, Audience*

1 Contact: davor.marko@analitika.ba

2 This paper was presented on 8th Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conference on "The Digital Media Challenge" organized by the University of Zagreb in cooperation with the ECREA CEE Network and co – sponsored by ICA which was held in June 2015.

MA Davor Marko, doktorand

Fakultet političkih nauka, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd, Republika Srbija
Centar za društvena istraživanja Analitika, Sarajevo, Bosna i Hercegovina

Osporena društvena uloga javnih RTV servisa: Mnoga lica pluralizma kao središnjeg obilježja učinka javnih RTV servisa u demokratskim društvima³

Apstrakt: U radu se ponovno promišlja uloga javnih RTV servisa u unaprjeđenju i stvaranju pluralizma i raznovrsnosti radi demokratskog bogatstva ljudskog društva. Medijski pluralizam je centralni koncept oko kojeg je stvorena uloga reformisanih javnih medija. Ovaj koncept se osporava danas, duž mnogih redova, a ovaj rad će razraditi tri glavna: pluralizam u strukturi, pluralizam sadržaja, te pluralizam koji podrazumijeva aktivnu ulogu publike. U promjenjivom okruženju, gdje korisniku orijentisani sadržaj postaje popularan, čini se da misija RTV servisa ne bi trebala biti samo o pružanju raznovrsnog sadržaja iz raznih izvora, ali i osigurati javnosti aktivniju ulogu pri korišćenju istoga. To nas dovodi do sasvim novog koncepta izlaganja različitosti koje se danas smatra potrebnim dodatkom savremenoj, medijskoj politici. Te tri dimenzije će biti razrađene na primjeru dva javna emitera u Srbiji – Radio-televizije Srbije (RTS) i Radio-televizije Vojvodine (RTV).

Ključne riječi: *medijski javni servisi, pluralizam, različitost, izvori, urednička politika, auditorijum*

³ Ovaj rad je predstavljen na Osmoj konferenciji medija i komunikacije Srednje i Istočne Evrope na temu „Izazovi digitalnih medija“ u organizaciji Univerziteta u Zagrebu u saradnji s ECREA CEE Network and co – pod pokroviteljstvom ICA koji je održan u junu 2015. godine.

Introduction

Principles upon which the concept of PSB is based upon are universality, diversity, independence, and distinctiveness. Universality defines that access to PSB should be free to every citizen, as well as easy to follow and understand. The service of the PSB has to be diversified in three ways – in regard to genres, the audiences targeted, and the topics that are reported. In this sense, principles of universality and diversity are highly interrelated.

Universality itself is quite diffuse concept. Alike other concepts, such as diversity or pluralism, it has been frequently used in communication and media policies, without being tied to specific meaning (Napoli, 2001; Hitchens, 2006; Karppinen, 2013). Born and Prosser (2001) identified three different senses of universality - first, universality implying technical and geographical dimension; second, social and cultural universality; and, third, universality of genre and modes of addresses. In order to meet the imperative of universality, PSB needs to offer program of the highest possible range in the terms of genre, topics, for various ages and tastes, bearing in mind, in the same time, its quality.

In order to performed its destined democratizing role PSB should provide a public forum for various communities and individuals to express and counterpart their ideas, and benefit from this interaction. Providing diversity and enabling dialogue (not imposing consensus), is the way of forming „culturally aware and mature, culturally pluralistic citizenry“ (Born and Prosser, 2001: 675). In this regard, PSB relation to the audience/citizens is considered to be crucial. So far, in practice, PSB rather demonstrated what Ytreberg calls a 'patronising elitism' characterised with a misbalanced relation in which the PSB decide for the audience what is worth, good, valuable, and relevant to society and democracy (Ytreberg, 2004; Ytreberg and Sundet, 2009). Media policies, on global and local levels, related to the PSB so far didn't recognize its potential and desired role in direct interaction with its audience.

Supplying citizens with wide range of contents and viewpoints has been in the hearth of traditional notion of broadcasting. As Ofcom (2012) stated in its report, the final objective of pluralism policies is to contribute to a well-functioning democratic society through informed citizens. But citizenship perspective doesn't mean one-way stream of communication. Some scholars (Napoli, 2011; Helberg 2012; 2015) proposed the concept of 'diverse exposure', while others (Peruško et al., 2012; Peruško 2013) labelled it as 'received diversity', and both take active role of the audience into account. It has to meet three objectives – to confront users with “the different” (with purpose, or via serendipitous encounters); diversifying conversations; and coaching the citizen as autonomous actor (Helberger, 2012).

The aim of this paper is to reconsider the notion of 'pluralism', adding a new, active, dimension of it – the role of the audience. Following accounts of Napoli, Helberg, and Burry, the main claim is that media policies regulating diversity and pluralism, as a core part of the PSB's mission, are not only about supplying a diverse content

from different sources but also about making sure that audience is playing an active role in recognizing and using it. The active use of the content or exposure diversity “examines to what extent the diversity of content and supply actually results in a (more) diverse program consumption” (Helberg, 2015: 1326). This question is especially relevant in the age of users, and individualized approach to the audience.

