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Media coverage of female politicians in Slovak Republic during the
presidential elections in 2009

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By
Lenka Babaríková
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Abstract

The coverage of female politicians in Slovak Republic during the presidential elections in 2009

by

Lenka Babaríková

Slovak Republic is a country where women are still underrepresented in the public life. Only recently, after the Parliamentary elections in June 2010, a woman became Prime Minister of Slovak Republic. Slovak and international media appreciated Slovakia for being a first country in central-eastern Europe to have a female leader of the country (Zsilleova 2010).

This fact doesn't change, that women are almost absent from high posts in Parliament, Government, public life, media or high managerial posts. Women in Slovakia still have a long way to the equality.

This study focuses on the way female candidate for President Iveta Radičová is represented in the media during 2009 campaign. The research compares her coverage with male candidate's coverage.

The coverage of personal traits of candidates was gender biased and media mentioned female candidate's gender very often, meanwhile they didn't mention male candidates gender except in few occasions.

However, there was no gender bias in the coverage of candidates' viability, the issues discussed, and the tone of coverage. Even though male candidate was favored in amount and prominence of coverage, he was covered in more negative way, which can turn his advantage into disadvantage.

Keywords: media coverage, female candidates, female politicians, gender bias, stereotyping

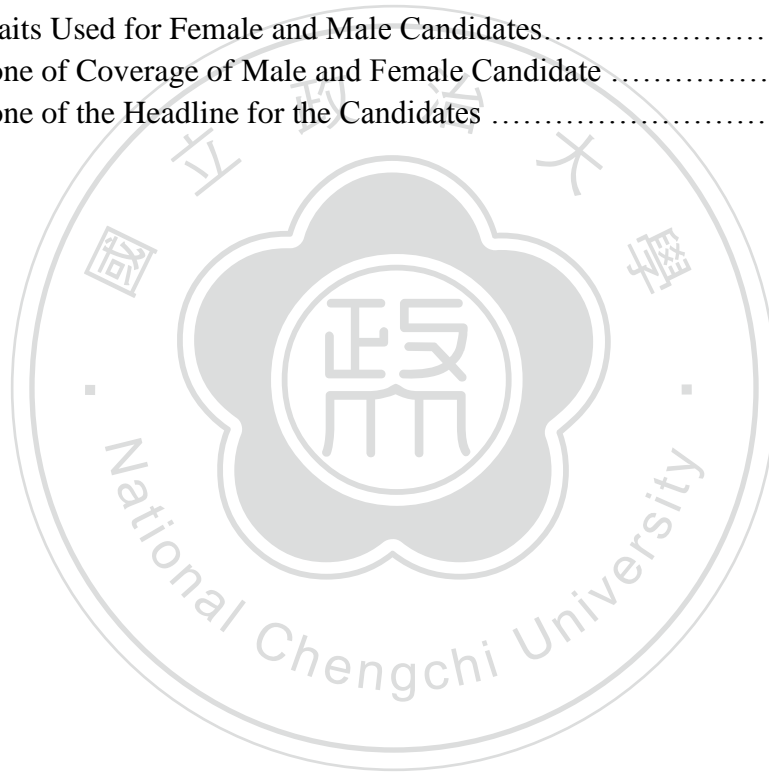
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1. Introduction

The media are very influential in modern society and the way political candidates are covered in media can influence voters' decisions. In this study I would like to examine the media coverage of male and female candidates in presidential elections taking place in Slovakia on March 21st, 2009 the first round and April 4th, 2009 the second round.

Women in Slovakia are still underrepresented in politics; during the parliamentary period of 2006-2010 only 18% of elected representatives in The National Council of Slovak Republic (Parliament) were women (www.nrsr.sk), the Government in the same period counted only with 12.5% of female ministers (<http://www.government.gov.sk>). After the Parliamentary elections of 2010, 15.3% of the new Members of Parliament for the period 2010-2014 are women. The Government for the same period has 14.3% of women, but for the first time in the history of Slovakia, and even in the history of Czechoslovakia, a woman became the Prime Minister of Slovak Republic, Ivetta Radičová will lead the Government for the next four years.

In the academic field, this will be the first study of the way how the female politicians are covered in Slovakia.

1.1. Women in media

The topic of coverage of women and more specifically of female politicians in the press is highly important and worthy of study because women still haven't reached equality with men in many aspects of life. This phenomenon should be observed, and also it should be determined

whether or not it is changing over time, therefore new research is needed to complement the studies previously done.

Cross-cultural comparisons are also necessary because women`s situation differ among cultures. Each culture has its own set of values, societal norms, and attitudes toward the role of women within the family, work place, and public life, and there is a necessity to compare the situation of women in different settings.

The results from European Union and from countries with different political systems and historical backgrounds are valuable. Past studies have concentrated more on the coverage of male and female politician in US, Canada, Australia or UK (Norris 1997; Atkeson and Krebs 2008; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Fridkin, Kenney et al, 2009), but there are not so many studies from European countries¹, and there are almost no studies in the region of Eastern Europe, in the so called post-communist bloc. The available studies of women in Eastern Europe focus more on violence against women, female NGO`s or other female- related topics, but not on the coverage of female politicians in the media (Mitchell 1998; Acsady 1999; Ibroscheva 2007; Hardy, Kozek et al. 2008).

