

MEDIA STUDIES AND APPLIED ETHICS



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AI Generative Chatbot in the Media: Journalistic Coverage of ChatGPT in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

In diffusion research, journalistic coverage is acknowledged as a significant factor in spreading awareness and fostering knowledge about innovation, potentially accelerating or impeding the adoption process. With regards to AI-related innovations, this dynamic has largely been studied within the context of Western developed countries. There is far less understanding of how this process unfolds in the news ecosystem of post-communist countries, particularly those with lower democratic standards and weaker economic development, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the intention of gaining preliminary insights, this study investigated how the journalistic organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina covered the emergence and societal adoption of ChatGPT, a novel form of generative AI, during the initial six-month period following its widespread availability. The content analysis of relevant news messages (N=542) published by 40 legacy and digital-only news outlets was used to explore the key characteristics of journalistic coverage, the attention given to the issue over time and the media depictions of this innovative AI technology. Results indicate that a small group of news outlets, predominantly legacy news organizations, provided significantly more content on ChatGPT than others, particularly public broadcasting services. Findings highlight a tendency among news outlets to focus on either the risks or benefits of ChatGPT and similar AI-based products and amplify sources associated with the business sector and high-tech industry, overrepresented by male voices.

Keywords: journalism, artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, diffusion of innovations, content analysis.

AI Generative Chatbot in the Media: Journalistic Coverage of ChatGPT in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

With the increased application in numerous societal sectors, artificial intelligence (AI) technology has become a prominent issue in public discussion in

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many nations over the world (Brause, Zeng, Schäfer & Katzenbuch, 2023). Lately, there has been a growing interest in the area of machine learning language models, especially after the launch of AI-powered chatbot ChatGPT in November last year, and similar competing products developed by other big tech-companies, like Bard (Google), Ernie Bot (Baidu), or LLaMA (Meta). According to the analytics firm Similarweb (Carr, 2023), the number of ChatGPT users grew from 100 million in January 2023 to 180.5 million by August 2023.

Dissemination research (Currall, King, Lane, Madera & Turner, 2006; Strelakova, 2015) suggests that social support and acceptance of emerging, unfamiliar, and quite often controversial innovative technologies, such as AI-based chatbots, depends on the public understanding of its benefits and risks. Also, previous studies (Chuan, Tsai & Cho, 2019; Goodman & Goodman, 2008) have shown that public perceptions of new scientific advances are often informed and shaped by the information, viewpoints, narratives, and voices presented in news media. Therefore, research studies assessing how information about AI related products are presented through mass communications channels are important to understand factors influencing public debate about these rapidly developing technologies.

While there is a growing body of academic research on media coverage of AI technology in Western democracies, less attention has been given to the news ecosystem of post-communist countries, particularly those with the lower democratic standards and weak economic developments, designated in comparative studies as ‘the media in transitional model’ (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015), such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, or North Macedonia. These countries are characterized by underdeveloped innovative tech ecosystems, brain drains, political and economic instability, instrumentalization of the media by political and business elites, and limited journalistic autonomy (Turčilo & Buljubašić, 2017).

According to diffusion theory (Rogers, 2003), it is crucial to examine how the social context, including news coverage, not only facilitates but also constrains the adoption and application of transformative technologies across various societal domains. To the best of our knowledge, no prior work has explored those issues in the context of the media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the intention of gaining preliminary insights and encouraging further research, the case of ChatGPT was chosen to examine how journalistic organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina covered the emergence, promotion, and practices of using this innovative AI technology among early adopters during the initial six months following its widespread availability on November 30, 2022.

The first, introductory part of the paper is followed by five sections. In the second and third section, a short review of literature, the theoretical approach and research questions that guide the analysis are presented. The methodological framework of the paper is elaborated in the fourth section. The fifth section of the paper elaborates on the results of the content analysis of news articles. Finally, a discussion of the results, main conclusions, remarks on the limitations of the paper as well as recommendations for future research are presented in the sixth section.

Literature review

The latest review of the current state of research on news media coverage of AI indicate that majority of existing studies focuses strongly on Western developed countries, mostly the United States and United Kingdom, showing a strong increase in the amount of media attention for AI over time, dominance of economic and business perspective and largely positive evaluations (Brause, Zeng, Schäfer & Katzenbuch, 2023: 277).

Nguyen and Hekman's (2022) study of a 10-year coverage of AI by four internationally renowned media outlets – *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Wired*, and *Gizmodo* – identified several themes that the outlets choose to emphasize with respect to four broad perspectives: economic prospects (labeled by authors as 'AI & Economics meta-frames'), political challenges ('AI & Politics meta-frames'), scientific progress ('AI & Research/Science meta-frames'), and concerns about human-machine relationships ('AI in Society/Culture meta-frames'). The news discourse associated these dominant frames with the four most prevalent data risks: data bias and algorithmic discrimination, surveillance and privacy intrusion, cybercrime and cyberwarfare, and types of risks related to information disorder, including 'fake news', 'deep fakes', and hate speech. Results of the analysis also point to the benefits emphasized in AI news reporting, such as increased efficiency and productivity, better management of resources and processes, and the improvement of human abilities in fostering knowledge and creativity.

Findings from another study (Chuan, Tsai & Cho, 2019) revealed that topics related to business and economy and technology development and application were the most prevalent subjects in news coverage of AI in five most widely-read American newspapers: *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Post*, and *Washington Post*, from 2009 to 2018. News articles discussed the benefits of AI more frequently than its risks. Economic benefits, improvement of well-being and the reduction of human biases or inequality were the most frequently discussed types of benefits in media discourse, while concerns associated with shortcomings of the technology, loss of jobs and privacy intrusion were among most mentioned types of risks. Analysis of *New York Time's* 30-year coverage of AI (Fast & Horvitz, 2017) also showed overwhelmingly positive assessments of technology.

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's (Brennen, Howard & Nielsen, 2018) analysis of eight months of reporting on AI in six mainstream news outlets in the United Kingdom – *The Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *HuffPost*, *BBC*, and the UK edition of *Wired* – reveals a growing politicization in the way this technology is covered by journalists. The research uncovered how right-leaning outlets emphasize issues of economics, business, national security and geopolitics, topics long prioritized by the Conservative party. Likewise, left-leaning outlets highlight questions of ethics, discrimination, and privacy, "reading AI through long standing concerns over labour relations and social justice" (p. 9).

Evidence from similar research studies conducted in other developed Western countries, such as Vergeer's (2020) study of reporting on AI in Dutch newspapers,

also indicate that salience for AI-related topics increased over time in media discourse. However, different types of newspapers also showed a distinct coverage of these issues. Compared to regional, national newspapers published more articles about AI topics but were also more negative about AI. Newspapers with economic orientation and religious newspapers were more favorable to AI as compared to popular newspapers.

Overall, further research is needed to understand not only similarities and differences in coverage of AI between different types of news organizations but also between different journalistic cultures around the world.

Given the novelty of the subject, it is understandable why scholars are only just beginning to analyze the way news media are covering ChatGPT and similar tools associated with generative AI. ChatGPT (which stands for ‘Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer’) is a large language model (LLM) chatbot designed by OpenAI, an American tech company, to “provide human-like response to user prompts based on the supervised and reinforcement learning technique that involved extensive digital training data as well as human feedback and response evaluations” (Schäfer, 2023: 2). Although a question of media representations of ChatGPT is receiving attention, most of the existing research works are limited to specific concerns, like the role of news discourse in shaping dominant social imaginaries of ChatGPT in educational context (Kikerpill & Sibak, 2023), prevalent metaphors used in online press reports to frame ChatGPT (Figar, 2023), or the way transparency principle of generative AI and similar regulatory initiatives are discussed in public discourses (Masotina, Musi & Spagnolli 2023).

Karanouh’s (2023) study of a corpus of 10,902 news headlines related to the OpenAI chatbot collected from Western media sources from its launch in November 2022 to March 2023 revealed early trends and sentiments toward ChatGPT. The findings of sentiment analysis indicate that ChatGPT was perceived more positively than negatively in the mainstream media, while automated content analysis highlights predominance of issues and actors associated with the Big Tech industry. Coverage of ChatGPT started to gain a significantly high level of attention among Western online news outlets and broadcast, businesses and cable news stations in January and February of 2023, according to the study conducted by the Tows center for digital journalism (Bartholomew & Mehta, 2023), using data from Media Cloud and GDELT Project’s databases. As indicated by the research, this was around the time when BuzzFeed unveiled its intention to employ ChatGPT in content creation, Google announced Bard AI as a rival to ChatGPT, and Microsoft integrated ChatGPT into its Bing search engine.

Theoretical framework

While the news coverage of ChatGPT is still a relatively unexplored area of media studies, analysis of innovation diffusion, including the influence of the news ecosystem, is not a novel subject of research in social sciences. The diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers, 2003) offers an elaborate conceptual framework for studying nature, main elements and major sources of influence shaping this dynamic,

with the emphasis on the role of communications in this process. Rogers (2003) defines diffusion as a special type of communicative process “in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (5). Within the framework of diffusion theory, the four main elements of diffusion processes are (1) the innovation, a new idea, practice, or object; (2) the communication channels, the means by which information about innovations reach individuals or organizations as units of adoption; (3) time, the period encompassing the adoption process; and (4) social system, the diverse communication networks that units of adoption are part of.

According to Rogers (2003: 36), mass communication channels are the most effective means for spreading awareness and in creating knowledge of innovations, whereas interpersonal channels are more effective in forming, reinforcing or changing attitudes toward innovations.

With respect to the former, scholars (Chuan, Tsai & Cho, 2019; Nguyen & Hekman, 2022; Rogers & Seidels, 2001; Rogers et al, 1993; Strelakova, 2015) are concerned with at least two ways mass communications, particularly news media, can contribute to the dissemination of information and knowledge about innovations, such as generative AI. First, news outlets can force or neglect attention to certain issues, influencing what the public thinks about innovations. This concern relates to the agenda-setting effects (Dearing & Rogers, 1996; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), presumed relationship between the ranking and visibility of issues by news media and its salience in public discourse. Secondly, when covering an emerging technology, news outlets can choose to highlight or ignore certain aspects of the issue, evaluate it as a threat or an opportunity, determine which sources will be granted space to discuss and narrate the issues, and decide which voices will be marginalized or absent. In other words, they can shape how the public thinks about innovations. This concern relates to the framing effects (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999): how the way information about innovation is presented can influence the audience’s perceptions and decisions regarding its adoption.

Although the emergence of new digital platforms and changing media consumption habits has fundamentally transformed the ecology of news provision (Picard, 2014), researchers (Aleksić & Stamenković, 2019; Brennen, Howard & Nielsen, 2018; Nguyen & Hekman, 2022; Swart & Broersma 2017) argue that news outlets still remain a relevant space for, and exert influence on, public discussion of important societal issues, for instance AI. However, this assertion is mostly based, as indicated in the previous sections, on the studies of the news ecosystem of Western developed countries. In the context of AI technology diffusion, much less is known concerning the impact of the media system in post-communist countries, specifically those categorized under the ‘media in transition model’ (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2016), like Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.

This study aims to address this gap in the AI news diffusion literature. We focus our research on the news media (*communication channels*) coverage of AI-powered chatbot ChatGPT (*innovation*) by the journalistic organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*social system*) during the initial six-month period following its widespread availability

(*time*). Our objective is to explore the key characteristics of news media coverage, the attention given to the issue over time and the media depictions of this innovative AI technology, as it is discussed in the literature as a significant factor with the potential to accelerate, slow down, or impede the adoption of innovations.

Relying on the conceptual framework described above, the paper attempts to analyze the reporting practices of Bosnia and Herzegovina's news outlets about the ChatGPT guided by the following research questions: (1) when did the news outlets start to cover topics related to ChatGPT and how did the coverage evolve over time (*distribution of media attention over time*); (2) what importance were attached to news articles associated with ChatGPT in terms of their size, position and types (*formatting of media messages*); (3) which core issues were emphasized by news coverage of ChatGPT (*themes*); (4) whether and how news articles discuss threats and opportunities of ChatGPT (*references to risks and benefits*) and (5) which sources and how often were granted a space to discuss the issues (*distribution of voices*)?

Methodological framework

In order to provide answers to the questions raised, we conducted the content analysis of messages published by 40 news outlets, both legacy and web-only journalistic organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period between November 30, 2022 and May 30, 2023. As this paper represents an exploratory study aimed at gaining preliminary insight, which would serve as a basis for further, more complex analysis, data were obtained only from online editions of news outlets.

Media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly fragmented. Currently, there are eight daily newspapers published in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2023), 41 terrestrial television stations, 154 terrestrial radio stations and 63 cable operators (Communications Regulatory Agency, 2023). Latest available research (Osmančević, 2021) has identified 464 news websites, out of which more than 50% lack any information about the publisher and editors behind the web portals. Majority of the messages published by these websites consist of replicated content, originally produced by the minority of established news outlets and news agencies (Baraković & Mahmutović, 2014). Similarly, a small number of broadcasters and cable operators are investing in news programming (Dautović, 2022), with only two channels – Al Jazeera Balkans and N1 – having an all-news format. Given the lack of regular monitoring of media performance, the absence of reliable data on advertising revenue and the absence of data of news consumption patterns (Brunwasser, Turčilo & Marko, 2016), it is difficult to determine a representative sample of news outlets in terms of their popularity, political leaning, ownership, and other similar parameters. For the purpose of the preliminary analysis, we thus selected a sample of 40 news outlets, according to their sector of operation, location, and perceived influence to reflect complexity of the news ecosystem of Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Appendix).

The relevant messages were identified using a specific set of keywords as content indicators, a technique known in digital methodologies as term resonance

analysis (Rogers, 2019). To conduct term resonance analysis a web scraping tool and advanced search engine features were employed. We utilized the Lippmannian Device, a tool developed by the Digital Method Initiative, as a web scraper and Google search engine’s advanced features to perform a customized search of content within a website. An established protocol was followed in the process of selecting relevant news content, incorporating three activities: defining keywords, removing duplicates, and checking the relevance of extracted content. The following keywords were used to identify relevant messages: “ChatGPT” OR “Chat GPT” OR “ČetGPT” OR “ЧатГПТ”. Only journalistic works were included, while content mentioning the keyword published in the website’s forum or comment section was excluded.

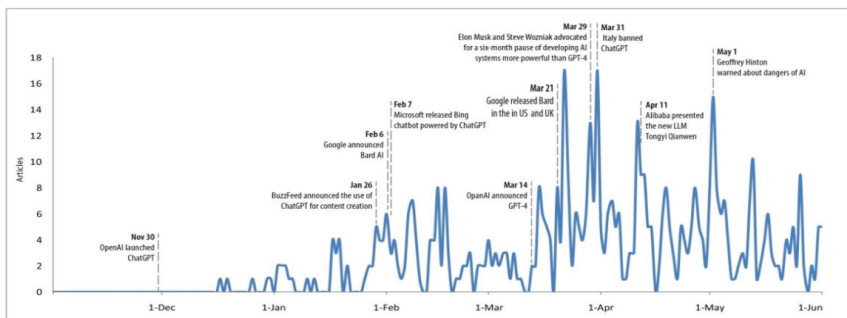
The unit of analysis was a news article. The messages were coded for a range of data, including news outlet, date, length, section, story types, themes, references to risks and benefits, and sources, including gender.

Two trained coders conduct the coding process. The average score of the coder reliability test was .83, and it was performed in the preparatory phase on a sample that made up 20% of the total number of relevant articles.

Results

Using the procedure described above, we identified a total of 542 relevant news articles, published during the observed period. As indicated in Figure 1, the first observed article mentioning ChatGPT was published on December 17, 2022, by N1, a 24-hour cable news channel and CNN International’s local broadcast partner and affiliate. This was more than two weeks after OpenAI released ChatGPT on November 30, 2022. The highest peaks were observed on March 29 when Italy banned ChatGPT over privacy concerns, and on March 22 when news outlets covered stories related to Bard, a new AI-powered chatbot released by Google the day before, Bill Gates’ predictions on the future of humanity, and the replacement of journalistic work by AI-generated content.

Figure 1
News coverage of ChatGPT across six-month period

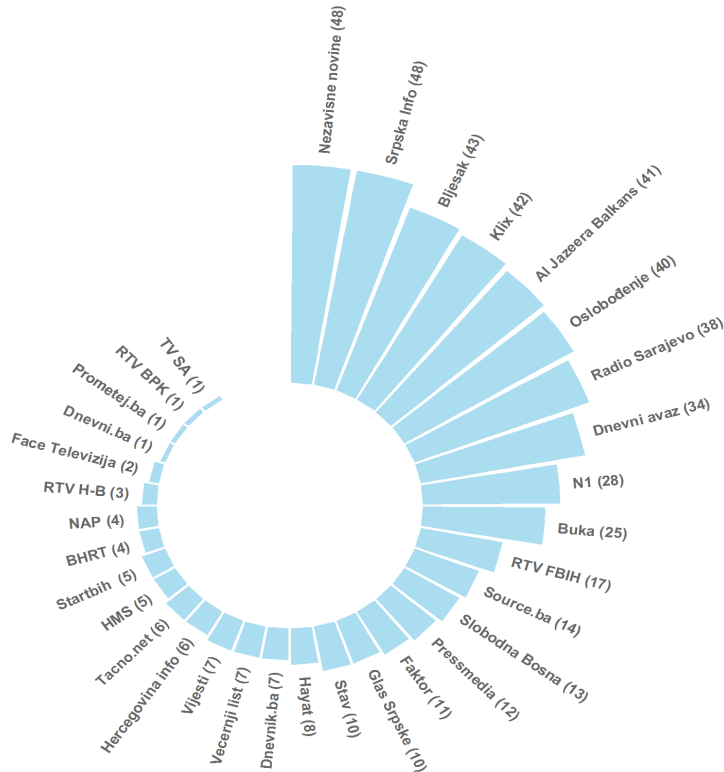


On a monthly basis, the coverage increased over the course of six months in terms of the cumulative number of news articles, reaching its highest share in March 2023 (Table 1).

Table 1
Monthly distribution of news items mentioning ChatGPT

Months	Cumulative numbers of news items (%)
December	5 (0.92%)
January	41 (7.56%)
February	80 (14.76%)
March	147 (27.12%)
April	142 (26.20%)
May	127 (23.43%)
Total	542 (100%)

Figure 2
News outlets: cumulative number of news items mentioning ChatGPT



Among the analyzed sample of news outlets, we observed variations in the amount of coverage dedicated to ChatGPT (Figure 2). Within the first ten news outlets that produced more than 70% of all identified articles are mostly legacy journalistic organizations, including four daily newspapers (Nezavisne novine, EuroBlic³, Oslobođenje, and Dnevni avaz), two regional television stations (Al Jazeera Balkans and N1), and one radio station (Radio Sarajevo), as well as three popular digital-only news outlets (Bljesak, Klix, and Buka). The small number of relevant messages published by the national public broadcaster, Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosanskohercegovačka radiotelevizija, BHRT), is indicative. It is important to note that no relevant news items were found in the content of seven news outlets. These outlets include Radio Television of Republika Srpska (Radio Televizija Republike Srpske, RTRS), one of the three public broadcasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina, two cantonal broadcasters (Radio Television of Tuzla Canton and Radio Television of Una-Sana Canton), one commercial broadcaster (RTV BN), and three influential investigative digital outlets (InfoRadar, Zurnal, and Istraga).

Table 2

Length of news articles: first ten news outlets by number of items

News outlets	Mean (x)	Median (Md)	SD
Nezavisne novine	1.01	0.90	0.43
Srpska info	1.22	1.01	0.79
Bljesak	1.41	1.26	0.68
Klix	1.35	1.17	0.94
Al Jazeera Balkans	2.39	1.40	2.27
Oslobođenje	1.86	1.48	1.28
Radio Sarajevo	1.61	1.08	1.10
Dnevni avaz	1.70	1.04	3.08
N1	1.58	1.12	0.99
Buka	2.83	1.89	2.88

The total number of characters in a text was measured to analyze the length of relevant news messages. For convenience, it was expressed using the unit of one ‘card’ (1800 characters with spaces), which is a conventional unit of text length in BH journalistic culture. Analysis indicates a large variance in the length of news items mentioning ChatGPT, with an average value close to two cards ($x=1.73$, $Md=1.19$, $SD=1.6$). Similar characteristics could be observed for the most of the news outlets with the highest number of relevant messages (Table 2).

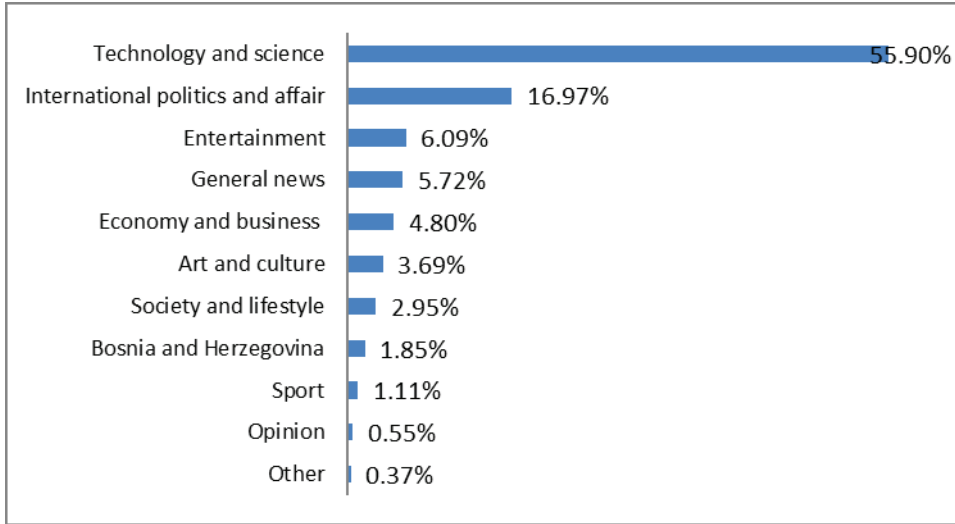
More than half of all identified news items mentioning ChatGPT were positioned in the section dedicated to topics related to technologies and sciences (Figure 3). International politics and affairs were the second section of news content where ChatGPT was most discussed, followed by entertainment sections. For the

³ The website Srpskainfo belongs to the local edition for Republika Srpska of the daily tabloid newspaper EuroBlic, which is owned by Ringier Axel Springer Media AG.

purpose of gaining preliminary insights, the type of news items and authorship were also considered. Hard news was the most represented type of story (N=386, 71.21%), while soft news (N=145, 26.75%) and opinions, editorial, and commentary (N=11, 2.02%) were less common. The bylines of nearly half of all analyzed news articles (N=257, 47.41%) contained references to other news outlets or wire services, either domestic or foreign, as the original authors of information presented in the messages.

Figure 3

Distribution of messages mentioning ChatGPT across news sections



We incorporated the key themes identified in previous research (Nguyen & Hekman, 2022; Chuan, Tsai & Cho, 2019) to code core issues in media coverage of ChatGPT. News reports covering the economic pros and cons of ChatGPT, its potential for various business sectors and economic growth, customer products, services related to ChatGPT and other AI technologies, labor automation, new business deals, or plans announced by key figures in tech companies, and similar topics in *Business and Economy* (N=215, 39.67%) were among the most frequently mentioned issues. Articles addressing the political implications of ChatGPT and similar A.I. technologies, regulatory measures, political interventions, concerns regarding actual or potential exploitation of AI generative chatbots for malicious activities (such as fake news, algorithmic discrimination, cybercrime, etc.), and other related topics in *Politics and Regulations* (N=158, 29.15%) represented the second most covered issues. The third thematic category involved stories discussing the impact of ChatGPT and related AI advancements on culture and society, specifically the art, creative, and game industries, the use of ChatGPT for entertainment, chatbot responses to popular or current social issues (e.g., ideal sport teams, the best movies, the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.), and similar topics in *Culture and Society* (N=118, 21.77%). Topics related to *Science and Research* (N=51, 9.41%),

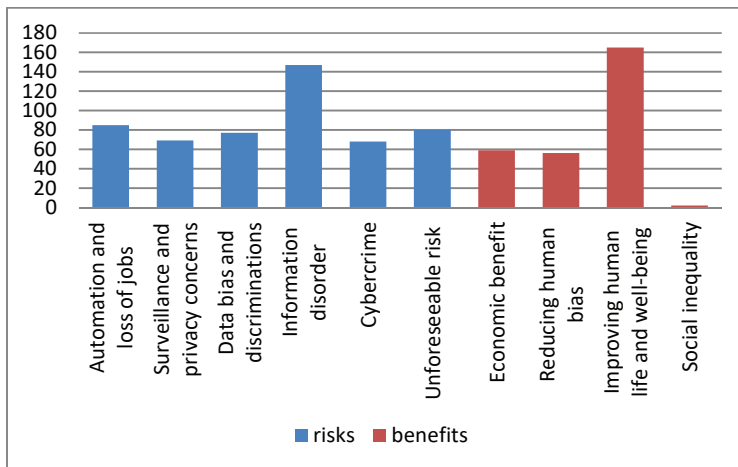
concerning the utilization of ChatGPT for scientific research and advancement, were the least reported.

News articles discussing *only risks* (N=264, 48.71%) were more prominent than news reports addressing *only benefits* (N=112, 20.66%) of ChatGPT and other related AI technologies. The messages mentioning both *risks and benefits* (N=89, 16.42%) were also observed, as well as news items where references to risks and benefits were *not clear* or included (N=77, 14.21%). References to only risks of ChatGPT were most frequent among news articles covering topics in politics and regulations of AI generative chatbots (Table 3).

Table 3
Themes and references to risks and benefits

Themes	Risks only	Benefits only	Risks and Benefits	Not clear
Business and Economy	76 (14.02%)	87 (16.05%)	35 (6.46%)	17 (3.04%)
Politics and Regulations	139 (25.65%)	1 (0.18%)	15 (2.77%)	3 (0.55%)
Culture and Society	33 (6.09%)	12 (2.21%)	17 (3.14%)	56 (10.33%)
Science and Research	16 (2.95%)	12 (2.21%)	22 (4.06%)	1 (0.18%)

Figure 4
Types of risks and benefits associated with ChatGPT



Most news articles mention one or more types of risks and/or benefits. As shown in Figure 4, real or possible threats related to various forms of information disorder, such as misinformation, fake news, propaganda, or plagiarism, were the most mentioned types of risks, while references to the improvement of human life and well-being were the most common types of benefits associated with ChatGPT.

The majority of analyzed news articles (N=410, 75.64%) contain one or more sources quoted or paraphrased by journalists. The most frequently cited sources were individuals or press releases associated with business, particularly the high-tech industry (N=529, 42.28%), followed by industry affiliated scholars (N=221, 17.66%), non-industry affiliated scholars (N=185, 14.78%), and government officials or politicians (N=175, 13.98%). Artists and celebrities (N=56, 4.47%), journalists (N=40, 3.19%), ordinary individuals (N=29, 2.31%) and all other sources (N=16, 1.27%) were not prevalent in news related to ChatGPT and similar AI technologies. In terms of gender, men (N=963, 76.97%) were cited more frequently than women (N=165, 13.18%) in news articles. Additionally, in some instances (N=123, 9.83%), these characteristics were not clear or determinable (e.g., press releases, joint reports, etc.). Men were the most commonly cited news sources across nearly all types of observed sources (Table 4).

Table 4
News sources: Gender distribution

Sources	Male	Female	Not clear (e.g. press releases, joint reports, etc.)
Business	452 (36.13%)	22 (1.75%)	55 (4.39%)
Industry affiliated scholars	204 (16.30%)	17 (1.35%)	0 (%)
Non-industry affiliated scholars	123 (9.83%)	45 (3.59%)	17 (1.35%)
Government/politicians	97 (7.43%)	27 (2.15%)	51 (4.07%)
Artists and celebrities	34 (2.71%)	22 (1.75%)	0 (%)
Journalists	33 (2.63%)	7 (0.55%)	0 (%)
Ordinary individuals	11 (0.87%)	18 (1.43%)	0 (%)
Miscellaneous	9 (0.71%)	7 (0.55%)	0 (%)

Results discussion and conclusions

The emergence and societal adoption of ChatGPT generated different responses from news outlets operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s media landscape. Resonance and content analysis revealed which actors were absent and present within this issue space, alongside their level of engagement in covering various events associated with this innovative AI-based technology. The findings allowed for the distinction of news outlets into at least two discernible groups.

The first group comprises non-participants, including news outlets that did not provide any coverage of this issue during the observed time period, such as digital-only outlets focusing on investigative journalism and both public service and commercial broadcasters from legacy media. While the absence of stories covering ChatGPT is understandable in the case of investigative digital outlets, the lack of observed relevant messages, particularly in one of the public broadcasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina (RTRS), is unexpected. Such an outcome could be linked to the high level of political instrumentalization of public broadcasting services, a factor associated with failure of these institutions to meet their expected functions,

as indicated by previous studies (Baraković & Mahmutović, 2011; Hozić, 2008; Osmančević & Sušnjar, 2021).

The second group comprises all news outlets that contributed to the coverage of this issue, demonstrating variations in the extent of their coverage. The findings raise the question why certain legacy and digital-only news outlets provided significantly more content on ChatGPT than others. Further research is required to understand the factors influencing the observed differences in news outlets' responses.

The results from content analysis, particularly regarding thematic features and topical categorization of news items, revealed a paradoxical portrayal of AI generative chatbots. Although news articles discussed ChatGPT and similar technologies across various thematic contexts, editors and journalists predominantly positioned this coverage as a technological and foreign issue. This could affect the perceived importance of this issue and consequently audience's support and adoption of ChatGPT and related AI-based technologies.

The findings suggest that the dissemination of information about AI generative chatbots is largely dependent on news content provided by other news outlets or wire services, either domestic or international. It is important to note that this research did not assess the quality of reporting in terms of authorship originality. Given the findings of previous research (Baraković & Mahmutović, 2014), a higher share of replicated content produced by other news organizations could be expected in the content of BH news outlets. However, more research is needed not just to confirm this hypothesis but also to explore the most influential providers of news related to AI technologies.

