



REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN PRINT MEDIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND MEDIA- LANGUAGE (EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH IN CROATIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)

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Abstract: Based on the theory of social constructionism, the paper brings into relation images of children in the society with the media as constructors of reality. On the basis of that relationship generalizations are made on which the leading idea of the paper, about children as a stigmatized and discriminated group in the media, is based. The aim of the research is to determine pedagogical implications of the way children are presented in two most widely read daily newspapers in the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina over a period of one year, to analyse the presence of stigmatization of children in print media and to identify the difference in the way children are presented in the two countries. Holistic, combined method of media content analysis and a comparative method are used. The research answered set research questions: does the presentation of children in daily newspapers contribute to the stigmatization of children in the society, are children in daily newspapers discriminated on the basis of their age and is there any difference in the stigmatization of children in daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The construct of the child which dominates in Croatian and Bosnian and Herzegovinian media is an antipode to the new pedagogical image of the child, which is why pedagogy has to raise awareness and question dominant personal theories of people who work with children through education and training, but also it has to affirm more strongly the construct of the competent child in media discourse.

Keywords: social constructionism, media, stigmatisation, discrimination, children in print media.

1. Introduction

Social constructionism is taken as the theoretical starting point of this paper and a framework for understanding relations between media and dominant social images of children. The paper begins with the introduction of the most significant theorists of social constructionism and the overview of the fundamental ideas of the theory. The theory is considered to be a suitable starting point that can contribute to the understanding of the role of the media which, as will be determined in the paper, elect, create and convey a certain construction of the world which is often not objective but it is relevant. It is particularly relevant for the formation of our notions about those social groups that have the least power and cannot influence the selection of information about them. Children, who are in the centre of this pedagogically oriented

paper, are considered to be one of those groups. This paper does not claim that media are the only factors that form the social image of children, or that people indiscriminately and irrevocably absorb media images and only and exclusively use them to formulate their worldview. Social constructionism views people as active participants who, when they construct their own idea of a matter, rely on those resources which are available to them. These resources include, on the one hand, conventional wisdom and experiential knowledge, and on the other media discourse (Gamson et al., 1992; Miller and Holstein, 1993; Schmidt 1997; Luhmann, 2000). It is necessary to keep in mind that people often accept media discourse only to the extent to which that discourse is consistent with the other two available resources (Sasson, 1995, Luhmann, 2000). So, along with the media, culture and

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experience are also important factors in forming awareness of a particular issue. The way we treat children as well as personal experiences with children play a significant role in our notion about them. These factors should also be taken into account in order to perceive the wider picture of the research problem. So, given the complexity of the construction of human attitudes and concepts, and the active creation of meaning with the help of available resources, this paper will focus on one segment of this construction - the media, which, with its omnipresence, attract the attention of most social sciences.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of social constructionism has its roots in the 18th century, but a detailed analysis of its development and work of the most important theorists goes beyond the scope of this paper. Only some of the most prominent scientists who contributed to the development of modern social constructionism, which had a significant impact on how social sciences understood the nature of social problems, will be mentioned here.

To start with the Italian philosopher and historian Giambattista Vico who in his work opposed Cartesian and rationalist concepts of mind and spiritual organization and constructed a philosophy based on language, rhetoric and law. He disputed the idea that there is a universal and constant human nature which was advocated by philosophers such as Hobbes and Spinoza. Vico, unlike them, believed that human beings were historical and that the human mind was constantly being reconstructed into new forms over time (Lock and Strong, 2010). After Vico in the 18th century, phenomenologists such as Husserl, who was Heidegger's mentor, appeared in the 20th century, and their work can also be associated with social constructionism. Husserl's ideas were complemented by Austrian theoretician Alfred Schutz who first developed a rounded concept of social constructionism. Schutz put an emphasis on the conscious experience of an individual and claimed that individuals have certain perspectives of the world that give meaning to their experiences (Schutz, 1962). His theory is in line with the ideas of George Herbert Mead, which Schutz himself acknowledges. Under the influence of Schutz, sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann published a book on social construction of reality in 1966 that dealt with the analysis of processes by which any "knowledge" becomes established as a "reality" and is generally considered that they were the ones who introduced the concept of social construction into the field of social sciences. In addition to

already mentioned Heidegger, social constructionism can find links with other hermeneutic scholars such as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas and Levinas. French philosopher Foucault based his theory on the view that knowledge was historically and culturally specific (Foucault, 1979), and emphasized the constructive power of language. His ideas were taken and used in the field of discourse analysis by numerous theoreticians in the UK (e. g. Parker), and his approach was adopted by Rose (1990) in order to show how concepts like "science" or "self" are socially constructed. In addition to Berger and Luckmann, the roots of social constructionism can be found in the work of other great sociologists such as Harold Garfinkel, Anthony Giddens and Ervin Goffman. For Goffman, social reality is far more than words in conversations, but we, playing our social roles, participate in frameworks of comprehension (Lock and Strong, 2010). Mary and Kenneth Gergen and Rom Harre and John Shotter are key contributors in the field of psychology. Mary and Kenneth Gergen dealt with the way people describe themselves by constructing descriptions as stories or narratives while Shotter devoted his attention to the dynamics and interpersonal construction processes. In the UK, Harre, relying on (socio-constructionist) ideas of Wittgenstein, was a prominent advocate of the idea that language conditions the ways in which we perceive ourselves and the world around us. When we talk about social constructionism in pedagogy, we must make a distinction between constructivism as the theory of knowledge and learning derived from developmental psychology, whose representatives are Dewey, Piaget, Bruner and Vygotski and social constructionism. Constructivism is the scientific understanding that the individual constructs himself through his/her individual experience. We are born with a specific biological program on the basis of which our brain continues to programme itself, with incentives in the physical environment. On the other hand, social constructionism places the emphasis on the socio-cultural environment in the construction process (Bašić, 2011). The theory of social constructionism entered pedagogy through "new" interdisciplinary childhood studies in the second half of the 20th century which imposed a new image of the child from which new childhood paradigms emerged, with significant implications for the upbringing.

Since search for truth is one of the foundations of social and human sciences, social constructionism suggests a radical change of perspective in this search. Work of Blumer (1970) and Spector and Kitsuse (1977), for example, provide a critique of conventional research of social problems, requiring



greater focus on the processes of creating these problems, responding to them, and processes by which these problems are maintained over a longer period of time. A social problem should not be perceived as an objective state but rather as a set of claims by individuals or groups who have asked for the problematisation of a certain condition. Since social constructionism highlights the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, this must also apply to the knowledge reached by social sciences. It follows that most social problems are temporally and culturally limited and should not be perceived as objectively problematic conditions (O'Grady, Parnaby and Schickschneit, 2010). Constructionism, therefore, calls into question the point of view that conventional knowledge is based on impartial observations and that we can easily differentiate a subject from an object, the perceived from the real (Ajduković, 2008).

It can be concluded that, if we look at the world from the socio-constructionist perspective, we have to be suspicious about our perceptions, bearing in mind that the categories based on which we understand the world do not necessarily imply objective knowledge and truth. In other words, the linear understanding of knowledge as an objective representation of the real world is abandoned, and knowledge is observed as one of the interpretations of reality that constantly evolves and is socially constructed by each of us in relations to others (Petrović-Sočo, 2011). In the light of this we can also observe the idea of childhood which, according to this interpretation, is not pre-defined or previously existing, but is created on the basis of our ideas, acquired through everyday interactions and life experiences, about what a child is, but also what it can or should be (Dahlberg et al., 2007).