There are numerous reasons for studying the most recent presidential election, in which three of the seven candidates were female. The first reason is that the second strongest candidate in this election, Iveta Radičová, was a woman. From the beginning, she was viewed by media and public as a candidate that would most probably pass to the second round together with Ivan Gašparovič, the candidate who eventually won the elections. It is important to examine whether

¹ Except UK.

or not she was covered in the media as much and in the same way as her opponent, the current president of Slovak Republic, Ivan Gašparovič.

This is a unique opportunity in the Slovak Republic to study media coverage of male and female candidates during elections, because this was the first time a woman candidate for the post of President of Slovak Republic had an actual chance to pass to the second round and possibly win, and she was perceived as a strong competitor to the favored male candidate.

The presidential elections are a prime case for the study of coverage of male and female candidates, because parliamentary elections in Slovakia are not very much concerned about individuals, but about the party as a whole, so normally there is not much possibility to study the difference between the coverage of men and women.

This study counts with settings different from similar studies in other countries, such as United States of America, where the president acts as the head of the state, and has an important role in the politics of the country. In Slovakia the position of the president in the society is more ceremonial, with the Prime Minister of Slovak Republic occupying the most politically powerful position. Consequently, during the campaign, there normally aren't many articles about the incumbent because of coverage of his official duties. Ivan Gašparovič was running to be re-elected, so he was campaigning and at the same time he was serving as the President of Slovakia.

1.2 Purpose of the study

In the Slovak presidential elections in 2009, there were seven candidates for president, and three of them were women. The purpose of this study will be to examine whether one of the female candidates is represented in Slovak media the same way as one of the male candidates.

From the seven candidates for president, two candidates passed to the second round: one man, and one woman; in order to reach more clarity, simplicity, and better possibility for comparisons of the two rounds, the analysis will only observe these two candidates during both rounds.

To fulfill the purpose of the study the research will focus on the aspects of the news coverage related to *quantity*, *prominence* and *content* of the coverage. In terms of content of coverage concepts like *gender- biased coverage*, *viability coverage*, *male / female issues*, and coverage of *personal traits* and *tone of the coverage* will be covered.

1.3. Background information

Slovakia became an independent state on January 1st, 1993, after the so called Velvet Divorce with the Czech Republic. Slovakia is a parliamentary democratic republic with a multi-party system. The head of state is the President; however his functions are mostly ceremonial and representative. In 1993 Michal Kováč became the first president of Slovakia; he was elected by Parliament for a five year term. In 1998 the Parliament was unable to choose new President, and Slovakia remained almost one year without an elected president; the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament served his functions. Because of this situation the law was changed and in 1999 President Rudolf Schuster became the first directly elected president of Slovakia, he was elected by direct popular vote for a five year term. Only three direct elections have been held up to now, in 1999, 2004 and 2009.

1.3.1. System of presidential elections in Slovak Republic

The elections in Slovakia start with the announcement of the presidential elections by the Parliament. Prospective candidates have 21 days to announce their candidacy. They need to have a support of at least 15 Representatives of Parliament or of 15,000 citizens in order to be eligible to join the first round of the elections. If one of the candidates receives 50% + 1 of valid votes in the first round, he or she is elected president. If president is not elected in the first round, two candidates with the highest amount of votes advance to the second round of elections. The candidate with majority of votes in the second round wins the elections, and becomes the new President of Slovak Republic.

In elections of 1999 there were 10 candidates for the first round and only one of them was a woman. She obtained 6.6% in the first round; therefore she didn't pass to the second round. In the 2004 elections there were 12 candidates and none of them was woman. We could call the year 2009 "the year of women" in Slovak politics, because there were seven candidates, three of them were women. Iveta Radičová obtained 38.05% in the first round, so she was able to pass to the second round of the election.

The first round of the election was held on March 21st, 2009. The official presidential campaign for the first round lasted 15 days, starting on March 6th. The moratorium for the first round of elections started on March 19th, 7:00 am and lasted until the day of the first round of elections.

The moratorium period is the time when the candidates are forbidden to engage in campaigning, but the press can still report on the elections. This time is meant to give voters

time to decide without any interfering factors. In each elections, the moratorium is closely observed, however there are always complaints about candidates breaking the rules.

There were seven candidates in the first round of 2009 elections. But this study will only focus on the two strongest candidates who passed to the second round.

Ivan Gašparovič (born March 27, 1941) studied law at the Comenius University in Bratislava. He joined the Communist Party in 1968, but he was later expelled. In 1992 Gašparovič joined the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). In July 2002 Gašparovič left the HZDS and founded a new party, the Movement for Democracy (HZD). Gašparovič assumed the office of President of Slovakia in 2004. He was running for re-election in the presidential election of 2009, he got 46.71% of the votes in the first round, which assured him passage to the second round.

Iveta Radičová (born December 7, 1956) studied Sociology at the Comenius University in Bratislava. Until the year 2005 she was dedicated to her academic career, and she was nominated Professor² of Sociology in 2005. Radičová served as Slovakia's Minister of Labor from 2005 to 2006, and she became a member of the Parliament in 2006. She is currently a member of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKU-DS); she led the party in the parliamentary elections on June 12th, 2010. SDKU-DS together with other three center-right parties formed the Government. She was named Prime Minister of Slovakia by President of Slovakia on July 8th. She is the first female PM in the history of Slovakia and even

² In Slovak Republic, Professor, is legal pedagogical- academic title awarded to PhD. teachers at university with excellent results in their teaching and research. The title is awarded by recommendation of the university and is awarded by the President of Slovak Republic, It is the highest academic title possible in Slovak Republic.

