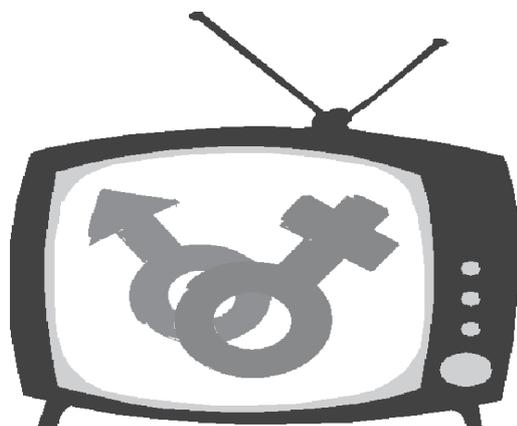


**MEDIA MONITORING DURING
THE JULY 3, 2005, ELECTION
CAMPAIGN**



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Introduction

Media monitoring has been one of the main publications of the Gender Alliance for Development and has paid attention to the handling and introduction of Albanian women in the print media. This time, based on the importance attached to the July 3rd elections, it was the opinion of the Center that it would be very useful to monitor the introduction of candidates in general and of women candidates in particular, especially by the broadcast media. This monitoring analyzes the introduction of candidates, reaches several conclusions, and presents recommendations on the role of the media during the election campaign.

Methodology

The Monitoring of the Electronic Media was carried out during the period May 18 – July 1, 2005, by four reporters: 1. Laureta Roshi, 2. Teuta Vimaraku, 3. Migela Trajani, and 4. Alma Sulaj, who monitored the stories of prime time news editions of the following TV Stations:

- Albanian Public Television (TVSH), 465 stories
- Koha Television, 98 stories
- Arbëria Television (TVA), 396 stories
- Klan Television, 59 stories
- Vizion Plus Television, 261 stories
- Top Channel Television, 120 stories

The total number of monitored stories was 1,399.

A questionnaire, to be found in the annex of this report, was drafted for the monitoring of coverage of women and men candidates. The same questionnaire was filled out on all candidates introduced in newscasts, in order to collect information on the quality of the introduction of men and women candidates.

Conclusions drawn from the Center's monitoring, in many areas, match the monitoring carried out by OSCE/ODIHR (Final Election Observation Mission Report, November 7, 2005; Warsaw) during the



election campaign, which included TVSH, TV Klan, and TV Arbëria, and illustrative parts of this report are included in the course of the analysis.

Monitoring of the print media was conducted during the period May 28 – July 1, 2005, mainly to monitor the introduction of women candidates in nine of Albania's daily newspapers: Gazeta Shqiptare, Koha Jonë, Korrieri, Panorama, Sot, Republika, Shekulli, Klan, and Nositi, using the following keywords:

Women in the Elections	66 Stories
Women in Decision-making	68 Stories
Women in Government	15 Stories
Women in Parliament	25 Stories
Total	174 Stories

The main objectives of this study are listed below:

1. Introduction of candidates in the broadcast media;
2. Coverage of the Albanian reality and the existing mentality on the role and capabilities of women in the political realm and its impact on the media, as a reflector of prevailing prejudices;
3. Role of the electronic media in introducing, covering, and creating the image of candidates in general, and of women candidates in particular;
4. Emphasis on the importance of the media in changing the mentality cultivated by society on women in the political realm.



Women's Participation in Albanian Politics

The Albanian Constitution guarantees equal rights for women and men, but Albanian politics clearly shows that women are excessively under-represented. From the start of the transition period with the elections held in 1991 (when women's participation in Parliament was at 20.5%), women's representation in the Albanian Parliament has dropped considerably, to reach the lowest point in 2001 with only eight women MPs (or 5.7% of the general number).¹ In comparing Albania to other countries, one notices marked differences. Looking at the latest publication of IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), the representation of women in politics worldwide is on average at 14.5%. For the Nordic countries, this average representation reaches maximal figures with about 38.8% (Sweden 45.3%, Denmark 38%, Finland 37%, and Norway 36.6%). In Europe, including figures from the Nordic countries, representation is at 16.8%; without those countries, it is about 14.7%. Spain is an exception here, with women's representation in Parliament at about 36%. Average representation in the United States of America is 15.8%, in Asia 15.6%, in Latin America 15.0%, in Africa 12.8%, for the Pacific 11.3%, and for the Arab countries 4.6%.² Compared to these figures, Albania currently has a very low level of women's representation in parliament, less than half of Europe's average and a little higher than the average of Arab countries. Albania has the lowest percentage for women's participation also in the context of the Balkan region. What are some of the leading factors for the absence of women's participation in the Albanian public and political spheres?

The existing political environment remains one of the major factors. "When a woman decides to enter into politics, she should feel welcomed, which I did not feel the day I first set foot in the Parliament hall," says Valentina Leskaj who won the right to be not only in the Parliament hall, but also in the office of the Minister of Labor



¹ Publication "Women in Parliament", Assembly of Albania, Tirana 2003
² www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm. Last visited on October 20, 2005.

and Social Affairs during the last socialist mandate. The harshness of political fight in Albania has been and remains problematic. In 80% of press stories monitored it appears that the harshness of Albanian politics is the number one criterion keeping women from rising to the surface. As Antoneta Malja says, today's male politicians have a ready refrain: "this woman is good and capable, but she can't win the election; the political fight is too vicious and violent".³ Furthermore, the manipulation of the general public opinion as well as other convincing male elements, such as lack of transparency, abuse of funds, ugly accusations against anybody at anytime, and their coverage in the media, remain traditional and psychological elements of the character of Albanian politics.

Another very important factor is also the lack of women's emancipation in the society and their attraction to a challenge such as politics also has economic and social reasons, beside male obstacles. Albanian mentality, carved even in the structure of political parties, does not support women to move forward in the political realm. The principle that "men are born for politics" still applies ⁴, and, as a result, women's sphere of influence remains the family. However, as M. Bregu says, "Women's exclusion from power empoverishes public life and encourages the development of an unjust society"⁵, which hampers a country's development thrust in three aspects: political, economic, and social.

Understandably, women's engagement in political life often depends on engagements in the family, whereby, as is known, they are overburdened with their roles as mothers, wives, and caretakers of the family environment. Considering all of these factors together, it may be said that, in parallel, they influence the lack of role models for women, which is necessary for their engagement and development in the political realm.

It is also worth mentioning here the non-supportive environment⁶ that women themselves have created. This environment features in-

3 Antoneta Malja "Why the hesitation for women candidates?" Metropol, May 27, 2005.

4 "Women in politics and men's politics," Martin Leka, Shekulli, March 8, 2005.2

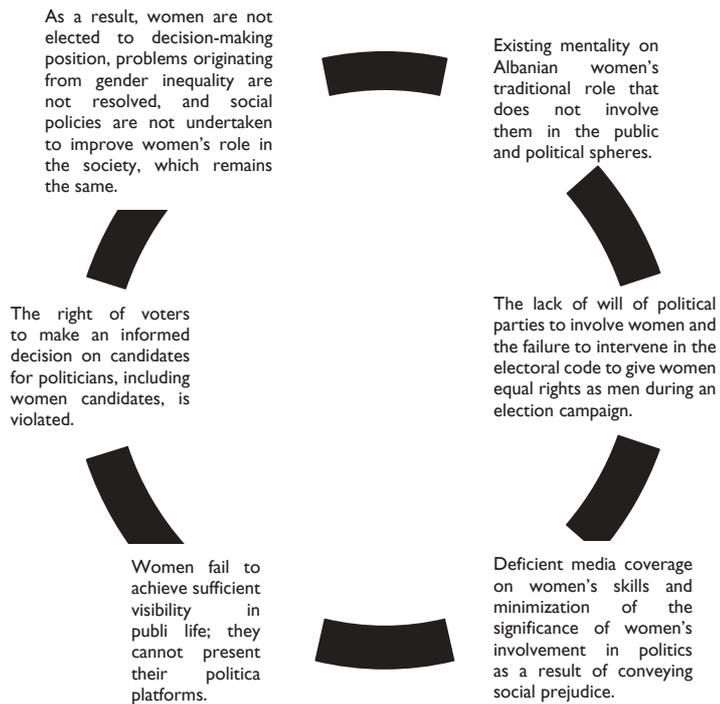
5 "Women equal to men," Majlinda Bregu, Panorama, September 25, 2005.