The analysis of four thematic areas of news coverage provides preliminary insights into the preoccupations, interests, and focuses of news outlets regarding issues associated with AI generative chatbots. The findings reveal a tendency among news outlets to focus on either the risks or benefits of ChatGPT and similar AI-based products. This tendency could indicate a move toward polarized, if not oversimplified, coverage. The evidence seems to align with previous research on AI news coverage in Western developed countries (Brennen, Howard & Nielsen, 2018; Nguyen & Hekman, 2022), which indicated that news outlets tend to amplify sources associated with the business sector and high-tech industry. Whether this is a byproduct of dependency on Western news sources or an intrinsic feature of journalistic cultures in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains an open question, one that should be addressed by future research. The overrepresentation of male voices in stories concerning ChatGPT suggests a gender imbalance in news sourcing. This evidence supports the findings concerning gender bias in news reporting of Western Balkan countries addressed in previous literature (Buljubašić, 2019; Moranjak Bamburać, Jusić & Isanović, 2007; Vujović, Obradović & Mitrović, 2014). These news sourcing practices fail to acknowledge, and may even misrepresent, the significant contributions of women to AI development. This is particularly noteworthy considering that many major think tanks and research groups focusing on the social impact of AI are led by women (Brennen et al., 2019: 5).

The reporting patterns observed on AI-generated chatbots, particularly the disparity in interest among different groups of news outlets, fail to provide

audiences with consistent and diverse information about these rapidly evolving technologies. This lack of comprehensive coverage undermines the foundation for meaningful public discourse on AI-related issues. The predominant positioning of ChatGPT coverage as a technological and foreign issue by Bosnian media outlets may inadvertently contribute to the perception of AI as distant and inaccessible, potentially hindering local efforts towards technological innovation and adoption. It is recommended that media practitioners prioritize original reporting on AI developments, contextualize the social impact of AI within Bosnian society, amplify the voices of underrepresented groups, and adopt a more nuanced and balanced approach to AI reporting. These efforts are crucial for providing audiences with a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with AI innovation, making it a high priority for public service media.

The limitations of this research should also be considered.

The manual content analysis was chosen as an appropriate method for conducting an exploratory study aimed at gaining preliminary insights. This method inherently possesses limited scalability. More rigorous analytic options, such as semi-supervised or unsupervised approaches utilizing machine classifications and topic modeling, would potentially yield more precise results. However, given the lack of previous research on this subject within the context of the media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the findings of this study could contribute to the establishment of benchmark datasets necessary for such analyses.

The analysis focused on the textual component of media messages. The further research should also consider the visual aspect or multimodal representations of AI in news content.

This research did not utilize qualitative approaches, like discourse analysis, but the data and findings of this research can help in performing relevant case studies that would provide a nuanced picture of news coverage of AI generative chatbots.

Preliminary findings of this exploratory research shed light on the issue of attention cycle for news media coverage of ChatGPT and its key characteristics, which could be utilized to advance knowledge on the role of media landscape in dissemination of information related to AI-based technological innovations in the context of post-communist countries.

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Appendix: News outlets sample

No.	News outlet	News platform	Location
1	Al Jazeera Balkans (AJB)	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
2	Bljesak.info	Web-only	Mostar
3	Buka magazin	Web-only	Banja Luka
4	Dnevni avaz	Print + web	Sarajevo
5	Dnevni list	Print + web	Mostar
6	Dnevnik.ba	Web-only	Mostar
7	Face TV	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
8	Faktor	Print + web	Sarajevo
9	Glas Srpske	Print + web	Banja Luka
10	Hayat TV	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
11	Hercegovina.info	Web-only	Mostar
12	Hrvatski medijski servis	Web-only	Mostar
13	Inforadar.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
14	Istraga.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
15	Klix.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
16	N1	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
17	Nezavisne novine	Print + web	Banja Luka
18	Nova BH	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
19	Novinska agencija Patria	News agency + web	Sarajevo

20	Oslobodjenje/O Kanal	Print + Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
21	Pressmediabih.com	Web-only	Sarajevo
22	Prometj.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
23	Radio Sarajevo	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
24	RTV BN	Broadcasting + web	Bijeljina
25	Radio-televizija Bosansko-podrinjskog kantona (RTV BPK)	Broadcasting + web	Goražde
26	Radiotelevizija Bosne i Hercegovine (BHRT)	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
27	Radio-televizija Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
28	Radiotelevizija Republike Srpske (RTRS)	Broadcasting + web	Banja Luka
29	Radiotelevizija Herceg-Bosne (RTV H-B)	Broadcasting + web	Mostar
30	Radio-televizija Tuzlanskog kantona (RTV TK)	Broadcasting + web	Tuzla
31	Slobodna Bosna	Web-only	Sarajevo
32	Source.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
33	Srpskainfo.com	Print + web	Banja Luka
34	Start	Print + web	Sarajevo
35	Stav	Print + web	Sarajevo
36	Tacno.net	Web-only	Mostar
37	TVSA	Broadcasting + web	Sarajevo
38	Vecernji list	Print + web	Mostar
39	Vijesti.ba	Web-only	Sarajevo
40	Zurnal.info	Web-only	Sarajevo

Četbot generativne veštačke inteligencije u medijima: Novinarsko izveštavanje o ChatGPT u Bosni i Hercegovini

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Apstrakt

U studijama difuzije inovacija, novinarsko izveštavanje prepoznaje se kao značajan faktor u razvijanju svesti i sticanju znanja o inovacijama, s potencijalom da ubrza ili uspori proces njene adaptacije. U pogledu inovacija povezanih s veštačkom inteligencijom ova dinamika do sada je najviše proučavana u kontekstu razvijenih zemalja Zapada. Mnogo manje je poznato kako se ovi procesi odvijaju u ekosistemu vesti postkomunističkih zemalja, naročito država s nižim demokratskim standardima i slabijim ekonomskim razvojem, poput Bosne i Hercegovine. S namerom sticanja preliminarnih uvida, ova studija ispitivala je kako su novinarske organizacije u Bosni i Hercegovini izveštavale o pojavi i socijalnoj adaptaciji ChatGPT, novog oblika generativne veštačke inteligencije, tokom početnih šest meseci od javne dostupnosti ove tehnologije. Korišćena je analiza sadržaja relevantnih novinarskih poruka (N=542) koje su publicirale 40 tradicionalnih i digitalnih novinarskih organizacija s ciljem istraživanja ključnih karakteristika novinarskog izveštavanja, pažnja posvećene temi tokom vremena i medijskih prikaza ove inovativne tehnologije veštačke inteligencije. Rezultati ukazuju da je mali broj medijskih kuća, uglavnom tradicionalne novinske organizacije, znatno više izveštavao o ChatGPT-u od ostalih, posebno javnih radiotelevizijskih servisa. Zaključci naglašavaju tendenciju medijskih kuća da se

fokusiraju ili na rizike ili na koristi ChatGPT-a i snažnije ističu izvore povezane s poslovnim sektorom i visokotehnološkom industrijom, u kojima preovladavaju muški glasovi.

Ključne reči: novinarstvo, veštačka inteligencija, ChatGPT, difuzija inovacija, analiza sadržaja.

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Digital Cultural Engagement of Elderly Audiences: Concepts, Perspectives and Examples within Academic Research

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Abstract

Digital technologies have transformed and continue to transform the way culture is produced, that is, the way it is presented, transmitted and consumed by the (inter)active audience. We consider it particularly important to examine and identify the concepts, perspectives and examples of digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences within academic research, given that the world population is aging and the elderly people are an important actor in socio-cultural processes, especially because younger generations are associated with new technologies by default. The main research question is: “What academic research has been done on the topic of digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences in the last ten years (2013-2023)?” As a research technique we used rapid literature review because our approach in this case is not analytical and critical as it comprises summarizing and synthesizing. The results show a noticeable solid presence of research papers that take into account the digital engagement of the elderly and the cultural engagement of the elderly as separate processes. However, there are few research papers that elaborate the topic of digital cultural engagement of the elderly from a communicological point of view.

Keywords: academic research, digital cultural engagement, digital culture, elderly audiences, interactivity

Digital Cultural Engagement of Elderly Audiences: Concepts, Perspectives and Examples within Academic Research

Introduction

According to the 2022 World Population Prospects report by the United Nations (UN), in 2022, approximately 10% of the world’s population belonged to people aged 65 and older. That percentage is projected to increase in the period up to 2050: approximately 12% in 2030 and 16% in 2050, that is, the old population would reach 994 million by 2030 and 1.6 billion by 2050. As for 2022, Europe and North

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America had the largest elderly population – almost 19% belonged to those aged 65 and older. By 2050, one in four people in these two regions could be 65 years or older and other regions are also predicted to see significant increases in their elderly populations over the next few decades (United Nations, 2022).

The results of one conducted research show that there is an increasing number of elderly³ people who perceive the time after retirement as time for themselves. Thus, taking care of grandchildren and other family responsibilities is no longer a priority for them, but they want to devote their free time to themselves and their hobbies, something for which they did not have so much time before, given their work and professional responsibilities. In that context, cultural activities are also very important: “Being involved in cultural activities is a way to satisfy needs for self-realisation and self-development” (Koropetska in Jakubowska, Kłosiewicz & Mękarski, 2015: 55). Hence, cultural engagement and the promotion of cultural and creative aging are very important. This means education, as well as inclusion and participation of the elderly in socio-cultural processes and events, which would encourage active aging.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed that culture was a very important element during isolations and quarantines, when people through various cultural and creative content (photographs, drawings, writings, songs, etc.) and online events (online exhibitions, online book promotions, online concerts, etc.), through sharing and interaction, tried to distract themselves from the difficult reality and thus contribute to their own and others’ psycho-emotional health and general well-being. The pandemic has also shown how important new technologies and online platforms, digital tools and digital skills can be for socio-cultural participation, especially in specific times like the pandemic, when one of the measures to prevent the spread of the virus was to stay at home, whereby the usual daily interpersonal communication between people had to be mediated. This is especially significant with regard to the elderly population, for whom digital communication and digital tools need to be adapted and they should be adequately educated, engaged and involved, acquiring new skills and gaining new opportunities for interaction and active cultural aging.

Digital technologies have transformed and continue to transform the way culture and cultural contents are produced, that is, the way they are presented, transmitted and consumed by the (inter)active audience. Different types of cultural content are subject to different forms and to different degrees of digitization⁴. For example, one important feature of virtual museum tours is that they are interactive. Unlike a movie, which the audience sees as it is recorded, during a virtual museum

³ The UN defines elderly persons as those aged 60 or over. Very often it is defined as 65 or over. In 1916 the American sociologist Isaac Rubinow defined that “Age 65 is generally set as the threshold of old age since it is at this period of life that the rates for sickness and death begin to show a marked increase over those of the earlier years” (Scherbov & Sanderson, 2019).

⁴ Digitization: “[...] the technical process of converting analog signals into a digital form, and ultimately into binary digits”; digitalization: “[...] the manifold sociotechnical phenomena and processes of adopting and using these technologies in broader individual, organizational, and societal contexts” (Legner et al., 2017).

tour the audience can choose how to view certain content. The audience is an active participant in that process. Also, the relation between the educational aspect and the new digital possibilities is very important regarding the audience:

“With modern digital resources, museum learning surpasses traditional models (visits, borrowing of exhibits, lessons in museums, and narratives at exhibitions) and it becomes transformed into a modern learning process based on digital technologies which find their unique expression in the development of virtual museums” (Pavlović, 2021: 168).

Given the great progress of digital technologies, today cultural and artistic institutions/organizations can connect with the audience in new ways, through which closer relationships are built and a new digital culture is created.

The American futurist Alvin Toffler coined the term “prosumer”. Prosumer is a person who consumes and produces media content: “It applies to the fact that we can create our own media and contribute, generating our own audiences” (Fairbrother, 2015). The time in which we live today is a time of active audience, of interactivity, co-creation and sharing. New technologies offer new opportunities for both audiences and other stakeholders in the field of culture and art.

Therefore, we consider it particularly important to examine the concepts, perspectives and examples of digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences within academic research, which would open up many significant aspects for further in-depth research regarding the elderly as an active audience and digital opportunities in the field of culture. This is particularly significant given that the world population is aging and that the elderly are an important actor in socio-cultural processes, so it is necessary to focus the research on these elderly audiences and their digital socio-cultural participation, especially because younger audiences are associated with new technologies by default.

Elderly audiences and digital cultural engagement

When we talk about digitalization, new technologies and Internet platforms, we usually associate their understanding and use with the younger generations. Most often, the younger generations are the first to accept innovations and changes in the technological sense. But things are changing and older generations are starting to accept and actively use new technologies for communication and interaction. According to a research study by the Pew Research Center⁵, the degree of adoption and use of new technologies and tools by the elderly population has increased significantly compared to what it was a decade ago. From the analyzed results of a survey conducted in 2021 by the Center, it can be noted that 96% of those who belong to the age group of 50 to 64 years and 75% of those of 65 years of age and older use the Internet. The results of the survey also indicate that older generations in the USA are more present on social media compared to 2010:

⁵ Pew Research Center conducts different types of data-driven social science research and it is a nonpartisan fact tank (About Pew Research Center, n.d.).

“At the same time, presence on social media among Americans 65 and older grew about fourfold since 2010, while use by the youngest adults remained relatively constant in that time frame. Since 2010, the gap between adults under 30 and adults 65 and older shrank from 71 points to 39 points” (Faverio, 2022).

In view of the fact that older generations are increasingly active in using new technologies, more digitally literate, and their free time (after retirement) allows them to devote themselves to learning new things and practicing new activities, it is very significant to study them as an audience and as active stakeholders in the cultural processes and co-creators of them. Also, additional strategies are needed for their digital cultural engagement, given that “with more leisure time and a strong preference for culturally-enriching activities, retirees are integral to the member base of many museums, public attractions, and other cultural institutions” (“Seniors & SMS”, 2022).

As we mentioned in the introduction, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digitalization and given the specific conditions of living that it has imposed, many things from our everyday life have moved to the virtual space, online and within different screens. It was culture and various cultural contents and events online that helped us to get through the difficult periods of quarantines and isolations more easily. This was especially significant for the elderly, who, as one of the most vulnerable categories of citizens, had to be most careful not to expose themselves and stay at home. Such conditions created fertile ground for the creation of various forms of digital cultural engagement for the elderly audiences, which should continue to develop and improve as a benefit for the elderly, but also for the cultural and creative sector and other stakeholders, as well as for digital culture and the cultural system in general.

The results of a survey conducted by Culture Track⁶ in the USA in 2021 indicate that those over the age of 55 highly value culture and cultural content and events and see them as social bonding. According to the results, more than half of the elderly took an active part in various digital cultural events during the COVID-19 pandemic (“Untapped opportunity”, 2021). Participation in various digital cultural events, the engagement and the interaction, as well as the creation of a new digital culture, gives the elderly audiences motivation, fulfillment and connection with the community and culture, which affects their psycho-emotional health and well-being. All of this offers cultural institutions/organizations and other actors in the field of culture a special opportunity for communication and interaction with this interested audience with enough free time for new activities through the many advantages offered by new technologies, Internet platforms and digital tools, and at the same time it is a challenge that needs to be overcome.

⁶ Culture Track represents a national online survey. It examines behaviors and attitudes of the audience, as well as barriers to cultural participation. The survey has been conducted since 2001 by LaPlaca Cohen (“Untapped opportunity”, 2021).

Methodology of the research

Our research is exploratory and descriptive in its scientific aim, and as a research technique for data collection we used rapid literature review.

The main research question from which we started is:

“What academic research has been done on the topic of digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences in the last ten years (2013-2023)?”

Our goal is to identify the academic research on the topic, that is, what their subject of research interest was within this topic. This would mean understanding the research concepts and perspectives regarding the digital engagement of elderly audiences, as well as having in mind various examples of this kind of research.

This research represents one of the aspects of a more extensive research that we plan to carry out in the coming period, which will refer to the communication strategies of cultural institutions in Macedonia and selected countries in the region⁷ with regard to the elderly audiences, i.e., cultural engagement, involvement and inclusion of the elderly audiences. We will also examine the opinion and the perceptions of the elderly audiences in this regard.

Literature review

In May and June 2023, we conducted a rapid literature review⁸ of scientific publications from 2013 to 2023 in English. We used this type of literature review because we wanted to explore what research studies were conducted within our topic and subject of interest, in order to have an idea of what kind of research has been done and in what way before conducting more extensive research, whereby we would use a systematic literature review. Hence, our approach in this case is not analytical and critical, but comprises summarizing and synthesizing.

We used the following databases as information sources: Crossref, Google Scholar, Library Genesis, Semantic Scholar and ScienceDirect. The keywords we used to search were: “digital cultural engagement” (with a variation: “cultural institutions digital engagement” and “cultural and creative sector digital engagement”) and “elderly audiences” (with some variations: “older audiences,” “older adults,” “elderly,” “seniors,” “older people”). The criteria for inclusion were that the papers were from 2013 to 2023, that their main topic was digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences and that they represented original scientific papers. Hence, we excluded the literature reviews found within the given topic and the given subject of research interest.

⁷ By “region” here we mean the countries with which Macedonia borders and the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

⁸ Hamel and his associates suggest that rapid review should be defined as “a form of knowledge synthesis that accelerates the process of conducting a traditional systematic review through streamlining or omitting various methods to produce evidence for stakeholders in a resource-efficient manner” (Garrity et al., 2021, p. 15).

Research outcomes

According to the keywords, for the period of ten years (2013-2023), in the databases mentioned previously we did not find many research papers that correspond to the inclusion criteria (of course, from those materials that were available and open access), so the selection process was limited in the beginning. Hence, some of the selected papers include the subject of our interest, but not as the primary objective of their research. Nevertheless, it is still present as an aspect of the research and therefore we took them into account.

The papers we found in the keyword search were mostly linked to research related to either cultural audience's engagement in general or digital audience's engagement in general. The most common topics that included some of the keywords, but not as a connected whole that would be relevant to our research, were: digital public services for the elderly, COVID-19 and the cultural life of the elderly, digital video games and the elderly, and the digital divide in terms of availability and participation (age, income, country of residence, etc.). The basis of the research was the psychosocial condition of the elderly, their well-being and inclusion in social-cultural life, as well as digital (il)literacy of the elderly. Thus, from this rapid literature review we can note that there is a lack of research related specifically to the digital cultural engagement of the elderly audiences from a communicological perspective.

Afterwards, we approached a detailed study of the selected papers according to our subject of research interest, in order to determine: the topic, their subject of research interest and the methods used for data collection, as well as their main findings and conclusions. In the Table 1 below we present the selected papers, categorized according to the above categories. The research papers are arranged according to the year, i.e., the ones from the later year are the first, and the more recent ones are the last in the table.

Table 1

Selected papers from the rapid literature review by categories

<p>Name of the research paper: "Comparison of engagement and emotional responses of older and younger adults interacting with 3D cultural heritage artefacts on personal devices"</p> <p>Keywords: augmented reality, 3D, elderly people, young adults, emotion, cultural heritage museum artefacts</p> <p>Author(s): Alelis, G., Bobrowicz, A., Siang Ang, C.</p> <p>Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: <i>Behaviour & Information Technology</i>, 34, 11, pp. 1064-1078, 2015</p> <p>Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Engagement with artefacts of older and younger participants in three modalities: 3D models on a laptop, AR on a tablet, and physical, and their emotional reactions to these artefacts in each modality</p> <p>Methods for data collection used in the research: Within-subjects study using counter-balancing; survey, statistical analysis method</p> <p>General findings and conclusions from the research: Regardless of age, the digital modalities were enjoyable and encouraged emotional responses – they were successful in creating enjoyable, emotional experience; even though the cultural heritage artefacts are digitised and viewed outside the museum, they can enable emotional connections; museums could consider presenting 3D models of their artefacts on their websites and make them available for downloading as an application for different devices</p>

Name of the research paper: "Using communication and visualization technologies with senior citizens to facilitate cultural access and self-improvement"

Keywords: ICT, visualization technologies, augmented reality, senior citizens, mass media, social well-being

Author(s): Meneses Fernández, M. D., Santana Hernández, J. D., Gutiérrez, J. M., Henríquez Escuela, M. R., Rodríguez Fino, R.

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *Computers in Human Behavior*, 66, pp. 329-344, 2017

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Social impacts and benefits of using digital visualization technologies with senior citizens with two main points of interest: access to cultural content and improved personal and social well-being

Methods for data collection used in the research: Controlled study; qualitative analysis based on satisfaction with the experience; survey, quantitative analysis

General findings and conclusions from the research: Senior participants are motivated to use digital technologies because that leads to better access to socio-cultural content and entertainment, easier communication and sharing experiences with friends and family and enhances their well-being; the technologies used in the study have enabled senior participants to digitally (re)visit cultural events and cultural locations that they wouldn't be able to visit in another way, and that was rated highly by the seniors that participated in the study regarding the emotional element; one very important aspect of the research is that the collaboration between the researchers and the SeniorCitizens Day Care Centre has yielded good results in terms of identifying ways to improve the personal and social well-being of the seniors through digital involvement in various activities, including cultural ones

Name of the research paper: "Active seniors perceived value within digital museum transformation" (case study)

Keywords: cultural heritage, digital transformation, active senior visitors, immersive technologies, level of engagement, perceived experience value

Author(s): Traboulsi, C., Frau, M., & Cabiddu, F.

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *The TQM Journal*, 30, 5, pp. 530-553, 2018

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Perceived value of active elderly visitors regarding the heritage sites and use of new technologies; opportunities for digital transformation, as well as risks in the tourism industry when it comes to active elderly travelers

Methods for data collection used in the research: Semi-structured interviews; observation

General findings and conclusions from the research: Extended knowledge on the perception of elderly audiences as consumers, i.e. active visitors, in terms of digital technologies used by archaeological museums; different dimensions of perception of the elderly audiences regarding the digital transformation of museums, namely: epistemological, functional, social and hedonistic; enabling an integrative framework to enhance the experience of digital technologies and cultural engagement in museums both before, during and after the visit by elderly audiences; a need for elderly to have access to interfaces that are easy to use and interesting for them, as well as a need for support regarding social media platforms

Name of the research paper: "Bridging the digital divide: Older adults' engagement with online cinema heritage"

Keywords: /

Author(s): Dibeltulo, S., Culhane, S., & Treveri Gennari, D.

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 35, 4, pp. 797-811, 2020

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Elderly audiences' engagement with cinema heritage online; different strategies for engagement of elderly with the digital world within *Italian Cinema Audiences*

Methods for data collection used in the research: Mixed methods ethnographic approach; face-to-face video-interview (as an isolated case) and unstructured video-interviews, qualitative analysis

General findings and conclusions from the research: Collaboration between older and younger people could be very important for the digital literacy of the older generations and for them to be active online and share content; encouragement of heritage content production is needed that would be suitable and easily accessible for elderly audiences; the implementation of elements like seeking feedback on online content and rewarding active participation is a successful way for understanding elderly audiences interaction with digital tools and resources; an integrated multimedia strategy can be an effective solution to the digital divide (engagement and inclusion online)

Name of the research paper: "Creative ageing – cultural engagement instead of social isolation: Results of the Europe-wide survey"

Keywords: /

Author(s): Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *Creative ageing – cultural engagement instead of social isolation: Results of the Europe-wide survey*, 2022

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Cultural engagement and participation of elderly and implementation of the topic of "cultural participation of older people" in various European cities

Methods for data collection used in the research: Interviews, qualitative analysis; survey, quantitative analysis

General findings and conclusions from the research: Most of the European cities do not officially define the group of elderly in guidelines that provide administrations guidance on topics related to culture; the promotion of cultural engagement and participation of elderly is in competition with that of other age groups and the promotion of cultural engagement and participation of elderly is expected to become more important in the future; the greatest barriers for cultural engagement and participation of elderly are: social isolation, digital content, and economic barriers; digital formats don't represent opportunities for everyone and should therefore not be seen as a universal accessibility tool; all stakeholders (cities, governments, practitioners) will need to think about implementing programs and funding and making inclusive and accessible offers for the elderly who might have limited digital knowledge and skills and limited financial possibilities

Name of the research paper: "Internet Use, Cultural Engagement, and Multi-Dimensional Health of Older Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study in China"

Keywords: internet use, multi-dimensional health, influence mechanism, older adults, cultural engagement

Author(s): Chen, W. C., Yang, L., & Wang, X. Y.

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *Frontiers in public health*, 10, 887840, 2022

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: The effect of internet use on the multi-dimensional health of the elderly in China with the mediating role of cultural engagement

Methods for data collection used in the research: Statistical analysis method (logistic regression and a single-step multiple mediation model)

General findings and conclusions from the research: Internet use by the elderly has positive effects on their physical and mental health; in terms of elderly internet use and the questions about health, cultural engagement has a mediating role; it is necessary to encourage and nurture the use of the Internet by the elderly, as well as to engage them more culturally, and this should be one of the goals of the government, in order to improve the health and well-being of the elderly

Name of the research paper: "Direct[Message]: Exploring Access and Engagement With the Arts Through Digital Technology in COVID Times"

Keywords: grounded theory, methodologies, active interviews, interviewing, methodologies, new methods & methodologies, methodologies, qualitative research, methodologies, arts-based inquiry, methods of inquiry

Author(s): La Rose, T., et al.

Journal/publication and year of publication of the paper: *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 22(6), pp. 641-653, 2022

Topic and subject of research of the research paper: Development of innovative digital technologies and digital platform for engagement with culture and arts of the elderly and making culture and arts more accessible for them through interactivity, taking into account the needs and desires of elderly, but also the barriers related to engagement and creation with the arts, culture and creative mediums

Methods for data collection used in the research: Interviews and focus groups (virtual); interactive online survey

General findings and conclusions from the research: Many seniors are not familiar with digital technologies and expressed a desire to learn more in order to enhance their digital skills so they can enjoy arts and cultural content; some of them highlight the financial problems regarding the purchase of appropriate devices through which they could use various cultural and artistic contents and be part of such kind of activities; for some of the included seniors in the research project, *cultural alienation* limited their engagement in online arts and culture activities; the researchers conclude that, with the project suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interactive online survey format could be of great benefit to researchers conducting similar studies and those working with specific populations such as the elderly

In the table above, we have summarized the selected papers according to several categories. What we can see from these research papers is that there are different approaches to the broader topic of digital cultural engagement of the elderly audiences, both in terms of the narrower topic and the subject of interest, as well as in terms of the methodology used. In the context of the perceived value of elderly audiences regarding the use of digital technologies in museums and elderly audiences' engagement with cinema heritage online, Traboulsi, Frau & Cabiddu (2018) and Dibeltulo, Culhane & Treveri Gennari (2020) use qualitative methodology, while Chen, Yang & Wang (2022) use quantitative methodology in order to examine the effect of Internet use on the multidimensional health of the elderly in China with the mediating role of cultural engagement. Alelis, Bobrowicz & Siang Ang (2015), Meneses Fernández, Santana Hernández, Gutiérrez, Henríquez Escuela & Rodríguez Fino (2017), La Rose et al. (2022) and the researchers from Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe (2022), use both qualitative and quantitative methodology so they can: compare the emotional response of young and elderly interacting with 3D cultural heritage artifacts on personal devices; investigate the potential benefits of digital technologies for the seniors and their response towards those technologies; examine the attitudes and opinions of the elderly regarding the use of digital technologies and their cultural-artistic engagement and develop adequate digital platforms that can be used by the elderly; examine the implementation of the topic of cultural participation of the elderly.

Despite the quantitative approach in terms of methods, Chen, Yang & Wang's (2022) research is based on results from the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) of 2015 and 2017, taking into account the responses of elderly people over the age of 60. When we take into account the conducted interviews within the research papers of Traboulsi, Frau & Cabiddu (2018) and Dibeltulo, Culhane & Treveri Gennari (2020) and the survey questionnaires that were used in the researches of Meneses Fernández, Santana Hernández, Gutiérrez, Henríquez Escuela & Rodríguez Fino (2017), Alelis, Bobrowicz & Siang Ang (2015) and Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe (2022), as well as the virtual interviews and focus groups and the interactive online survey from the Canada based research project of La Rose et al. (2022), we can see that, regardless of the different methodologies (qualitative and quantitative), all authors take into account the opinions and attitudes of the elderly within their topics and subjects of research interest, which highlights a key element: in research involving elderly people, concerning digital cultural engagement, it is necessary to include a methodology that takes into account their opinion, their perception, as well as satisfaction and experience.

As for the results and general conclusions of the research, we can notice that what unites them all is the need for greater digital cultural engagement of the elderly audiences, that is, the application of various strategies, whether it refers to cultural institutions such as museums (Traboulsi, Frau & Cabiddu, 2018; Alelis, Bobrowicz & Siang Ang, 2015) and cinema (Dibeltulo, Culhane & Treveri Gennari, 2020), or the community and the institutions (Meneses Fernández, Santana Hernández, Gutiérrez, Henríquez Escuela & Rodríguez Fino, 2017; La Rose et al., 2022; Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe, 2022), as well as government authorities and other stakeholders (Chen, Yang & Wang, 2022; Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe, 2022). The need for cooperation and support in the context of the use of various digital tools, devices, etc. by the elderly, i.e., their digital literacy, with the aim of their greater involvement and engagement within the framework of digital culture and in the sharing, interaction and creation of cultural content, and thus cultural experience, is also something that all the research papers we considered point to. All this affects the psycho-emotional health of the elderly, their well-being and the degree of satisfaction with social-cultural inclusion.

All mentioned researchers offer a solid theoretical framework. Considering that and all of the above, this rapid literature review gives us a good enough insight into the problem and the subject of interest and reveals various perspectives and concepts for further in-depth research.

Final considerations and conclusion

Wanting to have insights of research concepts, perspectives and examples regarding the digital engagement of elderly audiences, that would light the way for our in-depth further research within cultural engagement, cultural institutions and elderly audiences, we conducted a rapid literature review, which we presented in

this paper. The goal was to identify the academic research focused on digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences.