Czechoslovakia. In the first round of presidential elections 2009 she got 38.05 % and passed to the second round.

The second round of presidential elections was held on April 4th, 2009, the moratorium period started 48 hours prior to the beginning of the elections³. Iveta Radičová lost to Gašparovič; she obtained 44.47% of all the votes. The turnout of the second round was higher than in first round, it was 51.7%.

1.3.2. Situation of women in Slovakia

On May 1st, 2004 Slovak Republic entered European Union, and now shares many legislative norms, policies, and future goals with European Union. There are many initiatives in European Union to ensure future development toward the equality of men and women in every aspect of the life, but in reality the equality is yet to be established. During the last few years there has been a general increase in the number of women in decision- making positions in Europe, however the report of European Commission (2009) shows that women still remain a minority in political and economic spheres. In parliaments, governments and ministries and in the private sector too, power is still firmly in men's hands.

According to *Ženy a Európske voľby: súhrnná analýza*⁴ (2009) the majority (77%) of women in the European Union think that men are dominating politics. Most women believe that a female presence in politics would bring a positive change. In addition, the majority of women think their interests are not presented and guarded by politicians currently in power.

³ April 2nd, at 7:00am

⁴ Women and European Elections: general analysis

Slovakia ranks the third place in the European Union in regards to the percentage of women who think that personal and family life keep them from career (2009). Basic equal rights are rooted in the Slovak constitution, and recently new regulations have helped to strengthen equality, but in reality, the status of women is not actually the same as the law ensures, mainly in the domains of labor market, private and political life, family and career. The dual roles of mother and employee are typical for Slovak women, and balancing these can be difficult. They have to deal with low participation of men in family duties and in education of children (<http://www.employment.gov.sk/>).

During the communism period, all the adults had an obligation to be employed, but after 1989 Slovak women “faced a new challenge of a choice, which they never had during socialism: a choice of staying at work and being economically and professionally active or of returning to the ‘traditional role of women’, in the family and with children” (Bitušíková 2005, p.1006).

The position of women in politics during communism was also different than after 1989. During communism, there were quotas for participation of women in politics. These quotas demanded 30% participation of female politicians in the Parliament (Filadelfiová 2002). These quotas have helped to ensure at least 20% of female participation. As an example, the percentage of females in Parliament was 29% from 1985 to 1989, but according to Bitušíková (2005) this relatively high number of women in the legislative authorities and their participation in politics was only a formality, and their impact on decision-making was minimal.

After the fall of communism, the quotas were abolished and the percentage of women in Parliament dropped down to 12%. From then on the number was changing, at the present time; the number is around twenty percent. In 1998, there were 16.9% of female candidates for posts in the Parliament; in 2002 this percentage saw an increase of 6% to 23.1%. In the 2006 elections,

there was a slight decrease to 22.5% of female candidates and in 2010 the decrease continued to 21% of female candidates (http://www.aspekt.sk/info_det.php?IDcentrum=132). When the numbers of female candidates for Parliament are as written, it implies that the number of female politicians who get to the Parliament after the elections is even smaller. After the parliamentary elections of 2010, 15.3% of all the members of Parliament are women (http://www.nrsr.sk/Static/sk-SK/Poslanci/zoznam_volby_2010.html).

Filadelfiová and her colleagues studied possible gender gap in Slovakia based on facts of parliamentary elections in 2002. They claim that although Slovak women obtained voting rights quite early, when the first Czechoslovak Republic was established, and Slovakia signed international agreements about gender equality, there are still differences found in social and political life of men and women (Filadelfiová, Bútorová et al. 2002). From 1990 until 2002 women in Parliament were represented by only 12-15%, and there were only about 10% of women in Government; at one point of time, there were no women in the Government. Authors blame the processes of nominating candidates within political parties, because only parties can decide who will enter the list of candidates, and the parties set the order on the list. Consequently, the lower numbers in the list of candidates result in lower possibility of entering the Parliament and Government. Normally, only few women actually appear within first ten positions on the list.

Chaloupková (2004) agrees with this conclusion, and she also mentions the underrepresentation of women in Slovak politics. She compares the low presence of women in Parliament and Government with the comparatively high presence of women in political parties, but she also says that many times women themselves give up on politics, because of the fighting nature of politics, or that women are less interested in politics.

1.4. Stereotyping and gender bias

There are numerous studies related to women in politics, and some of them are concretely related to media coverage of women in politics. These studies offer various results and various points of view on the topic. Many of these studies use concepts such as *stereotyping* or *gender-biased coverage*. For better understanding of the topic these concepts need to be explained.

Stereotyping means attributing assumed characteristics to all of the members of a group. Pippa Norris defines stereotyping as “describing individuals positively or negatively on the basis of characteristics seen as common to their group” (Norris 1997, p.153). Stereotyping is in a way inevitable, because we often don't have all the information we need to make an accurate judgment. It serves as a shortcut in thinking. Stereotypes are common and they make up for the information we miss about individuals. Stereotypes are unconscious, and we use them to evaluate situations, and to understand the world. (Everitt 2005b) But as Norris (1997) claims stereotyping also leads to creating an inaccurate image of individual person, since it ascribes characteristics to them which may be not true.

This implies that *gender stereotyping* is attributing certain characteristics to women and men as a group. These characteristics only offer summary information about a group, and can be very imprecise and don't express the uniqueness of individuals.