Discussion within this paper will be contextualized and provided using as a case two public broadcasters in Serbia, the Radio-television of Serbia (RTS) and the Radio-television of Vojvodina (RTV). Pluralism and diversity will be discussed on the level of regulation and practice. Discussion on the media exposure will be provided in the final chapter of this paper.

1. Layers of Pluralism

Concepts such as plurality and diversity have been for a long time *buzzwords* in communication policy. Usually, “these concepts have not been infused with the specific, concrete meaning necessary for them to serve as meaningful and effective tools for designing, implementing, and analyzing policies” (Napoli and Karppinen, 2013). These terms are often used interchangeably, but there are some distinctions – while pluralism refers to external aspects, structure and variety of media sources, diversity is reflected through media content, usually within one media outlet (Matić, 2014: 83). Internal pluralism is usually labelled as ‘diversity of supply’, while external pluralism is related to the structure of media ownership usually known as ‘plurality of suppliers’. Competition between these suppliers is considered to be an important dimension of the wealthy media landscape. In their seminal work Hallin and Mancini (2004) related external pluralism to structural aspect of media organization that corresponds to political relations within the society. In terms of content, external pluralism can refer to the “existence of thematic channels, multi-platform media content, as well as parallelism of media and political views” (Peruško, 2013: 208). Internal pluralism refers to the content and organizational structure of media institutions that should reflect the variety of political and social viewpoints (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 29-30).

Media ownership and media concentration are among the most important and discussed issues when it comes to external pluralism. Transparent and balanced ownership enables regulator or the state to keep the competition fair and to prevent creation of monopolies and unilateral control on the market. In practice, various types of concentrations exist. Horizontal integration relates to the situation where one media creates or purchases a company producing outputs which are alike (newspapers, tv or radio shows). Vertical concentration implies the subordination where companies buy or create a vertical chain in which the content creation, packaging and distribution processes are merged. Cross-media ownership implies that publisher or broadcaster start to perform their activities in other type of media (for example, television owner launches its own newspaper) (McChesney, 2001; Cooper, 2004; Baker, 2007).

When discussing media diversity and pluralism reference is traditionally made to diversity of supply. Council of Europe indicates that media policy goals will not be “automatically guaranteed by the multiplication of the means of communication offered to the public” (CoE Recommendation, 2007). It is an obligation of member states to define and implement policies in domain of pluralism and content diversity that will ensure “a sufficient variety of information, opinions and programs is disseminated by the media and is available to the public” (Ibid.). Respect of the editorial independence, and encouraging the creation of space for variety of voices and critical debate, are the ultimate goals of such policies. But, only providing the space for different voices and public debate seems not enough, especially in the era of information abundance, explosion of sources, specialized channels and online sites, etc.

In its traditional sense, the concept of plurality neglects the active role of the audience in choosing and consuming diverse media contents. The neoliberal arguments, claiming that market rules and freedom of choice should define the public interest and contents of public media, emphasize the fact that ‘consumer sovereignty’ will lead to consumption of certain types of the program, while neglecting the other. Affirmation of the audience tastes neglects the public interests as the core values of pluralism. In order to be able to choose, media audience has to be aware of the diversity of media offer, and to know which benefits certain type of program would bring to them.

This led scholars to rethink options and define ‘exposure diversity’ in order to examine “to what extent the diversity of content and supply actually results in a (more) diverse program consumption” (Helber, 2015: 1326). Both the European Parliament and the Council of Europe explicitly have encouraged the PSM to not only offer qualitative and diverse content but to use technology to engage more directly with individual users (Council of Europe, 2007). Important policy documents, such as the European Commission’s Convergence Green Paper, highlight concerns about negative effects on media pluralism and exposure to diverse content. Information abundance, attention scarcity, and new forms of gate keeping as well as unique possibilities of filtering and navigating affect users’ media consumption (European Commission, 2013; European Parliament, 2008; High Level Expert Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism, 2013).

Napoli identified “the key conceptual elements that have characterized the application of the diversity principle in communications policy-making, policy analysis, and policy advocacy” (Napoli and Karrpinen, 2013). He divided the principle of diversity into three components – source, content, and exposure diversity. Source relates to content providers, ownership, as well as it could be conceptualized in terms of diversity of individuals working within the media outlets. Content diversity refers to diversity of program types and ideas or viewpoints expressed. Finally, exposure diversity refers to the extent to which audiences consume a diverse array of content. It often has been presumed that increasing diversity of content promotes diversity of exposure, as audiences have greater options to choose from (Napoli, 2001). On contrary, some studies suggest that many media consumers uti-

lize greater diversity of available content in ways that narrow the range of content they consume (Hindman, 2009; Webster, 2007; Webster and Ksiazek, 2012).