What we can conclude is that on the topic of digital cultural engagement of the elderly audiences in the last ten years, there are not many research papers (at least from the sources and the literature that were available to us) that elaborate this topic from a communicological point of view and taking into account all above-mentioned elements, which we consider to be a lack within the academic research, considering the importance and the actuality of the topic, socio-cultural and demographic changes at the global level and the development of digital technologies and tools and their use in the cultural and creative sector. We would like to point out that there is a noticeable solid presence of research papers that take into account the digital engagement of the elderly, as well as the cultural engagement, but as separate processes and not as a combination, which is precisely the subject of our research interest – digital cultural engagement of the elderly audiences.

What is evident from academic research is that the elderly are actively involved (whether through interviews, whether through focus groups and surveys), which is one of the key elements when it comes to the elderly audiences (that is already mature, experienced and with clear opinions and attitudes and with specific needs, unlike the younger ones, who did not yet have firm attitudes and are in the process of developing, changing and gaining experience). Namely, in the context of research, it is necessary to include methodological techniques that would enable examination of the opinions, attitudes, perceptions, etc. of the elderly audiences. Given the increase in the elderly population and the extended life expectancy, as well as the need of the elderly to remain mentally active as long as possible, it is very important this audience to be adequately digitally educated, included and engaged, especially when it comes to culture, because “without men, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no men. We are, in sum, incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture...” (Geertz, 1973: 49).

Another very important aspect that emerges from the literature review that we conducted is that some of the researchers suggest that research involving the elderly presents a kind of challenge and that more innovative ways and methods are needed in order to achieve better results and more successful research. Namely, La Rose et al. (2022) point out that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to “transfer” the initially planned research online, that is, they conducted the interviews, focus groups and surveys online and through interaction. They emphasize that this is a good practice when working in specific conditions and with the elderly population. However, given the limited digital capabilities of the elderly and the fact that a lot of work has to be done on their digital illiteracy and on reducing the digital divide, online methods still represent a great challenge despite their practicality. We believe that combinations and innovations are needed in order to have the most adequate and best methodology when it comes to the elderly population, that is, the elderly as an audience.

The limitations of our paper mostly relate to the small sample, i.e., the small number of research studies that we included in the rapid literature review, but those

were the available materials. In fact, that alone points to the fact that within our topic of interest, not many research studies, and therefore research papers, have been done, which points to a gap in academic research regarding this problem. Considering that this paper opens only one aspect of a more extensive and in-depth research that we will conduct in the near future, we believe that according to our main research question, this paper provides many important answers. As we indicate in the title of our paper, the concepts, perspectives and examples we have presented here open up many topics and questions that could be further explored and analyzed, and we consider this paper to be a contribution to a very significant topic within communication and sociological studies and a good starting point for future research into digital cultural engagement of elderly audiences.

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Digitalno kulturno angažovanje starije publike: koncepti, perspektive i primeri u okviru akademskih istraživanja

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Apstrakt

Digitalne tehnologije su transformisale i nastavljaju da transformišu način na koji se kultura proizvodi, odnosno način na koji se predstavlja, prenosi i konzumira od (inter)aktivne publike. Smatramo da je veoma važno ispitati i identifikovati koncepte, perspektive i primere digitalnog kulturnog angažovanja starije publike u okviru akademskih istraživanja, s obzirom da svetska populacija stari i da su stari ljudi važan akter u socio-kulturnim procesima, a posebno jer se mlađe generacije podrazumevano povezuju sa novim tehnologijama. Glavno istraživačko pitanje glasi: „Kakva su akademska istraživanja rađena na temu digitalnog kulturnog angažovanja starije publike u poslednjih deset godina (2013-2023)?“ Kao istraživačku tehniku koristili smo brzi pregled literature jer naš pristup u ovom slučaju nije analitički i kritički, već sumirajući i sintetizujući. Rezultati pokazuju uočljivo solidno prisustvo istraživačkih radova koji uzimaju u obzir digitalno angažovanje starijih i kulturno angažovanje starijih kao zasebne procese, ali na temu digitalnog kulturnog angažovanja starijih nema mnogo istraživačkih radova koji razrađuju ovu temu sa komunikološkog stanovišta.

Ključne reči: akademska istraživanja, digitalno kulturno angažovanje, digitalna kultura, starija publika, interaktivnost

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E' privilegio della sperimentazione di percorrere strade non tracciate con tutti i limiti e i vantaggi che ciò può comportare.

It is the privilege of experimentation to travel along roads that are not traced with all the limits and advantages that this may entail.

(Alessandro Silj, Dati per la verifica dei programmi trasmessi: Eurikon, 1982)

TV Eurikon and Europa TV: Research on the Beginning of Transnational pan-European Television¹

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Abstract

The article examines the success or failure of two experimental pan-European channels, TV Eurikon and Europa TV, focusing on the role of television in shaping European identity. The research, carried out thanks to the International Visegrad Fund Research Grant Program and the Historical Archives of the European Union, showed that balanced reporting during development of satellite communication and strong pan-European communication strategy are of key importance for shaping the public perception of supranational institutions like the EU. To achieve success, policy makers must overcome obstacles such as linguistic diversity, regulatory frameworks and national interests. Although we are not in the era of the beginning of satellite systems, Europe should consider new models of cooperation, cultural exchanges and different perspectives for the long-term sustainability of similar pan-European initiatives.

Keywords: television, Europe, satellite communication, TV Eurikon, Europa TV

TV Eurikon and TV Europa: Research on the Beginning of Transnational pan-European Television

Introduction

National identities in Europe are traced back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but challenges from transnational agencies, new political groups, and the media have transformed the landscape over time. The construction of European

¹ The paper was created as a result of research in the Historical Archives of the European Union thanks to the International Visegrad Fund Research Grant Program

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identity is multifaceted, with economic and political factors having a greater impact than cultural factors. The European Union, which was first founded as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), promoted open markets and democratic engagement in order to maintain stability. However, cultural and media components can be seen as the most important for European identity creation. As a result, European integration and cultural identity formation have gained attention in recent decades. Moreover, researchers began to introduce media as a concept that is indispensable in contemporary European society. Television was the dominant medium in the twentieth century, promoting European identity formation through collective representations. However, scholars disagree on the media's role in shaping the European public sphere. The "impossibility school" believes there is no common European public sphere due to lack of common language, pan-European media, and shared identity, while the "realistic school" argues for Europeanization of the national sphere. My scholarly pursuits are rooted in the belief that television has played a pivotal role as a communication medium of the twentieth century, fostering the emergence of a collective European consciousness. My fascination lies with the initial stages of television's incorporation into the reporting and broadcasting of European matters. More importantly, I would like to comprehend the economic, legal, and political foundations that led to the development of TV Eurikon and Europa TV and the reason why they disappeared and are now almost completely forgotten. The research gap emphasizes the importance of further examination of the institutionalization of transnational pan-European television and its effects on Europe's cultural identity. This article aims to delve into various elements that dictate the success or failure of such ventures, and their implications on media policy within Europe. The inquiry centers on the potential of television during its nascent phase to contribute to the forging of a European identity, and whether Europe must deliberate on new paradigms to advance pan-European media initiatives.

Methodology and research background

Transnationality is the slow formation of a common culture or feeling of community based on transnational experiences, which shapes nation-state identities but does not happen instantaneously. Transnationality is the process of cultural integration and identity creation that transcends national boundaries and is influenced by cross-national experiences. Transnational television flows, which are multidirectional streams of content that span several industries and viewers, are an example of this. These flows engage institutions, viewers, creators, and content providers, resulting in a fusion of cultural elements. The aesthetic quality of these flows helps to shape a collective global culture, affecting local traditions and media consumption expectations. As we can see, transnational television flows occur across institutions, people, programs, production, and aesthetics. "Here transnational means a common (preferably simultaneous) experience of television programs (images and/or content) across national borders (...)" (Henrich-Franke, 2010: 68)."

Historically, European broadcasters have been national, encompassing the whole national territory. Television's relationship with the nation-state has changed since the 1980s due to two developments: transnationalization, which has led to the growth of transnational media corporations and the expansion of international television trade, and decentralization, which has resulted in the development of intricate local and regional broadcasting systems. The relationship between the media and the nation-state is redefined by pan-European television, which both challenge and supplement national broadcasters (Chalaby, J. K., 2002).

There were disagreements in the pan-European television debate in Europe during the 1980s. America's hegemony in media content and the expanding commercial services sector put the European public broadcasting system under intense competition. Since national programs have historically been the only ones available, it was also necessary to consider the intricacy of national preferences for television programming. This implies that new power dynamics and shifting cultural and economic regimes required policy adaptation:

“How one can justify a European intervention in audiovisual matters? Basically, there were two ways out of this dilemma. One was to claim that ‘free trade’ and ‘Europeanism’ were highly compatible. Let us suppose that Europeans are thirsty for European material (other than their own national programmes), though history proves otherwise. Thus, any policy encouraging the development of a fluid European market of European programmes could claim to be both connected to a ‘free market’ and to ‘identity policy’” (Bourdon, 2007: 269).

Also, television viewership has become more diverse and pluralistic as national broadcasting rights are deregulated and privatized, and cable, satellite, and digital technologies become more widely available. Overall, satellite communication has proven to be a valuable tool in promoting cultural exchange and fostering international cooperation. With technological advancements, the potential for satellites to further enhance diplomatic relations and bridge cultural divides was promising. However, Bourdon believes that pan-European trials with TV Europa and TV Eurikon were to execute the ‘Green Paper’, spread European culture, and aid in the establishment of European identity. “Based on the same technocultural determinism as the Green Paper, the experiments failed” (Bourdon, 2007: 271).

This paper is an attempt to approach the subject from a new angle, albeit one that is not as critical as that of Bourdon's, whose catchy title (*Unhappy Engineers of the European Soul: The EBU and the Woes of Pan-European Television*) already alludes to a negative consequence of the creation of the European cultural identity. From the previous literature, we have learned what has not been done (Collins, 1998; Bourdon, 2007; Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011). My aim is to show with this paper what was done in the early 1980s of the 20th century. I would not have been able to show it if I had not immersed myself in a huge amount of archival material from the Historical Archives of the European Union thanks to the International Visegrad Foundation Grant Program. The research was conducted in August and September 2023. After searching for the keywords *TV Europa*, *TV*

Eurikon, *satellite*, and *television*, all publicly available materials were ordered. Since the majority of the texts were in physical format, they had to be saved in several folders. Part of the content was available digitally. The main research period referred to the five years between 1980 and 1985. Nevertheless, as there were earlier stages in the preparation of policies towards the development of the satellite program, as well as the consequences of the termination of the two aforementioned experimental programs, the texts from the end of the 70s of the 20th century and the three following years, 1986-1988, were also analyzed.

From a pan-European idea to an action initiative

The idea of being able to watch a joint program regardless of which European country you are in appeared in the sixties of the 20th century, but, like any innovative idea, it took time to take concrete technical, legal and financial steps. It would certainly be a difficult task, mostly due to the harmonization of the normative and legal framework of different national legal systems and also international law. European countries' unique broadcasting and media regulations necessitated extensive coordination and cooperation to reconcile content standards, advertising regulations, copyright laws, and licensing requirements for a joint program. Additionally, following international rules and managing issues of jurisdiction, cross-border broadcasting rights, and intellectual property protection were necessary in order to establish a single program spanning European countries. Apart from legal considerations, there were also significant technical and financial challenges. As indicated, while the idea of creating a joint program for European countries may have originated in the sixties, its realization was impeded by a multitude of challenges.

In the early 1980s, the European Parliament seriously considered radio and television broadcasting primarily for political reasons, which were as follows: decision-making processes, insufficient public information about the work and development of European institutions, inadequate and negative information about the European Community, and the need to present the community in a professional manner. In addition, the reasons were also of a media nature, taking into account primarily the power of television and the accelerated development of satellite technology. The initiative itself was officially launched on September 18, 1980, when the European Parliament adopted the resolution and Schall report *The information policy of the European Communities and of the European Parliament calling for either the establishment of a new 'European television company' or the establishment of 'a European television channel'*.⁴ At that time, television was perceived as a very important tool for the unification of Europe: "Television could contribute more to developing a wider understanding of the benefits of the European Union."⁵ This means that there was no certainty about whether it

⁴ European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p 7.

⁵ *Télévision: relations avec les professionnels de la télévision, rapports - Plan d'action pour l'introduction des services de télévision avancés en Europe*, Documents from [1977] to [1993], CEUE_PICP-459,

was even possible for the national broadcast services to harmonize enough to create a common European television program, so the idea of an independent and autonomous pan-European company that would be freed from the influence of the existing national companies was emphasized. Its headquarters could be in Luxembourg, but the costs and difficulties of organizing such an international media company are quite high, and the European Parliament was aware of that. Although the conclusion about the benefits of this solution is quite adequate, considering the projection that ‘television journalists with a European outlook will only emerge when a real European role has been defined for them’, this solution was nevertheless rejected.⁶

A joint European channel of several broadcasters is less complicated and costs less

Consequently, they resorted to what was supposed to be less complicated and cost less. It was a joint European channel of several broadcasters that was broadcast via the fifth channel of the satellite. That solution was called realistic and the key to its realization was seen in the cooperation of national broadcast services within Eurovision with the help of the development of satellite technology, which was detected in November 1980 at the EBU conference in Venice. Although the national broadcast companies had different ideas on how to make a European program, the best proposal, in the opinion of the European Parliament, was given by the second German program ZDF, on March 19, 1981 with the projection that broadcasting could start in 1986. It seemed quite feasible, and the consequences could be the following: A joint European television channel will give further cohesion to the European Community, uniting the citizens of Europe, and provide it with a medium which, even if it is not managed by the Community itself, by its very existence will increase the feeling of solidarity among Europeans.⁷ As indicated, the major purpose of the collaborative European television channel was to strengthen ties within the European Community by bringing its citizens together under a common media umbrella. This program would allow Europeans to access a unified broadcast network, boosting communal involvement. While this channel was planned to run freely, not directly overseen by the European Community, the decision-makers believed that its very existence would serve as a catalyst for cultivating a stronger sense of togetherness among Europe’s diverse people. From the same Working Document from 1982, it was evident that thoughts also went in the direction of European unification and

BAC101/1999_0520, 23.3.1982, p.445.

⁶ European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p.10

⁷ European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p.13

common identity with the help of television and new satellite technology that would break existing borders: “European unification will only be achieved if Europeans want it. Europeans will only want it if there is such a thing as a European identity. A European identity will only develop if Europeans are adequately informed. At present, information via the mass media is controlled at national level. The vast majority of journalists do not ‘think European’ because their reporting role is defined in national or regional terms. Hence the predominance of negative reporting. Therefore, if European unification is to be encouraged, Europe must penetrate the media.”⁸ The development of television and satellite technology may serve to promote European unity and shared identity, which is dependent on European residents’ desire for a collective European identity. This shared identity can only emerge if people throughout Europe receive full and reliable information. At the period, media dissemination was predominantly national, which influenced journalists’ viewpoints and reporting style, resulting in negative storylines. To foster European integration, it was critical that European-centric information obtain more access and exposure in the media landscape, resulting in a more balanced and inclusive narrative. The Commission also conducted a preliminary survey through “Eurobarometer” to gauge public interest in a multilingual European television program. The survey, conducted in October-November 1982, involved 6,600 adults aged 15 and over in 10 European countries. The results showed that 57% of Europeans expressed interest in the project of a European television channel.⁹ In December 1981, the European Space Agency (ESA) offered the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) the second TDS channel for a pan-European program on the L-Sat satellite. The channel was designed to be oriented towards any EBU member country.¹⁰

The Working document from 23.2.1982 states what this European channel should cover and pay attention to: language adaptability, technical operability, respect for diversity, fulfillment of three media functions: information, education and entertainment.¹¹ During the early 1980s, it was of paramount importance for the European Community to prioritize and focus on several key aspects to enhance communication efficacy. This included a strong emphasis on adapting

⁸ European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p 8.

⁹ Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

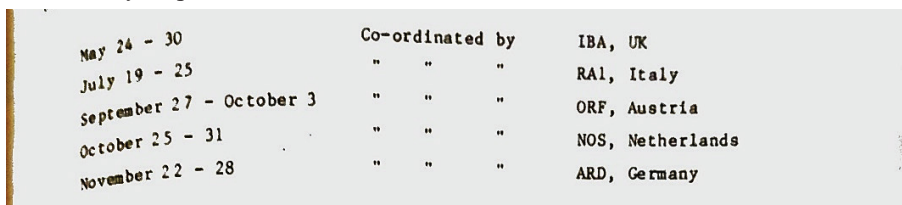
¹⁰ Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

¹¹ European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81

languages for wider comprehension, ensuring the technical systems were operable and conducive to communication, valuing and acknowledging the rich tapestry of cultural diversity, and ensuring that broad media functions were satisfied. First, the European Community (EC) was established with diverse linguistic backgrounds, necessitating language adaptability in communication channels for effective communication and community inclusivity. Secondly, technological advancements were rapidly transforming the media landscape, and the European Commission (EC) was prioritizing technical operability to leverage emerging technologies, ensuring effective communication channels and staying updated on technological developments across borders. Further, the European Community was founded on principles of unity and cooperation among diverse nations. Respecting diversity in communication meant acknowledging and celebrating the cultural differences present within the community. By promoting diversity in media content and representation, the EC could foster mutual understanding and tolerance among member states. Finally, information, education, and entertainment were fundamental functions of media with a vital role in shaping public opinion and fostering societal development. This multi-faceted approach was critical in promoting seamless communication across member states, supporting the ideal of unity within European society, and addressing the varied requirements and expectations of its vast citizenry.

In 1982, the EBU organized a five-week test broadcast of EURIKON to address content, style, organization, coordination, financial, and legal issues related to a joint European television program produced by Member State organizations. The experiment involved 35 hours of broadcast per week, sent in code to the Orbital Test Satellite (OTS-2).¹²

Picture 1, TV Eurikon broadcasting, from: Spicer, J. A Progress Report from 1982 prepared for the Directorate –General Information Commission of the European Community, September 1982, source HAEU



	Co-ordinated by	
May 24 - 30	" " "	IBA, UK
July 19 - 25	" " "	RAI, Italy
September 27 - October 3	" " "	ORF, Austria
October 25 - 31	" " "	NOS, Netherlands
November 22 - 28	" " "	ARD, Germany

In the opinion of Alessandro Silj, the Eurikon experiment emerged almost by accident, freeing it up for usage in other European Broadcasting Union (EBU) research. Five countries, including the United Kingdom (IBA), Italy (RAI), West Germany (ARD), Austria (ORF) and Nederland (NOS), agreed to implement programs, while nine countries provided programs if requested and eighteen

¹² Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

countries could receive it in total.¹³ Although the concept of pan-European was not developed nor was identity belonging to the European space, everyone participated “knowing the limits of the experiment, but finding it useful as a step forward towards programming European” (Silj, 1982: 3). In conclusion, the experiment was viewed as a valuable stepping stone, a preliminary exploration in the attempt to create a shared European broadcasting space that may foster a sense of unity and cultural expression among Europe’s different nations. This collaborative attitude and readiness to start on such an innovative undertaking highlight the potential of media to operate as a unifying force, bringing together countries with unique histories and languages under the banner of a united European endeavor.

‘A tricky business’ of a joint channel

In the document, Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat) by the ESA joint board on communication satellite programs, it is repeated that EBU and ESA have been cooperating for a long time and together they are making the most important steps in the development of broadcasting satellite television. It also states that the first mention of the practical use of L-Sat for this purpose was in the end of 1980 in an ‘exchange of letters on this subject between the Director General and the President of the EBU.’¹⁴ But what is most important in this documentary is the conclusion of why the experimental TV Eurikon program did not show success: ‘With regard to the programs themselves the accent is on the daily transmission of programs with a character intended for the general public. At present there are in practice no such programs, and a special effort will be required to produce them. The Eurikon experiment carried out with the OTS showed, moreover, that making programs intended for audiences throughout Europe was a tricky business especially where simultaneous interpretation into several languages is concerned.’¹⁵ The Eurikon project, executed in partnership with the OTS, illuminated the challenging nature of producing television programs intended for pan-European viewership, particularly in the context of delivering simultaneous interpretation into multiple languages. Indeed, the most complex technical problem was the language for which different solutions were tested. A variety of potential solutions were evaluated, including simultaneous interpretation, where linguists translate the spoken content as it occurs;

¹³ Dati per la verifica dei programmi trasmessi: Eurikon, Un esperimento di televisione europea di Luciano Li Causi, Introduzione di Alessandro Silj, RAI Radiotelevisione italiana Segreteria del consiglio di amministrazione Verifica programmi trasmessi, 1982.

¹⁴ ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1

¹⁵ Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat), ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1

voice-over dubbing, where original audio is replaced with translated dialogue; and the provision of subtitles, which display translated text on the screen corresponding to the spoken words.

Additionally, the complex issue was also the general design of the program and the balance between its different elements (information, education, entertainment).¹⁶ Striking this balance was essential to cater to the diverse preferences and expectations of a broad European audience, ensuring the program's content was engaging, informative, and culturally enriching across the continent.

The fact that one experiment failed did not end the thinking about the ways in which programs could be transmitted via the Olympus satellite and the kind of programs for this transmission. Three possibilities were proposed: a mixed European service that would maintain similar programming schemes as national broadcast services only with an added European dimension; then a European service that would broadcast mostly sports and current affairs live; and the European music Channel.¹⁷ The new experiment was called 'Europa TV' and it started on October 5, 1985. It was supposed to last until 1988 when it would be replaced by a European television channel that would be accessible to over 300 million viewers. The plan was to launch the Olympus satellite in the summer of 1987 and to operate from January 1, 1988.¹⁸ Out of DG19 X funds, in 1986 the EBU awarded a contract for financial support from the Commission, amounting to two million ECU²⁰, to enable Mr. Ripa di Meana to launch expenses and research work related to the European television channel Europa TV.²¹ 'EUROPA TELEVISION is Pan-European Satellite Broadcast Channel, beaming a multilingual television service to multinational television audiences in Europe.'²² Unfortunately, the document that was published on December 8, 1986 in a version in eight languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, English, Dutch, Italian, German, and French) and belongs to the group of Working documents of

¹⁶ Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

¹⁷ Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat), ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1

¹⁸ Participation de la commission a la premiere experience de television Europeenne (Europa TV) (Communication de m. Ripa di Meana en accord avec lord Cockfield, m. Narjes et m. Sutherland), Bruxelles, le 5 mars 1986, Dossier SEC(86)373, Vol. 1986/0013

¹⁹ Directorate General

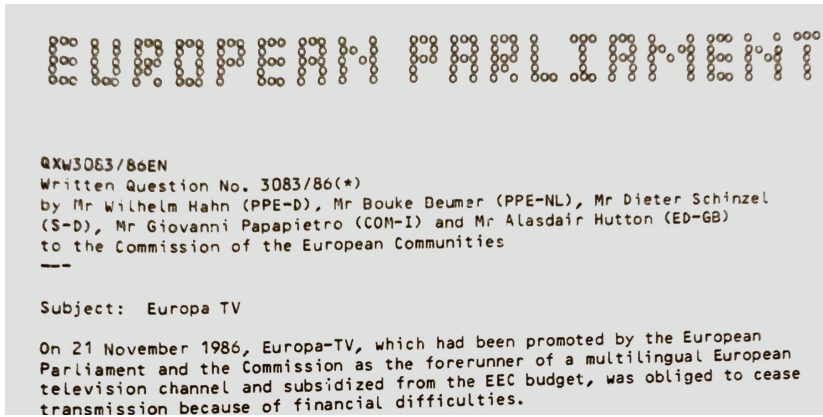
²⁰ The European Currency Unit (ECU) was the monetary unit before the Euro.

²¹ Participation de la commission a la premiere experience de television Europeenne (Europa TV) (Communication de m. Ripa di Meana en accord avec lord Cockfield, m. Narjes et m. Sutherland), Bruxelles, le 5 mars 1986, Dossier SEC(86)373, Vol. 1986/0013

²² ESA master copy, ESA-9619 Continuous weather service for a European TV channel, Annex 1, Document date: 29 November 1985, ESA/TOAG(85)17

the European Parliament, is actually a Motion for resolution on the cessation of broadcasting by Europa TV.²³ Approximately one year after its inception, Europa TV was forced to shut down. The primary reasons for the closure were a disappointing number of viewers and persistent financial struggles. A special problem related to advertising was pointed out in the Working Document of the European Parliament *Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV* at the time: "Calls for the speedy resolution of the problem of advertising revenue and for such revenue possibly to be managed by groups demonstrating a willingness to do so".²⁴ The funding, which was projected to sustain the channel for three years, was exhausted far more quickly than anticipated and it was not in the area of advertisers' influence.

Picture 2, Europa TV ceased broadcasting on 21. 11 1986. From the EP, QXW3083/86EN, PE 112.944



Pessimistic view of press coverage: short overview

In the early 1980s, the European Parliament recognized a significant problem with the portrayal of the European Community in media coverage. There was a lack of adequate and positive information about the European Community, which was seen as detrimental to public perception and understanding of the organization. To address this issue, the idea of creating a dedicated European satellite channel was proposed as a means to improve communication and provide more balanced coverage of EU affairs. Texts from the press at the time of Europa TV's shutdown confirm what the European Parliament saw in the early 80s as one of the biggest problems. The titles looked like this in different languages: *M. Ripa de Meana met en cause la passivité des Européens* (Le Monde, 3.12.1986), *Overleeft Europa TV?* (De Elsevier, 8.11.1986), *The dreams they switched off* (Guardian, 8.12.1986), *Projecto Europa TV encerrará eemissios* (Diario de noticias, 28.11.1986), *Grandes manœuvres autour de la télévision européenne* (Le

²³ Motion for resolution on the cessation of broadcasting by Europa TV, PE2-12422 *Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV*, B2-1296/86

²⁴ *Ibid*

Monde, 21.11.1986), *La Europa de la televisión, una idea feliz que no encuentra el camino para llegar a buen puerto* (La vanguardia, 23.11.1986), «Countdown» e desporto do Europa-TV: *podem voltar em breve à RTP* (Diario de noticias, 2.12.1986).²⁵ These titles suggest the passivity of Europeans in relation to a certain aspect of television; survival or sustainability of Europa TV and the future of television in Europe; unfulfilled potential and lost opportunities in the realm of television; initiatives within Europa TV are coming to an end; significant maneuvers or movements surrounding European television; challenges and obstacles hindering its successful realization, etc. With the shutdown of Europa TV, some national television stations found themselves in a problem of filling up the content. For example, the Portuguese public broadcasting service, RTP, was preparing to fill the three and a half hour slot left vacant by the demise of Europa TV with a new program that could potentially include the popular “Countdown” segment dedicated to actuality and sports news. The emergence of cable systems offering a wide range of channels further intensified this competition. In such a crowded marketplace, launching a new channel like Europa TV required not only financial resources but also a unique value proposition to stand out among competitors. As for the problem with advertising, Jeremy Taylor, who collaborated with Europa TV, states that some other channels are not interesting to advertisers either. Channels like RAI Uno from Italy, which focused on high-minded peak-time programming including opera, ballet, and drama, struggled to attract advertising from major brands. Taylor highlighted the role of politics in European ventures, emphasizing how the success of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy impacted the support for Europa TV among European Broadcasting Union (EBU) members. The decision to broadcast in multiple languages and the challenges posed by commercial channels were significant contributors to Europa’s downfall.²⁶ TV Europa’s demise serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of financial sustainability in realizing ambitious broadcasting projects. Despite good intentions and initial enthusiasm, without adequate funding, even the most promising ideas can falter. In the end, the development of cable channels, as well as growing competition among national television stations, highlighted the importance of offering unique value propositions to viewers and advertisers.

Conclusion

Europa TV and TV Eurikon could not appear spontaneously. Years ago, satellite technology was developed step by step within the European joint supranational institutions, primarily the European Space Agency. Market research was done for new users, various experiments and satellite components. Work was constantly being done on the improvement of the radically new technology of that time, without which it is actually not possible to communicate in all aspects even today. In order to broadcast a European program in Europe, the member countries had to constantly

²⁵ Télévision, Parlement européen, Documents from [10/1986] to [02/1987], CPPE-1499

²⁶ *The dreams they switched off*, Guardian, 8.12.1986, in: Télévision, Parlement européen, Documents from [10/1986] to [02/1987], CPPE-1499

agree. It was necessary to harmonize the technical characteristics, legal frameworks and create sustainable financing flows. It was not an easy task at all. The termination of the two experimental satellite channels can be attributed to a combination of factors. While funding problems due to a lack of advertisers played a significant role, the changing technological landscape with the rapid development of satellite television and computer technology, along with the increasing influence of private capital in the industry, also contributed to its demise. Additionally, being an international channel broadcasting in several languages further complicated sustainability in a time when the interests of capital were gaining prominence in the television industry. However, at the time of conceptualizing a European TV channel, the involved thinkers could not have anticipated the rapid evolution of computer networks that would eventually challenge the supremacy of television viewing. Their proposals, lacking the foresight of the technological advancements that would unfold in just a decade, were nonetheless astute, inventive, and crucial for nurturing the concept of a collective European identity. They envisioned that a shared television service, broadcast via satellite across Europe, could feature high-quality arts programs (although TV Europa and TV Eurikon included non-artistic programs as well) that would transcend language barriers, allowing viewers to appreciate foreign content without the need for linguistic understanding. This idea was rooted in the belief that such programming could serve as a cultural bridge, fostering a sense of unity and shared heritage among the diverse populations of Europe. Time has shown that other non-artistic channels such as Euro news and Euro sport could survive. The only channel of European artistic character today is ARTE TV. Despite the setback with Europa TV and TV Eurikon, there is evidence that balanced coverage and strong communication tactics have an important role in molding public perceptions of supranational institutions such as the EU. To achieve success with pan-European media initiatives, policy makers have had to overcome obstacles such as linguistic diversity, regulatory frameworks and national interests. Europe should consider new models for cooperation, cultural exchange and different perspectives to ensure the long-term sustainability and relevance of pan-European initiatives.