6 "Women – enemies of women," Mentor Nazarko, Shekulli, June 15, 2005.



fighting that discourages women's participation in politics; and, "the damage is that this lack of lobbying among women benefits politics' men who strengthen their ranks in decision-making positions."⁷ Albania does not face the problem of a lack of capable and qualified women for decision-making positions, but the fact is that, "our society has been historically and remains more open to men's achievements than women's in decision-making. This is not just part of the mentality. Women politicians are scolded should they dare to assume male privileges. Studies show that especially women who speak out openly generate negative evaluation, strangely, especially from women themselves."⁸

Let us take a look at the close circle we wander in:



What changed for women candidates in the last parliamentary elections?

“Although the large parties signed a Code of Conduct in 2005, which notes among others: We will encourage and support concretely women’s full participation, both as candidates and as election commission members,” no significant initiative was undertaken to that effect. Parties made almost no effort to include women in party structures or to select women candidates. In direct vote constituencies, the SP had eight women running for MP, whereas the DP had only three. Although both the SP and DP had a large number of women in their proportional name lists, their appeals to supporters to vote for other parties in these lists, nullified this act altogether. Of the 38 parties that participated in the 2005 elections, only the chairperson of one party, the Albanian Green League, was a woman. There was only a negligible increase in the number of elected women – 10 (or 7,1%) and the 2005 elections may be viewed as another missed opportunity to address this issue.⁹ Among the opposition parties, the SP has four women MPs, and two of the seven SDP MPs are women. Eight parties represented in parliament do not have any woman in their ranks.”¹⁰

How can higher women representation in politics be achieved?

The women’s movement in Albania encountered numerous difficulties and obstacles during the transition years, however, according to Xhuljeta Jaho (Republican Party Women’s Forum Chairperson), there are two main directions:

“1. One of these movements is that of the civil society, which includes different NPOs that make a great contribution in changing

7 There is often talk of “the protagonism of a bunch of women, on all political sides, who, after reaching senior decision-making positions, do not allow others to come near, thus monopolizing that chair, presidium, and the public. Often, their gossip machine is more dangerous than the masculinist opinions of a handful Kanun-driven men, wearing western ties and suits, because they assume the role of competents in women’s issues.” For more information, see, “Why are women sidestepped from decision-making?!” Lavdie Ruci, Korrieri, May 20, 2005.

8 “Women in politics, challenge and reality,” Koha Jonë, March 21, 2005.

9 Parliament currently includes 10 women, 3 of which are DP MPs, 4 are SP MPs, 2 are Social Democratic Party MPs, and 1 is a Republican Party MP.

10 Cited from the Final OSCE/ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission Report, Warsaw, November 7, 2005, p. 24.



the concept of women, both in terms of displaying their values, and in training different strata of women in the society in various areas, such as economy, business, lawyer services, etc. These associations were of great assistance in countering negative phenomena of this period such as drugs and prostitution, protecting women, and in compiling missing statistics in these areas.

2. Another direction of the organization of women's movement is that of women's fora in Albanian political parties, whereby they adhere and make their contribution to the country's political life. This is the most important structure of this movement, which, beside its direct active participation in the country's policies, is also the structure that prepares different candidates for inclusion in local, legislative, and executive structures through the rotation mechanism."¹¹

According to Viola Furubjelke (Ambassador of Sweden in Lebanon and Syria), these two mechanisms are complementary of each other because, without the continued pressure of the civil society, politics would lose a very important dimension. But can these two mechanisms, alone, implement a promotion system for increasing women's participation in politics?

According to Afroviti Gusho, the civil society and women's NPOs must bring the discussion on women's equal rights to the political sphere to the agenda of the day. In her view, this may be achieved through the drafting of a longterm strategy that calls for lobbying with three other important actors of the Albanian society: 1. Women in decision making positions; 2. Media – to make use of it for an analysis of this shortcoming of our society; 3. International organizations and donors.¹² Nevertheless, the civil society and NPOs have more to offer than just a support base for women who wish to run for politicians. It was noticed in the last elections that at least three winning women candidates came from the civil society (Diana Çuli, Majlinda Bregu, Valentina Leskaj). "It is not that I was thinking of my engagement in politics, but we talked among friends and colleagues that it was wrong that women coming from the civil society would not become decision-makers, and not enter parliament," says Majlinda Bregu.¹³



¹¹ "Woman's Message", Xhulieta Jaho (unpublished)

¹² "Women's movement and the hostage of decision-making," Afroviti Gusho, Shekulli, May 18, 2005.

¹³ "Scent of a Woman" Zefina Hasani, Klan Magazine, March 19, 2005.

In order to change this reality, or even as a way out of the political crisis that has engulfed Albania, the good political will could be empowered to change and intervene in the Electoral Code or the electoral system in order to offer representation quotas (not just candidate quotas) for women. To achieve this, it would suffice if all political parties, in submitting the multi-name lists, would use gender alternation. This would at least guarantee a representation quota of over 20 women members of parliament. Thus, according to the division of the 40 seats determined through the name lists, as provided for by the Constitution, would ensure an average of 20 women MPs. This, according to analysis of this phenomenon by Rexhep Meidani, would result in about 14% of their representation in parliament. Supposing that some women MPs might win in a direct vote or in the majority system, the end result of representation might be slightly over the average representation quota at the global level. This would certainly be a positive element for Albania and its politics.

This would appear like support for women that historically has not demonstrated any true political qualification not only in Albania, but even in countries with consolidated democracy. This “support,” known in political science as “quotas,” is known in the United States and countries of the European Union as Affirmative Action or Positive Action, aiming to facilitate women’s circumstances so they may be voted by people. This involves a series of types of support, such as greater and more complete promotion of women candidates in campaigns, facilitation of their finances in campaigns, provision of grants that candidates may need during the campaign for posters, leaflets, community meetings, maintaining connections with communication agents as the media, and so on. In spite of their roles as mothers, wives, professionals, and career politicians, women have known to find the necessary funds to manage to conduct significant campaigns in elections.

In recent years, gender quotas have served as testimony to an increased interest in issues of political representation. Today, almost all countries have promised to promote decision making based on gender balance.¹⁴ Over 80 countries have seen the adoption of

¹⁴ In September 1995, 189 member countries of the United Nations signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in the 4th United Nations Conference on Women. Section G underscores 2 main objectives: undertaking of measures to ensure equal access and full participation in the power, decision-making, and leadership structure, United Nations 1995b.



quotas for the selection of women candidates and more than 20 have started debates on quotas in the past 20 years.¹⁵ The quick spread of gender quotas suggests that it may appear in different countries, in spite of social levels or economic development.

Various studies have focused on judging different factors that influence women's representation in politics, including institutional factors as the electoral system, the kind of constituency, characteristics of the party's political list, the party's political ideology, and party characteristics of the political system, as are various influencing social-economic factors such as economic development, women's education and participation in the labor force, and different influencing cultural elements, such as dominating religions, attitudes toward women in leadership positions, and the existence of non-traditional gender roles. Numerous recent studies show that countries that have implemented quotas – such as reserved seats in parliament, party quotas, or quotas at the national legislative level – are encountered in numerous countries and regions; these are democratic or non-democratic regions, proportional and majority systems, bi-party and multi-party systems, with a high, medium, or low economic development, as well as in countries with different dominant religions. Some countries have experimented an increase of women's representation in politics through the adoption of quotas, while others have experienced less changes or modest steps. It is understandable that the effectiveness of quotas depends first of all on its type (party or legislative), the implementation method (voluntary or imposed by law), as well as other social cultural factors. In the meantime, an electoral quota in the form of law, requiring that 30% of MPs in parliament are women, has led to an increase of women's representation in Argentina to 30.7%. The same level of 30% has increased women's representation in Bolivia to 18.5%, in Brasil 6.8%, in Panama 9.9%, in Peru 17.5 %, and in Venezuela 9.7%. At the same time, different levels ensure similar results in other countries. While the broad use of political party quotas has helped increase women's representation to 36.7% in the Netherlands, 36.4% in Norway, and 32.2% in Germany, legislature-based quotas have helped increase women's representation to 35.3% in Belgium, and



¹⁵ Goodin 1996; Phillips 1999. Elster, Offe, and Preuss 2002; Elster and Slagstad 1993.