In order to be truly informed, “citizens must venture outside of a personal comfort zone of established beliefs and tested opinions and expose these to diverging and conflicting opinions and ideas” (Helberg, 2015: 1328). In order to do so, citizens need to be guided. But, who should be the guide? It could be the state. Through its public funding it could “finance independent search intermediaries via a public-funding model to compensate them for performing a task that may not be commercially viable” (Hege, 2012). There are some constraints in regard to this attitude, since public funding itself doesn’t guarantee independence, quality and impartiality, along with legal restrictions in regard to the state aid in domain of media (Helberg, 2015: 1330).

It could be search and recommendation services. Personalization, targeting strategies as well as algorithmic predictions, could lead the essential redesign of the public-service media’s relationship with the audience. Direct interaction with users can be used to leverage the public media’s authority and trust (Helberg, 2015: 1330). But, discourse, search and filtering mechanisms are generally either perceived as an *instrument of the audience* to seek exposure to content they are looking for or as a *threat* to diverse exposure because of (commercial) bias and a tendency in the audience to concentrate searches on the information that corresponds to personal interests and perspectives (European Commission, 2013). Burry introduced the Public Service Navigator (PSN), as a “mechanism for influencing the conditions of accessing the contents”, and which is focus on the abilities of the users rather than on the supplier side solely (Burry, 2015: 9). Authors distinguishes among three different ways of how the PSN could be established and used – as an add-on to PSB, as a discrete service, and as a broader media policy initiative (Burry, 2015: 10-15).

And, finally, it could be redefined editorial policies. The provision of balanced and diverse content suggestions should be seen as an extension of the traditional editorial process (BBC Trust, 2013). Miel and Farris (2008) described new editorial roles using the three key features - aggregation, search, and social bookmarking. *Aggregation* is the process of assembling various types of content in a tailored fashion and constantly updating it. Search is among the essential features, since search results could be easily manipulated algorithmically, usually by big commercial actors on the market of information. *Social bookmarking* is an increasingly important mechanism of giving prominence to content (Miel and Farris, in Burry, 2015: 1347).

2. PSB and Pluralism in Serbia

Pluralism as a concept has been introduced in Serbia at beginning of 1990s. It was mostly linked with political dimension, introduction of multi-party system, and possibility of expression of various political standpoints. Due to the repressive regime during the 1990s, and its blatant misuse and control over media, policies in

domain of pluralism and diversity in media have not been developed. This period has been marked by a strong etatization of the leading public media, the adoption of undemocratic laws and regulations in the media sphere, and an increasing number of local and private electronic media (Veljanovski, 2009: 24; Marko, 2013a).

2.1. Pluralism in text

Democratic laws and regulations were introduced after the overthrow of Milošević regime following democratic changes in 2000.⁴ Successive governments in post-Milošević Serbia established a new media legal framework in accordance with the 'European standards' (Marko, 2013a). It was urgent to regulate the inherited chaos in media sector, especially when it comes to broadcasters. According to the IREX Media Sustainability Index in 2001, in Serbia there were 600 radio and 300 TV stations, most with no license and follow no any regulation (IREX, 2001: 208). Transformation of Serbian media system was lead by ideals of free press and dual broadcasting system in which the transformed PSB is playing an important democratizing role (Matić, 2014: 156). New legislation introduced the pluralism of ideas and opinions, outlawed censorship and information monopoly, and created an ambient for the dual broadcasting system. Initial media policies didn't reflect the complex nature of media pluralism and all dimensions this concept entails, and it was "vague, scarce and ineffective" (Matić, 2014: 86) emphasizing pluralism rather as a value, than as a guiding or core principle of media policy.

As a goal and core principle, pluralism was mentioned in the 2011 Media Strategy.⁵ The Strategy aimed to prevent the state ownership in media highlighting pluralism (along with the program quality and editorial independence) as priority. It defines pluralism in a three-partite way – as diversity of ownership, diversity of sources and diversity of information and contents (Section 7). As the crucial challenge, document indicated the "improvement of the program quality", with an aim to create conditions for broadcasters "to produce editorially independent and professional content that inspire citizens on active participation" (paragraph 2.1.). But, Strategy mainly proposes the passive measures to reach this goal, mainly related to the creation of a fertile environment to reach it. Strategy promises that new legislative framework will guarantee a choice for citizens among the wide range of media contents through various platforms for their distribution (satellite, cable, terrestrial, etc.) and that dominant broadcasters will have an obligation to provide a 'must carry' content to operators within non-discriminatory conditions (section 7, on Media pluralism).

4 First, Serbia got the Broadcasting Act (2002) that was designed to establish order in the field of broadcasting. In 2003, a new Public Information Law was introduced, which regulated the principles of public communication. The Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance was adopted in 2004, and the Law on Advertising in 2005.