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ESA master copy, ESA-9619 Continuous weather service for a European TV channel, Annex 1, Document date: 29 November 1985, ESA/TOAG(85)17

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Europa TV ceased broadcasting on 21. 11 1986. European Parliament, QXW3083/86EN, PE 112.944

Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV, European Parliament, PE2-12422, B2-1296/86, 1986

Motion for resolution on the cessation of broadcasting by Europa TV, PE2-12422 Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV, B2-1296/86

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TV Eurikon i Europa TV: istraživanje početaka transnacionalne panevropske televizije

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Apstrakt

Rad istražuje uspeh ili neuspeh dva eksperimentalna panevropska kanala TV Eurikon i Europa TV, fokusirajući se na ulogu televizije u oblikovanju evropskog identiteta. Istraživanje, sprovedeno zahvaljujući Grant programu Međunarodne višegradske fondacije i Istorijskom arhivu Evropske unije, pokazalo je da su tokom razvoja satelitske komunikacije uravnoteženo izveštavanje i snažna komunikaciona panevropska strategija od ključne važnosti za oblikovanje percepcije javnosti o nadnacionalnim institucijama poput EU. Da bi postigli uspeh, kreatori politike morali su da prevaziđu prepreke kao što su jezička raznolikost, regulatorni okviri i nacionalni interesi. Iako nismo u eri početka satelitskih sistema, Evropa bi trebalo da razmotri nove modele saradnje, kulturne razmene i drugačije perspektive za dugoročnu održivost sličnih panevropskih inicijativa.

Ključne reči: televizija, Evropa, satelitska komunikacija, TV Eurikon, Europa TV.

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The Serbian Language in the Eyes of Foreigners: Analysis of the Most Common Doubts of Learners on The Social Platform Reddit

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Abstract

The subject of this paper is the analysis of posts on Reddit about foreigners' confusions related to learning Serbian as a foreign language. The aim of the research is to clarify the most common questions of foreigners who are interested in learning the Serbian language. A descriptive method and a method of theoretical analysis with the technique of content analysis have been used in the paper. The analysis of research results has shown that there has been a lot of interest among foreigners for learning Serbian as a foreign language. The most common questions related to mastering the Serbian language include: 1. issues of integration into the social community (solving administrative problems, studying and working, finding friends, finding information about the character and mentality of the Serbian people, getting to know the culture and history of the Serbian people, life in Serbia without knowing the Serbian language, etc.), 2. issues of finding language learning modalities (accredited study centers, private schools, online platforms, private lessons), 3. issues of learning Serbian as a foreign language (difficulty in learning, time needed to master the language, differences between the eastern and western variants of the language), 4. issues of finding and using appropriate teaching tools (textbooks, language learning apps, podcasts, adapted folk and art texts, music, films and TV shows with foreign language translation, flash cards, illustrations and tables) and 5. the issue of mastering certain grammatical and lexical contents (Cyrillic, cases, difference between perfective and imperfective verbs, getting to know colloquial expressions).

Keywords: Serbian as a foreign language, doubts, foreigners, social networks, Reddit, posts

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The Serbian Language in The Eyes of Foreigners: Analysis of the Most Common Doubts of Learners on The Social Platform Reddit

Introduction

By reviewing the literature and available articles in the field of the methodology of teaching Serbian as a foreign language, we can see that this discipline has existed in a simpler form since the foundation of the Serbian medieval state, i.e., from the moment when the economic, political and military need for foreigners to learn and use it appeared. Pavle Ivić (1998: 65) singles out the period after the fall of the Despotovina in particular, because during that period, “writing in the Serbian language [...] reached a geographical spread that was not recorded before or since”. It was used by sultans, regional commanders, and janissaries as the language of diplomatic correspondence, as evidenced by a quadrilingual textbook for learning foreign languages (Arabic, Persian, Greek, and Serbian) from the library of Sultan Mahmud I (Marinković 2010; Reljić 2012). Even in later times, the Serbian language was interesting to foreigners. Two more recent studies point to the study of Serbian as a foreign language during the life and work of Vuk Karadžić (Novaković 2023), i.e., his contemporary Dimitrije Vladislavljević (Novaković 2024). The above testifies to the fact that the teaching of Serbian as a foreign language has maintained a certain continuity and has been carried out with undiminished attention over many decades and centuries.

In the middle of the last century, socio-political events in the joint state had a great impact on the systematic and organized approach to this type of teaching, both in the country and abroad. “The Republic of Serbia, as part of the federal state, started to sign agreements on sending lecturers to foreign universities, i.e., accepting contractual lecturers of foreign languages at our universities” (Krajišnik 2016: 8), and, therefore, the teaching of Serbian as a foreign language, in the true sense of the word, began to develop rapidly in the sixties of the 20th century. By signing these and similar contracts, a large number of foreign specialists (mainly from Arab countries) “who wanted to quickly master our language in an efficient Western way” came to our country. Ostoja Đurić (1984: 5), the director of the Institute for Foreign Languages of that time, notes the following: “Today, we are witnessing an exceptional cultural fact: Serbo-Croatian, as the majority language of the Yugoslav peoples, is slowly moving towards the family of world languages. [...] During the 1982/83 school year alone, there were about ten thousand foreign citizens attending classes”. It was at that time that learning Serbian as a foreign language peaked in the interest of foreigners, who came to our country for economic, political or private reasons. From that time until today, business people, diplomats, journalists, students, and housewives appear as students (Vukadinović 1984: 60). The incentives for learning the Serbian language include education, work (Krajišnik 2016: 16), the popularity of culture, history, civilization and religion, migratory movements, personal commitment to learning the language, the possibility of a tourist or study stay in the country where the language is spoken (Stojičić, Mutavdžić 2011: 268), but certainly also integration into the new social community (Novaković 2022: 84).

Methodological settings of research

Subject and aim of research

Social conditions in the Republic of Serbia at the beginning of the 21st century indicate a tendency to soften the division between the Serbian resident population and foreigners. Despite the divisions present during the nineties of the 20th century (Lazić 2009: 68), there is an obvious progress in the establishment of good neighbourly relations between “us” and “them” in all fields of human and professional activity. Owing to social networks and posts of their users, we have the opportunity to better perceive and understand the relationships and attitudes that they have towards one another. Namely, a large number of foreigners often publish textual and multimedia content, highlighting the good points of life in our country: natural beauty, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, i.e., the character and mentality of the Serbian people. An important segment of any kind of such public performance is the demonstration of the level of knowledge of Serbian and acquired linguistic competences, i.e., the expression of doubts regarding learning Serbian and getting to know its culture and history. The way they speak/write, their grammar and size of vocabulary continue to attract a lot of attention from the domestic and foreign public which expresses a wide variety of emotions towards their efforts to learn the “too difficult Serbian language”. At the same time, very often without possessing real linguistic competences, using subjective research methods, users of social networks try to discover the real causes of mastering Serbian better or worse,⁴ and to provide appropriate advice for better learning. Today, they do this on well-known social networks such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, but recently the *Reddit* platform has drawn special attention. Therefore, the subject of this paper is the analysis of posts on foreigners’ doubts regarding learning Serbian as a foreign language on the *Reddit* social network. As our corpus is represented by the posts of users on the aforementioned social network, and taking into account the protection of their identity, we coded the excerpted examples as follows: [RED01], for the first excerpted example from this social network. The aim of the research is to create a clearer picture of the most common issues that interest foreigners who (plan to) study Serbian as a foreign language.

Research tasks

In accordance with the defined subject and aim of the research, we have selected the following research tasks:

1. To isolate and classify the most frequent questions of foreigners regarding learning Serbian as a foreign language.
2. To review, using scientific knowledge of previous research studies and

⁴ It is an interesting and under-researched approach to language study in which native speakers express their own attitudes towards foreigners who use their language (Galloway 1980; Ludwig 1982; Llurda 1995). The first studies from this scientific discipline were carried out by Lambert et al. (1960) in the late fifties.

theories, responses of community members regarding the most common questions and doubts of foreigners.

Methods, techniques and research instruments

In accordance with the specific subject, aim and tasks of the research, we used the descriptive method and the method of theoretical analysis with the technique of content analysis. The material for this research consists of selected posts on Reddit. In order to select the corpus on the mentioned social network, we used the integrated ability to search for content by keywords: “Serbian Language”, “Foreigners speak Serbian” and “Life in Serbia”. The research was carried out in mid-January 2024, and all data have been descriptively explained and presented using tables and graphs.

The analysis of research results

The analysis of the results of content research on the Reddit social network demonstrated to us that there is a great interest in learning Serbian as a foreign language among foreigners. Through text (and/or multimedia) messages, in more than two hundred posts, foreign citizens disclosed their most common doubts and questions regarding mastering Serbian as a foreign language: 1. **issues of integration into the social community** (solving administrative issues of residence, study and work, finding friends, being informed about the character and mentality of the Serbian people, getting to know the culture and history of the Serbian people, life in Serbia without knowing Serbian, etc.), 2. **issues of finding language learning modalities** (accredited study center, private schools, online platforms, private lessons, etc.), 3. **issues of learning Serbian as a foreign language** (difficulty in learning, time needed to master the language, differences between eastern and western variants of the language, etc.), 4. **issues of finding and using appropriate teaching tools** (textbooks, language learning apps, podcasts, adapted folk and art texts, music, films and TV shows with foreign language translation, flash cards, illustrations and tables) and 5. **the issue of mastering certain grammatical and lexical contents** (Cyrillic, cases, differences between perfective and imperfective verbs, getting to know colloquial expressions, etc.). Owing to a large number of users who were ready to help, the afore-mentioned doubts were resolved through thousands of meaningful comments. They were written by foreigners who had previously studied Serbian, but also by native speakers, relying on: their own experience of learning Serbian/a foreign language, linguistic feeling or acquired professional competences (during philological studies).

Issues of integration into the social community

The integration of foreigners into the Serbian social community is one of the most common topics on the Reddit social network, which includes numerous issues of getting to know the character and mentality of the Serbian people and life in

the Republic of Serbia, collecting documentation for securing temporary residence, study and work, and finding friends in a new environment. Foreigners who would like to get to better know the environment they come to or are trying to “check the accuracy of (negative) stereotypes about the Serbian people”: “How can a foreigner understand Serbian culture?” [RED01]. The analysis displayed that the members of the community, speaking from their own experience, “break down prejudices about the Serbian people” [RED04], glorifying “first-hand” [RED08] hospitality, empathy, beauty and cheerful spirit:

“I had a very positive experience, and all urban legends about rude people and barbarians living in the Republic of Serbia turned out to be incorrect. The people are friendly and helpful, and their hospitality simply goes beyond description. [...] Whenever I asked for help, they helped me without asking for anything in return”. [ROW21]

As a recommendation to foreigners “who are afraid of the Serbian people due to the terrible propaganda of the foreign media” [RED32], they single out classic Serbian “films that depict the Serbian soul” [RED33] and “videos on YouTube of tourists who have visited Belgrade before” [RED34]. According to these users, just by watching these videos, “they could learn a lot about the Serbs, the entire nation and the Republic of Serbia” [RED35], “where people are more down-to-earth than in the United Kingdom and much safer in the streets” [RED36]: “These films are part of the general culture in Serbia and the surrounding region. They are an excellent depiction of the era in which they were made, but I wouldn’t say that they best depict Serbian society today” [RED37]. Judging by the responses of Reddit users, the Serbs have shown their hospitality many times, especially during the war between Russia and Ukraine, when they accepted Russians and Ukrainians as their compatriots: “Yes, I got a job here. If I had to choose between Istanbul, Berlin and Belgrade, I would choose Belgrade as the culturally and linguistically closest city” [RED45]. Also, the Serbs “speak English”⁵ [RED51] and, unlike most European nations, they do not exclude from social life those who “do not speak Serbian” [RED52]. What is more, foreigners who are “online” [RED53] express their displeasure at the fact that the Serbs switch to using a foreign (usually English) language, without giving foreigners the opportunity to use Serbian. However, in cases where foreigners want to study at Serbian universities, they must have a certificate of knowledge of Serbian as a foreign language at an intermediate level. The answers regarding this topic are very interesting, and encompass individuals’ estimates that foreigners need from six months to a year to “learn Serbian perfectly” [RED66]. Of course, many years of practice in teaching the Serbian language testify that the mentioned level of achievement requires much more time and, of course, work. In addition to the above, foreigners who wish to get employment in the Republic of Serbia express interest in getting to know the legal regulations, explained in the “Law on Employment of Foreigners” (Official Gazette 62/2023) and the possibility of validating foreign

⁵ This can be confirmed by a testimony of Arnaud Gouillon: “I could be satisfied with speaking in English with the Serbs in Serbia, because, unlike in France, the Serbs know English perfectly” (according to Novaković 2022: 85).

diplomas. Apart from the serious issues of integration among the Serbian resident population, foreigners ask sincere questions about “the possibility of finding friends in Serbia”, i.e., humorous questions about “finding emotional partners”.

Issues of finding a language learning modality

Foreigners who plan to stay in the Republic of Serbia, as well as those who already live there, often seek information about institutions where they can learn Serbian, because, as most of them underline, learning the language on your own “with the help of websites and videos does not give the desired results” [RED22]. In their answers, community members prioritize accredited study center for learning Serbian as a foreign language at universities in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Niš: “It would be best if you moved to Belgrade and enrolled in the program for foreigners at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade. [...] [RED28] Apart from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, you can also try the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts in Kragujevac or the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, which also offer language studies” [RED29]. They are organizational units of the faculties of Philology and Philosophy, which, in addition to courses for exchange students, offer Serbian language courses within their commercial activities (see Krajišnik, Marinković 2002; Dešić 2007; Subotić, Bjelaković 2007; Novaković 2021; Nikolić Mastod 2023). Along with accredited university center, “positive experiences with Serbian language schools” also occupy an important place in the answers [RED30]. The analysis of the research results exposed that when choosing a private language school, foreigners are guided by information available on popular websites (such as *movetobelgrade.com*). However, owing to Reddit, most foreigners want to see the experiences of those who learned the language before. According to the comments after the questions, foreigners had very positive experiences with private Serbian language schools such as *Azbukum*, *Oxford Academy*, *Modern Talking* and *Belgrade Language School*. To the question “Can anyone recommend a professor of Serbian as a foreign language with pedagogical competencies?” [RED40], foreigners often mentioned the names of their professors with whom they studied Serbian online, highlighting their professional qualities: expertise, patience and skill in teaching. In addition to centers and private schools on the territory of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, foreigners also learn Serbian through the electronic platforms *iTalki* and *Preply*, which have recently had “a more significant role in connecting teachers and students” (Novaković, Jaćimović 2023: 42). It is noticeable that graduate students of Serbian Language and Literature are often interested in the above-mentioned platforms, which would enable them to find employment:

“I am studying Serbian Language and Literature. I tried teaching live lessons, but nothing came of it. Only predators called me. I have heard that there are sites for foreigners who want to learn our language, but I am not familiar with it. Does anyone have previous experience or any recommendations?” [RED52].

In addition to the mentioned modalities, foreigners were particularly interested in the existence of “language clubs” [RED66], where they could freely use “chunks of the Serbian language” [RED67]. Unfortunately, this part of the question was usually left open and insufficiently elaborated on in the comments of Reddit users.

Issues of learning Serbian as a foreign language

Teaching practice shows us that initial motivation appears as an important prerequisite for learning Serbian. By using the Reddit network, foreigners, who have never studied Serbian before or only have certain knowledge about it, express their desire to learn more or gather experiences of foreigners (and/or lecturers) about the process of learning Serbian. One of the most frequently asked questions is: “How hard is it to learn the Serbian language?” [RED04]. The answers to this question are, from a methodological point of view, very diverse, but it is particularly interesting that they are all aimed at explaining “simple pronunciation” [RED13], i.e., at indicating the existence of complex grammatical contents, such as the case and verb systems, phonological changes and “unusual [for speakers from the Anglo-American area] word order in the sentence” [RED16]. According to the research of individual users of this social network, the Serbian language, in the context of the difficulty of learning, “remains side by side with the Japanese, Russian and Arabic languages” [RED19]. In scientific papers it is noted that the Serbian language is classified in the group of “the most difficult natural languages” (Rosenberg 1979: 328).⁶ Also, a large number of foreigners, who have already started learning the Serbian language, believe that “they are not making enough progress even though they have an excellent teacher” [RED20], since they do not live in the native language environment.⁷ In addition to the above, foreigners who are not acquainted with the historical events in the Balkan Peninsula very often want to know “which language to learn – Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian” [RED22] and “whether there is any difference between them” [RED24]. The analysis of posts on Reddit revealed that questions of this type are also the ones that get the most comments, as both foreigners with experience in learning our language and native speakers, who use social networks for a kind of historical reckoning, join the conversation. In fact, there are very few linguistically based answers that explain to foreigners the events that led to the creation of political languages. Native speakers, depending on the place of birth, try to convince foreigners why they should learn a specific variant of the language, “between which there are no special differences except in the forms of

⁶ The source of complexity is certainly in the complex (grammatical) system of the Serbian language – the phonetic principle in spelling, suprasegmental features of Serbo-Croatian vowels and consonants, the seven-case system, archaic morphological structure, peculiarities in declension, conjugation and gradation, a relatively free order of words in a sentence and the existence of a large number of exceptions.

⁷ This observation is also scientifically based. In a recent study, Aleksandar Novaković and Jelena Stošić (2022: 96) have disclosed the positive influence of the environment on the linguistic achievements of foreigners learning the Serbian language.

certain words” [RED25]. Therefore, the Serbs point out to Russian citizens the use of the Cyrillic alphabet (“which will make it easier for them to learn the language” [RED26]), while the Croats promote the tourist potential of their own country. In connection with the above-mentioned question, Professor Milorad Dešić, former director of the Center for Serbian as a Foreign Language at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, previously wrote:

“Namely, in the 1990s, Yugoslavia fell apart, and with it the Serbo-Croatian language community. From one literary language, Serbo-Croatian (Croatian-Serbian, i.e., Croatian or Serbian), with Serbian and Croatian variants, we got three literary languages: Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian (which the Bosnians call Bosnian). The reasons for this development of events do not lie in the language itself, but came from the outside, from society, as a result of social changes. From a strictly linguistic point of view, it is still a question of one language, one linguistic structure, with several variants, but from a sociolinguistic point of view, i.e., state or political, there are three literary languages” (Dešić 2003: 200).

In other words, he is of the opinion that listeners from other language regions should “completely master one pronunciation, but also know the other to a certain extent.” The basic pronunciation will be the one used by the teacher: if he/she is from Serbia, it will be ekavica, and if he/she is from Montenegro or the Republic of Srpska, it will be ijekavica (the one by Vuk Karadžić, different from Croatian jekavica)” (Dešić 2003: 202). As a recommendation for learning Serbian, the community members suggest to each other: finding a “knowledgeable” teacher, good teaching materials and “a lot of patience, perseverance and work” [RED29].

Issues of finding and using appropriate teaching tools

Users of the Reddit social network, “determined to learn Serbian”, most often asked questions related to teaching tools that can be used to master our language. An important place in this group of questions is occupied by those related to finding a suitable textbook: “Do you know a good book for learning Serbian?” [RED71]⁸. In connection with these and similar questions, and by relying on their own experience or partial knowledge of the subject, social network users tried to recommend textbooks that could be used for language learning. Four textbooks stood out in particular: 1. *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian: A Textbook with Exercises and Basic Grammar* by Ronelle Alexander and Ellen Elias Bursać, 2. *Korak no korak* by Mira Danilović, 3. *Step into Serbian* by Jelena Kiš and *Teach Yourself Serbian* by Vladislava Ribnikar and David Norris. It is noticeable that the users of the afore-mentioned social network base their recommendations on the answers of artificial intelligence (*ChatGPT 3.5*), a quick Internet search by using the English language and popular websites for downloading pirated copies of textbooks (“You can find several textbooks on *Pirate Bay* and choose the one that suits you best” [RED14]), because, as they point out, it is

⁸ Among this type of questions, those related to finding textbooks for a special group of students stand out: “for the Americans”, “for the Russians”, “for the Czechs”, “for the Germans”. It is about an issue that was raised by Bogdan Dabić back in 1986, and which, unfortunately, has not been worked on much.

not easy to find and purchase textbooks for learning Serbian abroad. Also, to a good extent, they do not know textbook production in the field of teaching Serbian as a foreign language, claiming that “there are not many textbooks for learning Serbian” [RED15]. The reality is significantly different because the bibliography of textbooks and other textbook units in the teaching of Serbian as a foreign language contains over a hundred bibliographic references. Vesna Krajišnik (1992), Đorđe Otašević (2014), Kristina Đorđević (2018) and Aleksandar Novaković (2022a, 2022b) provided the most detailed list and overview of textbook units in their papers. Closely related to textbooks are the issues of finding a suitable computer or mobile application for learning Serbian as a foreign language: “Is there an application/website for learning Serbian?” [RED17]. The majority of responses are based on the use of mobile applications such as *LingApp*, *Anki*, *Clozemaster*, *Mango*, *Ling*, *LingQ* and *Duolingo*, while several users of the social network pointed to the existence of the *Gloss*⁹ application, which contains more than 250 free lessons. By using evaluation forms to assess the quality of applications, Aleksandar Novaković (2022a: 191) displays their basic characteristics and differentiates between poly-functional and non-functional applications for learning Serbian as a foreign language.

Along with textbooks, Reddit users have established a very interesting discussion regarding multimedia content that can be used for educational purposes. First of all, they recognized the place and importance of podcasts in the process of teaching Serbian as a foreign language. In the modern methodology of teaching foreign languages, the podcast is a type of “voiced/audio textbook” (Novaković 2022a: 50). The analysis of users’ responses on Reddit indicate that they equally recommend authentic podcasts (created for native speakers) and teacher podcasts (created to achieve the goals of education and upbringing). As the most frequently mentioned podcasts in the process of teaching Serbian as a foreign language, we have singled out: *Learn Serbian Podcast* (<http://skr.rs/zm1v>), *Serbian Language Podcast* (<http://skr.rs/zm1b>), *Talk in Serbian* (<http://skr.rs/zm1u>), *Pojáčalo* (pojacalo.rs), *Serbian Language Network* (<http://skr.rs/zi4f>), *Serbonika* (<http://skr.rs/zi40>) and *Podkast.rs* (<http://skr.rs/zi4E>). By understanding the importance of multimedia content in language teaching, social network users often recommended Serbian music, films and TV series as functional tools for language learning: “If you want to learn the language well, watch Serbian movies (with translation) and/or listen to Serbian music” [RED78]. At the same time, the focus is on films and TV series shot at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century (*Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame*, *Balkan Spy*, *The Marathon Family*, *Who’s Singin’ Over There?*, *The Meeting Point*, *The Black Bomber*, *Dudes*; *Grlom u jagode*, *Warm breeze*, *Bolji život*, *Otvorena vrata*, *Srećni ljudi*, *Porodično blago* and *Vratiće se rode*), i.e., on the music of recognized Serbian and Yugoslav bands and performers (Bijelo dugme, Haustor, Plavi orkestar, Dubioza kolektiv, EKV, Beogradski sindikat, Bad Copy, Parni valjak, Crvena jabuka, Plavi orkestar, Riblja čorba; Zdravko Čolić, Sergej Četković).¹⁰

⁹ The application is located at the following web address: <https://gloss.dliffc.edu/Default.aspx>.

¹⁰ When foreigners asked whether they could use turbo-folk songs to learn Serbian, they usually received

However, it is very important to mention that when making a recommendation, the actual knowledge of those interested in movies, TV series and music is ignored. The above is particularly evidenced by the examples of individuals who recommended the films *Zona Zamfirova* or *Petrijin venac*, in which the main protagonists use the Prizren-Timok and the Kosovo-Resava dialect, respectively. Therefore, the logical question arises of the ability of foreigners to understand and functionally use the above-mentioned multimedia content when learning a language. In other words, it seems that the above-mentioned contents cannot be beneficial teaching tools for foreigners who expressed their interest by using English. In contrast, flash cards, tabular forms and illustrations appear to be more functional teaching tools at the initial levels of learning Serbian. Taking into account their own experience of learning Serbian as a foreign language, social network users indicated the existence of flash cards classified by topic for learning new words of the Serbian language. On that occasion, they singled out the *FlashCardo* online platform, which contains hundreds of cards in the Serbian language (<http://skr.rs/zm1T>). The analysis of the posts also revealed a great interest of foreigners in using illustrations and tabular forms for learning: 1. subjects, objects and demonstrative pronouns (<http://skr.rs/zm1j>), 2. case (<http://skr.rs/zm1B>) and 3. verb (<http://skr.rs/zm1r>) systems of the Serbian language.

The question of mastering certain grammatical and lexical contents

A large number of foreigners' questions on Reddit were related to finding the best way to master "complex grammatical and diverse lexical content" [RED81]. Foreigners who are learning our language try to "find the golden answer" [RED85] through social networks regarding how to master pronunciation, learn the case and verb systems, i.e., "pick up numerous and diverse expressions and phrases" [RED91]. The analysis of the posts showed us that foreigners from Anglo-American areas have the most difficulties with pronouncing Serbian sounds, learning Cyrillic, mastering case forms and learning the difference between perfective and imperfective verbs. Namely, as they themselves point out in their posts, the very first learned word "hello" [RED62] revealed to them that learning Serbian "will be a long journey" [RED66], because in their native language "there are no diverse combinations of consonants" that exist in the Serbian language" [RED63]. In addition to the above, community members are interested in whether it is necessary to master Cyrillic. According to the opinion of foreigners living in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, learning the Cyrillic alphabet "is not mandatory, but it is desirable" [RED69] for easier integration into the social community, because "all menus and street names are written in the Cyrillic alphabet" [RED72]. As a useful tip, users strongly suggested "focusing attention on *critical consonants*" [RED92], which are also "the most difficult part of learning the Cyrillic alphabet" [RED94]. Also, they are interested in "whether it is possible to be good at cases" [RED96], because several users of the

humorous answers such as: "By no means, don't learn a language using turbo-folk songs. Your IQ will drop to zero" [RED88].

social network indicated that even after several months of daily work, “they notice little or insufficient progress” [RED97], making jokes at their own expense: “The best way to learn cases is to be with native speakers, who will send us to the shops. [...] and after fifty years we will be able to speak properly” [RED98]. As the most functional method, they recommend one another to use the language “according to a pattern” [RED92], by memorizing the word forms of all three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter) and applying them in everyday conversation. Users of this social network, who have mastered the case forms to a certain extent, want to know the best way to learn the difference between perfective and imperfective verbs in the Serbian language, because they notice that “previously learned rules no longer help at new levels of learning Serbian” [RED99]. In addition to the above, several posts were aimed at figuring out the true meaning of certain phrases and expressions: *Поздрав, Србендо!, Поздрав, јуначе!, Кућа часту!, Где си, царе?.*

Conclusion

As we all know, the development of modern information and communication technologies has influenced the way we teach and learn. The results of recent research display that teaching Serbian as a foreign language, owing to modern technologies, has experienced an expansion in all segments of its existence: the number of students and lecturers increased, the teaching process has been modernized, the learning modality has been changed, and stronger ties have been established between teachers and students. In other words, teachers who used to rely on their own experience in their work have started to exchange ideas and observations. However, students also have not remained focused only on themselves and their needs, but have networked in an effort to provide one another with useful advice and recommendations, employing all the advantages of the modern form of communication. The analysis of the research results revealed that, in addition to the well-known social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, the Reddit social network has been used for the purposes of communication and exchange of useful information, where meaningful and (very often) purposeful communication is established around an appropriate question. In their efforts to solve all their doubts, answer the most frequent questions, find the best ways to master the Serbian language and remove their fears, foreigners, using the integrated functions of the afore-mentioned social network, usually establish a text correspondence with: 1. foreigners who previously learned the Serbian language, 2. interested native speakers and, sometimes, 3. teachers who are researching current events in the field of teaching methodology of Serbian as a foreign language. On this occasion, they start a constructive discussion regarding the most diverse issues/questions: integration into the social community, finding learning modalities, learning Serbian as a foreign language, using appropriate teaching tools and mastering certain grammatical and lexical contents. Members of such a community strive to share their own experiences of learning/teaching Serbian as a foreign language, but also to provide appropriate and purposeful advice. Sometimes such answers, depending

on the professional qualifications of the participants in the discussion, are based on mere observation of their own path through the world of the Serbian language, and sometimes on individuals' professional qualifications in connection with the issue of acquiring a foreign language. Apart from the fact that interested parties receive more or less useful answers, the entire communication proves to be very functional in terms of the future development of the methodology of teaching Serbian as a foreign language. Namely, the content on the Reddit platform provides methodologists of teaching Serbian as a foreign language with an insight into the most common doubts that foreigners have about Serbian as a foreign language. Owing to such an insight into the factual state of affairs, they can, within the framework of modern foreign language teaching, provide theoretical and practical recommendations to future teachers, but also gain new insights into the important issues of teaching Serbian as a foreign language. Also, institutions that teach the Serbian language can, as part of their own professional and marketing activities, direct their attention to activities that will influence the improvement of teaching practice.