3. MEDIA IMAGES OF CHILDREN

The media create different images of children whose identification can give us an insight into the mechanism of creating the public opinion about children. If we take into account the aforementioned thesis of Gamson et al. (1992) about the construction of meaning and understanding of the world, we can conclude that in the contemporary world the knowledge of adults about children is based on their direct experience-as a child and as a parent, conventional wisdoms which can be found in popular literature and concepts of child and childhood that are present in the media. The way that any nation conceptualizes childhood, observes or stereotypes young people in terms of their patterns of behaviour, treats children in terms of laws that protect them and policies in their favour, it all depends on the way children are perceived by

their fellow countrymen. Of course, all this is influenced by information that people have about children in general, and one of the main sources of this information is the media (Kunkel, Smith, 1999). On the other hand, almost every day, all adults, in their different roles in society, make certain decisions or act in a certain way and thus shape the physical and social environment in which children grow up. If one considers the subjectivity and disparity of their knowledge about children on the one hand, and the importance of decisions and actions based on that knowledge on the other, there is an incredible gap between the importance that is declaratively given to children in the public and the way adults are informed about children (Korać, Vranješević, 2001). It is important to deal with the images of children in the media as these images play a significant role in the construction of identity and provide an indication about the position of children in the hierarchy of power relations in society (Parker et. al., 2001).

When we talk about the media role in the construction of understanding the world, it is necessary to mention Gerbner's cultivation theory that assumes that those who spend a lot of time using the media begin to observe the world through the media prism, that is, to change their image of the world in accordance with the media models. More media usage, therefore, increases the chances of developing a worldview which corresponds to the images distributed by the media. Individuals "extrapolate" or "cultivate" the images they perceive through the media into the "real world", that is, they believe that certain events, social relationships and behaviours that appear in the media are similarly manifested in reality. Too many stereotypical images can thus lead to the integration of those images into the knowledge of media consumers. A particularly vulnerable category, according to this theory, is adolescents who, due to their lack of experience and the formation of their own identity, are particularly receptive to television models (Gerbner et al., 2002). In adolescence, media can take over the socialization role from parents who are the most important actors in the lives of their children during their early years. Adolescents require more independence, which reduces parents' influence and external influences gain importance (Gerbner et al., 2002).

Based on this theory, media images may have a direct and/or indirect impact on children. Indirect effect is created through the process of identification because the children identify with certain traits or characteristics that are attributed to their age group through media imagery. This can be positive if they are



attributed to positive characteristics, but contemporary media often reach for conflicting, uncommon and scandalous stories that often encourage the spread of stereotypes about children. Such stereotyped images, on the one hand, can affect their image of self and self-esteem, while on the other they can shape their behaviour. Adolescents use media as a guide on which they base their identity and construct current and future social roles. Hence, stereotyped media images can influence the way they dress and behave or choose a place to socialize with friends, but are also connected with lower self-esteem (Clark et al., 2008). But, at the same time, positive media images of a particular social group to which a person belongs are associated with higher self-esteem (Op de Beeck, 2014).

The way in which adults experience children and childhood is reflected in the overall upbringing and education. Earlier it was mentioned that every culture has numerous implicit rules and expectations about what a child can and how it should be treated. The official social image of the child is present in documents such as the national curriculum, and other legal acts which regulate education. However, there are also unofficial, "folk pedagogies" (Bruner, 2000) that continue to exist, and each educator has his/her own image or theory in accordance with which he/she acts and shapes his/her expectations for the child as well as his/her overall behaviour. While educators are educated about the abilities of children as well as about ways of treating them, the influence of "folk pedagogy", their personal experience, and of media images in shaping their "personal theory" (Mallaguzzi, 1994) shouldn't be ignored. Educators create educational settings as well as their relationships with children in accordance with their image of child. Any innovation in education must start from reviewing and raising awareness of dominant personal theories of teachers (Vujčić, 2011).

But along with experts who work with children, education is never independent of public opinion which, to a great extent, is formed under the influence of the media. As the main source of information for most people, the media have the ability not only to initiate public discussions but also to construct adult's opinions on certain topics. How we perceive children and how we create policies and laws that affect them largely depends on how the media present children's issues (Parker et. al., 2001). The public sets social priorities in relation to children, and also affects attitudes, decisions and procedures of adults towards them (Korać, Vranješević, 2001). However, more and more research shows that media often display such an image of children that can limit official child and youth support

programmes, reduce the readiness of the community to invest in better conditions for them and undermine initiatives that can contribute to the realization of children's rights (Parker et. al., 2001; Heintz-Knowles, 2001; Op de Beeck, 2014). The research of Guzman et al. (2003) revealed significant public misinformation on the basic demographic characteristics of children and their social and economic status. Their results indicate that the public views the circumstances of children worse than the official data show they are and are unaware of the positive trends and improvements in children's living conditions. More than half of the respondents state that their perception of children and adolescents is most significantly shaped by their personal experiences, but if demographic indicators are taken into account about fewer families with children and more single-parent households as well as the separation of children from the rest of the population (in educational institution) then this information must be taken with reservations. On the other hand, less than a third of the respondents stated that their perception of children and youth was shaped by the media, which is in line with the results of other research (Miliša, Tolić, Vertovšek, 2009, Labaš, 2011) according to which respondents recognize the influence of media on other people, but believe that the media do not affect their perception and construction of the world. The results of this research are also confirmed by other studies that have revealed negative perceptions of children, especially adolescents in the public as well as lack of information on positive indicators related to children (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1998, Bostrom, 2000, Heintz-Knowles, 2001, Bales, 2001). Because of this perception, the public can believe that nothing can be done to improve children's situation and therefore be less involved in children's issues (Guzman et al., 2003). Public perception of children affects politics and investment in children and so long as that perception is negative public policy will continue to be focused on negative behaviours and show less interest in programs focusing on upbringing for positive behaviours.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. 1. SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of this research is stigmatization of children in print media in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the theoretical analysis of previous research on the images of children in society in general and especially in the media, conclusions and generalizations are made that children are a stigmatized group in the media. Therefore, the way in which children are presented in the most widely read daily



newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is researched and linked to stigma as a social construct. In the first part of the research, the subject of research is the identification of labelling, stereotyping, separation, loss of status and discrimination of children through analysis of general features of the articles, sources of information in the articles and protection of children's privacy. The second part of the research focuses on the qualitative analysis of the articles through identifying the presence of Goffman's (1974) categories of stigma in the way children are presented which is linked to the dominant social images of children. So a physical stigma, which includes physical attributes that make it difficult for a person to function in a society, is related to the image of a "poor" or "innocent" child where children are stigmatized because of their youthfulness and physical inability. Stigma of character traits is in Goffman's work related to negative traits such as violence and laziness and in this research it is linked to two contrasting images that emphasize stereotypical traits in children - the image of a "noble child" or "child saviour" and the image of a "spoiled child" or "child out of control ". The third category of stigma in Goffman's work is a tribal stigma (stigma of group identity) associated with belonging to a particular social group or, in the case of children, age cohort, where the attributes of individual members of the group are attributed to all of its members. In addition to these three Goffman's categories, following the insight into the analyzed sample, the "active child" category was added. The results of the research will provide an overview of implications of the way children are represented in daily newspapers to the stigmatization of children in society and of the differences between the way children are presented in daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ignoring children's voice in matters concerning them and disrespecting their privacy are just some of the ways the printed media label, stereotype, separate and discriminate children.