5 Strategija razvoja sistema informisanja u Republici Srbiji do 2016. Godine (2011). Available at: <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/sites/default/files/documents/tekst-strategije.doc>

The question of ownership was one of the most problematic when it comes to democratization in Serbia. For a long time this field remained unregulated. The Law on Transparency of Media Ownership was drafted in 2007, but efforts failed due to the opposition by the Media Association gathering owners of print media two years later. This Association managed to block the adoption of the law that was ready for public discussion (Valić Nedeljković and Matić, 2014: 340). State ownership and non-transparent ownership remained the major areas of policy concerns in domain of media regulation until 2014, when the Law on public information and media (2014) provided a legal ground for its regulation. Law forbids any monopoly in domain of public information, including the foundation of media (article 6). In its Article 7 it stipulates that information on media should be public (this is additionally regulated by articles 34,35,36), and founders should be registered in the so called – Media register (articles 32, 33, on Register – articles 37-44). In order to prevent the dominant control and influence in domain of public information, which could lead to the limited pluralism, the Law prohibits:

- Founding and managing rights in two or more newspapers which total circulation makes more than 50% on the market,
- Founding and managing rights of two or more publishers in domain of audio-visual production which share is more than 35% (article 45)
- Share of more than 50% of the founding capital between publishers of daily newspapers with an average daily circulation of more than 50.000 and publisher of audio-visual media services (article 46).

Ministry of culture of the Republic of Serbia is in charge to follow and report when ownership structure and relations endanger pluralism, while the Republic Broadcasting Agency is in charge for broadcasters (article 47).

Public service broadcasters in Serbia, both RTS and RTV, played an important role in promoting and providing pluralism. As Law on Public Media Services (2014), indicates public broadcaster should ensure:

- fulfillment of the citizen's needs for programming that facilitates preserving and expressing the cultural identity both of the Serbian people and national minorities and ethnic groups, showing consideration for the need of national minorities and ethnic groups to have access to certain programming in their own language and alphabet;
- impartial coverage of political, historical, economic, social, medical, cultural, educational, scientific, environmental, and other issues, enabling equal encounters of different views“. (Law, 2014, article 7, paragraphs 4 and 5).

RTV as regional broadcaster has specific responsibility to broadcast program in minority languages reflecting the structure and specifics of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, known for its multiculturalism (Strategy, paragraph 2.2.). There are no specifically defined quotas for national minority programs, neither in the Law, neither in statutes of public broadcasters.

2.2. Pluralism in practice

In its 2014 Progress report, EU reported that „media ownership remains non-transparent“ and that Serbian „media market continues to suffer from non-transparent public funding of selected state-owned media and commercial media through direct budgetary subsidies and contracts with public enterprises and authorities“ (EU Progress report, 2014: 46), and this is „accompanied by a tendency to self-censorship“ (Ibid.: 13). There are differences in the ways owners allow autonomy of journalists. For example, “foreign owners lean towards prioritizing profit benefits over social gains for the public. If they find balance, it is achieved by avoiding the coverage of the most controversial news topics” (Matić and Valić Nedeljković, 2014: 353).

Anti-Corruption Council of the Serbian Government, in its 2015 report identified 1.319 registered media outlets by the end of June 2014. Among these media, 711 are print, 237 radio stations, 208 Internet outlets, 130 televisions, 20 news agencies, 9 public media outlets and 3 electronic editions. Cross-cutting analysis of these data indicated that 613 legal subjects appeared as founders in more than one public media outlets (ACC Report, 2015: 9).

Random analysis of the 50 media outlets of various types in 2014 (see Table 2) showed that in most cases the ownership is undoubted transparent (46%), and this is mostly the case with radio stations (80%) and weekly newspapers (70%), and the least with televisions (25%) and dailies (30%). Analysis showed that in more than third outlets the ownership is not transparent, and this is mostly the case with dailies (50%) and televisions (37,5%).

Table 2: Overview of the media ownership in Serbia (2011 – 2014)

	Category of ownership	TV	Daily newspapers	Weekly newspapers	Radio stations	Internet portals
1	Transparent	4	3	7	4	5
	Total	23				
2	Non-transparent or partly transparent	6	5	1	1	1
	Total	14				
3	Transparent but perceived by public that other person is the real owner	6	2	2	0	3
	Total	13				
Total number of analyzed media		50				

Source: ACC, 2015:11

The structure of public broadcasters in Serbia reflects not only territorial organization of the state, but also to promote and reflect diversities in its content. The RTV has been established in 2006. having an emphasized role in representing multicultural, ethnic, national, and religious diversities of the northern Serbian province, with a special focus on national minorities.⁶ In practice, the second channel of the RTV broadcasts entirely the program for national minorities, mostly in their own languages. This program comprises of variety of genres (documentaries, live talks in studio, reports, prime time news program, series, etc.) offering them in 9 minority languages (Hungarian, Croatian, Roma, Ruthenian, German, Slovakian, Romanian, Ukrainian, and 'Bunjevački').