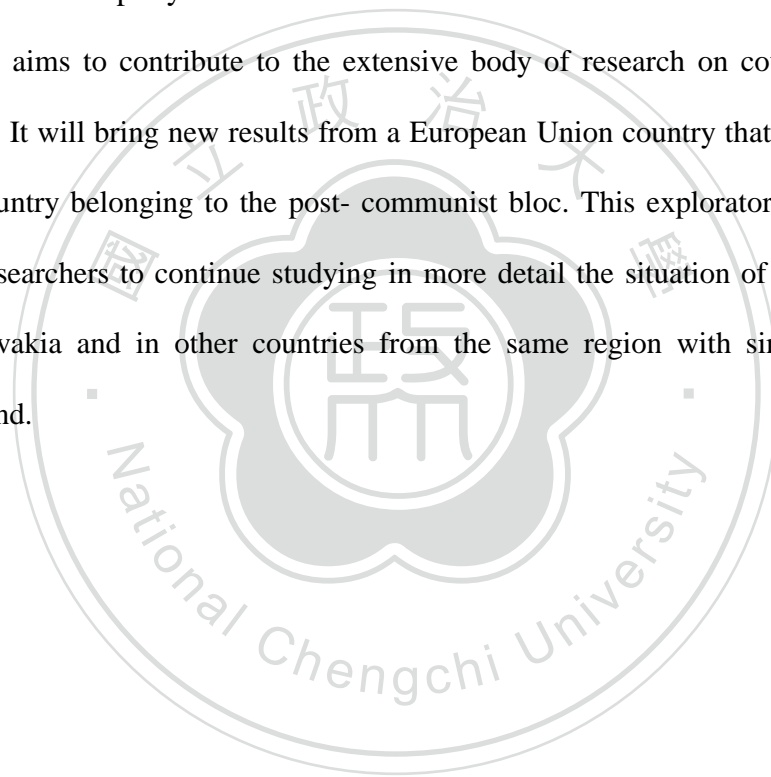
Consequently, *gender-biased coverage* is coverage of men or women that is based on gender stereotyping, and depicts men and women in a gender- stereotyped manner.

Previous studies found support for the claims that people use these gender stereotypes, so they can easily implement new information about a candidate into their personal portrait of the candidate (Norris 1997; Kahn, Kenney et al. 2009).

1.5. Contributions

As mentioned previously, the women in Slovakia haven't reached equality with men to the extent that it is ensured in the laws of Slovak Republic. Female politicians also have a more difficult situation than men in politics. Female politicians are underrepresented in the Parliament and Government, and their chance to get on the candidate lists (and consequently to Parliament and Government) for their party is much lower than for men.

This study aims to contribute to the extensive body of research on coverage of male and female politicians. It will bring new results from a European Union country that hasn't been studied before; from a country belonging to the post- communist bloc. This exploratory study will open a space for other researchers to continue studying in more detail the situation of female politicians / candidates in Slovakia and in other countries from the same region with similar historical and political background.



2. Literature review

2.1. Private / Public paradigm

To see where the gender-bias comes from, many authors examine the influence of the role of women in the society and in the home environment from a historical point of view. For much of history, women have been perceived as family care-takers, and as a part of the family, private environment. Men in contrast were considered as a part of both private and public realm. The structures and values of these realms differ essentially (Garlick, Dixon et al. 1992; Brown and Gardetto 2000). Women who cross the borders into the realm of behavior that is considered traditionally male are often considered as undermining the image of what a good woman should be.

The difference between the private and the public sphere is that the private sphere is concerned more about the individual needs driven by natural instincts: need for food, security, procreation, etc. The public sphere is universal; it includes the community as a whole, not just a small portion of it. According to Garlick, Dixon and Allen there is a hierarchy, and the public sphere is superior, “it draws on man’s higher capabilities, his mind, his courage, his ability to make choices concerning the good and bad and sacrifice himself for an abstract whole” (Garlick, Dixon et al. 1992, p.5). This public/private paradigm influences the representation of women who crossed the boundary of the private sphere and entered the public area; and it prevents the actions of women from being considered according to the same criteria as those of man.

According to Jackson and Russo (Jackson and Russo 2002, p.1), women in the mass media are often reduced to images that are “constructed through dominant discourses of social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and national. These images of women are fairly

restricted, and often introduce the frame of victimization and the relation between power (men) and powerlessness (women). Van Zoonen and Sreberny (2000) add to this and claim that women are often perceived through images or signs, however in contrast men are perceived in a more natural way. Ross and Sreberny (2000) note that a female politician will always be considered a *woman* first, but a male politician is considered as a *politician*. His gender is something that is rarely, if ever, brought into consideration.

Media coverage of women is a frequently studied topic. In her article *Uncovering the Coverage*, Joanna Everitt (2005a) claims that we use the unconscious gender stereotypes and images / signs of women to understand how politicians, female and male, should behave, and our image of how women and how politicians behave usually don't overlap.

2.2. Coverage of female politicians

Politics is a public domain, and the information people have about politics comes in great extent from mass-media; not from personal experience or from direct observation (Jimenez, Gomez-Escalonilla Moreno et al. 2008). This gives the media influence over the public, but it also creates a mutually beneficial relationship between politicians and the media. They both need each other: media depend on politicians to have stories to write about, and politicians need the attention of the media in order to get the attention of the public. In her book review, Everitt (2005b, p.388) found out that all of the authors to some extent believe that “news is produced, reported, and edited by men to be consumed by men. The result is that men's issues and concerns are regularly privileged over women's, and politics continues to be presented using a masculine narrative”. Women and their concerns are still considered novelties.