4. 2. THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to determine the pedagogical implications of the presentation of children in the most widely read daily newspapers in the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to systematically analyze the presence of stigmatization of children in print media and to identify the difference in the way children are presented between the two countries. A holistic, combined method of media content analysis and a comparative method are used in the research.

The aim of the descriptive analysis was to describe the measured data set and characterize it numerically by specifying frequencies and percentages and displaying them in picture and table. Of the descriptive statistics procedures, coding or quantification of the nominal variables has been applied which, in most cases, were not quantified in advance and converting descriptive values into numbers and entering them into the data table.

4. 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Does the presentation of children in daily newspapers contribute to the stigmatization of children in the society?

Sub-question 1. 1: Are photographs of children mainly used as a "decoration" to the text where unidentified children are placed in a position and context that contributes to stereotypical characteristics of children?

Sub-question 1. 2: Can most articles be categorized into one of the three types of stigma (physical, stigma of character traits or tribal stigma)?

Sub-question 1. 3: Which category of stigma dominates in articles about children?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: Are children in daily newspapers discriminated on the basis of their age?

Sub-question 2. 1: What is the most frequent size of articles about children?

Sub-question 2. 2: How often are children cited as sources of information in articles about children?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: Is there any difference in the stigmatization of children in daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina?

4. 4. SAMPLE

The analyzed sample are two best-selling daily newspapers in the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during a period of one year (from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014), which, according to Neuendorf (2002), is sufficient to determine trends in media content. The printed edition of daily newspapers was chosen because of its durability, which is not a feature of passing images in electronic media. Also, in spite of the expansion of the electronic media in the last decade and the reduced circulation of printed editions, daily newspapers nevertheless retained readership and social influence. However, survival on the market demanded conforming to market trends, so according to data of Croatian Chamber of Commerce (2012), the most widely-read daily newspaper in Croatia was *24 hours* (which remained the same until 2016). The popularity of these fully commercialized, tabloid



newspapers is greatly affected by their low price and free-of-charge copies, which singles it out from the other daily newspapers. That is why, for the sample of daily newspapers from Croatia, the second and third most widely-read newspapers - *Večernji list* and *Jutarnji list* - have been selected, which, along with the presence of commercial content, have retained some features of analytical newspapers which makes them more appropriate for comparison with the most widely-read Bosnian and Herzegovinian daily newspapers *Dnevni avaz* and *Oslobođenje*. Both Croatian papers are similar in visual presentations; they belong to different owners and are characterized by different editorial policy (Vlainić, 2012). *Dnevni Avaz*, which was first published in 1995, is the most popular daily newspaper in Bosnia and Herzegovina while *Oslobođenje*, which has been published from the time of Yugoslavia, is the oldest informative-political daily newspaper in BH. For the past several years, these have

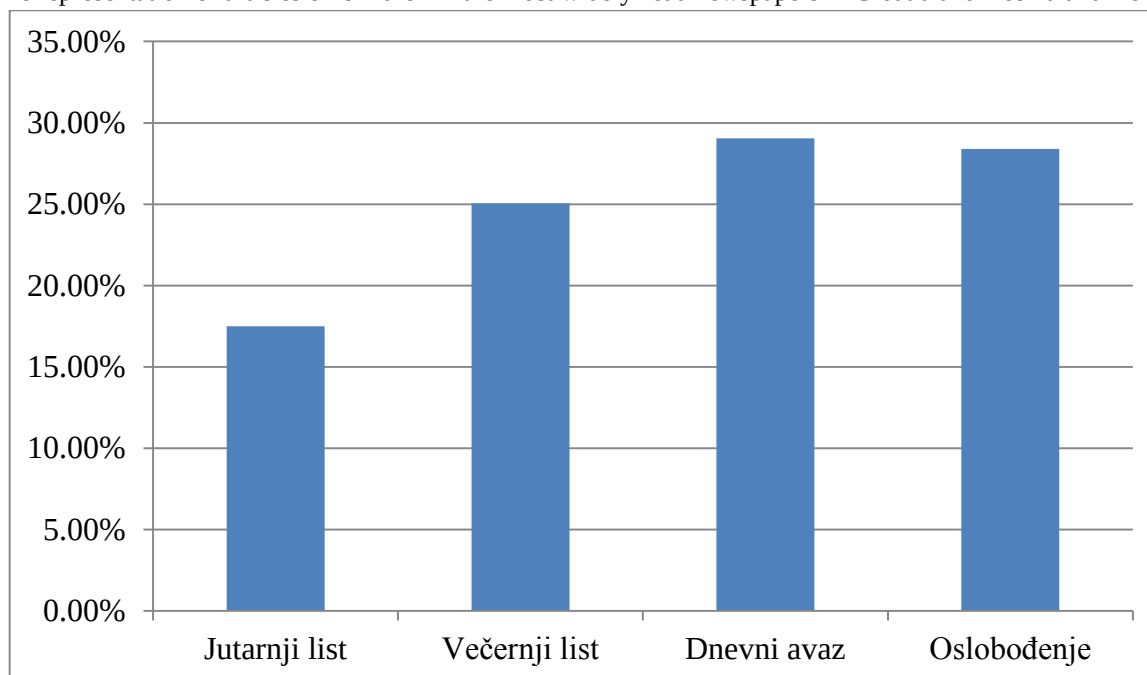
been two most popular daily newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (latest research TNS MIB, 2015). All four analysed daily papers can be classified as half tabloid newspapers. The comparison between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is interesting because of the common historical background, cultural, linguistic and territorial ties, as well as the different positions in which these two countries currently are. Namely, on July 1, 2013, Croatia became a member state of the European Union (which coincides with the beginning of this research) while Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to Eurostat's 2013 survey, was the poorest country in Europe. Both countries became States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the basis of notification of succession from the republic of Yugoslavia and thus committed themselves to respect children as rights holders.

5. REVIEW AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1 The representation of articles on children in the most widely-read newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Daily newspapers	Jutarnji list	Večernji list	Dnevni avaz	Oslobođenje	Total
f	459	656	761	744	N =2620
%	17,5	25,05	29,05	28,4	100

Graph 1 The representation of articles on children in the most widely-read newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



(Graph legend: ■ The representation of articles on children in the most widely-read newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina)



In the research period, in the four daily newspapers 2620 articles were found in which children were the main or one of the main topics, articles dedicated to a single child or to a group of children and those dealing with issues and topics related to children. Most of these articles were found in *Dnevni Avaz* (29.05%) and then in *Oslobođenje* (28.4%), suggesting that the Bosnian and Herzegovinian newspaper wrote about children and issues related to children slightly more (57.4%) than Croatian newspapers. The lowest number of articles on children during the researched period was published by *Jutarnji list* (17.5%).