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Srpski jezik u očima stranaca: analiza najčešćih nedoumica učenika na društvenoj mreži Redit

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Apstrakt

Predmet ovoga rada je analiza objava o nedoumicama stranaca u vezi sa učenjem srpskog kao stranog jezika na društvenoj mreži Redit. Cilj istraživanja je stvaranje jasnije slike o najčešćim pitanjima stranaca koji (planiraju da) ga uče. U radu je korišćena deskriptivna metoda i metoda teorijske analize sa tehnikom analize sadržaja. Analiza rezultata istraživanja je pokazala da među strancima vlada veliko interesovanje za učenjem srpskog kao stranog jezika. Kao najčešća pitanja u vezi sa savladavanjem srpskog jezika pojavljuju se: 1. pitanja integracije u društvenu zajednicu (rešavanje administrativnih obaveza, studiranje i rad, pronalazak društva, informisanje o karakteru i mentalitetu srpskog naroda, upoznavanje kulture i istorije srpskoga naroda, život u Srbiji bez poznavanja srpskog jezika i sl.), 2. pitanja pronalaska modaliteta učenja jezika (akreditovani centri, privatne škole, onlajn-platforme, privatni časovi), 3. pitanja učenja srpskog kao stranog jezika (zahtevnost učenja, potrebno vreme za savladavanje jezika, razlike između istočne i zapadne varijante jezika), 4. pitanja pronalaska i upotrebe odgovarajućih nastavnih sredstava (udžbenici, aplikacije za učenje jezika, podkastovi, prilagođene narodni i umetnički tekstovi, muzika, filmovi i TV-serije sa prevodom na strani jezik, fleš-kartice, ilustracije i tabelarni prikazi) i 5. pitanje savladavanja pojedinih gramatičkih i leksičkih sadržaja (ćirilica, padeži, razlika između perfektivnih i imperpektivnih glagola, upoznavanje kolokvijalnih izraza).

Ključne reči: srpski jezik kao strani, nedoumice, stranci, društvene mreže, Redit, objave

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Social Media as an Educational Support for Studying¹

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of an empirical study aimed at determining students' attitudes toward social media as a digital tool in the process of studying. The research used a descriptive research method, and data collection was done using a specially constructed instrument – a rating scale. The research sample was intentional and consisted of 314 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. The results of the study indicate that the majority of respondents express positive attitudes toward the use of social media during their studies. Namely, respondents recognize the potential of these tools for sharing and exchanging educational materials and are aware of their usefulness in supporting cooperative work, especially when it comes to solving tasks at the group level or collaborating on joint projects. Students perceive social media as a platform for active discussion with peers and teachers, as well as for solving academic challenges and problems. The study found no statistically significant differences in relation to independent research variables (years of study, study program, grade point average, length of presence on social media, frequency of access). It is concluded that further research into specific social media platforms is necessary to make a greater contribution to higher education.

Keywords: social networks, students, educational support, studying, higher education.

Introduction

The development of new technologies, increased Internet accessibility and the widespread use of mobile devices are opening new perspectives for overcoming geographical barriers and connecting people from around the world. Social networks play a significant role in this process, transforming communication methods and creating new channels for information sharing and community building. Due to their

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technological characteristics and functionalities (such as photo and video sharing, event creation, etc.), they have become highly popular and applicable in various fields, including education. In the realm of higher education, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have been utilized for years, allowing students to stay informed, ask questions, discuss course materials, and share learning resources. This ensures effective and straightforward communication, making information readily available and transparent to all involved in the educational process.

The high applicability of social networks in higher education consistently attracts researchers' attention, as they strive to determine their educational value from various perspectives, including communication, collaboration, and learning, with a particular focus on collaborative learning (Molinillo et al., 2018; Al-Rahmi & Zeki, 2017). In this context, research focusing on students as end-users, exploring the use of social networks as educational tools becomes significant, which was also the guiding idea behind our research.

Theoretical approach

Although social networks were not initially conceived as educational tools, in recent years, they have significantly positioned themselves in the context of academic education. It is believed that when used as digital learning tools, they can change and innovate educational practices, teaching, learning, and the overall academic culture (Manca & Ranieri, 2017). Viewed in this context, social networks today make a unique contribution to academic education in various fields, rightfully becoming an integral part of higher education. However, their implementation requires active pedagogical involvement in terms of meeting certain requirements and standards to ensure adequate implementation and achieve the most favorable learning outcomes. In this context, the application of social networks is largely conditioned and dependent on the actions of teachers as creators and moderators of the learning process, who are expected to accept and timely use these digital tools (Chugh et al., 2021). The issue of social media application has been particularly highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when most higher education institutions utilized online teaching, including various social networks as digital learning tools (Jogezai et al., 2021; Sobaih et al., 2020). A growing number of studies confirm that social media platforms have high potential in the areas of communication, collaboration, sharing, and cooperative learning (Anderson, 2019; Hamadi et al., 2021, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2017; Selwyn, 2012).

In addition to teachers' opinions, it is very important to examine students' attitudes toward the use of social networks in the educational process because students, as end-users, can provide relevant insights into the potentials, usefulness, and usage of these digital tools during their studies. In a study conducted on a sample of 125 university students in northern Italy (Vrontis et al., 2015), students were asked to assess the use of social networks for educational purposes. The findings of this study indicate the importance of using social networks to enhance educational communication, share information, and facilitate interaction between students and

teachers. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the application of social networks should involve mutual agreements and understanding between teachers and students and should be aligned with their attitudes and competencies. Similarly, in an empirical study examining various categories of social media usage among a sample of 308 students in Saudi Arabia, with a focus on online discussion, knowledge and content creation, content sharing, and entertainment (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016), significant positive relationships were found between these categories, making them suitable for the academic educational environment.

In a study related to the relationship between social networks and sustainable education, it was found that there are both positive and negative factors regarding students' behavior (Abbas et al., 2019). Specifically, in the mentioned study involving a sample of 831 students, risks associated with social media use were identified, including depression, stress, anxiety, and other potential health problems. The obtained findings are certainly significant and can be useful for better understanding the application of social networks in higher education. The primary characteristics of social networks in the studying process, as reported by students, are their usefulness and contribution to easy and fast information sharing. Supporting this, the results of a study conducted in the Philippines (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017) can be cited. In this study involving a sample of 500 students from private and public universities in the Philippines, students perceived the usefulness and ease of use of social networks as their main characteristics. Additionally, differences were found between private and public universities regarding information and communication technology infrastructure.

An interesting insight is provided by a study conducted to explore the use of Facebook and Twitter in academic libraries (Williams, 2021). In this qualitative study, it was found that students had contradictory feelings regarding the use of Facebook and Twitter in the domain of scientific communication.

Some research studies have focused on examining the use of social networks in various scientific fields, such as medicine or English language learning (Vizcaya-Moreno & Pérez-Cañaveras, 2020). On a sample of 120 students from a higher education institution for nursing education, the most useful and desirable teaching methods based on new media technologies were identified (Vizcaya-Moreno & Pérez-Cañaveras, 2020). The research results indicate that students use social media for learning clinical subjects. Particularly noteworthy are online tutorials or videos, interactive games, and virtual learning environments. The fact that social networks represent an important teaching and learning tool for students of the English language is confirmed by several studies (Ariantini et al., 2021; Novitasari & Addinna, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2023). For example, in a review study (Ariantini et al., 2021), it was concluded that YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are frequently used as tools for learning the English language. The findings of this study indicate that their use has yielded results in the development of language skills, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling, while also influencing creative and critical thinking.

A number of research studies have been directed toward examining individual social networks and their contribution to the academic education process (Gleason

& Manca, 2020; Obradovic et al., 2017; Pavlović & Obradović, 2015). For example, one case study focused on the use of Twitter in teaching (Gleason & Manca, 2020), specifically using this social network for pedagogical purposes: group discussion, increasing student engagement, expanding interaction, exchanging teaching materials, and more. The findings of this study show that the use of Twitter increased student participation, facilitated conceptual understanding, encouraged presence on social media, and increased interaction with experts from various fields.

The application of social networks during academic education can be particularly important when it comes to preparing students for professional careers, such as media workers or journalists. Supporting this notion are the results of a study conducted on a sample of 162 students from the Department of Journalism at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš (Pavlović & Obradović, 2015). Specifically, this study examined students' attitudes toward using the YouTube platform for continuous education and acquiring additional skills. Based on the obtained results, a recommendation was made to introduce social networks into the teaching process, which would help students in future professional challenges. This stance is supported by Obradović and colleagues (Obradovic et al., 2017), who point out that social networks are particularly important for certain professions, such as the profession of journalism, and therefore their greater presence is expected in journalism studies. Accordingly, they highlight that Instagram, as a social network and a digital learning tool, is of special importance for journalism students, who are expected to have knowledge and understanding of new media.

Methodological approach

The aim of the research is to examine students' attitudes toward social networks as a form of educational support in the process of studying (communication, collaboration, sharing, cooperative learning, etc.). The study included 314 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Niš. Participants' attitudes were analyzed in relation to the following variables:

- *Year of study* (I-IV year),
- *Study program* (Psychology, Pedagogy, Social Policy and Social Work, Communication and Public Relations, and Journalism),
- *Grade point average* (a) 6.00-6.99, b) 7.00-7.99, c) 8.00-8.99, d) 9.00-10.00),
- *Length of presence on social networks* (a) no open profile; b) less than 1 year; c) more than 1 year but less than 5 years; d) more than 5 years but less than 10 years; e) more than 10 years), and
- *Frequency of accessing social networks* (a) never; b) rarely (several times a month), c) sometimes (several times a week), d) often (several times a week), and e) regularly (daily).

In the study, there were 121 first-year students, 73 second-year students, 66 third-year students, and 54 fourth-year students. The majority of students were from

the Psychology program (126), followed by Pedagogy (80). The number of students from the Communication and Public Relations (46) and Journalism (42) programs was almost equal, while the fewest participants were from the Social Policy and Social Work program (20). Within the sample, 286 surveyed students have profiles, while only 27 of them do not have an open profile on social networks. Regarding academic achievement, ten surveyed students have the lowest average grade from 6.00 to 6.99; 78 of them have an average grade from 7.00 to 7.99; 149 students have an average grade from 8.00 to 8.99, and 77 of them have the highest average grade from 9.00 to 10.0. The largest number of respondents have been present on social networks for more than 5 but less than 10 years (205), 87 respondents have been present for more than 10 years, and 22 of them have been present for more than one but less than 5 years. As for the frequency of accessing social networks: 272 respondents access their profiles daily, 32 often, 6 sometimes, and 4 rarely.

The research set the following research objectives:

- To examine students' attitudes toward the use of social networks in university education as educational support in the process of studying.
- To determine if there are statistically significant differences in respondents' answers based on the independent variables of the study.

In line with the objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

- It is assumed that students have positive attitudes regarding the application of social networks in university education as educational support in the process of studying.
- It is assumed that there are no statistically significant differences in respondents' answers based on the independent variables of the study.

A five-point assessment scale specifically constructed for the research purposes was used in the study, consisting of 7 items. The numbers on the assessment scale titled "Students' Attitudes toward the Use of Social Networks in University Education" (SAUSNUE) ranged on a continuum from 1 – complete disagreement, 2 – partial disagreement, 3 – indecision, 4 – partial agreement, to 5 – complete agreement with the stated item. The F-test was applied to determine statistically significant differences in respondents' answers based on the independent variables. The value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the given scale is $\alpha = .87$, indicating adequate reliability and internal consistency of the variables.

The research data was collected by distributing written instruments to the respondents and suggesting a timeframe for submitting the completed instruments. They were informed that the study was anonymous and that they could freely answer the questions, and that the research data would be used solely for scientific purposes. Afterward, the respondents individually submitted their completed instruments to the researcher, and later the data was processed using the statistical program SPSS 25.

Analysis and Interpretation of Research Results

Table 1 presents students' (N=314) attitudes toward the use of social networks during their studies. For each attitude, the table includes the average value of student responses (M), the standard deviation from the average response (SD), as well as the degree of agreement/disagreement with the stated attitude.

Table 1: *Students' attitudes toward the use of social networks in university education*

Items	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	4.21	0.89	1.3	4.5	10.5	39.5	44.3
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	3.02	1.25	14.6	20.4	26.4	25.8	12.7
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	3.60	1.07	4.5	10.8	26.1	37.6	21.0
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	4.04	1.01	3.5	4.1	14.6	39.8	37.9
Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	3.44	1.03	5.7	9.9	32.8	37.6	14.0
Social media can be useful in students' research work	4.07	0.92	2.2	2.9	16.6	42.4	36.0
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	3.99	0.98	2.2	4.8	20.7	36.6	35.7

By analyzing the average responses of the participants (M) in the study, it can be noted that students generally express agreement (for 5 items) regarding the need for the use of social networks in university education, considering that the majority of respondents' answers to the given statements are concentrated around the number 4, which on the five-point assessment scale denotes the agreement stance.

The majority of respondents expressed agreement (partial 39.5% and complete 44.3%) with the statement that *Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning*, with 10.5% being undecided, while only a small percentage of respondents disagree (1.3% strongly disagree, 4.5% partially disagree).

Regarding the statement *The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks*, students assess somewhat differently compared to the previous one, with 12.7% completely agreeing, 25.8% partially agreeing, 26.4% undecided, while 14.6% disagree and 20.4% partially disagree.

The majority of respondents have positive attitudes toward the statement that social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on lecture and exercise topics (4.5% strongly disagree, 10.8% partially disagree, 26.1% undecided, while others agree with the statement: 37.6% partially agree, 21.0 completely agree).

The highest percentage of respondents has positive attitudes toward the statement that social networks can contribute to the successful completion of student group projects and preparation of presentations – 37.9% completely agree, 39.8% partially agree, 14.6% undecided, with only a small number of respondents disagreeing with the statement (4.1% partially disagree, 3.5% strongly disagree).

The majority of respondents have positive attitudes toward the statement that social networks can facilitate solving academic problems (14.0% completely agree, 37.6% partially agree). Slightly less than a third of the respondents (32.8%) do not have a clear stance on this issue, while a smaller number of respondents expressed disagreement with the statement (5.7% strongly disagree, 9.9% partially disagree).

The majority of respondents have positive attitudes toward the statement that social networks can be useful in student research work – 36.0% completely agree, while 42.4% partially agree, 16.6% are undecided, and only a small number of respondents disagree with the statement (2.9% partially disagree, 2.2% strongly disagree).

Respondents similarly evaluate the statement that social networks are a significant tool for online academic group discussions – the highest percentage of respondents agree (partially 36.6% and completely 35.7%), around one-fifth of the respondents is undecided (20.7%), while only a small percentage disagree (4.8% partially and 2.2% strongly disagree).

In the following tables, data on the statistical significance of respondents' answers concerning the independent variables of the study are presented: year of study, study program, grade point average, duration of presence on social networks, and frequency of access to social networks.

Table 2: *Statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes based on the year of study*

Items	Year of study	M	SD	F	df	p
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	I	4.08	0.99	1.65	3	0.18
	II	4.36	0.77			
	III	4.29	0.94			
	IV	4.20	0.74			
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	I	2.90	1.29	0.85	3	0.46
	II	3.05	1.22			
	III	3.02	1.29			
	IV	3.22	1.14			
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	I	3.45	1.14	2.17	3	0.09
	II	3.85	0.91			
	III	3.61	1.12			
	IV	3.59	1.02			
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	I	3.93	0.98	2.22	3	0.09
	II	4.29	0.87			
	III	4.08	1.17			
	IV	3.93	0.97			

Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	I	3.35	1.03	1.01	3	0.39
	II	3.49	1.06			
	III	3.41	1.08			
	IV	3.63	0.96			
Social media can be useful in students' research work	I	3.98	0.89	0.81	3	0.49
	II	4.11	0.94			
	III	4.18	0.97			
	IV	4.09	0.87			
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	I	3.91	0.97	0.45	3	0.72
	II	4.05	1.03			
	III	4.05	0.98			
	IV	4.00	0.93			

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that the variable of year of study does not significantly affect students' attitudes toward the examined topic.

Table 3: *Statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes based on study program*

Items	Study program	M	SD	F	df	p
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	PSY	4.33	0.87	1.07	4	0.15
	SPSW	3.85	0.81			
	PED	4.21	0.72			
	CPR	4.11	1.21			
	JOU	4.12	0.86			
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	PSY	2.92	1.29	1.21	4	0.31
	SPSW	2.60	1.05			
	PED	3.09	1.13			
	CPR	3.15	1.28			
	JOU	3.21	1.37			
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	PSY	3.63	1.03	0.84	4	0.50
	SPSW	3.35	0.81			
	PED	3.55	1.07			
	CPR	3.80	1.18			
	JOU	3.50	1.17			
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	PSY	4.13	0.98	1.19	4	0.31
	SPSW	3.95	0.83			
	PED	3.98	1.01			
	CPR	4.20	1.02			
	JOU	3.81	1.11			
Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	PSY	3.38	1.06	0.89	4	0.47
	SPSW	3.35	0.93			
	PED	3.40	0.92			
	CPR	3.70	1.05			
	JOU	3.48	1.17			

Social media can be useful in students' research work	PSY	4.14	0.85	0.93	4	0.44
	SPSW	3.85	0.81			
	PED	4.03	0.94			
	CPR	4.17	0.85			
	JOU	3.93	1.13			
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	PSY	4.06	0.93	0.53	4	0.71
	SPSW	3.90	0.72			
	PED	3.93	0.98			
	CPR	4.07	1.00			
	JOU	3.86	1.20			

The data presented in Table 3 indicate that the variable of study program also does not have a statistically significant effect on students' attitudes toward the use of social networks in university education.

Table 4: Statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes based on average grade

Items	Average grade	M	SD	F	df	p
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	6.00-6.99	3.90	0.88	0.69	3	0.56
	7.00-7.99	4.14	0.86			
	8.00-8.99	4.25	0.92			
	9.00-10.00	4.25	0.89			
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	6.00-6.99	3.00	1.25	0.06	3	0.99
	7.00-7.99	2.99	1.20			
	8.00-8.99	3.05	1.26			
	9.00-10.00	2.99	1.30			
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	6.00-6.99	3.30	1.25	0.70	3	0.55
	7.00-7.99	3.53	1.12			
	8.00-8.99	3.60	1.07			
	9.00-10.00	3.72	1.01			
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	6.00-6.99	3.50	0.85	2.04	3	0.11
	7.00-7.99	3.90	0.99			
	8.00-8.99	4.14	1.01			
	9.00-10.00	4.08	1.01			
Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	6.00-6.99	3.60	1.07	0.35	3	0.79
	7.00-7.99	3.35	1.03			
	8.00-8.99	3.47	1.05			
	9.00-10.00	3.47	1.02			
Social media can be useful in students' research work	6.00-6.99	4.30	0.67	1.28	3	0.28
	7.00-7.99	3.91	0.98			
	8.00-8.99	4.09	0.90			
	9.00-10.00	4.16	0.89			
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	6.00-6.99	3.90	0.88	1.49	3	0.22
	7.00-7.99	3.82	0.94			
	8.00-8.99	4.10	0.92			
	9.00-10.00	3.95	1.10			

Based on the data provided in Table 4, it can be concluded that the variable of grade point average does not statistically significantly affect students' attitudes toward the examined topic.

Table 5: *Statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes based on the length of presence on social media*

Items	Length of presence	M	SD	F	df	p
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	1-5 years	4.23	0.81	0.24	2	0.78
	5-10 years	4.19	0.93			
	More than 10 years	4.26	0.83			
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	1-5 years	2.86	1.36	0.88	2	0.41
	5-10 years	2.97	1.21			
	More than 10 years	3.16	1.31			
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	1-5 years	3.45	1.06	0.79	2	0.46
	5-10 years	3.57	1.08			
	More than 10 years	3.71	1.06			
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	1-5 years	4.23	0.75	0.75	2	0.47
	5-10 years	4.06	1.00			
	More than 10 years	3.95	1.08			
Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	1-5 years	3.14	1.21	1.88	2	0.15
	5-10 years	3.41	1.00			
	More than 10 years	3.59	1.06			
Social media can be useful in students' research work	1-5 years	4.00	0.93	0.07	2	0.93
	5-10 years	4.07	0.94			
	More than 10 years	4.08	0.85			
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	1-5 years	4.00	0.87	0.40	2	0.67
	5-10 years	4.02	0.98			
	More than 10 years	3.91	1.00			

The data in Table 5 indicate that the variable of the length of presence on social media does not have a statistically significant effect on students' attitudes toward the topic under investigation.

Table 6: Statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes based on frequency of accessing social media

Items	Frequency of access	M	SD	F	df	p
Sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning	Rarely	4.00	0.01	1.49	3	0.22
	Sometimes	4.83	0.41			
	Frequently	4.03	0.90			
	Regularly	4.22	0.90			
The exercise classes at the faculty should be supported by using social networks	Rarely	3.00	1.63	0.60	3	0.61
	Sometimes	2.67	1.21			
	Frequently	2.78	1.13			
	Regularly	3.05	1.26			
Social networks could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lecture and exercise classes	Rarely	3.50	1.29	0.86	3	0.46
	Sometimes	3.00	1.09			
	Frequently	3.47	0.95			
	Regularly	3.63	1.08			
Social networks can contribute to more successful implementation of student group projects and preparation of presentations	Rarely	4.25	0.50	0.28	3	0.84
	Sometimes	3.83	0.98			
	Frequently	3.94	0.84			
	Regularly	4.06	1.03			
Social networks can facilitate solving academic problems	Rarely	2.50	1.73	1.52	3	0.21
	Sometimes	3.00	1.09			
	Frequently	3.47	0.95			
	Regularly	3.46	1.03			
Social media can be useful in students' research work	Rarely	4.25	0.50	1.23	3	0.30
	Sometimes	4.17	0.41			
	Frequently	3.78	0.83			
	Regularly	4.10	0.93			
Social media is a significant tool for online academic group discussions	Rarely	4.25	0.50	0.52	3	0.67
	Sometimes	4.17	0.41			
	Frequently	3.81	0.90			
	Regularly	4.00	1.00			

Based on the data provided in Table 6, it can be concluded that the variable of frequency of accessing social media during the day does not statistically significantly influence students' attitudes toward the use of social media in the studying process.

Discussion

The emergence of social media has brought significant changes in both personal and professional communication domains. In line with this, researchers seek to shed light on the relationship between social media and students, particularly exploring the potential use of social media as an educational tool during the studying process (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Sobaih et al., 2016). In an attempt to address this issue in our context, a study was conducted to determine students' attitudes toward the use of social media as educational support during their academic studies.

The results of our research partly confirm the first hypothesis that students have positive attitudes toward the use of social media in university education, and that they represent educational support in the studying process. The findings from the study indicate that the majority of respondents expressed agreement with the statement that sharing educational materials through social media is beneficial for learning, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Hamid et al., 2015; Zachos et al., 2018). Our research found that most respondents have positive attitudes toward the idea that social media could significantly contribute to organizing debates and discussions on topics from lectures and exercises, which is also supported by other research indicating increased student interaction and engagement when using social media (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). Interestingly, the largest percentage of surveyed students have positive attitudes toward the notion that social media can contribute to the successful completion of group projects and preparation of presentations – 37.9% completely agree, while 39.8% partially agree. It may be assumed that social media facilitates coordination and group work, suggesting that students can quickly share documents via social media, communicate online, collaborate more effectively, and exchange ideas. Similarly, the results obtained for the statements that social media can facilitate problem-solving, can be useful in students' research work, and are a significant means for online academic group discussions can be interpreted. The positive attitudes of students regarding these items only confirm the stance known to the academic community, where social media are perceived as digital tools in the university context, significant for collaborative learning, creativity development, dynamics, and orientation toward research work (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

The research found no statistically significant differences concerning the independent variables of the study: year of study, study program, grade point average, duration of presence on social media, and frequency of access, thus confirming the second hypothesis. The obtained findings are consistent with the results obtained in the research on Facebook as a digital tool for supporting studying (Stanisavljević Petrović & Mamutović, 2018; Pavlović et al., 2017). In the aforementioned studies, it was found that the affiliation with the study program, as well as the grade point average, do not influence students' attitudes toward social media.

Conclusion

Social media is an integral part of young people's lives, significantly impacting the shaping of social interactions and changing the ways in which young people communicate, collaborate, and learn. The rapid development of new technologies is characterized by the emergence of new social platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, WhatsApp, or TikTok, which, like Facebook once did, provide space for new channels of communication in various aspects of young generations' lives. Consequently, there is a clear initiative to integrate social media into higher education processes because, according to their characteristics, they can contribute to improving learning, sharing and exchanging knowledge, and enhancing academic

achievement. Accordingly, there is a need to study different aspects of the relationship between students and social media, with the intention of recognizing the potential of these digital tools and utilizing them in the study process to the best possible extent.

In our research, it was found that students generally have positive attitudes toward using social media for educational purposes. Specifically, they recognize the potential of these tools for sharing and exchanging educational materials, and they are aware of their contribution to cooperative work when tasks are solved at the group level or when collaborative projects and presentations are done for specific subjects. Encouragingly, the research data indicate that students may perceive social media as an opportunity for discussion with peers and teachers and for solving academic tasks and problems. The results obtained regarding the independent variables of the study show that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of students, indicating that respondents' attitudes toward social media are not conditioned by characteristics related to the academic context or the frequency of access and length of presence on social media.

The pedagogical implications of our research relate to the justification for greater integration of social media into higher education. This could involve using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn for interaction between students and university teachers, sharing educational materials, and fostering collaboration and cooperative learning. Teachers from various departments could design activities that help students better understand how to use social media for professional development and networking. Additionally, teachers could devise learning strategies tailored to individual student needs, such as using social media to create customized study groups or projects that reflect diverse interests and talents. Furthermore, teachers could use social media to create dynamic discussions, surveys, and organize online events that encourage interaction and collaboration. Educational institutions could develop policies and practices that promote balanced use of social media, focusing on academic growth and student success.

The results obtained from the research can be considered significant as they provide a general overview of students' attitudes toward social media as an educational tool that can support the studying process. However, at the same time, this could also be a limitation since it does not provide a clear picture that would apply to each social media platform individually. Additionally, a limitation of this research pertains to the methodology used. Specifically, employing a qualitative approach or a mixed methodology might contribute to a more detailed examination of this issue. In that context, this research can serve as a reference point for future studies focused on specific social media platforms and their contribution to higher education.

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Društvene mreže kao obrazovna podrška studiranju

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Apstrakt

U radu su prikazani rezultati empirijskog istraživanja koje je imalo za cilj utvrđivanje stavova studenata prema društvenim mrežama, kao digitalnom alatu u procesu studiranja. U istraživanju je korišćena deskriptivna istraživačka metoda, a za prikupljanje podataka korišćen je namenski konstruisan instrument – skala procene. Uzorak istraživanja je nameran i čini ga 314 studenta osnovnih akademskih studija sa Filozofskog fakulteta u Nišu. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju da većina ispitanika izražava pozitivne stavove prema primeni društvenih mreža tokom studiranja. Naime, ispitanici prepoznaju potencijale ovih alata za deljenje i razmenu nastavnih materijala i svesni su njihove korisnosti u podršci kooperativnom radu, kada se radi o rešavanju zadataka na nivou grupe ili saradnji na nazajedničkim projektima. Studenti društvene mreže doživljavaju kao platformu za aktivnu diskusiju sa kolegama i nastavnicima, kao i za rešavanje akademskih izazova i problema. U istraživanju je utvrđeno da nema statistički značajnih razlika u odnosu na nezavisne varijable istraživanja (godine studija, studijski program, prosečnu ocenu tokom studiranja, dužinu prisustva na društvenim mrežama, učestalost pristupanja). Zaključuje se da je neophodno detaljnije istraživanje specifičnih društvenih mreža kako bi se postigao veći doprinos u visokom obrazovanju.

Ključne reči: društvene mreže, studenti, obrazovna podrška, studiranje, visoko obrazovanje.

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The Ottoman Siege and Conquest of Shkodra in the 15th Century According to the Journal Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro)¹

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Abstract

The paper examines the appendix on the Ottoman siege of Shkodra in 1474, which was published in two issues of the weekly newspaper Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro) in December 1896. The appendix is a translation of an article written by the Italian sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich, which was published in the magazine Rivista Militare Italiana at the end of 1896. The historical theme was inspired by the marriage between the heir to the Italian throne and the daughter of the Montenegrin ruler, which resulted in a political alliance between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Montenegro. Under these circumstances, it was important to remind the citizens of the united Venetian and Montenegrin armies that defended Shkodra against Ottoman attacks in the 15th century. The two countries' insistence on forming an alliance can be explained by the need to prove continuity and draw parallels between historical and contemporary events. It is for this reason that this article has been written, which must be examined to determine the extent to which it provides accurate historical information about a significant event of the 15th century.

Keywords: Shkodra, Montenegrin press, Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro), history

The Ottoman Siege and Conquest of Shkodra in the 15th Century According to the Journal Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro)

Introduction

Glas Crnogorca (Voice of Montenegro) was the first journalistic newspaper of the Principality, i.e., the Kingdom of Montenegro, which was published once a

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week in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.⁴ It is a continuation of the newspaper *Crnogorac*, which had been published in Cetinje since 1871 and changed its name after spreading anti-Austrian propaganda and encouraging the Serbian people to rebel against the Ottoman Empire (Jovović, 2015: 53).⁵ The first issue of *Glas Crnogorca* was published on April 21, 1873 in the State Printing House in Cetinje, and the last issue was published in Rome in 1922.⁶ In the many years of its existence, 2374 issues were produced, and the newspaper was not printed only during the war years.⁷

The publication was the official organ of the Montenegrin government and reflected the will of the prince, then King Nikola Petrović Njegoš (Popov et al., 1983: 238). The first page contained the *Official part*, in which laws, decrees, government proclamations and other official documents were published.⁸ Due to the variety of topics covered, it is considered an important historical source today. The current political situation of the country and the Balkans was adequately portrayed in it. *Glas Crnogorca* dealt with literature, culture, history, education and other related topics. Until 1879, it was known as *Nedeljni list za politiku i književnost* (*Weekly newspaper of politics and literature*), then *List za politiku i književnost* (*Newspaper of politics and literature*) until the end of 1915 (Jovović, 2015: 54). From 1917 to 1922, it had the equivalent name in French, *La voix du Monténégrin*, with the subtitle *Official Organ of the Kingdom of Montenegro* (*Journal officiel du Royaume de Monténégro*).⁹

Glas Crnogorca also offered readers exciting literary content such as poems and stories. Translations of texts from the international press were also published. In 1896, the periodical *Rivista Militare Italiana* published a work by Eugenio Barbarich entitled *Siege of Shkodra* (Jovović, 2015: 157). *Rivista Militare Italiana*, an Italian magazine, was founded in Turin in 1856 (Popović, 2020: 53). It is considered the oldest journal in Italy and is published periodically. It is still published, under the new name *Rivista Militare*, and today is the official newsletter of the Italian Ministry of Defense. As a military magazine, it deals with the current state of the army.¹⁰

⁴ In 1910, on the 50th anniversary of the reign of Prince Nikola Petrović Njegoš, Montenegro was proclaimed a kingdom with a king as ruler (Popov & all, 1983: 242–243).