35.1% in Costa Rica, and reserved seats in parliament have increased women's percentages to 24.7% in Uganda, 22.3% in Tanzania, and 22% in Eritrea.

Quotas for developing countries remain a first step in women's and girls' representation, but as separate policies, they should be accompanied by other initiatives, such as those for training and education at the elementary, middle, higher, and graduate education, as well as a reorganization of women's role in the family and her responsibilities in communities. Should the introduction of candidate quotas as a temporary solution remain alone as a strategy for women's involvement in politics, then it is doomed to fail, because women's empowerment cannot only come from participation as an invitee in the decision-making process, but is rather related to being capable and omnipotent in making decisions.¹⁶

One notices changes in many countries around the world, including India, whereby quotas or seats reserved in local government or parliament, have caused the women's agenda for education, health care, and employment, to be analyzed increasingly. According to Diana Çulit, more women in parliament in Albania, "would create a different environment altogether; issues and problems would be discussed and addressed differently. In fact, even a commune chairwoman would make social division as fair as possible."¹⁷ Thus, without becoming discouraged, we may reach the conclusion that the system of quotas is and should be a temporary measures that guarantees women's participation in politics through law.¹⁸ First, it may be said that a country's electoral system has a powerful impact on the system of quotas. It has been noticed that quotas function better in closed lists, the proportional system with defined mandates, and in large constituency areas. Secondly, we may say that the establishment of mandates is essential for the success of quotas in closed proportional lists of the electoral system. Third, laws on quotas should include details for their implementation. And last, for

¹⁶ Caroline Szyber (citing Rowlands 1997) 'Capacities Building Strategies Towards Women Going into Politics' thesis based on field study, India 2005

¹⁷ "Women in leadership: the way is paved for new generations to arrive farther," Metropol, April 14, 2005.

¹⁸ For more information, see "Women in politics as a quality of democracy," Eglantina Gjermani, Shekulli, May 21 2005.



quotas to be effective there must also be sanctions for failure to implement them. The goals and attainability of quotas depend also on women's behavior and insistence to arrive where they aim.¹⁹ Some countries of the Balkans such as Bosnia Herzegovina have implemented quotas in their electoral system guaranteeing 30% of parliament seats for women; the same is true of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and also Kosovo.

Role of the Media During the Electoral Campaign

Although the media may not be responsible for the actions, attitudes, or behaviors of individuals, it is undoubtedly omnipotent in forming public opinion, emphasizing issues or perspectives that may be a target of public debate. Norms and values, institutional structures, audience preferences, and market economy rules have an impact on the final media product. Therefore, as a powerful means of communication, the media may play a key role in integrating the gender perspective and is one of the leading factors in eliminating social stereotypes in order to achieve gender equality. In every country around the world, media is a conveyor of information to the broad public and during election campaigns the role of the media becomes even more important. During an election campaign, there are 3 categories of fundamental rights²⁰ directly related to the role of the media and indispensable to be implemented in the framework of democratic elections:

- The right of voters to make an informed decision
- The right of candidates to make public their political agenda
- The right of the media to report on issues related to public opinion.



¹⁹ Strulik Stefanie 'Deconstructing Proxy women in a Decade of Women's Empowerment through Local Government in India' workshop report October 20-21 2003, New Delhi Institute of Social Science.

²⁰ Media and Elections Index ACE Project <http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/me/> last visited (8/12/05).

It is logical to say that the voters' right to make an informed decision depends on the following two rights. However, even the right of candidates to make public their agenda is directly linked with the media's collaboration on this issue. Therefore, it is indispensable for candidates, whether men or women, to attain the visibility that the (broadcast and print) media offers them. What happens when the media only focuses its attention on some selected parties and candidates? What are the consequences for the under-represented sex, the importance of which is easily sidestepped during an election campaign? Is it not true that two rights are violated at the same time: the right of candidates to make public their political agenda and the right of voters to make an informed decision?

Elections' Legal Framework in Albania

Relying on the final OSCE/ODIHR report on Albania's July 3 elections, the conclusion was reached that these elections did not fully meet established international standards for democratic elections. Nevertheless, these elections were held according to a new electoral code approved in 2003, and amended in October 2004, January and April 2005, and, in spite of further improvements, it does provide for a democratic election process. This was achieved in 2004 by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, which issued several recommendations that would provide for fulfilling OSCE engagements and international standards in the country. The changes were drafted through a bipartisan process involving the SP and DP.²¹ Amendments to the Electoral Code during 2004 (some of which reflected Joint Recommendations) led to a series of changes, particularly with regard to election administration, drafting of voters' lists, constituency division criteria, the vote counting process, and addressing complaints and appeals.

21 Final OSCE/ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission Report, Warsaw, November 7, 2005, p. 7.



Regarding the election regulating framework in the country, there are provisions in the electoral code that regulate almost only the broadcast media, thus leaving free room for the print media (except for demanding respect for electoral silence on the day before the elections). The Code clearly describes sanctions that follow failure to comply with established rules. These provisions on the broadcast media were only observed during the official campaign period, between June 3 and July 1. Mass media attention during the electoral campaign of this election, in general, concentrated on these two big parties. The smaller parties encountered different limitations on their ability to convey their campaign messages. We can mention the fact that the Electoral Code gives larger parties the right to have twice the time that is available for smaller parties.

“Division of time is done according to the party’s representation level in Parliament, dividing them into three categories: those that have over 20% of parliament seats (referred to as the large parties), those with less than 20% of the seats (referred to as the small parties), and those not represented in parliament or the non-parliamentary parties. Besides, both private and public media are required to cover parties’ campaigns in newscasts, matching time with the level of representation in parliament. the general time offered to each of the “large parties” in parliament should be “twice the amount of time allocated to the ‘small’ parties represented in parliament.”²²



²² Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Final OSCE/ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission Report, Warsaw, November 7, 2005, p. 20.

Irregularities Encountered in Time Allocations – an Observation of OSCE/ODIHR

According to the OSCE/ODIHR Election Monitoring Mission (EMM), Republic of Albania, 2005 Parliamentary Elections, p. 9, Preliminary Report, (May 31 – June 16, 2005) pas OSBE/ODIHR, it is noted that the media covers the election campaign in its entirety: newscasts, special programs, TV talk shows, and debates. Monitoring data of the ODIHR EMM media office (on the June 3-14 period), showed that in news editions (in TVSH's free time), the DP and the SP (including government members who ran for MP), obtained more time than was legally allowed (compared to the other parties in parliament). The SP and DP had a generally equal allocation of time in news editions.²³ The two leading parties also dominated TV talk shows and political debates. A number of local TV stations broadcast debates between candidates in the direct vote constituencies.

The Central Election Commission established the Media Monitoring Board (MMB), which prepared daily reports for the CEC regarding coverage devoted to electoral subjects.²⁴ the monitoring of the broadcast and print media by the OSCE/ODIHR began on May 17 and included three television stations (TVSH – state, TV Arbëria and TV Klan – private), as well as the monitoring of Top Channel TV's main news edition. This monitoring produced the conclusion that the broadcast media (just like the print one) focused mainly on covering the campaign of SP and DP candidates.