Table 2 The representation of articles on children's rights in the most widely-read newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Daily newspapers	Jutarnji list	Večernji list	Dnevni avaz	Oslobođenje	Total
f	4	6	11	13	N=34
%	0,9	0,9	1,5	1,8	1,3

In the previous research (Goonasekera, 2001; Korać and Vranješević, 2001; Ebbeck and Warrier, 2008; Ciboci et al., 2011), children's rights have proven to be a topic rarely mentioned in the media, which is also confirmed by this research. The most widely read Croatian daily newspapers covered children's rights in less than 1% of articles about children during the researched year, while Bosnian and Herzegovinian newspapers showed a slightly better, but still very low representation of only 1.5% of articles in *Dnevni avaz* and 1.8% in *Oslobođenje*.

Table 3 The month of publication (from July 2013 to June 2014) of articles about children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Month	Jutarnji list		Večernji list		Dnevni avaz		Oslobođenje	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
January	45	9,8	62	9,5	71	9,3	69	9,3
February	35	7,6	44	6,7	58	7,6	56	7,5
March	37	8,1	53	8,1	56	7,4	59	7,9
April	47	10,2	45	6,9	72	9,5	57	7,7
May	17	3,7	60	9,1	65	8,5	55	7,4
June	13	2,8	45	6,9	53	6,9	51	6,8
July	38	8,3	38	5,8	46	6	31	4,2
August	23	5,1	45	6,9	43	5,7	49	6,6
September	55	12	65	9,9	82	10,8	89	11,9

October	52	11,3	60	9,1	69	9,1	66	8,9
November	44	9,6	58	8,8	59	7,8	67	9
December	53	11,5	81	12,3	87	11,4	95	12,8
Ukupno	N=459	100	N=656	100	N=761	100	N=744	100

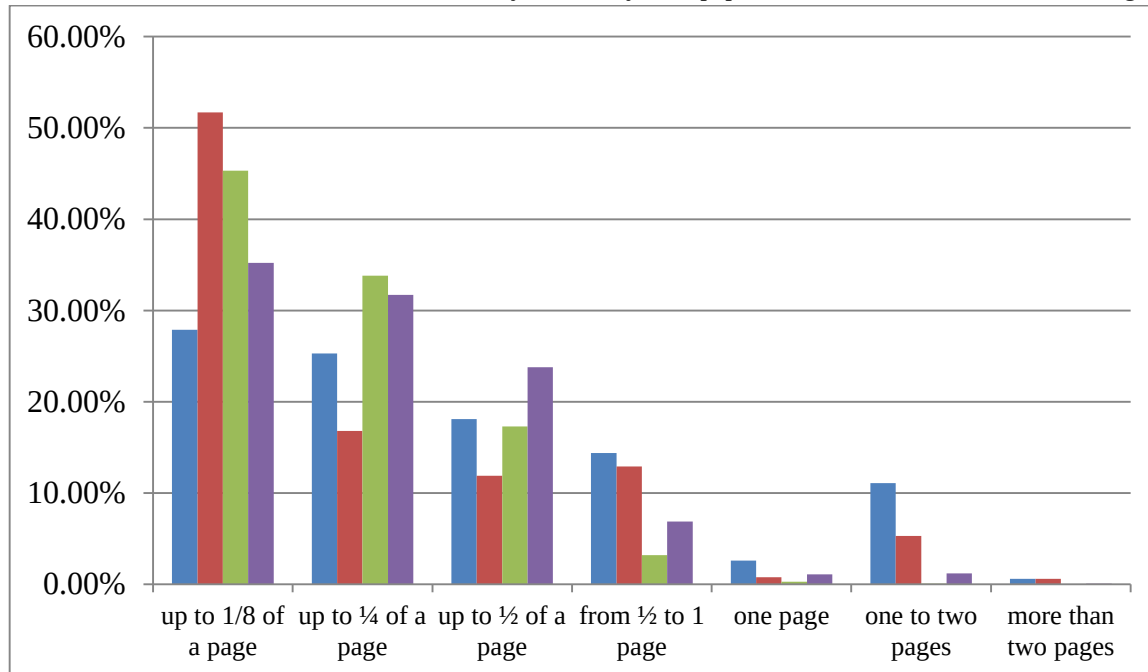
The size of articles	Jutarnji list		Večernji list		Dnevni avaz		Oslobođenje	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
up to 1/8 of a page	128	27,9	339	51,7	345	45,3	262	35,2
up to 1/4 of a page	116	25,3	110	16,8	257	33,8	236	31,7
up to 1/2 of a page	83	18,1	78	11,9	132	17,3	177	23,8
from 1/2 to 1 page	66	14,4	85	12,9	24	3,2	51	6,9
One page	12	2,6	5	0,8	2	0,3	8	1,1
One to two pages	51	11,1	35	5,3	1	0,1	9	1,2
More than two pages	3	0,6	4	0,6	0	-	1	0,1
Total	N=459	100	N=656	100	N=761	100	N=744	100

In all four analysed daily newspapers, the highest number of articles was published in September, October, December and January, while the least number was published in the summer months (June to August), which is consistent with the results of previous research (Ciboci et al., 2011). This distribution is understandable since the summer months are usually not abundant with events, especially those related to children who are on school holidays. That changes with the arrival of September and new school year when daily newspapers turn to educational topics. Analysis of articles shows that newspapers mainly deal with organizational and ceremonial issues in education, in which the leading role is given to adults while children are placed in the passive role of the "recipient" of education about which adults discuss in their name. After school topics which stretch through September and October, articles about children start to occupy newspaper pages more significantly in December and January, during the holidays. The newspapers dominantly write about humanitarian actions aimed at children in that period. These articles contribute to the physical stigmatization of children by creating a construct of a "child victim" or a "child in need".



Table 4 The size of articles on children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Graph 2 The size of articles on children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



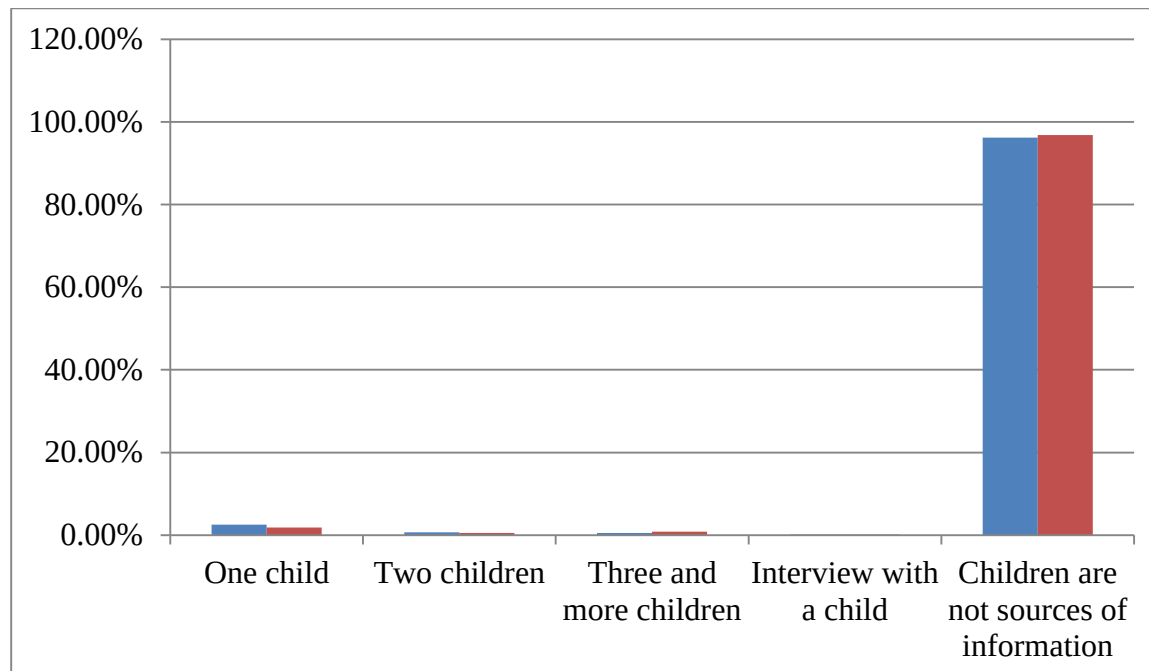
(Graph legend: ■ Jutarnji list, ■ Večernji list, ■ Dnevni avaz, ■ Oslobođenje)