Contents in Hungarian language are the most presented. According to the Regulatory Broadcast Agency report, in 2013 program in Hungarian comprises 27,63 % of entire program on RTV2, followed by program in Romanian (12,2 %), Roma (11,72 %), Ruthenian (11,66 %), and Slovakian (10,23 %). Also, the content in Serbian language is presented with 18,02 % (with drastic increase, comparing with 3,58 % in 2011) (RBA Report, 2014: 60). When it comes to quality, research team of the Novi Sad School of Journalism⁷ detected a shortage of intercultural content (reporting on other minorities, inter-minority relations) and general focus on majority issues, with focus mainly on politics and economy. When report on minority issues, culture had the biggest presence (which was up to 50% when it comes to contents in Hungarian language). This demonstrates that perception of their own community is reduced to culture, arts and folklore which may strengthen auto-stereotypes, but it may also strengthen the majority's perception that "minority life" has been mainly shaped around tradition, dance and music. When it comes to sources, in most of the cases items relied on one source, mostly depersonalized (agencies, institutions, organizations), with uniform position (who are providing similar position) (Marko, 2013b: 76-89).

When it comes to informative program of the PSB, independent and continuous analyses demonstrated the high level of content plurality. According to the study from 2009⁸, both public services had the high plurality index (RTS – 0,83, and RTV – 0,81) when it comes to the program type, even bigger than programs of public broadcasters in Netherlands – 0,75 (measured for 2002, by Cuilenburg) (Matić, J., in Valić Nedeljković, 2009: 24-68).

6 Article 13 of the Law on Public Media Services, define that RTV operates within the territory of Vojvodina, and its headquarter is in Novi Sad (article 2).

7 The analysis of content of minority media in the Hungarian, Croatian and Roma languages was carried out from February to September 2012.

8 The Novi Sad School of Journalism conducted for the first time in the media research practice the monitoring focused on the program schemes of the TV stations with national frequencies and the Provincial and National Public Broadcasting Service. The joint publication contains the results of the analysis on diversity of TV program broadcasting on six TV stations in Serbia – RTS1, RTS2, TV Pink, TV B92, RTV1 and RTV2. The monitoring of the respective TV stations was conducted during one week (10-16th November 2008) by the Novi Sad School of Journalism monitoring team. The structure of the TV program was analyzed according to the program genre, production origin, language and target audience.

Table 3: Plurality index according to the program type

	RTS1	RTS2	RTV1	RTV2
H	0,824	0,834	0,818	0,806

Source: Matić, J. in Valić Nedeljković, D. (ed.) *Medijski skener*, Novosadska novinarska škola, 2009:35

Analysis from 2009 indicated that public broadcasters didn't meet informative needs of citizens in domain of culture and arts, themes that are underrepresented in PSB's programs. Content on both RTV channels is far more diverse than on the any of commercial TV stations with national coverage in Serbia, while their content differed from RTS due to the lower percentage of informative, entertainment, advertising and, especially, sport program. RTV's second channel, had the biggest percentage of cultural and artistic contents – 20,8 % (comparing to 7 % of RTV1, or 6,6 % of RTS2 on second and third position, or with no program of such type on commercial stations such as B92 or TV Pink) (Matić, in Valić Nedeljković, 2009: 33).

When it comes to the program assessment, it is the role of the Regulatory Broadcasting Agency to monitor the program of the PSB's. In this regard, RBA chose the administrative non-critical approach, which not takes into account the program quality, and it only observes if PSB's comply with quotas prescribed by laws, and report it in statistical way (Matić, 2014: 157). As Matić observed, „that regulatory framework did not provide clear indicators based on which one can evaluate whether RTS and RTV are successful in playing their role of public service broadcasters“ (Matić, 2010: 39).

According to the 2013 RBA report, Both RTS1 and RTS2 meet the legislative demand of content diversity. While RTS1 has been characterized with an absolute dominance of the informative (62,24%) and movie and series (13,75%) program, RTS2 program has been consisted of less dominant informative (43,22%), and equally represented movie and series (10,01%), scientific (9,82%), music (9,47%), documentary (7,21%), cultural (5,46%), and children (4,6%) program. In the case of RTS1 underrepresented types of programs are children (1,1%), scientific (0,76%), and cultural (0,09%). Both, RTS1 and RTS2 do not meet legal requirement of having, at least, 10% of independent production in Serbian language. In 2013 RTS had only 8,79% (out of this percentage, 30,13% were documentaries, 20,82% religious program, and 20,45% informative program) and RTS2 had 8,81% (out of this, 30,31% is informative, 22,28% scientific, and 17,19% is religious program) (RBA, 2013, annual report).

Just recently, regulator started to evaluate something that could be tied with the quality assessment. In the last report, RBA published a part related to representation of gender and meeting the needs of persons with disabilities (Matić, 2014: 157-158), and this is valuable, but still not enough, insight of how public broadcasters are meeting the demands of plurality. Apart of regulator, Program councils of the PSB's as part of PSB's internal structure, are in charge of following and assess-

ing the program's quality. According to the Statute of RTS (article 48) and the Statute of RTV (article 31), Program councils are obliged to organize, at least once per year, public discussion on the PSB program. This public discussion should last 15 days, and main recommendations for program advancement should be presented to the General Manager and to the Steering Board. First public meeting have been organized in the second half of 2015.