²³ On June 7, the board notified that the SP had received more time than the DP on public TVSH and some private television stations. The DP filed a complaint with the CEC and the MMB regarding the broadcast by TVSH of a 45-minute speech by PM Fatos Nano. TVSH tried to 'make up' for Ndërsa TVSH u përpoq që të 'kompensonte' PD-në, partia nuk mbeti e kënaqur me vendimin e njëanshëm të TVSH për të transmetuar kronikën nga arkivi, pasi më mirë do kishte qenë transmetimi i një kronike nga fushata aktuale. Përfundimisht, KQZ i kërkoi TVSH të siguronte kohë kompensimi (me një përmbajtje dhe kohë të njëjtë) për PD-në brenda 48 orëve. Ankesa të tjera janë dorëzuar nga subjekte elektorale për transmetime jo të balancuara dhe KQZ pas shqyrtimit të raporteve të BMM u kërkoi kanaleve transmetuese të ribalancojnë raportin e minutazhit.

²⁴ Duke u bazuar në raportin e OSBE/ODIHR ekzistuan disa keqinterpretime të nenit 140 të Kodit Zgjedhor ku gjatë monitorimit BMM përfshiu reklamat me pagesë në llogaritjen e minutazhit televiziv për partitë, si edhe nuk paraqiti të dhënat në mënyrë të njëtrajtshme. Po aty, fq 20



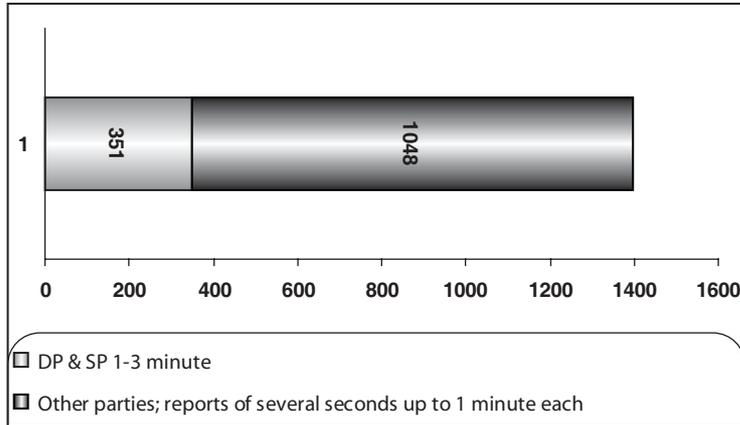
“Before the official part of the campaign began, the media offered extensive coverage to the elections, and TVSH gave favorable coverage for the government – 46% of the total time was devoted to politics. Other broadcast media monitored by OSCE/ODIHR had a tendency to focus their coverage on the government and SP and the DP. Before the start of the official part of the campaign, the LSI was granted about 10% of the political coverage in the leading news editions of TV Klan and Top Channel, but this coverage was insignificant on TVSH and TV Arbëria. At the start of the official part of the campaign, TVSH provided free coverage time to parties, as provided for by the law. Coverage of the SP and DP in its news editions was more covered, with the DP receiving 19% of the time, and the SP 16%.²⁵ Private media had the opportunity to air paid “advertising” on the campaign, with the two largest parties being able to buy time twice as big as that of the smaller parties, as the campaign budget allowed for it. In general, several commitments were made in order to fulfill legal obligations pertaining to coverage devoted to political subjects. However, the two largest parties, SP and DP, received more time in the broadcast media, and the LSI and LZHK to a lesser extent, whereas the smaller parties received more reports but less time. Besides, inequality was noticed in distributing time to the smaller parties, with some receiving less time than the others.

Introduction of Candidates in the 6 TV Stations Monitored by the GADC During the Election Campaign

The election campaign in Albania took place during a nearly three-month period (June 3 – July 1), with the majority of candidates used the (broadcast and print) media to make public their political agendas. The following graph shows these characteristics of coverage in the six TV stations monitored by the GADC:

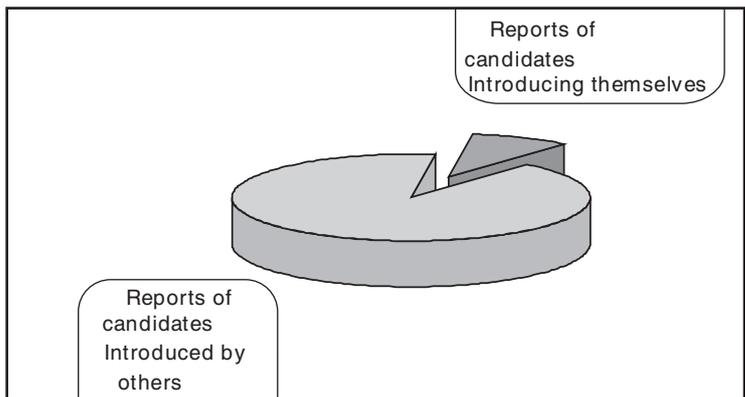
²⁵ Po aty, fq 21.



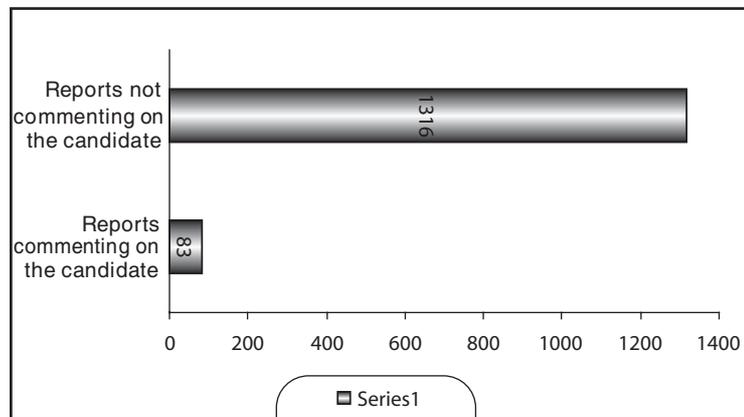


As may be seen from the above graph and as was noted in the OSCE/ODIHR report, the broadcast media focused considerably on the race between the two largest parties, which received the largest time allocation. The smaller parties received a greater number of reports, but shorter.

How many candidates had the possibility to introduce themselves and their political agendas? (We would need to leave party leaders aside)



As may be seen from the above graph, the overwhelming majority of candidates (1273), whether women or men, were introduced by someone else, and only a small number (126) had the possibility to introduce themselves. Besides, only 74 reports (of 1,399 in total) used the allocated time to describe the candidate in question, and 1,325 others did not offer such an opportunity. That is not all, however. What comments were made on the candidate during electoral campaign reports in the media?



Our monitoring found that only 83 reports commented on the candidate (with comments coming from the party leaders or reporters), whereas the other 1,316 reports did not include any comment on the candidate, but rather included coverage of the policy of the party represented by that candidate. It is noted that the majority of comments concentrated on the fight against corruption, party leaders' capability or incapability, the introduction of new candidates, and the emphasis on the country's current problems. These, however, did not include anything constructive on resolving these issues or any special emphasis on the candidate's respective plans. Some sample comments are listed below:

- Gjinushi expressed readiness for the fight against corruption.
- Albania suffers from poverty and unemployment because MPs have not raised their voice in parliament about the country's problems.



- Minority rights are not respected in Albania.
- Democratic Party leader discusses DP's platform and policy on supporting farmers when he comes to power.
- Party leader quoted: "The Socialist Government gave life to this country. We are the ones who will triple the values of this country. We have the moral right to enjoy the roads we have built."
- Criticism over the role of the two main poles of politics that do not respect the code of ethics in their programs.
- Only one of the party leaders speaks and guarantees that the Socialists know what to promise and will keep their promises.

Further on, it is noticed that the six monitored broadcast outlets, reports featuring a special focus of reporters on the candidate's values took up only a small percentage, about 13.22% of the total. The rest of the stories concentrated mainly on electoral campaign programs, thus rendering a very general picture of candidates. Of course, a reporter's focus on a candidate in a report "gives direction" in that report. In most cases, reporters did not have a defined focus and, as a result, hundreds of reports were built on party plans rather than on different candidates' values. This is a result of the fact that the media reflects social norms and it is noticed that "the Albanian electorate is still oriented toward the party, left or right, toward the center or the extremes, rather than toward the values that the candidate stands for as a person."²⁶

²⁶ "Women's movement and the hostage of decision-making," Afroviti Gusho, Shekulli, May 18, 2005.