When articles are analyzed in terms of their size, it is evident that in all the analysed daily newspapers articles about children take only up to 1/8 or up to 1/4 of a page. The highest frequency of articles up to 1/8 of the page was published by *Večernji list* (51.7%) and it was followed by *Dnevni avaz* with 45.3%. *Dnevni avaz* also published the highest number of articles up to 1/4 of a page (33.8%), which means that 79.1% articles on children published by *Dnevni avaz* only took up to 1/4 of a page. It is followed by *Večernji list* with 68.5% of articles, then by *Oslobođenje* with 66.9% and *Jutarnji list* with 53.2%. It is noticeable that the majority of articles on children take up to 1/4 of a newspaper page, which reduces the importance of topics about children and children's issues.

When comparing Croatian and BH newspapers with regard to the size of the articles, it is evident that BH newspapers publish smaller articles on children than Croatian newspapers. Namely, even though both countries are fairly equal when it comes to articles up to 1/8 of a newspaper page (41.9% in Croatian newspapers compared to 40.3% in BH newspapers), if all articles up to 1/4 of a page are viewed together, Croatian newspaper have published 62.2%, and BH newspapers 73.1% of articles of that size. If we count in the articles up to 1/2 of a page, it accounts for as much as 93.6% of articles published in BH newspapers compared to 76.6% in Croatian newspapers.



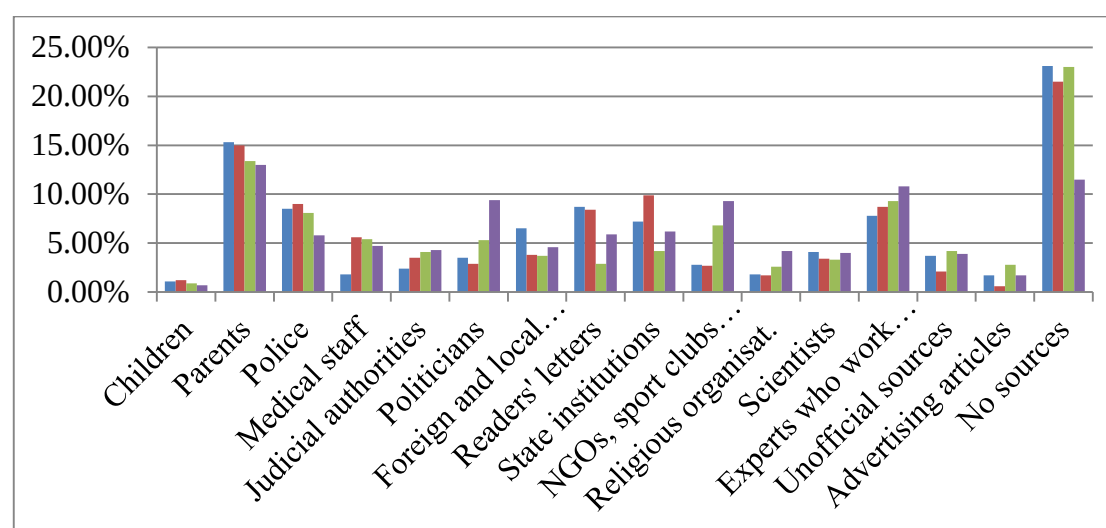
Graph 3 Comparison of the presence of children as sources of information in articles about children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



(Graph legend: ■ Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)

This graph illustrates how seldom children are cited as sources of information in articles written about them or dealing with topics related to their lives. Children are not the source of information in 96.2% of articles about children in Croatian newspapers and 96.8% articles in BH newspapers. Thus, children are cited as sources in 3.8% or 3.2% of analyzed articles.

Graph 4 The main sources of information in articles about children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



(Graph legend: ■ Jutarnji list, ■ Večernji list, ■ Dnevni avaz, ■ Oslobođenje)

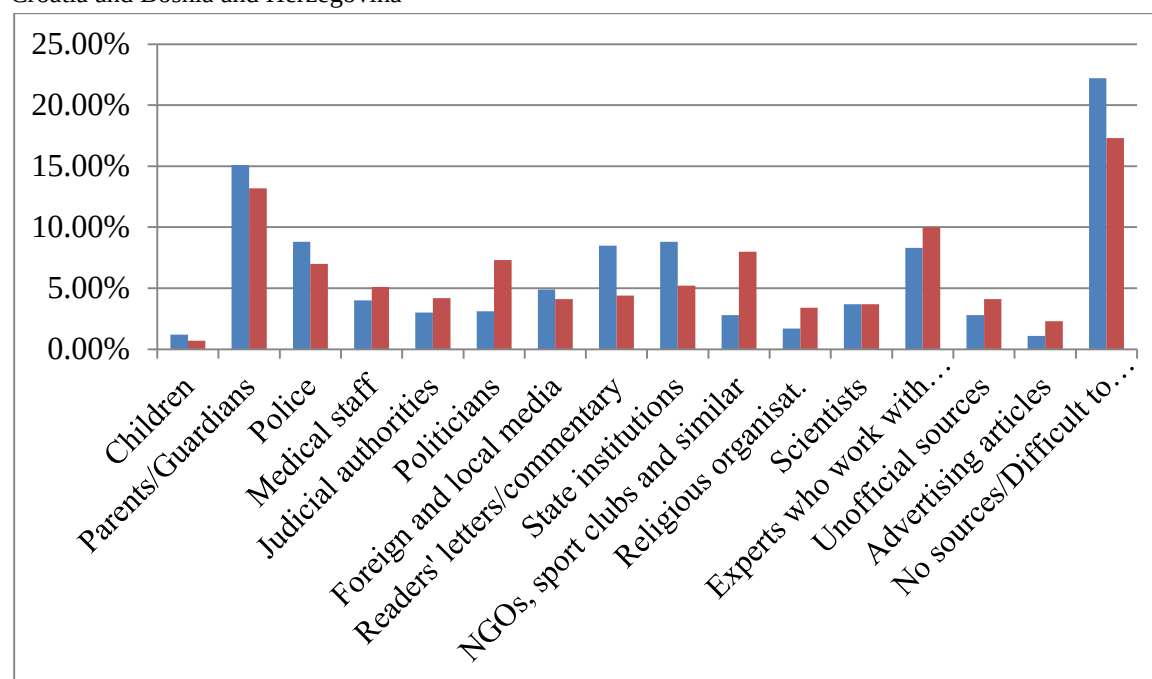


Since children rarely participate as sources of information in articles on children, it is interesting to look at who are the main sources of information in these articles, and to check if children, when they are referred as sources, are used as the main sources of information.