Participants to the Media Sustainability Index 2014, said that editorial policies of public media are mostly following the political and economic interests of those in power, and "journalists and editors are generally interested to transmit the viewpoints and attitudes of politicians" (IREX MSI, 2014: 111-112). As Matić observed, information program of RTS "produced a thematically universe picture of reality which was dominated by opinions of authorities that were rarely problematized or opposed" (Matić, 2014: 158). Out of 474 recorded actors to whom the news were referred, within the monitored period, political authorities (state officials, mayors, etc.) were mentioned in 21% cases, followed by foreign actors (17,9%), citizens (8,7%) and experts (4,6%). Representatives of opposition parties enjoyed greater publicity (4,6%) than the ruling parties representatives (3,2%), but the later were represented and their voices were dominantly represented through the representation of state functionaries and officials (Matić, 2014: 104).

3. Media Exposure as Necessity or Burden

In the absence of systematic studies on media audience in Serbia, the only source related to the audience are those measuring the popularity of televisions and certain programs on TV's. These researches indicate that the most popular programs in Serbia are those of entertainment and sensationalistic character, such as popular tv series, reality shows, sports events (ABG Nielsen, 2013,2014). Informative program is not anymore the 'priviledge' and the obligation of public services, but commercial stations with national coverage in Serbia also produced their own and popular information program.

The Law regulating public media services in Serbia, obliged PSB's to operate in the name of public interest (article 6). Second paragraph of this article states that "the responsibility of the public service broadcaster to the public and the public's influence on the public service broadcaster's activity shall be exercised particularly through the public's involvement in enhancing radio and television programming" (article 6, paragraph 2). This sounds promising and clearly indicates that PSB has to take an active role towards its audience. But, in practice, this active and incentive role of the PSB is not being exercised. Additionally, the Law provides that the public service should express plurality in terms of sources and diverse content, and to be directed to varied audience without defining the way in which contact with the audience should be realized. Even if PSB, following instructions prescribed in the Law and reports done by the regulator (RBA reports from 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014) to improve the scope of the program related to children, or vulnerable

groups, or in domain of culture, there is no guarantees that this program will reach the abovementioned target audience. The Law and PSB itself have to stimulate public in other way, developing approaches and mechanisms to empower their audience for active use of plural media content.

As it was observed by many scholars on pluralism, “the shift from informing to educating and coaching audiences cannot leave the mandate of the public-service media unaffected and will have far-reaching repercussions for the public-service media’s understanding of their mission as public agenda setter and motor behind the public sphere” (Helberg, 2015: 1336). Technology would enable PSB’s to design an active approach and play an important role in making its audience more active. Gibbons believes that “active user engagement with diverse media content ultimately encourages the dialogue between different groups in society” (Gibbons, 2015: 1386).

In order to achieve this, the PSB shouldn’t impose solutions. It should build its integrity and reputation through open dialogue and interaction with citizens. In the era when commercial logic dominates the media market, the PSB itself is not entirely free from these influences. Therefore, PSB has to be lead by public accountability and editorial responsibility when use new technology to persuade audience to follow its program. Using such technologies grants certain powers to the PSB, and it has to perform it in a responsible and careful way. The PSB has to redefine its relationship with the audience moving from dominantly asymmetrical to more equal and symmetrical relation in which the voice of the audience will be powerful enough to determine the way of how PSB operates and selects its program (Berdichevsky & Neuschwander, 1999; Spahn, 2012; Verbeek, 2006, in Helberg, 2015: 1332-1333). Empowering users to understand and actively use media and their contents, is of the crucial importance. Media literacy stands for these goals.

As it is declared by the state representatives, among the most important goals in the new strategy of media development in Serbia (the current expires in 2016), will be the media literacy. As part of the EU accession process, state authorities, ministries, education institutions, professional and journalist associations, will join their efforts in order to create and active approach and concrete measures to empower citizens of Serbia for active media use.

Concluding remarks

Pluralism is multi-layered and complex category, which is very often hard to define. Media policies in democratic countries differentiate external from internal pluralism - the first is related to the structure of the system itself, or the structure of the program and the types of sources, while internal pluralism is mainly identified with the diversity of media content in the terms of topics, genres, and in relation to the targeted public. In addition to media ownership, type and variety of sources, content diversity, the fourth dimension has been widely considered as an important dimension of pluralism – the one that provides the audience with an active role in the identification and selection of programs from the wide range that already exist.

Active role of the state, regulators, and media (especially those with public status and remit), in coaching and empowering media audience to actively seek for the program they would like to consume or they will benefit from, is in the heart of contemporary debates on media pluralism and its regulation. Media politics are still looking for an operative and effective solutions to take this dimension into account. PSB's are additionally challenged, having an imperative to be and perform universal. This demand of universality, in which the pluralism of supply presents a core principle, has been put under the veil of uncertainty due to the growing fragmentation of media public that is looking for specialized or niche programs. This is a huge task for decision-makers and regulators, especially in the context of policy re-definition and appearance of new issues that policies have to tackle in order to conceptualize new values, and goals, looking for the means and mechanisms to assess them.