Kahn observed this topic in numerous studies (1992; 1993; 1994; Kahn, Kenney et al. 2009) and she discovered that women have a harder time influencing the media's agenda than do their male counterparts. Everitt (2005b, p.388) also noted that women's points of view are frequently ignored by the media, and when women appear on news the way they are presented "reflects the biases and assumptions of those who define the public—and therefore the media—agenda".

The first studies dedicated to topics on women in media or concretely female politicians in media surged thanks to feminist movements, the research on the content of news coverage in 1970's illustrates both the achievements and frustrations of the movement's efforts to receive favorable attention for itself and feminist issues (Larson 2001). The majority of the studies done on women and politics can be divided into the topics of advertising, news coverage of the women's movement and feminist organizations, first ladies, women candidates, women politicians, and women in the electorate.

It seems that the results on the topic of coverage of female politicians in media are changing over time. We can say these alterations reflect the changing situation of women in society, but women are still not equal to men in each aspect, so the coverage of men and women also differs even in the present time according to country, social and political situation, etc.

Early studies from the US (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Kahn 1992; Norris 1997) of the coverage of women showed that men were more frequently covered than women, and the coverage of men was more salient, which means more coverage on the front page for men and more coverage in the style section or the women's section for women. Women's coverage was substantially different from men's coverage. Coverage of women was more focused on a women's role as mother or wife, on her appearance, on "feminine" personal traits such as

empathy, sensitivity; as opposed to male traits such as rationality, independence and the like. Media also focused more on female issues for women; these issues include those in which women are perceived as more effective in handling, such as education, child care, or health care. Men's issues are those issues that men are perceived as more effective in handling such as the economy, crime, or war.

2.3. The amount and prominence of coverage

The fact that news is considered men's domain can be a reason why the news stories are concerned more about men in general (Keith 2009). Also, the past research showed that men were more frequently covered than women, not only in the field of politics, but in general (Kahn 1992; Kahn 1994; Norris 1997). There have been more articles dedicated to male politicians, and much more coverage on the front page, whereas females tend to appear more in the later sections of the newspapers such as culture, fashion, design and such. Bosá (2007) noted that women in Slovakia after 45 years old are not likely to appear in media at all; normally only in the case in which they are wives of politicians, politicians themselves, or artists.

More recent research has shown that differences in amount and prominence of coverage between men and women are gradually shrinking. Many recent studies in the US failed to demonstrate that female politicians were covered less frequently than male politicians (Atkeson and Krebs 2008; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008).

There are actually cases where women received more coverage than men in certain periods or in certain situations, such as during the so called Year of the Women in the USA

(Norris 1997); or in the 2000 Senate and gubernatorial primaries (Bystrom, Robertson et al. 2001); but there are still differences in coverage content.

Fridkin and Goldenberg (1991) have said already in 1991 that the increase in coverage of female politicians can be caused because female politicians are considered as novelties in the politic arena, and they can be perceived by media as newsworthy. Even though this is an old article, it can still be applicable in the Slovak Republic's political environment, where female politicians rarely achieve high posts in politics.

The background literature tells us that in the past there were differences in the amount of coverage of male and female politicians, but these differences have been shrinking over the recent years. Because there is no study which could tell us how it was or how it is nowadays in Slovakia, there is a necessity to look into the current coverage and observe the situation. Therefore, the first research question is concerned with the amount of coverage of both male and female presidential candidates, which is phrased as follows:

***RQ1:** Is there a difference in the amount of coverage of male and female candidates?*

As the literature review suggests, sometimes there is no significant difference in the amount of coverage of male and female candidates, but the difference can lay in the prominence of coverage. The second research question will deal with this possible difference.

***RQ2:** Is there a difference in the prominence of coverage of male and female candidates?*

2.4. The content of the coverage

Even though the difference in the amount of coverage is shrinking, some authors (Ross and Sreberny 2000; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Kahn, Kenney et al. 2009) say that it is still

possible to observe differences in the content of the coverage. There is still more coverage concerning women`s appearance, viability or personal traits, and there is still much more emphasis on women`s issues for women in media.

2.4.1. Gendered coverage

Some differences are found in the coverage of so called *gendered coverage* of politicians. Gendered coverage for women means that there is a higher trend of reporting about their marital and family status, whether they have children, and the tendency to directly mention their gender, mention that they are women or female politicians (Ross and Sreberny 2000; Bystrom, Robertson et al. 2001).

Everitt (2005) has noted that women in Canada are more likely to receive coverage focused on their relationships, they are more likely to be described as wives of, daughters of, mothers of and even girlfriends of some man; as if they are expected to have some man in the background helping them, telling them what to do.

Ross and Sreberny (2000) and Everitt (2005a) noted in their studies that when media are writing about female politicians, they often mention their age, their appearance, and their clothing. Moreover, they even mention the organization and cleanliness of their offices.

Sometimes female politicians are converted into sex objects, or on the other extreme are presented as asexual. If they are portrayed as a sex object that is considered disruptive to the world of politics, this can consequently diminish their credibility (Everitt 2005a).