The “Women in Politics” Element and the Electoral Code

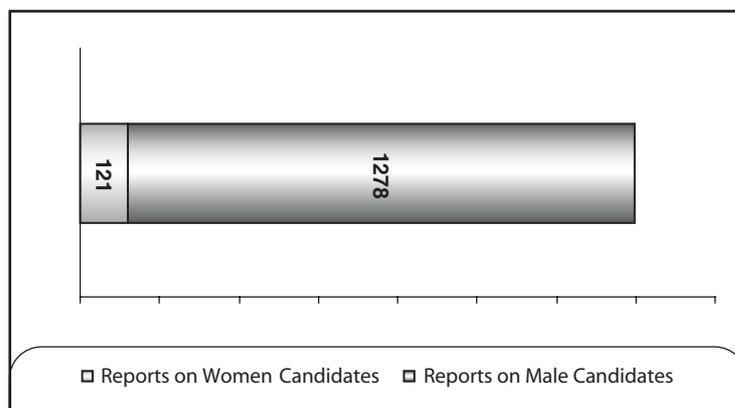
It is strange, however, that although the SP-DP Bipartisan Commission discussed corrections to the Electoral Code in order to consider international recommendations, there was no mentioning of legal modifications as a function of increasing women’s representation in political life. In fact, even the largest parties did not undertake serious measures on increasing women’s representation in the party lists. Lobbying that aims at increasing women’s participation in the political sphere, like in the rest of post-communist Europe, should focus on three levels in Albania:

- the change of gender culture inside the party,
- the change of the mentality of the party leader and senior party representatives, and
- exploiting the media as a tool to sensitize the general public to support a woman candidate.

Understandably, all these factors need to be implemented simultaneously in order to be effective. What happens in the Albanian media when women candidates (in scarce numbers due to the first two factors) try to achieve prominence in the media in order to introduce their political agenda? How are women candidates described and covered in the broadcast media? What space is allocated to them? The following graph speaks clearly on the visibility of women candidates for politicians in the broadcast media during the campaign:

By only looking at this graph on women candidates’ coverage in prime time news editions, it may be clearly seen that there is inequality between women candidates and men candidates. Only 8.6% of the general reports monitored by GADC (of the total 1,399) are about women candidates.





Women Candidates and the Media During the Election Campaign

The observation and way in which Albanian media covered women in politics represent a direct reflection of the existing mentality on women's role in the public realm and their participation in decision-making levels.²⁷ Historically, women in Albania have been and remain deprived of participation in the political sphere and decision-making positions. This phenomenon has had a negative impact on the society's and media's perception of women who are interested in and capable of running for such positions. Similar situations of recent years in pluralism may be noticed in women's representation in local government bodies or senior political party structures. Although the Albanian Government has supported several strategies and objectives (Millennium Goals, Beijing Platform for Action, and

²⁷ In order to obtain a more complete picture, it would suffice to look at the percentage of women in the Albanian parliament from 1920 to date. Regarding the period between 1920 and 1939, we may say simply that the parliament of that time did not have any woman. Beginning from 1946, it may be said that Albanian women's representation in parliament has increased steadily and reached the (highest) percentage of 35.2% (88 women out of 250) in the period 1974-1978. During the transition period, this percentage decreased steadily. "Women in Parliament," Assembly of Albania, Tirana, 2003.



EU Recommendations²⁸ for gender equality in the public realm, state bodies and support institutions demonstrate poor and extremely delayed sensitization regarding the equality of coverage of candidates in the media, which features clear misbalance between women and men candidates. Reform in the electoral code would require a better and more complete promotion of women candidates in the campaign, facilitation of their finances during the campaign, including the provision of certain grants that candidates may need during the campaign, for posters, leaflets, community meetings, maintaining contact with communication agents such as the media, and so on.

As was mentioned in the introduction chapter, before the campaign, the larger parties signed a code of conduct that reads, “We will encourage and concretely support the full participation of women candidates, both as candidates and as members of election commissions.” Nevertheless, no significant effort was noticed during the campaign. The monitoring of the electronic media undertaken by the GADC as well as by OSCE/ODIHR showed that 95% of the political coverage time was devoted to men candidates, whereas the six TV stations monitored by the four reporters involved in our monitoring (including the above stations) showed that only 8.6% of reports featured women candidates. Aside from the lack of initiatives to involve women candidates in party structures or to facilitate their selection, they were further sidestepped through the (lack of attention) in the broadcast media.²⁹

²⁸ Council of Europe Recommendations on equality between women and men in the media note, “media plays an important role in forming individuals’ attitudes and roles and serves as a useful instrument for social change.” Beijing Platform for Action Recommendations’s main objectives are: 1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication, 2. promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women by the media, and 3. important role of the media as an agent for change toward gender equality.

²⁹ Only one of the 38 parties that participated in the elections had a woman chair (Albanian Green Party). The number of elected women increased insignificantly in the past elections, but broadcast media focus was not on this considerable inequality. This fact was easily sidestepped because electoral promises were deemed more important.



Broadcast Media's Concentration on Women Candidates

In every society, the media bears the responsibility of the storyteller of different stories and informs the public by involving a wide variety of viewpoints. Often times, the media shows a tendency to minimize coverage of events and organizations that women are interested in. The media, including different publications on women and girls, does not inform the broad public on the rights and importance of women's involvement in the society and the public realm, failing to take a position toward the government and national mechanisms in order to improve women's status. Many of the media outlets around the world attach no importance to the fact that women and girls are the first to be affected by different economic reforms and to lose their jobs. The fact that women are isolated from the decision-making process is also often ignored by the media.

The media is often used to "cultivate" bias and generalizations are made to illustrate "women's place" in the society as a way to support conservative governments and the public opinion in blaming women for the failure of family policies and in reinforcing the view that women are responsible for different social problems, of which divorce is one.

One of the main popular trends in the media is the one treating women as pretty objects, which causes an identification of women that relies on their fundamental physical characteristics, failing to give prominence to other capabilities of an individual, such as the mental ones. Understandably, we cannot say that the media does not cover successful women politicians and business leaders, but this coverage is rare. One would find more often stories on fashion, fashion shows, movie actors, art, and secrets to eternal youth. These stories do not encourage women and do not promote the feeling of self-esteem, respect, and social responsibility. The role of the media in an election campaign is very important for all candidates in general, but for women candidates in particular. When events involving women politicians are not covered, it is usually due to the



lack of awareness campaigns on this topic and that leads to inequality in coverage of women and men candidates, and is considered anti-constitutional.³⁰

For a woman candidate, “the most difficult thing is to manage to communicate with your electorate. The challenge for women is to ensure the right relations with the public, candidacy from their parties, and the necessary time in public and in the media to present themselves. However, in Albania, men have much more experience than women in political life. They present themselves differently and are much more used to public appearance. Men use stronger language and place themselves at the center of attention (listen carefully to speeches during an electoral rally!). On their part, women do not blow situations out of proportions, they have a tendency to calm things down.”³¹

TV Stations	Large Political Parties		Other Smaller Parties	
	SP and DP Stories	Time Allocated	Smaller party stories	Time Allocated
TVSH	105	2-3 min	360	1 min
TV Klan	10	1-2 min	49	1 min
TV Koha Jonë	54	2-3 min	44	1 min
TV Vizion Plus	70	1-2 min	191	Some seconds
TVA	71	2 min	325	1 min
Top Channel	41	2-3 min	79	Some seconds to 1 min
Total	351	1-3 min	1048	Some seconds – 1 min



30 Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, “Women in Parliament: beyond numbers” 1998 pg. 37-38.