⁵ The publication was not only marketed in Montenegro, but throughout the Balkans and thus posed a threat to the power of the Ottoman Empire and the Austro–Hungarian monarchy.

⁶ See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

⁷ During the war against the Turks (November 1877–January 1879) and the First World War (December 1915–January 1917), *Glas Crnogorca* was not published for some time. From January 22, 1917 to June 18, 1922, the Montenegrin government began publishing it in exile, first in Ney near Paris and later in Rome (Jovović, 2015: 53).

⁸ See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

⁹ See: Digitalna biblioteka Crne Gore, <https://www.dlib.me/me/casopisi-novine-kolekcije/481-URN:DLIB.ME59730P-3>, visited on 17. 1. 2024.

¹⁰ See: *Rivista Militare*, <https://www.esercito.difesa.it/comunicazione/editoria/Rivista-Militare/>

In the 19th century, the journal *Rivista Militare Italiana* reported on national and international events. The Italians' interest in Montenegro was reflected in their efforts to familiarize readers with its culture, historical events and potential for scientific research. The travelogs of Italian travelers to Montenegro were widely published (Popović, 2020: 51). At the end of the 19th century, the Italian press showed great interest in Montenegro after the engagement of the Italian Crown Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, son of King Umberto I, to the Montenegrin Princess Jelena Petrović, daughter of Prince Nikola Petrović. The wedding was an important event in both countries and symbolized the establishment of an alliance between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Montenegro. On the occasion of the wedding, which took place on October 24, 1896 in Rome, various newspaper articles, books and other works were published to arouse the sympathy of the Italian public opinion towards Montenegro (Popović, 2020: 51).

After the wedding of the prince and princess, the Italian sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich visited Cetinje to find out about the Montenegrin army's organization. Barbarich came from a noble family and had an illustrious military career behind him. He was a writer interested in political and military issues in Europe in the present and in the past, as well as in the geography of foreign countries. He wrote and published numerous works on military history and travel literature.¹¹

Barbarich's visit to Montenegro at the end of 1896 led to articles published in journals after his return to Italy (Popović, 2020: 51–61). He began by describing the Montenegrin military organization and the customs that prevailed there in order to give Italian readers a better understanding of the Montenegrins. Barbarich published a historical–military article in the *Rivista Militare Italiana* about the centuries–old cooperation between the Republic of Venice and the Montenegrins on the occasion of the wedding of Vittorio Emanuele and Jelena (Popović, 2020: 53–57). The entire issue of the *Rivista Militare Italiana* of November 1, 1896, is dedicated to this event. It begins with a greeting to the newlyweds and wishes for a long and happy life together (Cisotti, 1896: 1923).

A special edition of the *Rivista Militare Italiana* is dedicated to Montenegro to strengthen relations between the two ruling families and to inform the Italian public about the future queen's country of origin. It contains appendices with historical, geographical, military, cultural, and statistical data on Montenegro, as well as historical events on the Apennine Peninsula in which the Savoys played a key role. The section on the centuries-long alliance between the Venetians and the Montenegrins, covering their joint participation in wars, is very important. Eugenio Barbarich compiled this work on the basis of actual documents, chronicles and publications of his contemporaries who wrote about the history of Montenegro (Cisotti, 1896: 1979–2025). It consists of three chapters: *The Siege of Shkodra (L'assedio di Scutari)*, *The Crnojevićs in Venice (I Zernovich a Venezia)* and *The Last Chapter of the Dalmatian Wars (L'ultimo capitolo delle guerre Dalmatiche)*.

Pagine/default.aspx, visited on 1. 2. 2024.

¹¹ See: Begotti, P. C. *Barbarich Eugenio (1868–1931)*. Dizionario biografico dei friulani, <http://www.dizionariobiograficodeifriulani.it/barbarich-eugenio-1863-1931/>, visited on 30. 1. 2024.

The first chapter describes the joint effort of Venetians and Montenegrins in the defense of Shkodra from Ottoman sieges in 1474 and 1478. The second chapter describes Đurađ Crnojević's stay in the Venetian Republic and his attempts to re-establish his supremacy in Montenegro through an alliance with the Venetians. The third chapter deals with the wars of the new century, the fall of the Venetian Republic, and the loyalty of the Montenegrins (Cisotti, 1896: 1979–2025; Popović, 2020:58).

The insistence on an alliance between two nations throughout history due to marriage between members of ruling families is part of political propaganda. Therefore, the data in the texts published at the end of the 19th century are largely the product of the aspirations of that time and cannot be fully trusted. It is therefore necessary to carry out an analysis and determine whether the authors used reliable historical sources. The topic of this paper is precisely the analysis of a part of the text written by Barbarich concerning the Ottoman siege and conquest of Shkodra in the 15th century.

A brief history of Shkodra until the Ottoman conquest 1479

The city, which lies on a hill near the east coast of Lake Shkodra, was founded in ancient times and its history can be traced back to the present day. Throughout history, the town has been known by various names: Scodra, Scutarum, Scutari, Iscenderie, Shkodër, Скѡдъръ, Росафъ, Rosafa, Ruzaphata (Jireček, 1914: 156; Antonović, 2010: 254). In the 4th century BC, the Illyrians founded Shkodra, one of their most important cities. The Romans invaded and conquered the Illyrian Empire, including Shkodra, in the second century BC (Antonović, 2010: 255). In late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the city served as the administrative and ecclesiastical center of the province of Prevalitana in the Eastern Roman Empire following the administrative reform of Emperor Diocletian in the third century AD. In the early Middle Ages, Shkodra was part of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) and came under Serbian suzerainty in the 11th century (Bešić & all, 1967: 241–243, 256; Antonović, 2010: 255).¹²

At the beginning of the 12th century, Byzantine sovereignty was restored, but the city again came under Serbian rule after the victorious campaigns of the great prefect Stefan Nemanja against Byzantium. During the Serbian administration, Shkodra became an important regional center. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Shkodra was an important city on the Adriatic coast in Zeta of the state of Nemanjić. It was probably the administrative center of Zeta (formerly Duklja). Zeta was ruled by Queen Jelena Anžuska (Helen of Anjou), and the young kings Stefan Dečanski and Stefan Dušan (Ćirković & all, 1970a, 60–61, 71; Srejskić & all, 1981: 439, 462, 464, 509).¹³

¹² Shkodra became part of the Principality of Duklja in the 11th century after Prince Stefan Vojislav's successful uprising against Byzantium. Stefan Vojislav and his descendants ruled over Serbian lands including Duklja, Travunia, Zahumlje, Raška and Bosnia. For more on Duklja in the 11th century, see Bešić & all, 1967: 385–399; Srejskić & all, 1981: 180–196.

¹³ Queen Jelena ruled over part of the country in the last quarter of the 13th and early 14th centuries, including the regions of Zeta, Trebinje, Plav and Gornji Ibar. Stefan Dečanski, a young king with a palace near Shkodra, succeeded her as ruler of Zeta. He led an unsuccessful uprising against his

Shkodra belonged to the Nemanjić state until 1359. After the death of Emperor Dušan, the Balšić brothers gradually gained control of Zeta and fought against other local Serbian nobility.¹⁴ Since then, their sudden rise can be traced in the area between Lake Shkodra and the Adriatic Sea. Balšić ruled the city until 1393, when Đurađ II Stracimirović Balšić, together with Drivast and Sveti Srđ (St. Sergius), handed it over to the Turkish Duke Šahin to free himself from captivity. Eventually, he was able to retake it in September or October 1395, but he gave it up to Venice the following year (Jireček, 1914: 156–158; Ćirković & all, 1970a: 59–63; Božić, 1979: 220; Antonović, 2003: 227–228).

During Venetian rule, the area around Shkodra was the scene of frequent military conflicts between the Venetians, the local regional rulers and the Ottoman Turks. This underlines the strategic importance of this place. Shkodra was besieged twice in 1474 and 1478 as the Ottoman army advanced unstopably and posed the greatest threat to the city. Although the sieges were unsuccessful, the city was handed over to the Turks in 1479 with the signing of the Ottoman – Venetian peace treaty. The Ottoman authority made the city the center of the newly founded Sanjak of Shkodra (Božić, 1979: 218–227; Antonović, 2003: 50–56).

The Ottoman conquest of Shkodra in the 15th century according to the journal *Glas Crnogorca* (*Voice of Montenegro*)

The article by sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich from the *Rivista Militare Italiana*, *The Siege of Shkodra*, was translated and published in *Glas Crnogorca*. It can be found in the *Listak Glasa Crnogorca* section, together with a reference to the magazine from which the material was taken and the author's signature. It was printed in December 1896 in issues No 50 and 52. Barbarich's text has the characteristics of a historical analysis and describes the Turkish siege of Shkodra from 1474. The author relied, as stated, on the *Venetian annals* (*Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*) published by the historian Domenico Malipiero between 1457 and 1500 (Malipiero, 1843; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896a: 2). He did not cite any other sources.

Text published in issue No 50, December 7, 1896

The narrative begins with an account of the events that took place around Shkodra in the spring of 1474. On their way to conquer the Balkans, the Ottoman army clashed with the Republic of Venice, which ruled the coasts and islands of the

father, King Milutin, in 1314. In 1331, the young King Stefan Dušan successfully rebelled against his father, King Stefan Dečanski, near his palaces on the Drimac River (Ćirković & all, 1970a: 60–61, 71; Antonović, 2003: 54).

¹⁴ In 1358, a battle took place in the vicinity of Shkodra between Emperor Uroš and Simeon (Siniša) Paleologus, brother of Emperor Dušan, who asserted claims to imperial power. The brothers Balšić were most likely involved in the conflict, but there is no evidence in the sources. Although Emperor Uroš won the war, the brothers Balšić gained control over Shkodra (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 4–7; Srejskić & all, 1981: 569–570).

Adriatic. The Ottoman siege of Shkodra lasted four months (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 301–307). The author gives statistics from the *Venetian annals* about the attack and defense of the city. According to Malipiero (1843: 92–93), the Turkish military commander, “the Beglerbeg of Greece”, advanced on the walls of Shkodra with 10,000 Turks and attempted to take the city without further ado” (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). At this time Shkodra was under the sovereignty of the Republic of Venice. Antonio Loredan, captain of Shkodra and governor of Venetian Albania (Albaniae Venenta), exercised power in the name of the Doge of Venice.

Barbarich emphasizes the friendship between the people of Venice and the Balšić and Crnojević families who ruled Zeta (Montenegro) in the 14th and 15th centuries. According to the reports of Venetian rectors in Dalmatia, the Balšićs and Crnojevićs were trusted allies of the Venetian Republic. The Venetian Senate referred to Stefan Crnojević as “Magnifico Voivode della Zeta” and praised him for his alliance with the Castriots and his fight against the Turks. Montenegrins and Venetians worked together to protect Shkodra (Cisotti, 1896: 1981–1982; Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2; Jovović, 2015: 157).

Stefan Crnojević was succeeded by his son Ivan, who married the Venetian landlady Katerina Orio and thus strengthened relations with the Republic of Venice. This obliged Ivan Crnojević to provide assistance to the Venetian army and Antonio Loredan in the defense of Shkodra. More than 2,000 soldiers, town dwellers and Montenegrin cavalry and infantry defended the town, armed with 30 cannons (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). As the Beglerbeg of Greece (the Beglerbeg of Rumelia) did not succeed in taking Shkodra, Kadim Suleiman Pasha of Jedren came to his aid with 8,000 Janissaries and men from the Sanjaks of Macedonia and Serbia, a total of around 12,000 soldiers. The Turkish army camped in front of the walls of Shkodra towards the end of May 1474.

As the Ottoman force was large, the Venetian Senate decided to send a warship to support Shkodra. The number of ships grew over time. Instead of huge galleys, which could not pass Bojana, lighter ships such as fusta and barges were sent (Božić, 1979: 225).

Venetian ships sailed into the mouth of Bojana to support Shkodra, whose commander was Triadan Griti. Other Venetians who defended the city were Stefan Malipiero, Lodoviko Bembo, Leonardo Boldu and Petar Mocenigo. Four admirals made a plan based on the help of “Ivan Crnojević, lord of the nearby land on Lake Shkodra, and a man of great influence and power ... who will come as a friend and ally (amigo e confederato) of the republic to help Shkodra across the Lake („Ivana Crnojevića, gospodara bliske zemlje na Skadarskom jezeru, i čovjeka od velikog upliva i vlasti ... koji će doći kao prijatelj i saveznik (amigo e confederato) republike da pomože Skadru preko Jezera“)

 (Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2). Ivan Crnojević’s (prince della Montagna Negra) devotion to the Venetians is particularly evident in the statement that he assembled 8,000 fighters before Leonardo Boldu, provisor in Albania, asked him for help in Žabljak (Cisotti, 1896: 1985; Glas Crnogorca, 1896a: 2).

This concludes the first part of the report of the Turkish siege of Shkodra. Barbarich used excerpts from the *Venetian annals* to show the partnership between

Stefan and Ivan Crnojević and the Venetian commanders. This corresponds to the intended goal: to emphasize the centuries-long friendship. In the Venetian annals, however, Ivan Crnojević's loyalty and friendship to the Venetians are not discussed in detail. Malipiero (1843: 94) describes Ivan as the ruler of Žabljak, a town near Shkodra, and as a man with enormous power among his people, which enables him to gather a large number of fighters, making him a good ally. He is described as an ally in war, but not with the zeal that Barbarich describes. The author may have relied on additional sources or traditions when writing the article, or he may have been influenced by the political events surrounding the marriage of the Savoya and Petrović families.

Text published in issue No 52, December 21, 1896

The issue No 52 of *Glas Crnogorca* published a continuation of the article on the siege of Shkodra. The article begins with information about Venetian ships that arrived in Sveti Srđ (St. Sergius) on Bojana River on June 1, 1474. They lit a fire to inform the besieged people in Shkodra about the arrival of help. During the siege, the Turks surrounded Shkodra from all sides, blocking the wooden bridge over the Bojana River. Suleiman Pasha ordered Sanjakbeg of Serbia Aliaga to protect the bridge. Loredan was waiting for the navy in Sveti Srđ and Ivan Crnojević for immediate help, as the city was suffering from water and food shortages. Ivan offered Providur Bold 8,000 infantrymen in Žabljak. Barbarich notes that only "the entire Montenegrin army" supported Christianity, while Pope Sixtus IV, the Hungarian monarch Matthias Corvinus and the Polish king hesitated (Cisotti, 1896: 1987; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896b: 2).

By throwing stones and wood into the water near the mouth of the Bojana River, the Turks attempted to block Venetian ships from reaching the besieged Shkodra. This turned into a battle that ended with the retreat of the Venetian ships to Sveti Srdj (Božić, 1979: 225–226). With their retreat, the only help that remained was that of the Zeta prince "who had settled on the hill of St. Mark with 8,000 infantrymen and had gathered 18 fustas and smaller ships on the lake... and the Turks no longer approached the shores" („koji se utvrdi na brdu sv. Marka, sa osam hiljada pješaka, a na jezeru je bio okupio 18 fusta i manjijeh lađa... i Turci se nijesu više približavali na obale“) (Malipiero, 1843: 95–96; *Glas Crnogorca*, 1896b: 2). Crnojević's troops attempted to attack Shkodra from St. Mark's Hill, but were stopped by 12,000 Turkish horsemen protecting the entrance to the city. On the other hand, Boldu, who was leading a small fleet on Lake Shkodra, had just reached Bojana River when he encountered a water obstacle. The Venetian fustas (narrow, light and smaller ships) had to turn back along the Bojana River. Crnojević's army retreated and split into smaller units, which occasionally attacked the Turkish camp in Shkodra (Cisotti, 1896: 1989).

Despite unsuccessful attempts to break the siege, the Venetian and Montenegrin armies remained resolute, as did the people of besieged Shkodra. The Turks were suffering from a malaria epidemic at the time, so their attacks on the city were unsuccessful. Ivan Crnojević and his men launched an attack either from the hill of St. Mark or from Drivast.

Malipiero was left alone with the fleet near the mouth of Bojana when a fever epidemic broke out. The six-hour attack was ordered by the Ottoman commander Suleiman Pasha at dawn on July 28. However, due to the risk of being at the center of a joint attack by the Montenegrins and Venetians, Suleiman Pasha halted the offensive and lifted the siege of Shkodra. The Ottoman army retreated and was chased by the Montenegrins from all sides. Around 3,000 Turks died that day and just as many on the retreat to Jedren. After a 100-day siege, Shkodra was liberated thanks to the dignity of Loredan and the heroism of Ivan Crnojević (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 2–3).

Barbarich praises Ivan Crnojević and his men for their support and bravery during the Turkish attack on Shkodra and the subsequent retreat. On this occasion, he refers to the *Venetian annals*. However, this section in annals does not mention that the help of the Montenegrins was decisive for the defeat of the Turks (Malipiero, 1843: 96–98). The Turkish retreat occurred as a result of a months-long siege that did not yield results and due to the unsuccessful breakthrough into the city during the last attack. Ivan Crnojević's fighters, the Venetian army attacking from the navy, the civilians and the military staff in besieged Shkodra all contributed to their defeat. Moreover, the Ottoman army retreated about a week later, on August 8, 1474, and not immediately as claimed in the appendix (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 307).

After the successful defense of Shkodra and the retreat of the Turks, the Venetian Senate rewarded Ivan Crnojević and presented him with a flag with the inscription: "For the safety of Kotor and help for Shkodra". He was also appointed commander of the division that was to patrol Lake Shkodra and the area east of Danj to prevent further Turkish attacks. The victory was short-lived. After the conquest of Kroja, the Ottoman army returned to Shkodra in June 1478. This time, Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (1453–1481) led the campaign. The Ottoman army was led by the Anatolian Beglerbeg Mustafa and the Rumelian Beglerbeg Suleiman (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 314). The Turks used a different strategy, as they had learned from their experiences during the first siege of the city. First, they prevented the attack of Ivan Crnojević, who retreated to Žabljak and could not help the besieged Shkodra. Even though Shkodra was never captured by the Turks, it was handed over to them in December 1478 on the condition that its citizens and defenders were protected (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 3).¹⁵

In March 1479, the Prince and the Provisor of Shkodra surrendered the city to Turkish proxies (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 316). After the surrender of the town, Ivan Crnojević fled to the highlands to escape the Turkish attacks. He built a fortress on the Crnojević River, which he named Obod, and a monastery in Cetinje. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Montenegro (Glas Crnogorca, 1896b: 3).

Less attention was paid to the second siege of Shkodra, perhaps due to its surrender. However, this event does not represent an alliance between Venetians and Montenegrins. The second Ottoman siege of Shkodra sheds light on how things really were. Ivan Crnojević was not mentioned in the peace treaty between the Venetians and

¹⁵ The Venetian Senate decided to abandon the city, as it was of the opinion that resistance was futile. The Republic of Venice signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire on January 25, 1479 (Božić, 1979: 227).

Mehmed II when they surrendered Shkodra. The Venetian army withdrew, leaving the Montenegrins defenseless against the Turks. The Turks conquered Žabljak and forced Crnojević to recognize Turkish sovereignty (Ćirković & all, 1970b: 316–317). As a result, the Venetians merely exploited the Montenegrins' belligerence for their own purposes, which should have been concealed at the time of the commemoration of the great centuries-long alliance at the end of the 19th century.

Conclusion

The weekly *Glas Crnogorca* was one of the most important journalistic publications in Montenegro in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It contributes to historical studies through its broad content and coverage of political, social and cultural events, but its content should be interpreted with caution. In addition to current events, historical content was also published to remind readers of the great military successes of the past. One such story is a chronicle of the Turkish siege of Shkodra in 1474. The political context in which this piece was published is interesting. It is a significant political event for the small Principality of Montenegro.

The marriage of Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, the son of King Umberto I of Italy, and Jelena Petrović, the daughter of Prince Nikola Petrović of Montenegro, indicated a political alliance between the Principality of Montenegro and the Kingdom of Italy. On the occasion of the wedding, which took place on October 24, 1896, numerous texts were published depicting the harmony between the two countries in the past. Moreover, the decision to conclude this marriage before the vast majority of the people had to be rationally justified in order to arouse the sympathy of the public in both countries. Under these circumstances, the Italian infantry sub-lieutenant Eugenio Barbarich wrote a military historical work entitled *The Siege of Shkodra*, which was published in the journal *Rivista Militare Italiana* at the end of 1896. About a month after the translation of this text, *Glas Crnogorca* published the translation.

It seems that the author presents information about an event connected with both the Principality of Montenegro and the Kingdom of Italy by examining historical sources. However, it is worth reflecting on how much political and cultural continuity there is between the Republic of Venice, which emerged in the Middle Ages and existed until 1797 and whose main region was Venice, and the Kingdom of Italy, which was founded in 1861 from a number of smaller states on the Apennine Peninsula with islands in the sea. The theme was chosen to emphasize a centuries-old connection through an experience shared by both sides, which corresponds to the intended result. A comparative examination of the appendix with historical data revealed that the text consists mainly of elements that are crucial for the depiction of Crnojević's coalition with the Venetian government. It should be noted that the Crnojevićs were not always allies of the Republic of Venice, but rather opposed it depending on historical circumstances.¹⁶

¹⁶ Since the history of relations between the Crnojević family and the Republic of Venice is quite

Ivan Crnojević and his warriors were instrumental in the onslaught against the Turkish army during the first and second sieges of Shkodra. The alliance persisted for as long as it was required by the Venetian Republic, which needed them as an army. These are impersonal political circumstances about the grand coalition and friendship that were declared in the *Glas Crnogorca*. Following Shkodra's capitulation to the Turks, Ivan Crnojević found himself without support from his erstwhile allies. In other words, he was there for the Venetians in situations of need, fought alongside them as an ally, won praise and awards for the victorious defense of Shkodra in 1474, and was left behind when an enormous Turkish force attacked the tiny community and no one else was available to help. That is what is noticeable from this appendix. The majority of the article is devoted to the united struggle and triumph; the setback is barely touched upon and its implications for Montenegro are not discussed. As a result, the literature partially manipulates historical facts and exhibits traits of political propaganda. As a result, it reflects the political context of the time it was written and released.

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complicated and requires more space, we will limit ourselves to this assertion. See Ćirković & all, 1970b: 277–333 for more details.

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Osmanska opsada i osvajanje Skadra u 15. veku prema listu *Glas Crnogorca*

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Apstrakt

U radu se analizira prilog o turskoj opsadi Skadra iz 1474. godine, objavljenom u dva broja nedeljnog lista *Glas Crnogorca*, koji je štampan decembra 1896. godine. Prilog je zapravo prevod teksta koji je napisao italijanski pešadijski poručnik Euđenio Barbarić i objavio u časopisu *Rivista Militare Italiana* krajem 1896. godine. Istorijska tema je inspirisana sklapanjem braka između italijanskog prestolonaslednika i ćerke crnogorskog vladara, što je podrazumevalo i politički savez između Kraljevine Italije i Knjaževine Crne Gore. Pošto su u 15. veku zajedničkim snagama Crnogorci i Mlečani branili Skadar od turskih napada, u datim okolnostima je bilo potrebno podsetiti javno mnjenje na ove događaje. Insistiranje na savezništvu između dva naroda može se objasniti potrebom da se izvrši korelacija između prošlih i aktuelnih događaja i prikaže kontinuitet. Tako je nastao ovaj prilog, koji je potrebno analizirati i utvrditi u kolikoj meri donosi tačne istorijske podatke o jednom važnom događaju iz 15. veka.

Ključne reči: Skadar, crnogorska štampa, *Glas Crnogorca*, istorija

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Gender Representation on Postcards of the Inter-war Era

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Abstract

Using the examples of postcards from the inter-war era of the 20th century, it will be shown how media culture participates in building and maintaining social order by defining gender roles. Several of the most representative examples of French provenance, which belong to the collection of postcards of the National Museum of Leskovac have been singled out. Media culture is inseparable from visuality, since, based on a given visual expression, it creates a framework within which the recipient of media content will perceive, interpret and form an opinion. Gender representations on postcards of the inter-war era are precious testimonies of patriarchal ideology and women's subordination that is represented as natural, although it is a cultural construct. Gender discrimination is a phenomenon that still exists today. Even though the status of women in European societies has undergone a radical change during the past century, the inequality still exists on the basis of their economic and social status. The article seeks to encourage research on the same or similar topic in order to find the roots of gender dichotomy and to understand it so that we can work towards its eradication.

Keywords: media culture, gender, inter-war era, postcard

Introduction

The term "media" should be understood as a mediating factor in communication and an essential structural element of every communication situation, as well as a combination of natural and artificial conditions through which communication is achieved. (Radojković & Miletić, 2005: 95). Media culture includes traditional media (radio, television, film, music) and printed media (magazines, newspapers, comics, books, postcards) (Ljajić, 2020). Media culture is inseparable from visuality, since, based on a given visual expression, it creates a framework within which the recipient of media content will perceive, interpret and form an opinion (Osmančević, 2021: 184). Representations of media culture, as stated by Kellner, show who has power and who does not, who is allowed to use force and violence, and who is not (Kellner, 2004: 5-6). Along with other socialization elements, the media play a significant role in the development of gender roles, but also in the creation and maintenance of gender stereotypes (Penezić, Šunjić, 2013).

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Printing is the oldest mass media which, besides verbal messages, conveys iconic messages, often combined to create new meanings. This possibility was created by the advent of photography, whose invention spurred the development of printed media (Vujović, 2021). The communicative power of photography is one of the reasons for its widespread prevalence (Vujović, 2021: 9). The postcard industry directly emerged from the technique of photographic reproduction in the second half of the 19th century, thus it can be considered as its subcategory (Đurić, 2013: 775 – 776). (Đurić, 2013: 775). A postcard is an illustrated correspondence card: it is a picture (photo, drawing, etc.) printed on cardboard, intended for mailing, without an envelope, usually in the 14 x 9 cm format with an illustration on the front and the text of the correspondence and address of the recipient on the back (Милорадовић, 2014). As a new media for a new market, the emergence of postcards enabled photographers and publishers to express their originality and creativity. Mass media provide the basis for shaping individuals' identities and contribute to shaping dominant perceptions of the world and highest values, with photography being one of the most effective means (Đurić, 2013).

According to the content of the obverse, the following typology of postcards is mentioned in our literature: topographic postcards, postcards with scenes and events, portrait postcards with figures of famous personalities, statesmen, actors, artists, etc, advertising and propaganda postcards, postcards featuring reproductions of works of art and other (Ниношевић, 2022). As Đurić points out, the function of the postcard as a medium will be realized when its back is inscribed with a personal message (Đurić, 2013). That is the reason why these printed media, apart from being a museum or collector's item, can also be viewed as part of the corpus of new visual mass media (Пепаћ, 2013: 76). Therefore, a postcard can be considered a form of mass media, in the context of being widely used as a means of communication and information distribution worldwide.

In literature, postcards are mostly analyzed in the context of local histories, given that the obverse usually features the landmarks of cities, therefore, representation of gender on postcards is not a frequent topic of research. For now, the most comprehensive publication that deals with similar topics is from the author A. Drago, who exhibited postcards with illustrations or photographs of women from the 19th century to the 40s of the 20th century. I also highlight the paper of A. Grgov that deals with the postcards of the first half of the 20th century in the context of representation of gender differences.

The research questions from which I start in this paper are: “What do postcards reveal about gender relations in the inter-war period of the 20th century?” and: “How media culture, with the help of visual expression, participates in the construction and maintenance of social order?”

In this paper, Cartwright & Sturken's representation theory, as well as the research of Vujović and Mulvey on the representation of women in the media, will be used as a theoretical framework. Using the qualitative content analysis, it will describe each postcard in the paper in the context of time and space. Through semiological analysis it will be seen which elements are involved in the creation of

meaning in one image and how the systems of representation function in creating meanings. Goffman's combination of frame and semiotic analysis will also be applied in order to understand how the body language in the picture is related to the stereotypical image of a woman.

Gender representations on postcards of the inter-war era are precious testimonies of patriarchal ideology and women's subordination that is represented as natural, although it is a cultural construct. Gender bias is a phenomenon that still exists today. Even though the status of women in European societies has undergone a radical change during the past century, the inequality still exists in many ways: women experience discrimination in regard to their economic situation and also must deal with inequities in their social lives, such as being harassed or abused, or even, tragically, in assaults and crimes targeting women.³ In 2021, several tens of thousands of people participated in gatherings across France on International Women's Day condemning the inequality faced by women, which has been further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. At these gatherings, predominantly attended by women, issues such as the gender pay gap, discrimination, as well as sexual and sexist violence were addressed.⁴ During the past period, research has been conducted in Serbia that addressed issues of gender equality, which indicate that women in our society continue to be in significantly disadvantaged positions compared to men, and occurrences such as gender-based violence and gender-sensitive language are still common. Support for these claims is provided by the results of a public opinion survey conducted by CeSID in 2013 for the needs of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. The survey results, conducted on a representative sample of 1200 citizens in Serbia, showed that the majority of respondents perceive the society we live in as discriminatory (Ćopić, 2016). Through this paper, my aim is to encourage research on the same or similar topic in order to find the roots of gender dichotomy and to understand it so that efforts can be made towards its eradication.