Everitt (2005a) also states that the hair or clothes of female are much more likely to be discussed than her stands or opinions, while the appearance of male politicians is rarely discussed.

This research will also pay attention to the gendered coverage; there is a need to see whether Slovak female politicians are also covered by Slovak media in gendered way, therefore the third research question will be as follows:

RQ3: Is the female candidate portrayed by Slovak media in gendered way?

2.4.2. Viability coverage

The literature also points out that female politicians receive more coverage on their viability. Further, Larson (2001), Bystrom and Banwart (2005) mention that female politicians in the US receive more negative coverage on their viability. Media focus more on the kind of news containing “horse- race” coverage, the qualifications of female politicians for the office, or statements regarding her age and experience.

However, Fridkin and Kittilson (2008) didn't find any differences in the viability coverage of male and female politicians during the election campaigns in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

This study will focus on the coverage of viability of the female candidate as well. This concern is expressed in the next research question.

RQ4: Is there a difference in the viability coverage of male and female candidates?

2.4.3. Issue coverage

It seems that there is a persistent tendency to cover men and women differently in issue coverage and trait coverage even in the most recent studies. The difference in issue coverage expresses the difference in the substance of coverage of male and female politicians. According to Fridkin and Goldenberg (1991) male issues are considered to be those issues that men are seen as being more competent in handling (e.g. foreign policy, defense, economy, and agriculture, etc.); female issues are those where women are considered to be more capable (e.g. education, minority rights, environment, abortion, social programs, health care, etc.). As the data of their study indicate, male issues are much more prevalent in the US media than female issues, and overall male issues are covered more frequently for men, and female issues are discussed more frequently for women. Fridkin and Kittilson (2008), and Everitt (2005) confirmed these results in their studies done in Canada and the US, and Fridkin and Kittilson added that “emphasis on male issues is almost twice as likely for male candidates than female candidates” (2008, p. 382). These results show a consistent difference in the substance of issue coverage given to male and female politicians, and the results were consistent cross- nationally in this study.

This kind of coverage (male issues for male candidates, and female issues for female candidates) can influence the voters perceptions of the candidate: voters are more likely to perceive women talking about women`s issues as more effective and men talking about men`s issue more effective (Iyengar, Valentino et al. 1997). Candidates can take advantage of it, if they are able to direct media attention to issues convenient for them. But as it was discussed earlier in the paper, this task can be very difficult for politicians in general, and even more difficult for female politicians.

For the needs of this study, the issues will be divided into *male issues*, *female issues* and *neutral issues*. *Neutral issues* will be those issues specific for Slovak environment, not mentioned in previous studies, impossible to categorize as male or female issues.

This study wants to examine whether the issue coverage in Slovak Republic differs significantly for male and female candidates. This will be addressed in the next question.

RQ5: *Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of issue coverage?*

2.4.4. Trait coverage

For the definition of trait coverage some authors (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Diekman and Eagly 2000; Sczesny, Bosak et al. 2004; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008) came to an understanding that under male traits we understand those traits that are consistently associated with men and are perceived as agentic. Moreover male traits tend to overlap with leadership traits (e.g., bold, rational, independent, objective, competitive, strong leader, unemotional, aggressive, ambitious, and tough) while female traits are associated with women and perceived as communal traits (e.g., sensitive, empathic, passive, dependent, noncompetitive, gentle, emotional, weak leader, and compassionate). These studies came to the conclusion that the discussion of male traits is more prevalent in general, especially for coverage of male politicians; but coverage of female traits is more common in the coverage of female candidates in comparison with the coverage of male candidates (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Ross and Sreberny 2000; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008).

According to Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), there are traits that are desirable for men and traits desirable for women within the society (Choi and Fuqua 2003; Ozkan and Lajunen 2005). Bem created the list of 20 most common *male*, *female* and *neutral traits* used to describe individuals. The male and female traits defined in BSRI match the male and female traits used in previous studies to define male and female traits in coverage of traits of politicians or political candidates. The *neutral traits* are the ones that cannot be attributed to any gender in particular (ex: happy, friendly, truthful and the like). This study will use all three categories of traits, because of the frequent use of neutral traits in Slovak media.

In this study trait coverage of male and female candidate will be observed as well, and is covered in the following research question:

RQ6: *Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of personal traits?*

2.4.5. Tone of coverage

Previous studies also centered their attention to the tone of coverage for male and female candidates. Some authors claim that the coverage female candidates receive in the media is much more negative when compared with their male counterparts. The tone of the articles and of the headlines written about female politicians is frequently negative, or mixed, while male politicians receive much more neutral coverage (Norris 1997; Ross and Sreberny 2000; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008).

Based on the results from the previous studies, the tone of the coverage will be examined also in this research and it is addressed in the research question seven.

RQ7: Is there a difference in the tone of coverage of male and female candidates?