31 “Compromising sweetness,” Kristi Pinderi, Kult Magazine, March 30, 2005.

Based on the above table, we may say: during these TV reports, women candidates were able to introduce themselves or be present in reports, they were able to use only a few seconds to be shown speaking or attracted the attention of cameras (head shots) for a few seconds. We may conclude (knowing that only 8 women candidates of the SP and 3 of the DP ran for MP, and considering that only 1 chair of a party in Albania is a woman) that, women candidates of all parties had extremely limited time to introduce themselves, their programs, and how this program was related to that of the party they represented. Women candidates of the smaller parties were very discriminated in comparison to those of the larger parties, which had a few more seconds at their disposal. In some cases, while men candidates were offered 1-3 minute reports, women candidates, whatever party they belonged to, only received 30-second reports; one of them only received 14 seconds. We would like to remind readers once again that only 121 reports, of the total 1,399, focused on women candidates. No complaint was submitted to the CEC about the scarce time offered to women candidates. In fact, cameras did not deem these women important enough as to focus on them so that the electorate could get to know them visually. Of course, this led to the fact that in most cases, many capable women candidates, did not win.

Albanian media, both print and broadcast, demonstrates some "loyalty" to the criterion or standard of the male politician, with the latter being usually a man and, women, new faces and images find it very hard to enter into the closed universe of politicians stabilized in the political market. Thus, the greatest attention is focused on "old" politicians, particularly men who dominate Albanian politics. Women politicians who have attracted media attention the most are those who have been part of Albanian politics during the transition years, such as Ermelinda Meksi, Jozefina Topalli, Marjeta Zaçe, Monika Kryemadhi, etc., who are very few.

Poor media coverage of women candidates during July 3, 2005, election campaign created an unbalanced rapport between them and men candidates. One of the reasons for this is the very fact that the Albanian media outlets' market is underpopulated in terms of women and girls in leadership positions. Leaving aside television station News 24 and daily Koha Jonë, which have women chief editors or deputy

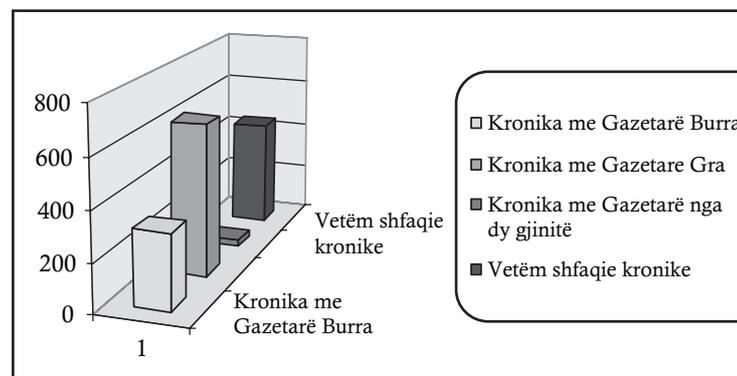


chief editors, the rest of Albanian media outlets are dominated by men and boys. This leads first of all to an identification of problems encountered in pure prejudice toward women candidates, resulting from two reasons:

1. Men are the ones to evaluate women's "merits" and "capabilities",
2. There is no competition according to professional standards, but rather appointments fitting preferences of media directors in Albanian outlets.³²

Let us take a look at the rankings of coverage in prime time news editions in terms of the sex of reporters:

Reports by Male Reporters	306
Reports by Female Reporters	626
Reports by Both	27
Footage only	440



Looking at the above figures, we may say that although the majority of reporters who prepared political reports from the election campaign were women and girls, their focus on the gender equality



³² Mark Marku, "Albanian media structure, a reflex of society's gender stereotypes," published by the Gender Alliance for Development, "Gender issues in the focus of the print media," January 2005.

issue in politics was minimal. This leads to the conclusion that the majority of reporters in the country, whether men or women, are still prey to social stereotypes and prejudice on the importance and role of women in politics.

Women Candidate's Presentation

What can we say about women candidates (so few of them) who, in one way or the other, were known visually by the electorate and managed to present themselves or be presented by someone else?

“Women make up 50% of our society, women are a great force in building families!”

This stance taken by one of the Albanian parliamentary party chairmen monitored during a news report, one notices that women are not yet seen by party leaders as a great force in building and developing the society as a whole, but women's place is always limited to inside the family. This attitude is not seen as unjust by the media and such comments coming from party leaders or men candidates receive a lot of camera focus. Why aren't direct comments on women's role in politics and the society sought from women candidates themselves? Why is it that, in most cases, party leaders are the ones speaking about women candidates? It is noticed that even comments made on women candidates are very generalized and do not speak to their capabilities. The prejudice that women's place and role is and remains the family is conveyed even during the electoral campaign, which rids women candidates of their skills in the public and political realms.

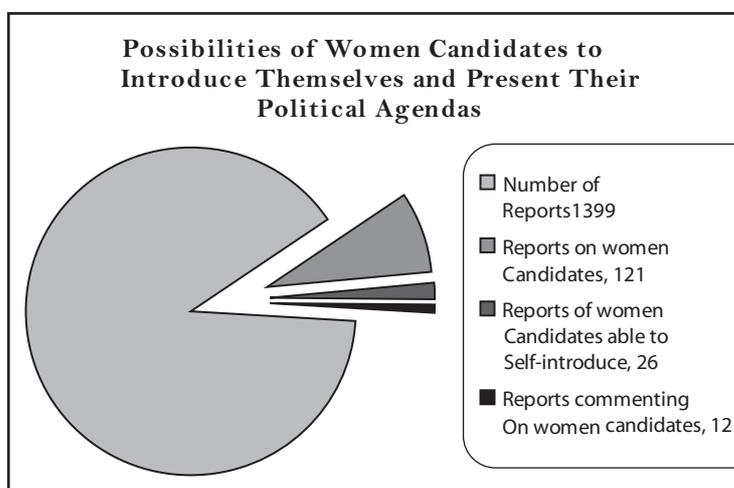
The following table presents a comparative view on television station reports, reports on women candidates, percentage of representation, and the number of reports on women candidates and comments about them.





TV Stations Names	TV Stations		Reports on Women Candidates		Focus on the (woman) Candidate		
	Total Reports	Reports on Women Candidates	% of Representation	Defined- Focus- Reports	Candidate's self- presentation	Comments on her	
TVSh	465	35	7.5%	15	7	5	
TV Klan	59	14	23.7%	6	4	1	
TV Koha	98	6	6.1%	3	2	2	
Vizion Plus	261	29	11.1%	4	8	4	
TVA	396	26	6.5%	2	4	0	
Top Channel	120	11	9.1%	1	1	0	
Total	1399	121	8.6%	31	26	12	

Thus, as may be seen, reports on women candidates were not only scarce in number, compared to the total number. The reporter's focus on the woman candidate, the possibility to present themselves, as well as comments about her show not only a quantitative lack of representation, but also emphasize a great lack in the quality of women candidates' presentation. The quality of women candidates' presentation may be seen visually in the following graph.



Comparing the number of reports in which women candidates were able to introduce themselves to the general number of reports, we notice extreme disbalance. Only 21.5% of the 121 reports on women candidates (or 1.8% of the total of 1,399 reports), women candidates were able to present themselves, and only 9.9% of them (or 0.8% of the total 1,399) were commented upon.

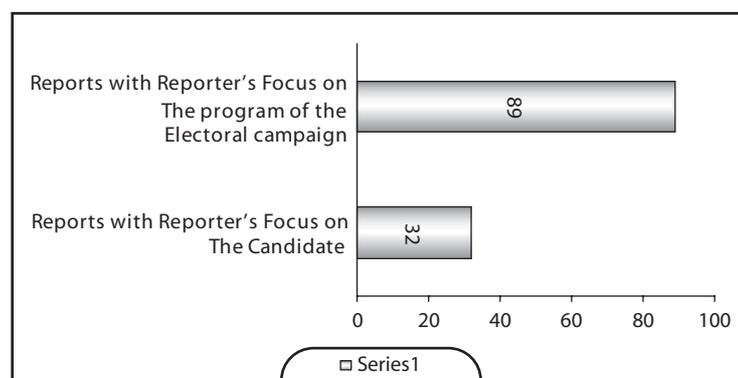
Some comments referring to women candidates:

- **X**huvëli introduces women candidates in constituencies 33 and 35 in Tirana.
- **W**e can only join Europe with educated ladies
- It is said the DP put 3 women on the list.
- Women are the most persecuted stratum of our society



- Politics would be better if there was greater **women** participation.
- The photo of the candidate was focused by the reporter, but there was no voice over it.