Socio-historical context of the inter-war era

The word feminism first appeared at the beginning of the 19th century in France, in which it is written that feminism is "a doctrine whose subject is the expansion of the rights and role of women in society" (Аритоновић, 2009). From that time the organized women's struggle for equality began (Zaharijević 2008: 389). The so-called suffrage movements in Great Britain and the USA spread to other countries, gaining a global character (Zaharijević, 2008). In that first phase of the struggle for gender equality the aspirations of the first feminists were limited to the struggle to equalize with men in terms of access to social resources and positions, whether on the political or social level (Brašnjić&Ševo, 2019: 223). The end of the First World War in 1918 left numerous consequences in the field of social, political, economic and cultural awareness of the entire world. According to Todić, women partly managed to get some

³ Source: <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/svet-66487073>

⁴ Source: <https://www.danas.rs/svet/u-francuskoj-skupovi-zena-protiv-nejednakosti>

formal rights and freedoms and became more equal with men, which was certainly influenced by the awakened awareness of their own significant role during the war, when, in addition to the physical, they were also exposed to enormous psychological pressure regarding preserving one's own honour (Тодић, 2008: 145).

As in other European countries, the struggle for the emancipation of women in Serbia began in the second half of the 19th century. It was the period when the first women's associations were founded, whose goal was to fight for political and legal equality. In the time of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the inter-war era, the Serbian Civil Code from 1844 was still in force, according to which a woman was completely subordinate to a man. By concluding the marriage, she lost her general business capacity and became equal to a minor. At the congresses jurists demanded legal equality for women, especially in inheritance law, which was not answered until World War II. The process of the struggle for gender equality included education and employment of women, changes in demographic patterns and models of relations between the sexes, and after an arduous struggle, the political equality of women (Аритоновић, 2009).

Simultaneously with women's struggle for equal rights, the European post-war propaganda worked to push women out of all spheres of public life: state policy used various types of media to maintain the established order. Post-war politics made it clear to women who gained the right to vote that this right belonged to them because they were the mothers or wives of fallen heroes. In Germany, women who did not want to leave their jobs after the war were publicly condemned, while in Italy they were identified with prostitutes. There have been cases of termination of work privileges for women, due to alleged incompetence, as well as glorification of the role of mother and wife at the state level. In France, the "Family Medal" was established in 1920, which was awarded to mothers, and in Germany, 1934 was declared the "Year of the Housewife." In America, the model of the "new modern woman", tied to the house and the household, was promoted, stemming from the consumerist culture (Zaharijević, 2008). In this regard, I can conclude that media culture of the inter-war era was a powerful tool of state policy and propagated the moral values that were determined and imposed by the official policy.

Theoretical framework

Representation means using language and images to create meaning about the world around us. We use words to understand, describe and define the world as we see it, and for the same purpose we use images. This process is achieved through systems of representation, such as language and visual media, which have rules and conventions of their own organization. Only we can see the material world and create the meanings of a specific cultural context, and through systems of representation. That means that language and systems of representation do not reflect the existing reality as much as they construct it and mediate our understanding of reality (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001). According to Vujović, media representation is always a construction, because it is sent from a certain position of power in society and with a certain ideological implication, therefore the representation of women in the media cannot be a realistic reflection of them (Vujović, 2016: 98).

When it comes to the visual representation of women in the media, Mulvey states that the pleasure of viewing in a world governed by gender imbalance is set as a split between active/masculine and passive/feminine. Namely, the male gaze projects its fantasy onto a female figure that is styled in accordance with it. In their traditionally exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously viewed and exposed, their appearance coded for a strong visual and erotic effect, so it can be said that they connote spectatorship. Mulvey believes that the difference between the sexes controls, that is, constructs images and representations, and observation itself is an act of fetishization, based on erotic and sadistic instincts (Mulvey, 2008).

Methodology

The content analyzed in this paper comes from different parts of Europe, mostly from France, and belongs to the collection of postcards of the National Museum in Leskovac. Out of a total of 461 postcards that the Collection contains, 28 are photographs of married couples, women alone and family photographs, the six most representative postcards are analyzed in the paper. The rest are simply repetition of the similar motifs.

In this paper, qualitative content analysis will be applied, which is a method of researching media material, various documents, written, audio or visual records and other forms of oral or written communication between people. The goal of this method is to describe, classify the content of certain forms of communication and, by relating it to the socio-demographic, biographical, cultural and other characteristics of the author of the document, as well as those to whom they are intended, to explain or understand it in the context of time and space in to whom it was created (Branković, 2009: 89).

Semiotic analysis will also be applied in this paper, considering that semiotics is linked with meaning, or the ways in which representation, in the broad sense (language, images, objects) generates meanings or the processes by which we comprehend or attribute meaning (Curtin, 2016). Barthes claims that in every process of marking there are two systems: the level of denotation and the level of connotation. Denotation refers to the descriptive level of meaning, literal, while connotation leads to social, historical and cultural aspects. Barthes also distinguishes three members in each semiological system, which are in a mutually dependent relation: sign, signifier and signified. Signifier is the physical form of the sign as we perceive it through our senses (sound, written word or image) and a signified is the meaning we associate with the sign. An image (or word) and its meaning together (signifier and signified) constitute a sign (Barthes, 1968). A sign is anything that provides meaning, such as a written or spoken word, a sign, or a myth. Barthes sees myth as the phenomenon of shifting connotative meaning into denotative meaning because it is influenced by beliefs in a society (Ishar & Irawan, 2023). Barthes also defines myth as depoliticized, ideological speech, which distorts reality. Its main role is to turn what is individual and manufactured into general, natural and eternal (Barthes, 1968).

Additionally, Erving Goffman's methodology will be applied in this paper – the combination of frame and semiotic analysis, applied in the book *Gender*

Advertisements. Goffman analyzed gender representation and gender roles through next categories: relative size, which refers to male superiority, usually expressed in photographs through the size and height of the male figure in relation to the female; female touch, indicating that the women in the advertisements most often touch the advertising product or their own body, as a precious object; ranking by function, which means that the men in the photos are most often shown as superior, the ones who give instructions, and the women are in the role of serving; ritualization of subordination – men are shown in advertising photos with an upright body and raised head, and women in a subordinate position; and permitted withdrawal, referring to the depiction of women as psychologically absent from the social situation they are in, looking away from others as a sign of shyness. They are also free to express their emotions, to smile more expressively than a man (Goffman, 1979).

Results

In the first two photos (fig. 1 and fig. 2) young married couples are shown. Taking into account Barthe's division into three members in the semiological system, a signifier would be a married couple, a signified, in this case, would be the happiness of the newlyweds, while a sign would be a combination of the previous two members - a married couple means happiness. The denotative or literal meaning of this picture would be a photo of a happy newlywed couple, and its connotative meaning indicates that happiness is associated with the marriage of a heterosexual couple. Based on Goffman's methodology, women in both photos are subordinated: male superiority is visibly emphasized by the protectiveness over the woman, which is particularly visible in the second photo, where the man touches the woman's chin, like a child. In both photos, a woman is hugging a man and clinging to him, whereas he shows his willingness to care for both of them. Both women openly express their emotions, they are smiling, unlike their partners who have serious expressions on their faces.

In the next two photos (fig. 3 and fig. 4) heterosexual families with children are shown. In the third photo (fig. 3), a signifier, according to Barthe's semiotic principles, would be a mother, a father and a daughter learning to play the piano. The happiness of family life would be a signified, and a sign - a young married couple with a child symbolizes tranquility and happiness, since the woman in the photo has a satisfied and happy expression on her face. According to Goffman's methodology, male superiority is emphasized in this case as well. His larger figure compared to a woman's is associated with authority. As in the previous photo, the woman in this photo expresses her emotions more freely than the man, she has a cheerful expression on her face while looking at her daughter. The denotative or descriptive meaning of the photo is that it depicts a young married couple with their daughter learning to play an instrument, while its connotative meaning is the pleasure and happiness which is associated with married life, and represented as natural. In the fourth photo (fig. 4) a seven-member family is presented. The father's gaze is directed towards the mother and conveys seriousness and partly authoritativeness. The woman's face

is radiant, facing the camera, while the gaze is directed upwards, as a sign of shyness and modesty. Manual addition of colours contributes to the complete impression of happiness and satisfaction in life in a multi-member family, which would also be its connotative meaning. In both photos (fig. 3 and 4) the man is represented as more dominant, authority and protector of his family. In each photo (fig. 1, 2, 3 and 4) women are viewed and exposed, they turn away or lower their head from another person or situation, which, according to Goffman, is a sign of subordination. Further, they seem psychologically absent from the social situation in which they find themselves, disoriented and dependent on men who have a serious, protective attitude (Goffman, 1979).

Fig. 1⁵



Fig. 2⁶



In addition, the representation of women on the previous four postcards is completely in line with the traditional representation of women in visual culture throughout history: according to Miletić, the Venus of Willendorf, a symbol of fertility and motherhood, had a ritual purpose, and all female figures dated from antiquity to the Middle Ages had the status of deities, which is why they were not depicted as doing something, but as they were, and maternal love, as the only true love of a woman, basically marked the culture of Europe (Miletić, 2008: 296 - 298). Based on this, I can conclude that gender representation has not changed significantly over the centuries and that women are traditionally associated with the role of a spouse and mother, which is linked with principles of media culture of the inter-war era. Post-war propaganda worked to push women out of all spheres of public life: state policy

⁵ Issue by the „EKO“, Made in France; photography; 8, 5 x 13, 7 cm; around 20s; from Leskovac to Prokuplje; NML, I – R/432

⁶ Issue by the „Noer“, No 1613, Made in France; purple toned photography; 8, 5 x 13, 7 cm; 23. 13. 1928 (illegible stamp); to Prokuplje; NML, I – R/433

used various types of media to maintain the established order.

Fig. 3⁷



Fig. 4⁸



While in the previous postcard obverse the woman is shown as a future mother or already a mother, in the last two postcards the woman is in the role of a seductress, and her character is objectified. The fifth picture (fig. 5), in which there is a short-haired girl with a slightly provocative smile, is somewhat different from the previous representations of women as mothers and spouses, which can lead to the conclusion that the women of the inter-war era managed to fight for their long-awaited freedom. However, a deeper analysis indicates that the girl's character is objectified, eroticized, in order to represent female sexuality. Applying the principle of Barthe's semiological system, the girl in the photo would be a signifier, the passion is a signified, and a sign – the girl represents passion. Also, the girl connotes passion, and the impression itself is enhanced by manually adding colors to the photo, which highlights her sensuality. Goffman's categorization can also be applied here, in the part where he mentions touching one's own body as a precious and delicate object, as a typical representation of women in the media.

All five photos (fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) prove Laura Mulvey's thesis, which confirms the passivity of "woman as an image" and the activity of man as an observer. In this regard, gender difference controls and constructs images and representations. Connotative meaning is shifted into denotative meaning because it is influenced by beliefs in a society. Something that is manufactured is turned into general, natural and eternal, according to Barthe's thesis (Barthes, 1968).

⁷ Made in France; photography; 8, 6 x 13, 5 cm; 10. 11. 1934 (illegible stamp); to Leskovac; NML, I – R/435

⁸ Issue by the „Lola Paris 27“, Made in France; hand coloured photography; 8, 7 x 13, 9 cm; 1932; from Prokuplje to Leskovac; NML, I – R/444

Fig. 5⁹



The girl in picture 6, who, dressed according to the latest fashion of the inter-war era, is about to put a letter in the mailbox. Although the glint in her eyes and the showing of her ankles could indicate boldness, her attitude suggests a child's shyness, with a hint of mischievousness, while her hunched shoulders and pushed posture reveal subordination and insecurity. Unlike the men who are shown in every photo with a domineering and protective attitude, this photo is also evidence of the woman's "permissive withdrawal". As in the previous photo, here we can also notice Goffman's "ritual touching": the girl touches her own body, pulling her dress up to highlight the ankle, proving Goffman's thesis about the self-touching of the body as a precious object, as one of the most common representations of women in advertising photographs (Goffman, 1979).

Fig. 6¹⁰



⁹ Issue by the „DEDE Paris 1530“, Made in France; hand coloured photography; 8, 6 x 13, 5 cm; 1920 (illegible stamp); to Leskovac; NML, I – R/436

¹⁰ Photography; 8, 5 x 13, 3 cm; inter-war era; unused; NML, I – R/257

Conclusion

The research results showed that gender representations on postcards of the inter-war era testify to the need of the inter-war politics to preserve the typical patriarchal idea of women. After the first results of feminist activism, it used all means available to displace women from all spheres of public life. This printed media are precious testimonies of patriarchal ideology and women subordination that is represented as natural, although it is a cultural construct. Connotative meaning is shifted into denotative meaning because it is influenced by beliefs in a society. Male superiority is visibly emphasized by the protectiveness over the woman. The figure of the man in the obverse of the postcards is taller, his facial expression is serious, he does not show emotions, unlike the woman, who is more facially expressive. In their traditionally exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously viewed and exposed, represented as absent, disoriented and dependent on men or in the role of a seductress, and her character is objectified.

Barthes claims that there is nothing “innocent” in culture, nothing that is not determined by the context and the interpreter. Cultural products and practices are always ideologically constructed in order to present artificial creations as given by nature and maintain the bourgeois social order (Barthes, 2008). That is why the subject matter in these postcards is presented as a universal truth, something given by nature, but it is actually a cultural construct, given by convention.

Along with other socialization elements, the media play a significant role in the development of gender roles, but also in the creation and maintenance of gender stereotypes. Media culture, with the help of visual expression, creates a framework within which the recipient of media content will perceive, interpret and form an opinion. Thus, it participates in the construction and maintenance of social order. Images are great tools to perceive the maintained order because they contain signifiers that produce meanings. Therefore, through visual expression, cultural positions are presented as natural and not as a cultural construct. Media representation is always a construction, because it is sent from a certain position of power in society, therefore the representation of women in media cannot be a realistic reflection of her. Media culture shapes our view of the world, and in order to be able to see with our own, not “media” eyes, we need an understanding of how they do it.

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Rodna reprezentacija na razglednicama međuratnog doba

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Apstrakt

Na primeru razglednica međuratnog doba 20. veka, pokazaćemo kako medijska kultura učestvuje u izgradnji i održavanju društvenog poretka definisanjem rodних uloga. Izdvojili smo nekoliko najreprezentativnijih primera francuske provenijencije koji pripadaju zbirci razglednica Narodnog muzeja u Leskovcu. Medijska kultura je neodvojiva od vizuelnosti, jer na osnovu datog vizuelnog izraza stvara okvir u

kome će primalac medijskog sadržaja percipirati, interpretirati i formirati mišljenje. Rodna reprezentacija na razglednicama međuratnog doba dragocena su svedočanstva patrijarhalne ideologije i subordinacije žena koja je predstavljena kao prirodna, iako je kulturni konstrukt. Rodna diskriminacija je pojava koja je danas izraženija u nekim delovima sveta, kao npr. u slučaju Avganistana, gde su obnovom talibanske vlasti 2021. godine, žene izgubile osnovna prava. Premda se status žena u evropskim društvima radikalno promenio tokom prošlog veka, nejednakost i dalje postoji na njihovog ekonomskog i socijalnog statusa. Ovim radom želimo da podstaknemo istraživanja na istu ili sličnu temu u cilju otkrivanja korena rodne dihotomije kako bismo je razumeli i mogli raditi na njenom iskorenjivanju.

Ključne reči: medijska kultura, rod, međuratno doba, razglednica.

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In the Waves of the Communication Flood without the “Old Testament Ark” of Culture

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Abstract

The collection of essays “Sharing Opinions” published in 1997 by Miroljub Radojković, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences from Belgrade, also contains an essay from 1981 titled “The Communication Flood and the ‘Old Testament Ark’ of Culture”. The author of the essay offers a critical analysis of the changes brought about by the era’s new communications technologies and how they impact both society and an individual. Forty-three years later, the overview of how communication technology would grow in the future is especially impressive when viewed from today’s perspective. In the early 1980s, the technical concepts and predictions that the author wrote about - such as working from home, remote learning, and the smart watch - seemed like science fiction. The “look into the future” section of the aforementioned essay, in which communication technologies play a significant role in shaping culture and social connections, is, however, its most significant component. Radojković uses the “power of sociological imagination” to offer partially positive, but mostly negative responses to questions about the future of morality in that new society, as well as the place of art or religion. The author of this paper wants to examine the futuristic theses that were developed more than 40 years ago by looking at them through the lens of contemporary communication technology and its effects on society. The main research inquiry is derived from Miroljub Radojković’s thesis regarding the communication flood (or “floods of generality”) that will endanger the fundamental cultural values based on interpersonal interaction, human engagement with nature, and the symbolic environment, and it is as follows - why, in spite of the warnings, did man encounter the communication flood without the “Old Testament ark” of culture?

Keywords: communication technologies, man, society, culture, Miroljub Radojković

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In the Waves of the Communication Flood without the “Old Testament Ark” of Culture

Technology paves the way for alienation

The Communication Flood and the ‘Old Testament Ark’ of Culture³” by Miroslav Radojković begins with a common life situation. Namely, in public transport in the early ’80s, he noticed a teenager gazing into the distance with on-ear headphones through which music was playing from a Walkman in her purse, hanging around her neck. This scene was scientifically provocative enough for Radojković to highlight certain observations and questions. The girl, according to the author, probably enjoyed the music; however, the problem was that she was not in a position to share that music with others. “Her choice of music is entirely personal and selfish” (Radojković, 1997: 13).

Recalling McLuhan’s ideas about detribalization, the return of youth to rituals of openness, and total engagement in the game, Radojković wondered whether, according to the prominent Canadian theorist McLuhan, this annulment of the possibility of communication would cause horror. The teenager isolated and secluded herself with the help of a portable device: “She entangled the sense of hearing, the sense that most easily seduces us and engages us in contact with others. Is she expressing her ignorance or fear of seductive speech? What can her peer do? Can he approach her? He may be gifted with the greatest cleverness and wit, but for him, she remains ‘untouchable.’ The path of the seductive sense is occupied. The chance for communication is annulled” (Radojković, 1997: 13).

The author of the essay critically examines, or rather, questions whether the academic community at that time wrongly and prematurely accepted McLuhan’s position, according to which in the electronic civilization, there would be a “return to emotional and tactile communion among people,” or that in culture, “the creations and values that will be freely shared, through play and in complete communication, will resurrect” (Radojković, 1997: 14).

More than four decades later, we can confidently say that Miroslav Radojković’s criticism and pessimism regarding McLuhan’s theses about bringing people together through electronic communication technologies have been justified. Instead of one girl with a Walkman and on-ear headphones, there are at least ten boys and girls in public transport today who, thanks to smartphones and wireless headphones, have alienated themselves from their surroundings and nullified the possibility of communication with it.

In 2023, a smartphone is the equivalent of the 1981 Walkman, a portable audio player, with the added features such as Tetris, alarm, television, radio, and more. Due to all these options, the path to alienation through a mobile phone compared to the Walkman can be likened to a comparison between a macadam road and a fast highway. The author of this text observes daily, whether in public transport, a park,

³ The essay was first published in 1981, and later reissued in 1997 as part of the essay collection 'Sharing Opinions'.

or at the university, groups of young people who do not communicate because they are engrossed in their mobile phones.

Exploding Topics Company⁴, which aggregates and consolidates data from statistical research worldwide, published the results of global research on smartphone usage in January 2023. The findings revealed that, on average, every person who owns a smartphone spends 3 hours and 15 minutes per day using this device. Every fifth user spends more than 4 and a half hours per day looking at the screen. On average, each user checks their smartphone 58 times a day (notifications, etc.) (Howarth, 2023).

Taking into account Radojković's predictions, the data that stands out as particularly interesting is that the majority of respondents, or 52 percent, stated that they use social media on their mobile phones out of boredom.

Thanks to smart devices, the message that Professor Radojković mentioned describing how audio, video cassettes, or disks would enable us to create our own private stockpile of culture gains full meaning. It reads: "People, create your own stockpile of media culture and carry it with you" (Radojković, 1997: 16).

When it comes to content, smartphones have opened up almost limitless possibilities for us, whether it is searching for it or creating it.

A specialized portal dealing with mobile phones, "BankMyCell," published a study showing that the average adult, globally, spends 6 hours and 58 minutes simultaneously in the online space and in front of screens (mobile phone, computer, tablet, television). An average of 3 hours and 43 minutes of this time is reserved for the mobile phone. Particularly concerning is the data that "if we consider that the average person sleeps seven to eight hours a day, the result is that the average Internet user today spends more than 40% of their waking time online, or in front of a screen" (Turner, 2023).⁵

No mass medium has destroyed another, emphasizes Radojković, but each has demanded additional time and attention for itself. Every new medium has taken a portion of a person's time for itself, leading to the concerning data mentioned earlier. Each social media also takes a portion of one's time. The social networking service "Threads," owned by Meta, was launched on July 6, 2023. In just 5 days, it reached 100 million users. In light of this thesis, each user had to allocate additional time for that network in addition to the time spent on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, or any other network.

According to Radojković, the greatest danger to humanity is the non-renewability of time. "Every new victor in the field of communication technology (e.g., Threads) begins its era by providing evidence of 'subsistence' to people – the owners. But at the same time, it takes away a new segment of personal and social time, the natural dimension that humans waste most mercilessly, and for which, in the end, they regret most sincerely!" (Radojković, 1997: 17).

⁴ The complete research is available at the following link: <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/smartphone-usage-stats> (Accessed on 11/7/2023).

⁵ The complete research is available at the following link: <https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/average-screen-time-on-iphone-android> (Accessed on 11/7/2023).

Culture and Art in the Cage of Communication Technologies

In the era of traditional mass media dominance, print, radio, and television, Radojković labels these concepts as ‘nurseries of mass culture.’ According to him, mass media “cheapened cultural goods, standardized cultural creations, brought them closer to broad taste, translating culture from the ‘temples’ into people’s homes. In return, creativity became industrialized, favoring mass tastes inclined to decline, functional illiteracy spreads, language blurs, subcultures flourish, and there is resistance against culture” (Radojković, 1997: 15). In the age of modern Internet-based communication technologies, discussions about art and culture more often revolve around being slaves to mass consumption.

According to Colbert, in the field of culture, marketing “can be defined as the art of reaching market segments that are likely to be interested in the product, adapting commercial variables to the product (artistic work) – price, promotion, contact with a sufficient number of consumers, while simultaneously providing good service to customers and achieving goals in line with the mission of the cultural organization” (Colbert 2018, cited in Pinto de Sousa, 2021: 29).

We are contemporaries of supermarket culture and art. Art is everywhere around us, leaving galleries, museums, exhibition halls, and moving to online stores, online auctions, and giveaways. In 1981, Radojković saw this transfer of art and culture as a potentially positive direction. “As distribution channels multiply, there will be more space and eventually a need for works of art. Artists could experience demands from institutions and spontaneous affinities that exceed their overall creative possibilities. Because they will need to create for countless creative and distribution centers, for an enlarged audience and market” (Radojković, 1997: 15).

From the perspective of 2023, when it comes to positive developments, we can say that the only thing left is just potential. There is indeed space for art, but the artist may not be ready to respond creatively to such a market. The author of this text spoke in 2018 with an academic painter visibly burdened and upset by the job he accepted – painting over 30 art pieces. When asked who needed 30 paintings in a short period, the answer was a hotel. According to the applicable regulations in the Republic of Serbia for higher categorization of hotels, it is prescribed how many artistic paintings each room should have.

From the pessimistic point of view from 1981, Radojković wondered whether new works of art would have a chance to communicate in competition with those already in circulation. He questioned whether new works would survive the reproduction of old artistic pieces and if a new artistic act could attract the attention of someone creating their own collections, arranging, combining, or creating their own art (Radojković, 1997: 23). These questions have proven to be justified, as they lead to the following: Will a modern person, after returning from a visit to a museum or gallery, notice a painting on the wall of a hotel room and engage with it? Will a new artistic painting attract more attention than a reproduction on the opposite wall of a hotel room? Will a person notice the painting on the wall of a hotel room alongside the ability to create their own artistic image on their mobile

phone using artificial intelligence-based tools? All the answers point to the fact that communication technology has completely taken over culture and art. In 1981, Radojković wrote: “As far as culture is concerned, it already largely represents communication technology. If it dominates that domain and continues to spread further, the cultural creator (human, note by the author) is next in line” (Radojković, 1997: 26). Considering the development of artificial intelligence, culture is already in shackles, and the cultural creator is on the path to centuries of enslavement.

The “submerged” society and social relations

The analysis discusses the thesis that communication technologies will completely change the way people are informed about politics and social movements. Radojković, in 1981, wrote about the “death” of traditional print media. Printed copies will be replaced by electronic newspapers, and each person will be able to choose content thanks to their personal decoder (Radojković, 1997: 16). This prediction has fully materialized. Initially, during the transitional period, we had online media accessed through computers. Printed editions still coexisted, but with significantly lower circulations. With the expansion of mobile phones and the development of informational applications by media houses, we can now speak of the extinction of printing rotogravure machines. Confirmation comes from the news on June 30, 2023, with the headline “Wiener Zeitung ceases printed edition after 320 years of existence and transitions to an online format.” These Viennese newspapers were the world’s oldest in terms of continuous publication. On the same day, 63 people lost their jobs, with 35 from the editorial board.

The key problem in online information-sharing characterized by speed is the lack of analytical processing of information by the media. Lee points out that smartphone users in the informational sense are more akin to “swarms of bees” that quickly gather around certain topics and leave them even faster, moving to another subject in an environment saturated with media. In the swarms that characterize modern communication technology, passive members predominate, processing data without emotions (Lee, 2015).

Radojković examines the progress of communication through satellite and Internet networks that will enable the development of a “videophone.” With this communication system, as Radojković predicted, people will be able to order various goods, “visit” relatives, conduct business meetings, all from the comfort of their own homes. Thanks to this type of communication, he wrote, students will not have to go to school. “On a two-way TV monitor, one can ‘attend’ school by following classes from a classroom without students.” He also questioned the need to go to work. “If physical tasks are transferred to robotic machines, the only function left for humans is control over the production process. The control panel can be moved to their office” (Radojković, 1997: 23). We were able to experience all these forms of communication during 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has become the “new normal.” Lee and his colleagues researched changes in social contacts in the United States during the pandemic. The main conclusion is that “face-

to-face” contact is a unique form of social contact that has stronger protective effects on individual mental health, and all other forms of social contact (e.g., videophone, etc.) cannot compensate for social distancing (Lee, et al., 2022). Monica Anderson and Emily Vogels from the Pew Research Center conducted a study with a sample of over 2,000 adult U.S. citizens, which showed that the majority of them (64%) emphasized that any electronic form of communication cannot replace “face-to-face” communication (Anderson, Vogels, 2020)⁶.

Radojković had a visionary insight into the use of today’s smartwatches as early as 1981. “If you happen to decide to travel or move away from home, it is enough to equip yourself with an indicator like a wristwatch. Its signals will show your family that you are well and healthy and how far you have moved away. [...] Man is a being that will ‘see’ and ‘know’ everything without moving from his own center of the world” (Radojković, 1997: 17-18). Today, we witness the phenomenon that a mandatory part of school equipment for children is a smartwatch⁷, through which parents can track their child’s whereabouts at any moment using an application on their mobile phones. Have schools become such unsafe places that parents no longer trust leaving their child there? What happened to the trust between parents and children? These are just some of the questions that need to be answered before accepting it as a normal occurrence for children to wear a movement indicator around their wrists. Adults have also transitioned from classic analogue and digital watches to smartwatches that have numerous features such as measuring blood pressure, stress levels, sleep quality, the number of steps taken, etc. At first glance, all of this seems useful; however, looking at the other side of the coin, this raises questions about sharing private data, such as the user’s health condition. Then there is the question of the reliability of these devices in terms of measuring vital parameters such as pulse and blood pressure, potentially causing anxiety or panic attacks in users due to potentially inaccurate measurements. We must agree that these are not medical devices. Research conducted by Liu and his colleagues showed that various sensors on smartwatches can jeopardize our private data, such as PIN codes, and any text typed on the watch’s keyboard (Liu, et al., 2015: 1285). It is a common practice that in the era of the “communication flood” (Radojković, 1997), we approach technological innovations with enthusiasm, without critically observing the issues that concern the negative impact on society and individuals. This approach is precisely what drags the modern human “to the bottom” and leaves him “without oxygen.”

In the early eighties, Radojković also highlighted the potential threat to religion with the development of communication technologies, raising the question of whether religion, a public sphere fundamentally based on belief, is endangered in

⁶ The complete research is available at the following link: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/03/31/americans-turn-to-technology-during-covid-19-outbreak-say-an-outrage-would-be-a-problem/> (Accessed on 13/7/2023)

⁷ An example of an offer from mobile operators in the Republic of Serbia: <https://www.yettel.rs/sr/privatni/usluge/digitalni-servisi/pametni-sat/> (Accessed on 26/7/2023)

the conditions of a possible communication flood (Radojković, 2017). The author emphasized the importance of interpersonal contact for religion. “Without direct contact, people have no confirmation of religiosity through temptation, and there is no religious confirmation through visions. The church based its influence, besides fear, secrets, and hope, in part on rituals, on group behavior, and on collective sentiments in the temple, i.e., in the gathering place of the faithful, clearly separated from the space of others. Already entering most sanctuaries creates a feeling of humility” (Radojković, 1997: 21). The influence of communication technology directed “pastors” towards believers, instead of the practice of people going together towards God. Referring to the example of radio-churches, Radojković wrote that in our “urgency to support the spiritual life of modern man in a way he is not accustomed to, we have forgotten one essential thing – total presence. If theologians are concerned about the fate of religion in the conditions of losing ‘complete presence’ already today, the possible total absence of presence tomorrow must raise suspicion about the fate not only of religion but also of culture” (Radojković, 1997: 22). The era of the Internet and social media has further complicated the relationship between believers and the church/religion. McClure notes that the use of the Internet has influenced an increase in the disconnection of believers, reducing the likelihood of maintaining a close connection to their religious tradition. Additionally, this author points out that although the Internet can be used to create or receive religious messages, it can simultaneously, due to the large amount of unchecked information, undermine the truthfulness of the religious message (McClure, 2017). Suitinen and Cooper write that the Covid-19 pandemic forced the church to behave entrepreneurially, that is, to adopt a “start-up mentality.” “Examined churches in the United Kingdom, Finland, and Namibia offered weekly services in an online format, and many expanded the offerings of their church communities using online technologies for small group meetings, children and youth activities, prayer meetings, and quizzes” (Suitinen, Cooper, 2021, cited in Bingaman, 2023: 12). Not only can we no longer speak of “total presence” in 2023, but today we must direct our attention to “total absence” and religion “at a distance,” where religious sacred rituals in temples are definitely lost. On the entrepreneurial platform of today’s churches, participants offer prayers and confessions in the privacy of their homes in front of a monitor or mobile phone screen. Suitinen and Cooper, in the conclusion of their research, state that the key challenge for contemporary religious organizations is the ability to design technology that will replace the experience of remote participants with the experience of teleparticipants, a kind of virtual reality in which a believer can feel everything at home that believers in the temple feel (Suitinen, Cooper, 2021, cited in Bingaman, 2023: 12).