2.5. Differences between rounds

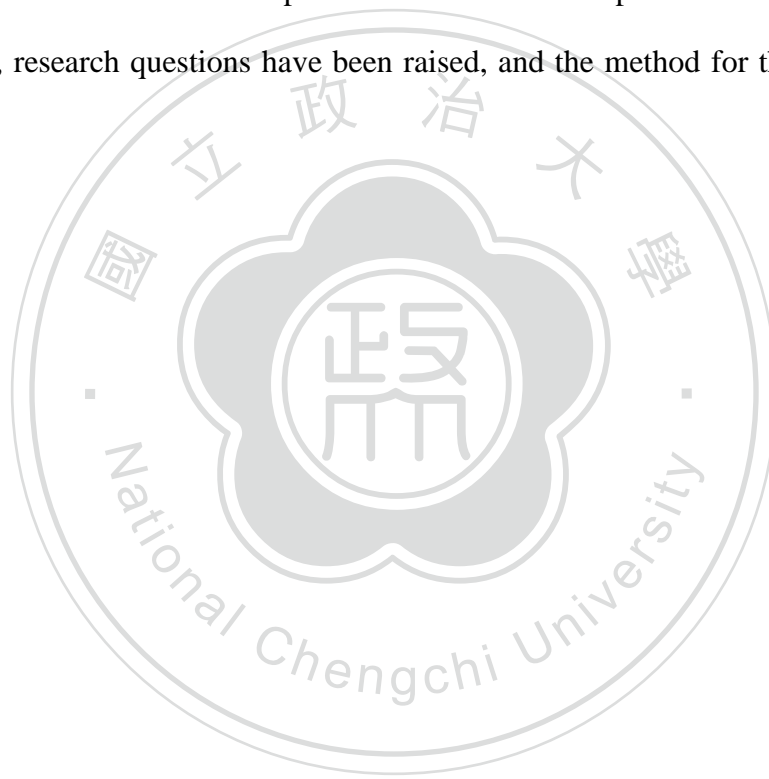
The amount of attention received by political parties or candidates from media during the election campaign can be influenced by an array of factors. A rule of equal amount of attention may be applied by some media, but this principle may be overridden by newspaper values and even journalistic judgments about the political significance or popular support of the candidates. Candidates with less support are often more dependent on media attention for popular recognition and hence for support at the polls. Media attention is particularly important because voters will be initially unfamiliar with the candidates. Past research found a support for a claim that candidates with less popular support receive less coverage (Fletcher, 1987, 1988, Jenkins 1999). If the support for candidate changes the coverage might change as well.

In this study, Iveta Radičová performed very well in the first round of elections, and she received much more votes than originally expected, therefore her coverage in the second round may be different than in the first round. This issue is addressed in the following research question:

RQ8: Is there a difference in female candidate`s coverage between the first and the second round?

2.6. Summary

The literature suggests that even though there have been some improvements in the differences between coverage of male and female politicians in the media; there are still some differences and there is a necessity to observe these remaining differences over time as well as cross- culturally. Based on the literature review, this study aims to examine the situation in media coverage of male and female politicians in Slovak Republic during the presidential elections of 2009, research questions have been raised, and the method for the observation was created.



3. Research method

3.1. Content analysis

A content analysis of news stories about two presidential candidates from two important daily newspapers in Slovakia during the four weeks of official presidential campaign time was conducted. Only two candidates who passed to the second round were included in the analysis. There are various reasons to this decision: the remaining five candidates had substantially less support among voters than the two strongest candidates, so the remaining five candidates were probably reported as less viable independently of the gender.

There was also much less coverage for them independently of the gender. Because in the second round there were only two candidates, it is more consistent to include only these two candidates even in the examination of the first round. This way the competition between one strong male candidate and one strong female candidate can be observed.

Sme and *Pravda* are the largest daily non-tabloid newspapers in Slovakia. Their circulation is close to 70,000 (2007) each, they are non-partisan and they are general newspapers, not specialized in particular subject. The hard copies of the newspapers were used, so the prominence of coverage could be observed, also the database LexisNexis doesn't contain any of the newspapers.

Due to the short time span a census was conducted. The study included the articles from both newspapers starting from March 6th, to April 4th, 2009⁵. There were 26 issues for each newspaper, a total of 52 issues, including both election days and moratorium time, because

⁵ There are no newspapers on Sunday in Slovakia.

newspapers are allowed to report also during the moratorium period, although they cannot publish the results of polls.

The unit of analysis for this research are newspaper articles, all the articles whose main headline contains one or both candidates' names; the word *candidate* and all its possible versions due to Slovak declination and gender of nouns; the word *election*, but not the verb *vote*; and the word *campaign* were included.

The articles whose headline includes the word *vote* were not included, because these articles are more concerned about the voters, not about the candidates. The articles in form of interviews were not included because these kinds of articles don't represent how the media report on candidates, but how the candidates talk about themselves. The articles placed in the section *Advertising* were also excluded, because it is a place paid by candidates and therefore it is expressing what the candidates want to say, this doesn't indicate how the media are representing the candidates.

There were 173 articles which fulfilled the criteria to be included in the analysis, of which 94 were from daily newspaper *Sme* and 79 were from the daily newspaper *Pravda*. Nine articles included in the analysis based on the criteria mentioned above were not related to the two candidates, but to the elections in general sense, about other candidates, or about other politicians related to the elections. Because they fulfilled the criteria they remained in the analysis.

In order to analyze the content of articles, the coding scheme used by Miki Caul Kittilson and Kahn Fridkin (2008) in their study called "*Gender, Candidate Portrayals and Election Campaigns: A Comparative Perspective*" was adapted. This increases the validity of the measurement and creates a possibility of comparison of results with this study.

The codebook was created and written in both English and Slovak language; coding sheet used only English. The researcher served as the first coder, and the second coder, a Slovak native female, coded approximately 10% of all the articles. There were two training sessions before coding the articles, the researcher offered explanations of all the concepts from the codebook, followed by a demonstration of how the researcher would have done coding of a selected article. The 10% of the articles to be coded by the second coder were selected using a simple random sample, in order to do that, a list of all the articles was created and a table of random numbers was used to select the articles.