Of the 121 reports that offered introductions of women candidates, only 18 of them described the candidates. The rest did not run any description at all.

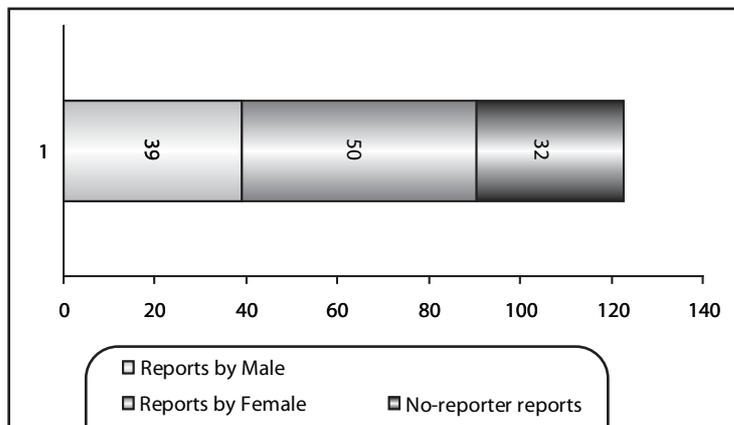


Thus, as may be seen from the above, reports in which the reporter focused particularly on the values of the woman candidate are very scarce. In the cases when there was a particular focus, it was found that the reporter focused on quotes that some of the candidates stressed as important, such as the concentration on women's rights to be equal and women's presence in politics. Comments that candidates made themselves in their constituencies were also at the center of attention, such as: I feel good in this constituency, many changes have been made, let us not stop the pace, or where candidates made press statements, such as: the candidate resigned from her position in the municipality in order to run on the SP ticket. Nevertheless, electoral promises made by party chairmen remained under focus continuously.

“We will create the conditions for a debate after the parliamentary elections on laws of the constitution, that of human freedoms and rights.”



However, slogans and clichés used during the campaign to earn public support, which attracted broadcast media reporters’ attention, remain empty in essence. Why should we wait for the elections to be over in order to talk about human rights, a fundamental part of which are women’s rights? Are these not party platforms to be discussed exactly in electoral reports? Why is it that none of the broadcast media reporters did not think of the question: what are human rights (including women’s rights) that political parties have implemented so far? What would the post-election debate change?



As was noted above regarding the general presentation of candidates, the majority of reporters presenting political reports are women or girls. This leads us to think that social prejudice about women’s place in the society are deeply rooted and affect the objectiveness of news presented in the broadcast media nowadays. As Lavdie Ruçi says, “the fact that even in programs hosted by women journalists, male experts and no women raise problems, is clear testimony to a masculinist society that makes no effort whatsoever toward modernization or liberalization. It seems as if everything that has been said so far has been just demagogy or pure sophism. Neither one can move the world forward...!”³³



33 “Why are women left away from decision-making?!” , Lavdie Ruci, Korrieri, May 20, 2005.

Conclusions on the Portrayal of Men and Women Candidates in the Broadcast Media

The goal of this monitoring is not only the presentation of candidates during the last parliamentary elections, but also the presentation of women candidates compared to men candidates by the broadcast media, as well as the tone of this presentation. Considering these two evaluation factors, we may say that:

- Electoral campaign media reports concentrating on men candidates made up for 90% of the total number of reports and used about 95% of the total time available in the electronic media.
- The majority of different television station reporters were women and girls who did not focus on the issues of women politicians, but rather offered a general approach to party plans and leaders. This observation leads us toward the conclusion that many women reporters in Albania are not conscious of the discrimination that Albanian women face in the political realm. Nor do they undertake initiatives to oppose the “status quo” and promote the individual aspect of women candidates in the broadcast media. Furthermore, the majority of reporters often did not have a focus in handling electoral reports, thus leaving the flow of reports up to men candidates, and consequently, these reports reflect the male ways of leadership so far. This leads to a suffocation of women candidates’ opportunities to present and talk about themselves.
- Monitored reports on the candidates of the July 3 elections mainly focused on the two largest parties, SP and DP, whose candidates had the opportunity to receive better quality coverage compared to the presentation of smaller party candidates, as well as of their women candidates who were even more under-represented. Besides, the monitoring pointed out that there was inequality among the smaller



parties, some of which received much less coverage than the others did.

- We may emphasize that even reports describing women candidates do not speak directly about her, but rather broadly stress the importance of women's participation in politics, commenting that politics would be better off today if women were to be involved in it. In 80% of the reports (121), women candidates were not able to present themselves, let alone to present their political agendas. In cases when they were able to present themselves or be commented on by party leaders (10%) of the reports, comments were not of good quality, underscoring existing stereotypes on women's role in our society.
- As a result, 2 of the fundamental rights related to media during an electoral campaign were violated: 1) the right of candidates (particularly of women candidates) to present and make public their political agenda and, as a result, 2) the right of voters to make an informed decision.

Women Politicians' Visibility in the Print Media - Observations

This monitoring was carried out in order to create an idea on the image of women candidates in our country and to look at how the media (not just the broadcast one) influences this image. Newspapers offered a wide variety of stories, but the print media in general focused on the political race between the DP and SP. According to the OSCE/ODIHR report, "Some (media) displayed an evidently partisan editorial line and harsh criticism of specific parties. A number of the print media did not respect the campaign silence period."³⁴

In these stories, the photos of women candidates were only reserved for well-known names, which either come from previous

³⁴ Ibid, p. 22.



years of experience, or as a result of powerful promotions by the party supporting them. Often times, the premises where these women are interviewed are either the different respective party conventions, or important meetings between political forces. In some cases, parties' press conference halls where these women were making press declarations, or in even less cases, at the time of their meetings with the electorate, were used. You find no photos of a candidate, or affirmed politicians being at the center of her meeting with the electorate. Even in the cases when this happened, the purpose was to focus on the leader. In general, photos depict moments of official meetings and we find no considerable pieces aiming at offering expanded information on the women candidate, her political platform, or work during the year. As Majlinda Bregu says on the importance that media attaches to the work of a woman, "I am surprised by the fact that you become interesting only at the moment you put on your political suit. As long as you remain out of it, your professionalism remains in the dark."³⁵

In fact, very often, reporters consider it acceptable to pose a question like one asked of Ms. Topalli: "Is your election as Parliament Deputy Speaker flattery on the part of the DP, or is it related to your contribution and merits?"³⁶

One would never find such a question asked of men candidates for politicians during the campaign. Why are reporters always inclined to allude that women politicians are not capable and do not deserve their place in the political realm? Such a question would not be acceptable, on the contrary, intolerable, even for a young candidate in politics, let alone for a politician as Ms. Topalli who is widely known by the public.

In another story, one notices that the author tends to describe the woman candidate under the disguise of the "important" husband.³⁷ Brixhida Kokëdhima who ran under the green flag is not the centerpiece of the story, although the story is devoted to her. In fact, the author considers that he will draw more readers if he



³⁵ "Aromë gruaje" Zefina Hasani, Revista Klan, 19 Mars, 2005.

³⁶ "Fjala e Shkodrës", Xhevahir Osmani.