In Croatian daily newspapers and *Dnevni avaz* the largest number of articles is without a source or sources in them are difficult to determine. In *Oslobođenje* the most frequent source of information are parents or guardians of the child (13%) which is the most frequent main source of information in other daily newspapers too, when the source in the text exists. After parents or guardians in *Jutarnji List*, the main source of information on children are readers' letters, commentaries and

columns which is proof of the significant interest in the issues related to children in the Croatian public. In *Večernji list*, the third most frequent source are state institutions such as ministries, social welfare centres, etc, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina third most frequent source are professionals who work with children (pedagogues, psychologists, teachers etc.). In *Jutarnji* and *Večernji list* and *Dnevni avaz*, the fourth most frequent source of information is the police which is a significant indication of the context in which children are mentioned in daily newspapers and which topics attract attention.

Graph 5 Comparison of the main sources of information in articles about children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)

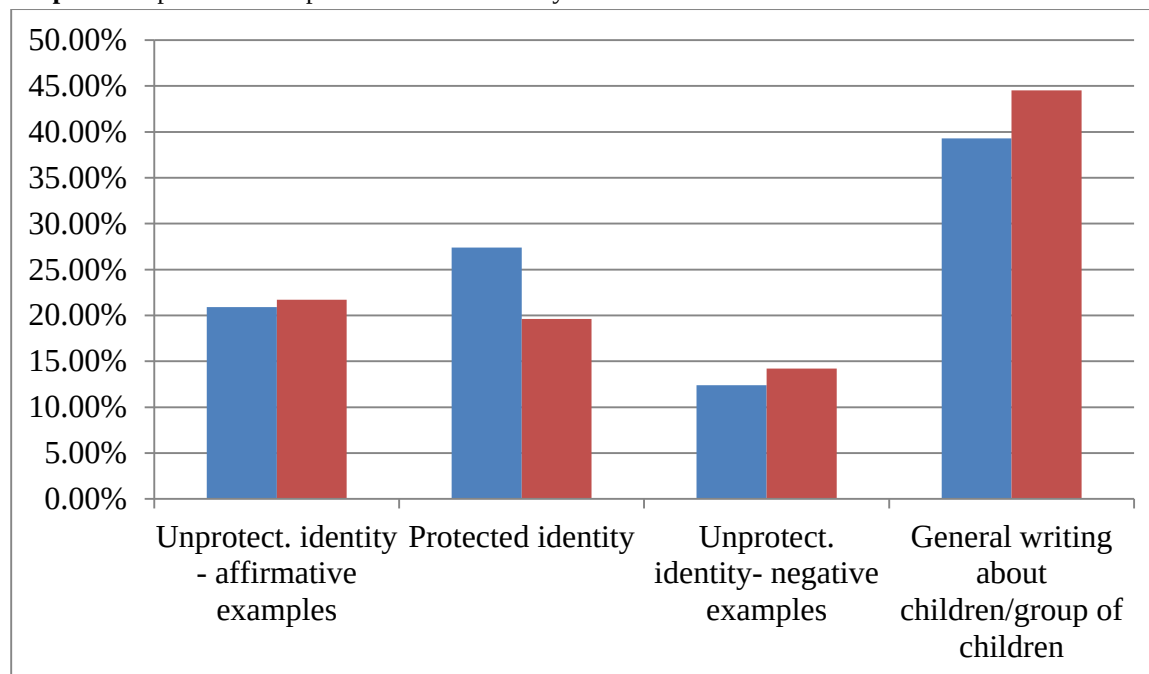
(Graph legend: ■

Comparison of data between two countries shows that, after a large number of articles without sources which are prevalent in both countries, the most frequent source of information is parents. After parents, the most frequent sources in the Croatian press are police and state institutions, while in BH sample the most frequent are experts working with children. The fourth place in Croatia is taken by commentaries and columns and in Bosnia and Herzegovina by non-governmental

organizations, which is not surprising given the large number of non-governmental organizations in BH that often take over the functions of state institutions and thus "patch holes" where the fragmented structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not work. On the fifth place in Croatia are experts who work with children, and in BH politicians.



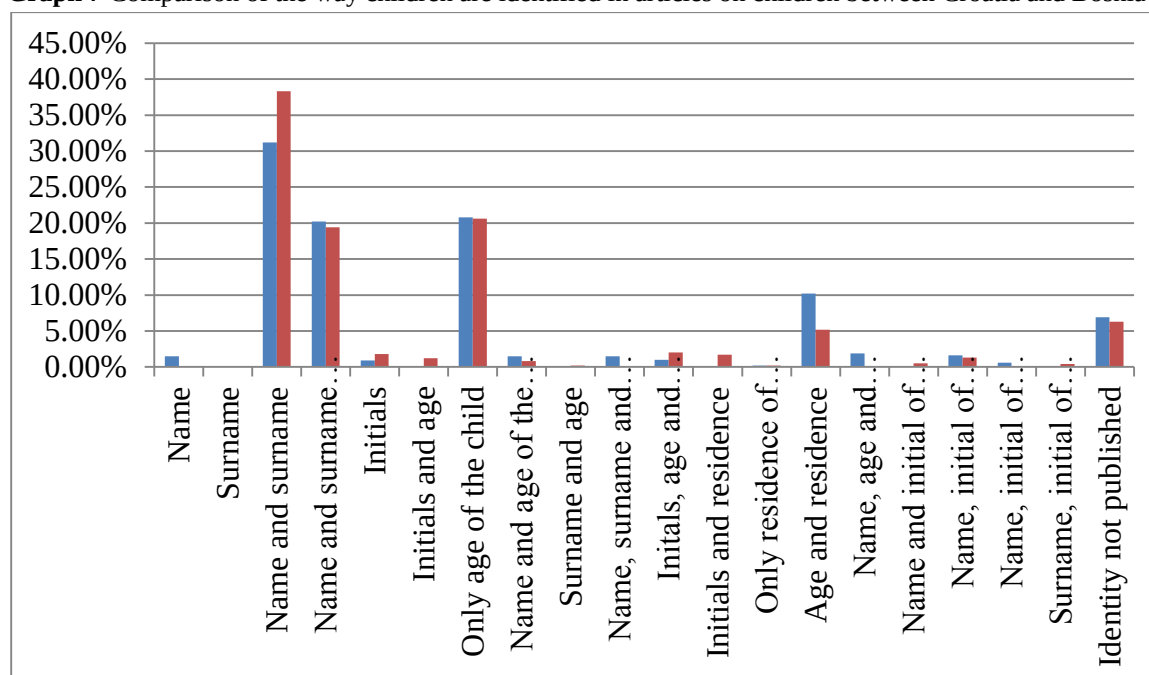
Graph 6 Comparison of the protection of the identity of children in articles on children between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



(Graph legend: ■ Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)

Comparison of data at the national level makes it clear that in both countries articles about children are written generally about children or a group of children. Second in frequency in BH media are affirmative examples of unprotected identity when children are shown in positive contexts in which their dignity is not compromised, while in the Croatian media in the second place are examples in which the identity of children is protected (27.4 %). In BH newspapers, there are 19.6 % of examples of protected identity.