It seems that Serbia, in its transitional and democratization process, bypassed many actual dilemmas and challenges, including the one related to the concept of media pluralism and diversity of media content, also to the active approach to the public. Initial democratic laws, adopted in between 2002 and 2004, rather defined pluralism as a value, than a clear policy goal. As Matić observed, "while media laws seemingly promote content diversity, the effectiveness of regulatory measures is neither analysed nor problematised" (Matić, 2014: 157). Recent assessment on the PSB role in promoting and enhancing pluralism in Serbia, indicated that PSB better serves the government than the public. (Matić, 2014). It is rather an instrument for purveying the authority's messages to the public, indicator of their strength to attract media attention, with no balance when it comes to representation of different viewpoint and various and diverse groups resided within the Serbian society (Matić, 2014: 114).

It seems that Serbian authorities, including policy makers, media experts, regulators, PSB management and editorials, very soon will struggle with the ongoing question of how the PSB could include new technologies in order to raise their engagement in regard to media exposure. And second, should the mission of the PSB be shifted from providing diverse content to stimulate its audience to benefit from "the overall diversity of media content that is available? (Helberg, 2015: 1324).

Bibliography

- Anti-corruption Council (2015). "Izveštaj o vlasničkoj strukturi i kontroli medija u Srbiji [*Report on ownership structure and control of media in Serbia*]," The Government of the Republic of Serbia. Available online: <http://www.antikorupcija-savet.gov.rs/Storage/Global/Documents/izvestaji/izvestaj%20mediji%2026%2002.pdf> (accessed on 1 March, 2015).
- BBC Trust. (2013). *BBC trust service review, BBC online and BBC red button*. London, UK: Author. Available at: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/service_reviews/online_redbutton/report_online_redbutton.pdf (accessed on 10 April, 2015)
- Born and Prosser, Culture and Consumerism: Citizenship, Public Service Broadcasting and the BBC's Fair Trading Obligations (The Modern Law Review, Vol 64, No 5, 2001): 657-687
- Baker, C. Edmund (2007). *Media concentration and democracy: why ownership matters*. New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, M. (2004). "Limits on Media Ownership Serve the Public Interest". *Television Quarterly* 34 (3/4).
- Cooper, R., & Tang, T. (2009). Predicting audience exposure to television in today's media environment: An empirical integration of active-audience and structural theories. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 53, 400–418.
- Council of Europe. (2007). *Recommendation (2007)3 on the remit of public service media in the information society*. Strasbourg, France: Committee of Ministers.
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on media pluralism and diversity of media content
- European Commission. (2013). *Green paper. Preparing for a fully converged world: Growth, creation and values*. Brussels, Belgium.
- European Parliament. (2008). *Resolution on concentration and pluralism in the media in the European Union*. Brussels, Belgium: Author.
- European Parliament. (2010). *European Parliament resolution on public service broadcasting in the digital era: The future of the dual system*. Strasbourg, France.
- European Commission (2014), „Serbia Progress report,“ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140108-serbia-progress-report_en.pdf (accessed on 1 May, 2015).
- Foster, R. (2012). *News plurality in a digital world*. London, UK: Reuters Institute for Journalism. Retrieved from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/Publications/Working_Papers/News_Plurality_in_a_Digital_World.pdf
- Gandy, O. (2001). Dividing practices: Segmentation and targeting in the emerging public sphere. In W. B. Entman (Ed.), *Mediated politics* (pp. 141–159). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Helberger, N. (2012). Exposure diversity as a policy goal. *Journal of Media Law*, 4, 65–92.
- Hindman, Matthew (2007). “A mile wide and an inch deep: Measuring media diversity online and offline,” In: Philip M. Napoli (editor). *Media diversity and localism: Meaning and metrics*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 327–348.
- Hitchens, Lesley (2006). *Broadcasting pluralism and diversity: A comparative study of policy and regulation*. Portland, Ore.: Hart Publishing.
- High Level Expert Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism. (2013). *A free and pluralistic media to sustain European democracy*. Brussels, Belgium: European Commission.
- Horwitz, Robert B. (2005). “On media concentration and the diversity question,” *Information Society*, volume 21, number 3, pp. 181–204. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01972240490951908> (accessed 5 December 2013).
- Ytreberg, E. And Vilde Schanke Sundet (2009), “Working Notions of Active Audiences Further Research on the Active Participant in Convergent Media Industries,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Vol. 15, Issue 4: 383-390.
- Ytreberg, E. (2004). “Formatting participation within broadcast media production,” *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 26, Issue 5: 677-692.
- Media Sustainability Index, (2001), “Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia),” IREX: 205-214, Available online: <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/21-Serbia.pdf> (accessed on 3 May, 2015).
- Media Sustainability Index, (2014), “Serbia at a glance,” IREX: 106-121, Available online: https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u105/EE_MSI_2014_Serbia.pdf (accessed on 5 May, 2015).
- Lowe G.F. & J. Bardoel (Eds.), *From public service broadcasting to public service media* (pp. 22–49). Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom.
- Marko, D. (2013a), “Media Reforms in Turbulent Times: The Role of Media Assistance in the Establishment of Independent Media Institutions in Serbia,” *Working Paper 6/2013*, Sarajevo: Analitika – Center for Social Research.
- Marko, D. (ed.) (2013b) *Freedom, Access, Marginalization*, Sarajevo: Media plan institute.
- Matić, J. (2010), To Whom is a Public Service Broadcaster Accountable, ANEM Publication III, pg. 39
- Matić, J. (2014). *Servis građana ili servis vlasti*, Beograd: Dobar naslov.
- Matić, J. and D. Valić Nedeljković (2014) “Serbia,” in Petković, Brankica (ed.) *Media Integrity Matters: Reclaiming Public Service Values in Media and Journalism*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute: 328-390.
- Mazowiecki, T. (1994) “Specijalni izveštaj o medijima izveštaca UN-a imenovanoj Rezolucijom 1994/72 Komisije za ljudska prava UN-a, E/CN 4/1995/54.