³⁷ Brixhida Kokëdhima: Une gruaja qe dua te ndryshoj politiken 15 Tetor, 2004, Intervistoi për Panoramën Shaban Sula.

mentions the fact that only a forced position would drive publisher Koço Kokëdhima to enter into politics. That is how the reporter prefers to begin the story. From that moment, the author diverts the focus from the candidate and concentrates it on her husband. This discriminates the woman candidate indirectly. Brixhida Kokëdhima explained that her decision to enter into politics and to run for MP is beyond her husband's decisions. The story sheds light on her political aspirations: concern about the environment and, in particular, following the strong stance of the media she runs against the government plan to build a waste processing plant in the Kashar area. "I believe that I can successfully lead the aspirations and programs of the Albanian Greens and justify citizens' hopes for a healthy environment, for an environment-friendly behavior, and for human and transparent politics," she says. Nevertheless, different allusions create another image. Sentences such as, Brixhida Kokëdhima, wife of the known publisher Koço Kokëdhima, tend to not only offer facts about a woman attempting affirmation in politics, but also to identify her as "someone's wife." In the case of the interview of Ms. Kokëdhima, one notices the claim that her candidacy is closely linked with her husband's businesses. Or, the author goes even farther by mentioning that maybe that is why it was deemed convenient that she position herself so powerfully in the Albanian Green Party.

We may also note that there were some good stories in the print media that analyzed and criticized different factors of women's participation in politics and their running for MP in the last elections. These stories feature important comments by female reporters on gender and women's participation in Albanian politics. Very little is spoken and written about the woman candidate. "Albanian women, MPs, heads of local government bodies around the country, do not have much opportunity to talk about their work, and talk about how that succeed to carry out several roles at the same time in order to be where they are."³⁸

38 "Women in leadership: road paved for new generations to go farther," Dorina Hamzallari, *Metropol*, April 14, 2005.



We may say also that there are stories that clearly describe the role of a woman candidate and praise her work for Tirana. One of them was entitled, "It is our turn now," by Zefina Hasani, published in Klan magazine, on May 14, 2005. It is a story that pauses to talk about Mimi Kodheli, a Socialist Party candidate. The story displays extensive information whereby the candidate manages to emphasize her views and also to discuss about her challenges and plans in politics. In fact, it would not be excessive to accept not only that the space devoted to the story is satisfactory, but the quality of the questions also speaks to the awareness of the reporter on the candidate's figure and her work so far. The same story also reflects upon two other women candidates, among which is Filloreta Kodra of the Socialist Movement for Integration, providing a detailed presentation of the candidate's achievements and her political plans for the future in her constituency.

Certain stories also include a little column under the photo of a woman aspiring to become a politician, which provide details on her biography. Such was the case, for instance, in "Panorama", April 20, 2005, "LSI Deputy Chairperson Speaks; Filloreta Kodra – We will win because we have international support." The professional biography of a woman candidate, incorporated in the story, helps the reader not only to be informed about the political agenda of a candidate, but also to understand her capacity and values so far.

Thus, it is noticed that:

- Newspapers offered voters a variety of political standpoints. Nevertheless, the print media generally focused on the race between the two largest parties.
- Women candidates were extremely under-represented in their presentations compared to men. The majority of stories, comments about them were not of good quality at all. Reporters sufficed to generalize party campaigns or concentrate elsewhere, such as on the husband, the business, etc., as a way to rid the woman candidate of her leadership skills in politics. This is a reflection of our society's stereotypes and prejudice on women's place in the society.



Recommendations

- The role of the media should be that of informing the public in an objective manner. As a result, news coverage should not be discriminatory, prejudiced, or supportive of existing social stereotypes. Instead, it should be sensitive to gender issues.
- The media has a key role to play in presenting images of politicians and, as such, it should not act as a traditional mirror of traditional stereotypes created in the society. On the contrary, it should turn into an agent of change in its approach to women or through the fair coverage of their activities. The media should take part in creating a new dimension of dividing roles through gender and not fall prey to the existing mentality.
- The media personnel, from editors to reporters, from the publisher to the ordinary reporter, should become aware that the histories they include in their stories often violate gender balance, which is very important for the consolidation of democracy and its supportive structures. The media has a key role to play in increasing women's role in democratic processes and should try to convey this message in every possible way.
- In a world where funding is very important in politics, good media visibility makes up for the lack of financial resources, which are often more limited for women politicians than they are for men. Considering the small number of women in politics, the media should try to offer them the appropriate space to reflect their achievements and document their work, rather than handle them as second-hand players of the political sphere.
- The government should restructure its policy on involving women in politics and on their coverage in the broadcast and print media, in order to provide for equal visibility opportunities for both sexes. The government should work to involve media representatives in training or other programs about the importance of promoting gender



equality, of portraying women not in the traditional way, and of placing at the center of attention the fact that immense damages are caused by women's underestimation in a society. Therefore, the development and use of various ways to inform the public, as well as the use of different media campaigns on the role of men and women should be stimulated, in order to achieve equal opportunities for both sides. The placement of this issue under media focus aims at offering the general culture and new ways of conduct and attitudes, at the foundation of which is mutual respect and separation from traditional roles.

How can the media culture be improved to achieve gender equality in the society?

- The analysis and monitoring of the media may point out the portrayal of women and men in the media as well as draft effective longterm strategies.
- Gender issues should be incorporated into editorial policies (not only during election times), codes of ethics, and advertising policies, avoiding sexist language and eliminating stereotypes.
- Continued training and sensitization of reporters and media editors on gender issues. Positive models in the media should be promoted and encouraged, thus advocating positive attitudes, positive behaviors, and efficacious ways of communication. Implementing new communication and education models we will lead our society toward gender equality.

Reports monitored during the election campaign often said, "If there had been more women's participation in politics, politics would be better today.....". However, it would maybe be more accurate to say, "If the media could give equal coverage opportunities to women and their agenda in politics, the percentage of women's participation in politics would be higher today!"



Instead of a Closing

Debates about a new reform of the electoral code have resumed again in the country and, so far, there has been no mentioning of engaging to ensure a higher percentage of women's representation in politics. We should not forget that they make up 52% of Albania's population! As Martin Leka says, "Parties should not forget that any unfulfilled percentage promise is equal to a debt!!" How many women candidates should sacrifice the tiring work of a life and how many generations need to perish before these debts are paid and we can see a fair representation of Albanian women in decision-making positions? If political parties lack the good will to set into motion a representation percentage system for women, why should one such be implemented in the electoral code as well?

The fourth United Nations Conference and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) recommended that governments that are signatories to relevant international conventions should set aside a quota of 30% of parliament seats for women. Understandably, arguments supporting the importance of this participation are several, but we may mention first of all that equal opportunities for women and men are a fundamental part of human rights. Secondly, the equal participation of women and men in decision-making levels is important because the interests of both sexes must be reflected clearly and fairly. And, thirdly, women's participation in decision-making institutions has led, in many countries of the world, to an improved quality of governance.³⁹ Let us not remember that Albania signed these conventions years ago, however their implementation is not yet included in the priority lists...

³⁹ "Women in politics as a quality of democracy" Eglantina Gjermeni, Shekulli, May 21, 2005



Annex

Monitoring Questionnaire

This questionnaire was drafted in order to monitor the coverage of women and men candidates in the main news editions. The questionnaire provides for monitoring not only time allocation to women and men candidates, but also the tone of candidates' presentations: whether they had the opportunity to display their political agendas during the defined time, visibility during the day and on which channels, as well as the sex and focus of the reporter, which in most cases determines the "direction" of the story and the candidate in question. These factors, intertwined with each other, create a clearer idea on the role of the electronic media in presenting candidates.

I. General data

- I.1 TV Station.....
- I.2 Date/Month.....
- I.3 Time of newscast.....

2. Election campaign stories.....

- 2.1 Presented candidate (name, last name):
- 2.2 Order of presentation.....
- 2.3 Reporter's focus/ What does the candidate talk about?
- 2.4 Is someone else talking about him/her.....



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2.5 How is He/She described?.....

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2.6 Comments made about her/him.....

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2.7 Who prepared or presented the story?.....

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2.8 Time allocated to each?.....

3. Other comments.....

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