At the end of this subsection, we will reflect on Radojković’s assumption about morality in the new communication environment. According to this author, the foundation of morality lies in “doing, an act done towards others and oneself.” If new communication technology, the author wonders, “physically isolates and immobilizes the individual in their habitat, the ultimate consequence is the question: Is morality possible? Will there remain the possibility of individuals touching each other without an intermediary, so that it can be evaluated as an act in accordance

or against moral norms, necessary to create new norms? [...] New communication technology offers ‘connections’ between individuals in channels without witnesses, indirectly, and therefore without ‘others’ with whom morality is spontaneously created” (Radojković, 1997: 21). More than 40 years later, we can note that morality is created with an intermediary (social media), without direct contact between individuals. Influential individuals (influencers) are now leaders in creating (im) morality. Millions of followers, among whom children and teenagers are the most numerous, devoid of the help of parents and the educational system in interpreting the moral and immoral, adopt (im)moral behavior patterns from those whose only reference is the number of followers and the number of views. According to this model, we may not be able to speak of the end of morality, but we can certainly talk about the greatest crisis. If humans as cultural creators do not find an adequate model to navigate this crisis, a certain end of morality will mean drowning in the waves of the communication flood.

Conclusion – a drowning person without a lifebelt

At the end of the essay “The Communication Flood and the ‘Old Testament Ark’ of Culture,” Miroslav Radojković offered two potential paths to avoid, at that moment, pessimistic forecasts about the impact of communication technologies on humans, society, and culture.

The first path involves the search for “another human (Zen) beyond the circle of the already created and malignant industrial civilization. It leads to the Far East, to the origins of the past that still exist here and there on the planet” (Radojković, 1997: 24). However, the author foresaw what we witnessed today. “Going there, one does not get further than the new paradox. Because many are leaving those oases and laboriously breaking through to the West, right where we must return” (Ibidem). Indeed, oases of Eastern cultures like China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, India are now at the forefront of technological development on a global level. What is even more dangerous for humanity, these countries are now competing with the West in innovative technologies, which implies an even smaller likelihood that in the future we will “find” a person who will rely on another person without the intermediary of communication technologies.

The second path was traced toward the man of tomorrow. According to Radojković, this orientation required a “radical change in the individual conditions of existence that need to be saved from the grinding of technology. Such determination requires an immediate, willingly individual engagement and the power of social decisions. It demands that we turn away from resignation, not towards action. As a first step, it is necessary to carefully assess the direction in which the development of communication technology is truly heading. Second, it is essential to consider whom among the attractive servants we need to take on this journey” (Radojković, 1997: 25).

The contemporary man, whose salvation from the “grinding of technology” Radojković warned about 42 years ago, has not only failed to embark on the

correct path but has willingly subjected himself to the passion for technological advancements. Here, we find the answer to the fundamental research question posed at the beginning of this paper. For centuries, people have observed the development of technology with enthusiasm, and indeed, technology has been subject to human control for many centuries, facilitating daily life, work, communication, and information-sharing. However, with the advent of the “network of all networks” and the subsequent widespread digitization, the worldview of humans has undergone a complete transformation. Continuous technological innovations have occupied the mind of the modern human, offering faster communication, quicker access to information, speedier nourishment, faster work, but, in reality, they have only “sped up” human time. The term “speed-up” is in quotes because there has not truly been an acceleration of the passage of time; rather, technological and digital innovations, each on its own, have stolen a portion of daily time. As a result, people have lost time for some traditional norms such as face-to-face conversations, spending time in nature, and caring for it. Engrossed in digital technologies, people have lost precious personal and social time.

Such an irreparable loss of human time actually means that we are already “submerged” by the communication flood. The idea, or rather the warning, by Miroslav Radojković about Noah’s Ark and the “Old Testament Ark of Culture,” which would contain the foundations of human culture unburdened by digital communication technologies, can be seen as a long-overlooked opportunity for survival. The final “loss of oxygen” for humans as cultural creators will occur when they submit to artificial intelligence. It is already here, presenting itself as being in the service of humans. Let us remember that all previous technologies applied the same scenario, creating the illusion of a safe game in the waves, and today, people are drowning without a life jacket.

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U talasima komunikacionog potopa bez „starozavetnog kovčega“ kulture

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Apstrakt

U zbirci eseja „Podela mišljenja“ iz 1997. godine profesora Fakulteta političkih nauka iz Beograda Miroljuba Radojkovića, nalazi se i tekst iz 1981. godine pod nazivom Komunikacioni potop i „starozavetni kovčeg“ kulture. Autor u eseju kritički piše o promenama koje izazivaju nove komunikacione tehnologije tog vremena, te na koji način utiču na društvo i pojedinca. Gledano iz današnje perspektive, 43 godine kasnije, posebno je upečatljiva skica razvoja komunikacionih tehnologija u budućnosti. Tehnološke ideje i predviđanja o kojima je pisao autor, kao što su rad od kuće, učenje na daljinu i pametni sat, početkom 80-ih godina 20. veka delovale su kao naučna fantastika. Međutim najznačajniji segment pomenutog rada je „pogled u budućnost“ u kojoj su komunikacione tehnologije važna determinanta kulture i društvenih odnosa. Kakav je usud morala u tom novom okruženju, kakva će biti umetnost ili pozicija religije, pitanja su na koja Radojković „snagom sociološke imaginacije“ pruža delom i optimistične, ali pre svega pesimistične odgovore. Osnovni cilj autora ovog rada je da kroz prizmu komunikacionih tehnologija sadašnjice i njihovog uticaja na društvo analizira futurističke teze koje su nastale pre više od 40 godina. Osnovno istraživačko pitanje proizilazi iz teze Miroljuba Radojkovića o komunikacionom potopu („poplave opštila“) koji će ugroziti osnovne vrednosti kulture zasnovane na interakciji između ljudi, interakciji čoveka sa prirodom i simboličkom sredinom, te glasi – zbog čega je čovek, i pored upozorenja, komunikacioni potop dočekao bez „starozavetnog kovčega“ kulture?.

Ključne reči: komunikacione tehnologije, čovek, društvo, kultura, Miroljub Radojković

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The Usage of Artificial Intelligence in Media: Benefits, Disadvantages, and Ethical Concerns

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the benefits and drawbacks of applying artificial intelligence in media. The research focuses on the evolution of artificial intelligence and the moral quandaries that it raises. To begin, a historical overview of artificial intelligence is offered. Then its use in the media is described. Following that, the benefits and drawbacks of artificial intelligence are discussed. Finally, the potential for future advancement and ethical consequences are examined. Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool with diverse applications, but it currently has severe disadvantages, particularly on an ethical level.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, AI, media, ethics

Introduction

In the modern world, it is impossible to picture life without a constant stream of news, and the amount of information that the typical person receives every day is measured in tens of gigabytes, which is equivalent to watching sixteen movies of average duration (Heim & Keil, 2017).

In today's digital age, the constant collection, analysis, and distribution of information underline the importance of intelligence in processing vast amounts of data. With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), machines are evolving into extensions of human capabilities, revolutionizing daily activities. This study explores AI's history, development, and application in the media, particularly the entertainment sector. It delves into the benefits, drawbacks, and ethical considerations of AI deployment, examining its current impact and future implications for the media landscape.

In this study, a systematic approach was employed to investigate the benefits and drawbacks of AI in the media and entertainment industry. The methodology encompassed a comprehensive review of existing literature, followed by an analysis of the identified sources to evaluate the implications of AI integration in media

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contexts. The literature review was conducted through electronic databases such as ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, Academia Edu and Google Scholar, using keywords such as *artificial intelligence*, *media*, *entertainment industry*, and related terms. Studies published throughout this century and previous century were included, with a focus on peer-reviewed articles and conference papers.

To clarify the criteria used to define and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of AI in the context of media, we will assess factors such as performance metrics (content generation speed, recommendation accuracy), societal impact (job displacement, bias mitigation), and ethical considerations (privacy protection, transparency in algorithmic decision-making). By analyzing AI's impact through these lenses, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of its implications for the media industry.

The development of artificial intelligence

The origin of artificial intelligence, as well as the idea of intelligent machines, can be traced back to ancient Greek mythology.

Adrienne Mayor explores ancient myths of Greek, Roman, Indian, and Chinese cultures in her book *'Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology'* (Mayor, 2018) which envisioned a life imbued with artificial intelligence – automatons³ and self-moving contraptions, referencing animated machines invented in antiquity:

“The first robot to walk the earth was a bronze giant named Talos. This marvelous mechanism was not created in a robotics laboratory at MIT⁴, but by Hephaestus, the Greek god of invention. Over 2,500 years ago, long before medieval automatons, and centuries before technology enabled self-moving devices, Greek mythology explored ideas about creating artificial life and grappled with still unresolved ethical questions about biotechnology – the so-called life through craft (Lamb, 2019).”

Greek narratives, beginning with Homer, included stories about robotic⁵ assistance, animated monuments, and primitive kinds of AI. Indian traditions even featured robotic warriors defending Buddha's relics, modeled after Greco-Roman automaton designs. These legendary automatons appeared in myths about Jason and the Argonauts, Medea, Daedalus, Prometheus, and Pandora, and were frequently built with processes similar to those used by craftsmen to make tools and statues. Interestingly, very sophisticated animated devices were created in antiquity, peaking in Alexandria, an old center of learning and innovation (Lamb, 2019).

Mayor's study explores humanity's early fascination with artificial life, revealing how ancient mythology foreshadowed modern robotics and AI

³ Automaton - a machine that operates by itself without the need for human control or a person who behaves like a machine, without thought or feeling. (Assessment, 2024)

⁴ MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

⁵ The term "robot" was first coined by Karel Čapek, a Czech writer and playwright, in his play "R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)" in 1921.

advancements. Historical documents and journalism from the last century document intelligent artifacts, such as the Fisk reading machine, exhibiting human-like traits. Science fiction in the early twentieth century introduced the concept of artificially intelligent robots, exemplified by characters like the Tin Man in 'The Wizard of Oz', leading to John McCarthy, who coined the term 'artificial intelligence' in 1955, defining it as the ability of machines to mimic human intelligence (McCarthy, 1955). Following World War II, technological advancements enabled the development of computers capable of executing complex tasks, with logic playing a crucial role in their progress. British scientist and mathematician Alan Turing's⁶ pioneering research in logic laid the foundation for programmable digital computers that had better data processing power, faster operation and more memory, which contributed significantly to the study of AI (Turing, 1950).

Turing's insight proposed that machines, using symbols like 0 and 1, could replicate any mathematical operation. This, alongside advancements in fields like neurology, information theory, and cybernetics, sparked interest in developing electronic brains. However, pre-1949 computers lacked a critical aspect of intelligence: memory. They could execute commands but couldn't retain them. Initially accessible only to universities and corporations, computing required feasibility demonstrations and financial support. From 1957 to 1974, AI expanded as computer capabilities and machine learning improved. Despite optimism, major goals remained elusive, leading to funding declines and research setbacks.

The 1980s witnessed a resurgence of AI, driven by algorithmic advancements and increased funding. Despite limited government support, expert systems found widespread application across various industries. By the 1990s and 2000s, significant milestones were achieved. In 1997, IBM's Deep Blue defeated reigning world chess champion Garry Kasparov, marking the first victory by a machine over a human in the game. This breakthrough in decision-making systems surpassed limitations in computer storage, paving the way for further advancements.

Artificial Intelligence in the Media and Entertainment Industry

Artificial intelligence revolutionizes the media sector, enhancing content creation, delivery, and user engagement. By analyzing data, identifying patterns, and automating processes, AI elevates media experiences. Its impact spans entertainment and media industries, where organizations leverage AI to enhance operations, engage users, and tailor content. This surge of AI usage in media is enabled by three primary factors.

Firstly, there has been a notable increase in processing capacity, illustrated by the consistent doubling of transistors on a chip every two years (Sheikh, Prins, & Schrijvers, 2023), enhancing computational power while reducing costs. Graphics

⁶ Alan Turing, an English mathematician, logician, and cryptographer, proposed the Church-Turing thesis, asserting that any practical computational model is either equivalent to a Turing machine or a subset of its capabilities. Turing's eponymous test provocatively questioned whether machines could exhibit consciousness and thought, stirring ongoing debates in artificial intelligence.

processing units (GPUs)⁷, initially designed for gaming graphics, now play a crucial role in parallel computations within AI systems. Today, companies like Netflix and Meta AI (including Facebook and Instagram) utilize GPUs to process data, delivering reliable recommendations to their vast user base exceeding 50 million members (Steck, et al., 2021). The landmark 2012 publication ImageNet Classification with Deep Convolutional Neural Networks demonstrated exceptional image classification results, emphasizing the potential of deep learning with GPUs for parallel processing (Krizhevsky, Sutskever, & Hinton, 2012).

Secondly, the rise of AI is fueled by the proliferation of data volumes, closely tied to Internet expansion. The abundance of digital information generated in recent decades significantly augments the database accessible for AI research. Online activity traces, termed digital breadcrumbs, serve as valuable training resources for AI algorithms, with social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram contributing labeled data points for facial recognition software through user-tagged personal names in images (Sheikh, Prins, & Schrijvers, 2023). Notably, AI-driven algorithms sift through vast data to generate personalized content, exemplified by Netflix's use of machine learning for tailored recommendations (Steck, et al., 2021).

Thirdly, digital neural networks, first proposed in the 1950s, have undergone hierarchical organization enhancements, paving the way for more efficient management. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into daily life through cloud-based services, concerns arise regarding the dominance of major commercial platforms. Cloud computing's exponential growth fosters enhanced AI capabilities through user interaction feedback, potentially shaping the future trajectory of artificial intelligence (Kelly, 2014). AI systems can operate entirely in software or be embedded in hardware, spanning virtual assistants, photo editing software, search engines, advanced robotics, autonomous vehicles, and drones.

Artificial intelligence is separated into various subfields, which include:

1. Machine Learning – a branch of AI that deals with the development of algorithms and techniques enabling computers to learn from data and experiences, identify patterns, and make autonomous decisions (Soori, Arezoo, & Dastres, 2023).
2. Deep Learning – a subset of machine learning that uses deep neural networks with multiple layers to achieve high performance in pattern recognition and processing complex data such as images, sound, and text (Soori, Arezoo, & Dastres, 2023).

Cognitive Computing – techniques that enable computers to draw conclusions and solve problems using logical approaches and rules (Kulkarni & Jaiswal, 2023).

Natural Language Processing (NLP) – an area that deals with understanding, interpreting, and generating human language by computers, allowing them to interact with users in a natural way (Kulkarni & Jaiswal, 2023).

⁷ A GPU, Graphics Processing Unit, or graphical chip, is a processor specialized in rendering both basic and advanced computer graphics. The graphical chip is typically found on graphics cards or motherboards.

Computer Vision – a branch that deals with the development of systems capable of recognizing, analyzing, and interpreting visual information, such as images and video recordings (Kulkarni & Jaiswal, 2023).

Various approaches to AI enable the development of computer systems proficient in diverse tasks, facilitating applications across many fields. The ability to communicate with AI via text or audio, similar to communicating with humans, highlights its remarkable capabilities. ChatGPT 3.5 exemplifies this, utilizing machine learning or deep learning based on user preferences, though it may require human intervention for handling novel situations (Ray, 2023).

The advantages of artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence technologies enable rapid decision-making and action execution, surpassing human capabilities in speed and efficiency. These benefits include precise personalization, enhanced production efficiency, audience analysis, targeted marketing, informed decision-making, and substantial cost savings (Sharma, 2024).

AI, akin to the labor force, serves as a cost-effective resource, enhancing efficiency and profitability by expediting tasks across various industries. Unlike human labor, AI operates flawlessly without breaks or fatigue, enabling prolonged work periods and maximizing production. By applying pre-determined algorithms based on acquired data, organizations can reduce human errors associated with manual processes, thereby enhancing decision-making accuracy and precision. Additionally, AI automates routine operations like email correspondence and document verification, freeing human resources for more creative endeavors (Bhosale, Pujari, & Multani, 2020).

Humans have qualities like curiosity, inventiveness (Pólya, 1945), perseverance (Duckworth, 2016), analytical and critical thinking (Dweck, 2006), communication skills, and the capacity to work in groups (Covey, 1989). Consequently, AI cannot replicate human skills due to its absence of creativity, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. Unlike human cognition, which integrates thoughts, emotions, and mental representations, digital computers process symbols devoid of inherent meaning, relying on external semantic attributions (Broussard, 2018).

On the other hand, AI algorithms can detect performance issues early in development, aiding in timely adjustments, saving time and resources. Utilizing AI for performance testing offers a competitive advantage, delivering high-quality applications for enhanced user experiences, leading to increased satisfaction and revenue (Pulle, 2023).

In the entertainment industry, AI enhances user experiences. Chatbots streamline customer support, while voice recognition technology enables hands-free navigation. AI personal assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant seamlessly integrate into entertainment platforms, allowing voice-controlled navigation (McLean, Osei-Frimpong, & Barhorst, 2021).

AI tools for music composition enhance creative sound production efficiency. AI also automates tasks like video editing, proofreading, and ad copy creation,

driving cost savings and productivity (Zhang, 2023). In marketing and audience engagement, AI enables precise ad targeting and social media analysis, refining strategies by identifying trends and measuring online influence. AI's disruptive influence on media and entertainment fosters creativity, personalization, and efficiency, optimizing marketing for improved outcomes (Sivaraman, 2023).

Personalization is a key aspect of AI's multifaceted impact on media and entertainment. It is enhanced by tailoring content suggestions and gaming experiences by adjusting difficulty levels dynamically to match players' skills and preferences (Bhuiyan, 2024). Moreover, AI-driven automation tools improve efficiency, particularly in animation and character modeling for films and video games, enhancing realism in 3D models for films and video games (Ghulam, Francillette, Gouaich, Michel, & Hocine, 2013).

AI-powered recommendation systems tailor music and content suggestions to individual preferences, boosting user satisfaction. AI algorithms analyze user data to offer personalized recommendations for movies, TV shows, and music, fostering interaction with entertainment content and online shopping based on past patterns and searches. By examining audience behavior and feedback, AI provides valuable insights for content refinement and enhanced engagement, improving the overall user experience (Sivaraman, 2023).

AI improves business decision-making by analyzing large data sets to predict customer behavior through predictive analytics, aiding in product development and marketing strategies (Ma, 2024). Additionally, sentiment analysis powered by AI offers valuable insights into brand perception, enabling businesses to refine branding and marketing approaches for improved outcomes. Moreover, AI automation reduces costs in the media and entertainment sectors by eliminating manual tasks, reducing human intervention, and subsequently lowering energy consumption and utility expenses.

Other than the entertainment industry, AI holds promise for reducing social inequalities as well. AI-driven healthcare diagnostics enhance access to quality medical services, especially in underserved regions. Personalized educational platforms tackle learning disparities by catering to individual student needs. Moreover, AI tools offer marginalized communities access to vital services and empower policymakers with data-driven insights for targeted interventions, fostering a more equitable society. Through examining AI's impact across various industries, including media, we aim to grasp its influence on digital experiences and anticipate future developments in this dynamic field.

The shortcomings of artificial intelligence and ethical issues

AI holds immense potential in transforming various aspects of society, yet its rapid development raises critical questions concerning safety and ethics (Martinović, 2021). In the media sector, AI's ability to derive valuable narratives from vast datasets revolutionizes industries, but ethical concerns persist regarding misinformation and employment impact (Walia & Jain, 2024). The concerns extend to AI's potential

negative impact on media employment, with fears of job losses across the industry. Robert Thomson, News Corporation's CEO, emphasizes the irreplaceable expertise human journalists bring to their work, expressing concerns about diminishing reporting quality with increased AI integration (Kanana, 2023).

AI-generated content, while transformative, often lacks empathy and contextual understanding, leading to biases and inaccuracies (Biswas, 2023). Maintaining quality and impartiality standards is crucial for AI-generated content to uphold societal responsibilities.

The EU Ethical Guidelines for Trustworthy AI emphasize that AI systems should be lawful, ethical, and robust, meaning they must comply with laws and regulations, adhere to ethical principles, and avoid causing unintentional harm (Díaz-Rodríguez, et al., 2023).

Sustainability and environmental friendliness are also imperative considerations in AI implementation to mitigate its ecological impact. In the evolving field of AI ethics, challenges persist in establishing universally adopted guidelines and integrating diverse ethical principles (Bostrom & Yudkowsky, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014). Virtue ethics posits that the moral goodness of an action relies on the manifestation of virtuous qualities aligned with moral values. Yet, assessing the moral character of AI systems or agents proves challenging, as it requires elucidating their underlying motives, often obscure and elusive (Huang, Zhang, Mao, & Yao, 2022). This ambiguity presents a significant hurdle in implementing virtue ethics in AI design, as determining the specific virtuous traits an AI system should embody and how to effectively characterize and measure these traits remains daunting.

Existing AI systems are typically devoid of a moral component (Bostrom & Yudkowsky, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014). We can modify, replicate, deactivate, delete, or utilize these systems without considering moral implications. Moral limitations in our interactions with AI stem from obligations to other entities, such as humans, rather than inherent duties to the systems themselves.

Deontologists argue that the morality of actions is determined by adherence to moral rules and duties. However, implementing a rule-based ethical framework faces challenges. Firstly, selecting which ethical rules to incorporate into design is daunting. Conflicts may also arise between rules, necessitating prioritization or weighting of ethical principles, a task often difficult to accomplish (Huang, Zhang, Mao, & Yao, 2022).

Subsequently, consequentialist ethics evaluates the morality of actions based solely on their outcomes, presenting two primary challenges during implementation (Huang, Zhang, Mao, & Yao, 2022). Firstly, determining the consequences of actions is problematic, especially in current AI systems where the outcomes are often unclear due to the lack of transparency or interpretability, particularly in artificial neural networks. Secondly, quantifying these consequences poses a challenge as consequentialism aims to maximize utility, necessitating the definition and calculation of utility, which varies across cultures, religions, and organizations.

The moral status of AI systems and respecting their rights present novel ethical concerns, necessitating coordination among diverse ethical standards. While AI

ethics research focuses on specific aspects like explainability and fairness, integrating multiple ethical principles remains challenging, with subjective elements hindering both research and practical applications.

Superintelligence

The ethical challenges of artificial intelligence are significant, especially when contemplating superintelligence. A. J. Good introduced the concept, suggesting that AI, capable of comprehending its design, could enhance itself or create a more intelligent successor (Good, 1965). This recursive process could lead to a continuous cycle of improvement, known as an intelligence explosion.

Recursive scenarios extend beyond AI; individuals with enhanced intellect via brain-computer interfaces may develop more sophisticated interfaces. Achieving superintelligence may require increased processing speed. Neurons transmit impulses at speeds up to 1,000 times per second, and the fastest axonal fibers at 150 meters per second, much slower than light speed, suggesting the potential to build brains capable of computing millions of times faster without altering size or software (Bostrom & Yudkowsky, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014). If human minds were accelerated accordingly, they could complete a subjective year of thought in just 31 physical seconds and a millennium in eight and a half hours. This accelerated cognition, termed weak superintelligence by Vinge, mirrors human cognition but at an accelerated pace (Vinge, 1993).

Yudkowsky (Yudkowsky, 2008) identifies three types of metaphors used to describe the capabilities of AI smarter than humans:

1. AI entities can patent new innovations, publish groundbreaking research articles, participate in stock market transactions, or exert political influence, all of which are metaphors for differences in individual intellect among humans.
2. Metaphors based on knowledge gaps between previous and present human civilizations - powerful AI can develop powers akin to those predicted by futurists for human societies in the distant future, such as molecular nanotechnology or interstellar travel.
3. Metaphors generated from differences in brain architecture between humans and other biological animals.

Limiting our examination to historical parallels reveals that the advent of superhuman intellect raises unparalleled ethical dilemmas. Beyond individual concerns like unjust mortgage rejections or abuse by automated agents, the ramifications extend to global or cosmic implications, including humanity's extinction and replacement by entities deemed unworthy. However, if superintelligence is steered toward constructive purposes, it holds the potential to tackle myriad current problems that have stymied human-level intellects.

Superintelligence represents one of several existential risks outlined by Bostrom: “[...] hazards where an adverse outcome would either annihilate Earth-originating intelligent life or permanently and drastically curtail its potential future”

(Bostrom, *Existential Risks: Analyzing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards*, 2002).

In contrast, a positive consequence from superintelligence may protect intelligent life on Earth and help it reach its full potential. It is critical to note that, while more evolved intellects have great potential benefits, they also pose significant threats.

The future of artificial intelligence?

In the age of digital media, a quandary arises regarding the pursuit of ethically aligned AI amidst constraints faced by researchers. ChatGPT, for instance, lacks full autonomy presently and is unlikely to achieve complete independence based on current evidence. As AI capabilities expand, future advancements may grant it partial autonomy, enabling increased independence in specific tasks or domains (Biswas, 2023).

Achieving complete autonomy for AI demands comprehensive consideration, encompassing infrastructure, security, ethics, and responsibility (Bostrom & Yudkowsky, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2014). As linguistic capabilities advance rapidly, communication with AI systems becomes increasingly common, revolutionizing interactions with companies. Meanwhile, the integration of autonomous vehicles into daily life poses ethical challenges but promises advancements in universal intelligence (Anyoha, 2017).

In parallel, the entertainment industry is leveraging virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) technologies to enrich viewer experiences across various mediums. As these technologies evolve, their integration into gaming, live events, film, and television is anticipated to expand, offering immersive experiences (Li & Li, 2022).

Moreover, personalization is a prevailing trend in the entertainment sector, driven by AI and machine learning algorithms (Sharma, 2024). Streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime exemplify this trend through tailored content recommendations based on user preferences (Steck, et al., 2021). Such advancements aim to enhance customer satisfaction and revenue generation.

Additionally, AI-powered avatars and content moderation solutions are expected to proliferate in digital media, offering realistic and safe online experiences (Takyar, n.d.). In live broadcasting, AI automation is set to enhance the quality and accessibility of content, including real-time captioning and dynamic overlays (Ashfaq, Nabi, & Rohit, 2022). Similarly, AI-driven media archives management ensures efficient retrieval and preservation of historical content.

As AI continues to reshape the media landscape, it is crucial to recognize its profound influence on societal beliefs and conventions. This necessitates upholding moral standards while fostering diverse cultural exchanges (Takyar, n.d.). Furthermore, the emergence of synthetic media powered by AI challenges conventional notions of reality and truth, emphasizing the importance of data annotations for accuracy and reliability (Kniazieva, 2022).

While AI holds immense potential across various fields, including aviation, medicine, and law, its specialization limits its versatility in business settings (Kelly, 2014). Nonetheless, AI's unique thinking style offers fresh perspectives, prompting continuous reevaluation of human cognition and intelligence. As we navigate the evolving landscape of AI, the study of artificial wisdom emerges as a critical avenue for further exploration.

As we redefine AI, we also redefine humanity itself. This is in line with the prediction that, in the coming century—and maybe even this decade—we will constantly be reevaluating the essence of what it means to be human (Kelly, 2014).

Conclusion

Since ancient times, humans have been fascinated by autonomous machines capable of independent thought. AI, stemming from electronics and technology advancements, allows vast data collection for personalized experiences in online shopping and multimedia content. It streamlines tasks, reducing human intervention, expenses, and energy usage. While AI enhances user interaction and content, surpassing humans in some aspects, it lacks imaginative thinking and moral reasoning. Without human involvement, service quality risks decline. Concerns persist over AI security and rogue behavior, emphasizing the importance of addressing ethical dilemmas with AI's assistance.

Artificial intelligence continues to expand rapidly but still lacks the autonomy to exist independently. While it cannot replace humans entirely, circumstances may change. The future of AI promises economic growth, productivity gains, and insights into human nature as it becomes more integrated into daily life. AI serves to improve our capabilities and illuminate our identity by reflecting on natural intellect. With its vast array of potential applications, AI is a very potent instrument that can have both beneficial and harmful effects. AI's future evolution is still unknown, though, as it is unclear how these possibilities will advance and what effects they will have on society and the wider globe. To maximize AI's benefits and minimize its risks, it is imperative to properly navigate this process.

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Upotreba veštačke inteligencije u medijima: prednosti, mane i etički izazovi

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Apstrakt

Cilj rada je analiza prednosti i mana upotrebe veštačke inteligencije u medijima. Predmet istraživanja je razvoj veštačke inteligencije i moralne dileme koje on nosi. Za početak je dat osvrt na istorijat veštačke inteligencije, a zatim i opisana njena primena u medijima. Potom se analiziraju prednosti i mane veštačke inteligencije. Na kraju se razmatraju mogućnosti njenog daljeg razvoja i etičke implikacije. Veštačka inteligencija je vrlo koristan alat sa širokim dijapazonom upotrebe, ali pored brojnih pogodnosti koje pruža, trenutno ima i velikih nedostataka, pogotovo na etičkom nivou.

Ključne reči: veštačka inteligencija, AI, mediji, etika

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