Graph 7 Comparison of the way children are identified in articles on children between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

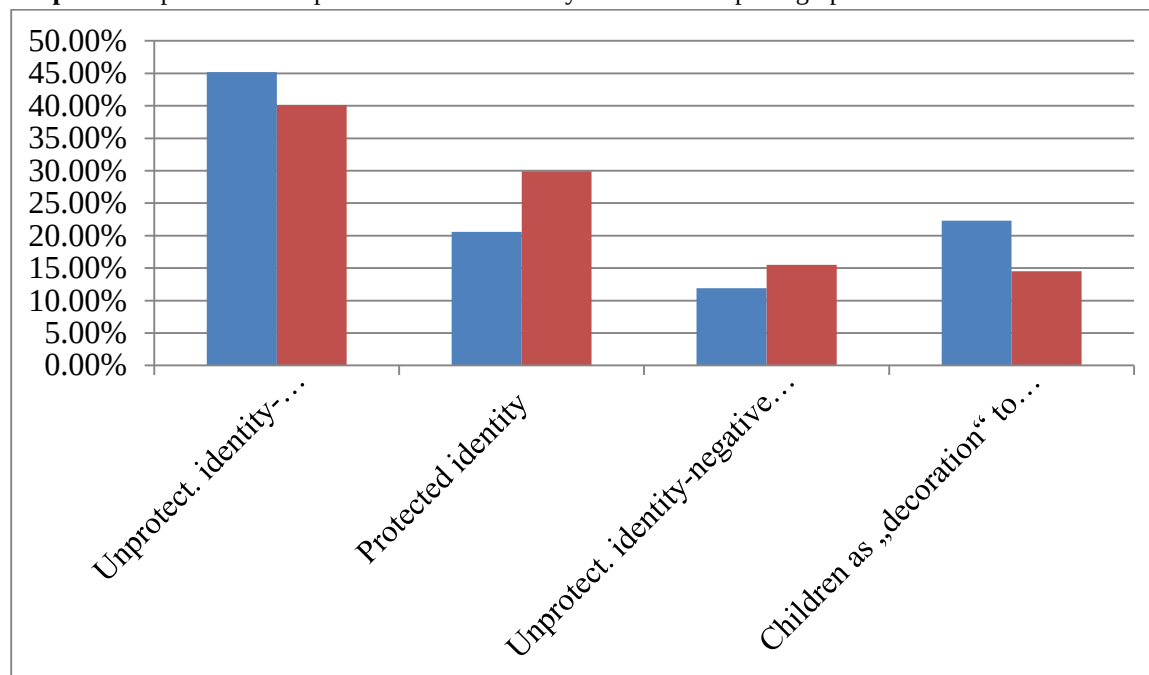


(Graph legend: ■ Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)



It is evident from the graph 7 that in both countries children are most frequently represented in the text by: 1) their name and surname; 2) only the child's age; 3) name and surname of parents. The fourth and fifth most frequent categories are *age and residence* (Croatian newspapers 10.2%, Bosnian newspapers 5.2%) and *identity not published* (Croatian newspaper 6.9%, Bosnian newspapers 6.3%).

Graph 8 Comparison of the protection of the identity of children in photographs between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

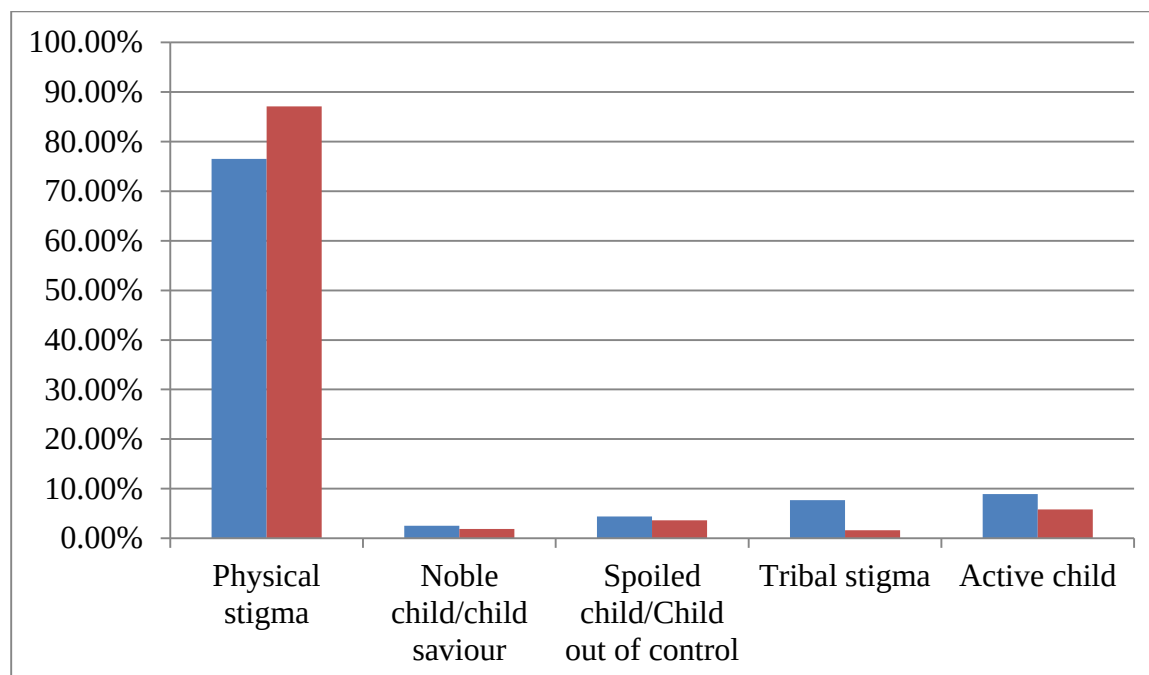


(Graph legend: ■ Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)

The most frequent category of photographs in both countries is the one on which the identity of children is unprotected, but in an affirmative context. In BH newspapers, the second most frequent category is the one in which the identity of the children is protected, while in Croatian newspapers children's photos which are set as "decoration" to the text are in the second place. Such photographs, as they usually symbolize the stereotypical characteristics of children, contribute to the construct of a "poor child", and thus the physical stigmatization of children. Negative examples of unprotected identity are present in 15.5% of articles in BH newspapers and

11.9% in Croatian newspapers. Such a result is slightly better than that of Ciboci et al. (2011) who found 18% of photographs in Croatian newspapers on which the identity of children was unprotected although it was supposed to be protected. Thus, Croatian newspapers more often use photographs of children as "decoration" to the text (22.3% compared to 14.5% in BH newspapers) while BH newspapers more often display photographs where the identity of children is protected (29.9% compared to 20.6% in Croatian newspapers).