- McChesney, R. (2001). "Global media, neoliberalism and imperialism". *Monthly Review* 52 (10).
- Milivojević, S. (2012), "Media System in Serbia: According to UNESCO Media Development Indicators – Summary," Belgrade: Centre for Media / Faculty of Political Sciences, Available online: <http://centarzamedije.fpn.bg.ac.rs/content-files/MDI%20SERBIA%20Summary%202012.pdf> (accessed on 10 March, 2015).
- Karppinen, K. (2013). *Rethinking media pluralism*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Napoli, P. (1999). Deconstructing the diversity principle. *Journal of Communication*, 49, 7–34.
- Napoli, P. M. (2011). Exposure diversity reconsidered. *Journal of Information Policy*, Vol. 1, 246–259.
- Napoli, Philip M. (2001). *Foundations of communications policy: Principles and process in the regulation of electronic media*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.
- Napoli, P. And K. Karppinen, „Translating diversity into Internet governance,“ *First Monday*, Volume 18, Number 12 - 2 December 2013. Available online: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/rt/printerFriendly/4307/3799> (Accessed on 10 May, 2015).
- Ofcom. (2012, June 19). *Report on measuring media plurality*. London, UK: Author. Retrieved from <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/measuring-plurality/statement>
- O’Neill (1990), Practices of toleration, in J.Licthenberg (ed.), *Democracy and the Mass Media* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Philips, A. Dealing with difference: a politics of ideas, or a politics of presence?, in S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996)
- Peruško et al., (2012), "Audience behaviour as a dynamic variable in media system modelling: Southeastern Europe in a comparative perspective," Paper presented at International conference on post-socialist media audiences, Prague.
- Peruško, Z. (2013) "Media pluralism policy in a post-socialist Mediterranean media system: the case of Croatia," *Central European Journal of Communication* 2: 204-218.
- RRA, „Javni servis RTV: Način ispunjavanja zakonskih i programskih obaveza,“ *Izveštaj za 2013. godinu*, available online: http://www.rra.org.rs/uploads/useruploads/izvestaji-o-nadzoru/Izvestaj_RTV_2013.pdf (accessed on 15 May, 2015)
- Strategija razvoja sistema informisanja u Republici Srbiji do 2016. Godine (2011). Available at: <http://www.kultura.gov.rs/sites/default/files/documents/tekst-strategije.doc> (accessed on 1 May, 2015)
- Thompson, M. (1995) *Kovanje rata*. Zagreb: Hrvatski helsinški odbor, Građanska inicijativa za slobodu javne riječi ARTICLE 19.

- UNESCO, memobpi46, on Media pluralism, Available online: http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi46_mediapluralism_en.pdf (accessed on 15 May, 2015).
- Banerjee, I. and K. Seneviratne, eds. (2005). *Public Service Broadcasting: A best practices sourcebook*, UNESCO. Available online: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001415/141584e.pdf> (accessed on 1 March, 2015).
- Veljanovski, Rade (2009) *Medijski sistem Srbije*. Čigoja: Belgrade.
- Webster, James G. (2007). "Diversity of exposure," In: Philip M. Napoli (editor). *Media diversity and localism: Meaning and metrics*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 309–326.
- Webster James G. and Thomas B. Ksiazek (2012). "The dynamics of audience fragmentation: Public attention in an era of digital media," *Journal of Communication*, volume 62, number 1, pp. 39–56. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01616.x>, accessed 5 December 2013.
- World Radio and Television Council, „Public Broadcasting, Why? How?“, 2000, in Price E.M. and M. Raboy, „Public Service Broadcasting in Transition: Documentary Reader,“ The European Institute for the Media/PCMLP, Oxford University, 2001: pg. 5-6.