Graph 9 Comparison of the presence of stigma categories in articles on children between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina



(Graph legend: ■ Croatian newspapers, ■ BH newspapers)

Comparison based on categories of stigma show overwhelming uniformity of results. BH newspapers more often physically stigmatize children than Croatian newspapers (87.1% vs. 76.5%). In both countries, the second most dominant category is the one of "active child" - 8.9% in Croatian newspapers and 5.8% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The least represented category in Croatian media is "noble child/child saviour" (2.5%), and in BH media "tribal stigma" (1.6%).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis of the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, set research questions are answered and conclusions are made based on the answers. Answers to Research Question 1: *Does the presentation of children in daily newspapers contribute to the stigmatization of children in the society?* is given by answering the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1. 1: *Are photographs of children mainly used as a "decoration" to the text where unidentified children are placed in a position and context that contributes to stereotypical characteristics of children?* The answer to this question is negative. This researched variable refers to those photographs depicting children models, that is, those children who have nothing to do with a text, but serve only as an

"illustration" and "decoration" that is supposed to attract the attention of the reader. These photos are most often taken over from foreign media or from various websites, although sources of photos are often not mentioned. The most frequent category of photographs in both countries is the one on which the identity of children is unprotected, but in an affirmative context. The second most frequent category in all daily newspapers, except for *Jutarnji list*, are photographs where the identity of the child is protected (OSL 30.4%, DA 29.1%, VL 25.6%, JL 14.3%).

Sub-question 1. 2: *Can most articles be categorized into one of three types of stigma (physical, stigma of character traits or tribal stigma)?* The answer to this question is positive. Namely, the only category that is not part of the stigma categories is the "active child" that appeared in *Večernji list* in 13% of articles, *Dnevni Avaz* 6.2% and *Oslobođenje* in 5.4% articles and thus it is the second most frequent category in these daily papers, though with a small share. In *Jutarnji list* this category was present in only 2.9% of articles.

Sub-question 1. 3: *Which category of stigma dominates in articles about children?* Analysis of the results reveals that the physical stigma, that is, images of a "poor child" or a "child in need" in the Croatian and BH media is predominantly most frequent. The highest number of articles in this category was



found in *Oslobođenje* (89.5%), *Dnevni avaz* and *Jutarnji list* (84.8% and 84%) had similar results, and *Večernji list* (71.3%) published the least number of articles with this type of stigmatization.

Responses to research sub-questions show the following significant data: children's photos are mostly not used as "decorations" but most photographs show children in an affirmative context in which their identity is not protected and it is assumed that a part of these photographs is published without parental consent and without respect of ethical guidelines; most articles about children can be categorized into one of the three categories of stigma (physical, stigma of character or tribal stigma) (VL-87%, DA- 93.8%, OSL-94.6%, JL- 97.1%), and the one that dominates is physical stigma which attributes incompetence and passivity to children as well as subordinate position in relation to adults. Such answers to research sub-questions indicate a positive answer to Research question 1: *Does the presentation of children in daily newspapers contributes to the stigmatization of children in society?*

Answer to **Research Question 2:** *Are children in daily newspapers discriminated on the basis of their age?* is given by answering the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 2. 1: *What is the most frequent size of articles about children?* The analysis showed that in all researched daily newspapers, most articles about children take only up to ¼ of a page. Most articles of the size up to 1/8 of a page were published in *Večernji list* (51.7%), followed by *Dnevni avaz* (45.3%). *Dnevni avaz* also published the highest frequency of articles up to ¼ of a page (33.8%) which means that 79.1% of articles about children published in *Dnevni avaz* take only up to ¼ of a page. In *Večernji list* there is 68.5% articles up to this size, in *Oslobođenje* 66.9% and in *Jutarnji list* 53.2%. With the lowest frequency of articles up to ¼ of a page, *Jutarnji list* had the highest number of articles from one to two pages (11.1%), while *Dnevni avaz* had the lowest frequency of these articles, only 0.1%. Articles about children on more than two pages in Croatian daily newspapers and in *Oslobođenje* occurred in less than 1% of cases, while no such articles were recorded in *Dnevni avaz*.

Sub-question 2. 2: *How often are children cited as sources of information in articles about children?* Children are not the source of information in more than 95% of all articles in analysed daily newspapers: 95.2% in *Jutarnji list*, 97% in *Večernji list*, 96.9% in *Dnevni avaz* and 96.8% in *Oslobođenje*.

Responses to research sub-questions show the following significant data: articles about children mostly occupy a very small part of daily newspapers, i.e. most of the articles are up to ¼ of a page which is a significant indicator of their low status in society and age discrimination; children are not the source of information in more than 95% of articles in all analysed daily newspapers, and even when they are, their statements are mostly used as a "decoration". Thus, children are a population whose possibilities of presenting themselves and using the right to participate are limited and are, therefore, subject to (age) discrimination. Such answers to research sub-questions indicate a positive answer to Research question 2: *Are children in daily newspapers discriminated on the basis of their age?* Namely, children are not present in daily newspapers, and when they are, topics about them and for them are handled superficially, without deeper analysis and commentary and without inclusion of their voices, which is a clear indication that, due to their age, which carries little power and influence in society, they are considered uninteresting, and their problems unimportant and temporary.

Answer to **Research Question 3:** *Is there any difference in the stigmatization of children in daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina?* is based on the data obtained for variables that were compared at the national level. The difference between Croatian and Bosnian and Herzegovinian media was found in the results of the analysis of the following variables: - BH newspapers publish smaller articles on children than Croatian newspapers. Namely, if all articles up to ½ of a page are viewed together, Croatian newspapers published 76.6% and BH newspapers 93.6% of articles of that size. - Croatian newspapers more frequently use photographs of children as a "decoration" to the text while BH newspapers more often show photos on which the identity of children is protected. Children as a "decoration" to the text are the least represented category in BH newspapers (14.5%) even less than negative examples of unprotected identity, which is the least represented category in Croatian newspapers (11.9%)

The difference between the most widely-read Croatian and BH newspapers has not been found in: the presence of children as sources of information, the main sources of information; the protection of the identity of children in articles; the way children are presented in articles and in the presence of stigma categories in articles on children.

Of the seven analyzed variables, the difference between Croatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian media was found in two variables and such data indicate a negative answer to Research



question 3: *Is there any difference in the stigmatization of children in daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina?*

Based on the analysis of articles about children in the most widely-read daily newspapers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it can be concluded that children in these two countries are a marginalized and discriminated group that is not overly interesting to the public. It seems that it is especially unpopular (and irrelevant) to talk about rights of this group, and events in which group members take part or are important to them seem to be covered superficially.

This data is especially worrying if we take into account previously mentioned importance of media in shaping the dominant images of children in society. Image that an adult has about children as a group can determine their behaviour towards them but also decisions they make in their various social roles which, in most cases, affect children. That is especially problematic when we think of experts who work with children and their dominant personal theories which need to be reviewed and, when necessary changed, if we want to implement any kind of change in education. Educators are the ones on which the success of educational reforms depends. Unattractiveness of the teaching profession for the most exceptional, low status of teachers, poor financial income, initial education that does not provide basic competences for dealing with practical problems and professional development that does not strengthen them result in routinization and copying of the practices they experienced while they themselves were students and considered them successful. Such a reality of the profession in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina results in the persistence and even zealous insistence on socialist pedagogies and personal theories of teachers for who children's rights are a ridiculous "fabrication" of the new age, and child's voice is subordinate to the ideal of the classroom in which "you can hear a fly". In the atmosphere in which teachers themselves do not feel "rich" in potential, as self-constructors of their environment and active participants in the educational system in which their voice is worth listening, it is impossible to expect that the construct in which a child is perceived in that way is dominant.

Changing the way we observe children as a social group and the way we behave towards them in educational institutions, but also beyond them, can radically change our society. The results of this research provide a clear theoretical basis for stronger affirmation and implementation of alternative,

pedagogically sensitive concepts both in media discourse and pedagogical theory and practice.

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