33 out of 40 variables showed 100% agreement between the coders, and the Krippendorff's Alpha of all these variables was 1. The remaining seven variables showed intercoder reliability with Krippendorff's Alpha from 0.633 to 0.927, these variables were all measured in interval-ratio levels, which makes it difficult to have 100% agreement.

For the variable *length of article* the Krippendorff's Alpha was 0.633⁶. The variable *number of sentences about female candidate* showed the Krippendorff's Alpha level of 0.728⁷.

⁶ This variable was coded as a total number of sentences in the article, the difference between the two coders was in all the cases one sentence. For example coder one coded the article as having 30 sentences while the coder 2 coded the same article as having 31 sentences. When coding all the articles, this disagreement was solved by counting the total number of sentences twice to prevent any mistakes

⁷ The differences between the coders were only of one sentence, and only in articles longer than 28 sentences. While coding all the articles, more attention was paid to who was the subject of each sentence in order to decide, whether the sentences were talking about female candidate or not.

Similarly, the variable *number of sentences about male candidate* noted the Krippendorff's Alpha level of 0.801⁸.

The variables *number of horse race sentences for female candidate*, *number of horse race sentences male candidate*, *tone of article for female candidate*, and *tone of article for male candidate* had Krippendorff's Alpha level between 0.857 and 0.927, which is according Neuendorf (2002) acceptable in most situations. To see the detailed results of intercoder reliability test see the Appendix II.

3.2. Research questions

The review of international and Slovak literature about women in media and women in politics leads to the research questions related to women in Slovak politics and women in Slovak media. This is an exploratory study, there are no previous studies and therefore no results that could be used to hypothesize the outcome of the questions, consequently this study only use research questions, without using hypothesis. The questions are in detail explained in the literature review; here is only a summary of the questions:

⁸ The differences between coders were only one sentence. These differences happened only in articles longer than 37 sentences. While coding all the articles, this was also resolved by paying more attention on the subject of each sentence.

RQ1: Is there a difference in the amount of coverage of male and female candidates?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the prominence of coverage of male and female candidates?

RQ3: Is the female candidate portrayed by Slovak media in gendered way?

RQ4: Is there a difference in the viability coverage of male and female candidates?

RQ5: Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of issue coverage?

RQ6: Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of personal traits?

RQ7: Is there a difference in the tone of coverage of male and female candidates?

RQ8: Is there a difference in female candidate's coverage between the first and the second round?

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. The amount of coverage

All the measures used in this research are discussed in detail in the Codebook. To measure the amount of coverage of candidates, each article was coded as covering *only female*, *mainly female*, *equal weight*, *mainly male*, *only male*, and *not about candidates*.

Because the unit of analysis is the newspaper article, the articles needed to be coded in a way to express to what extent each candidate is mentioned in each article. Based on the preliminary review of the articles, there weren't many articles talking about only one of the candidates, many of the articles mentioned at least once the other candidate, that is why there is a necessity to distinguish to what extent do they mention the other candidate. This measure can be

used in interesting ways in analysis. Many questions can be raised when defined in this way⁹. For some uses this variable can be recoded to use only three categories¹⁰. Category *not about candidates* was used, because there was also a possibility of article fulfilling the criteria to be included in the analysis, but eventually not discussing any of the two candidates.

Other measure for the amount of the coverage will be the number of sentences for each candidate in the article. The sentences will be counted because sentences are closed ideas, and even though they can differ in length, they are easier to be observed as other possible measures¹¹.

If both candidates were mentioned in the same sentence, this sentence was counted for both candidates.

3.3.2. The prominence of coverage

For the prominence of coverage the location of the article was observed¹². The newspapers are different in the format, one is folded and the other is not. For the newspaper *Sme* (folded), there was a measure of location *front page below the fold* and *front page above the fold*;

⁹ Example: Are there more *only male* or *only female* articles? In the articles of *equal weight*, whose name appears more often in the headline? In the articles coded as *mainly male / mainly female*, how much space is dedicated to the other candidate? Are *only female* articles shorter or longer than *only male* articles? Etc.

¹⁰ *Male, Male and female, and Female.*

¹¹ Paragraphs can differ significantly in length; lines used in each newspaper differ in the length; words are difficult to count when hard copies of newspapers are used, when counting words there is a lot of chance of error.

¹² Front page, national news, local news, sections like culture, women, etc.

for the newspaper *Pravda* (not folded) there was a measure of *location in the upper side of the front page or lower side of the front page*¹³.

Attention was also paid to whether the candidates` names were mentioned in the headline. The number of pictures of each candidate was also counted.

3.3.3. Gendered coverage

Gendered coverage emphasizes gender characteristics of candidates in articles, and includes mentions of *marital status*, information about *spouse, partner or children* of candidate¹⁴. *Direct mentions about gender* of the candidate¹⁵ were also counted: “Miss Radičová” and “Mister Gašparovič” counted as direct mentions of the gender as well. The reason is that in reporting normally the title of miss/ mister is not mentioned, the Slovak media practice is to use only the surname of the politician.

As the literature review suggests the physical appearance of female is sometimes mentioned by the press, therefore there was a measure for the number of sentences mentioning physical appearance of candidates¹⁶.

Considering that the Slovak language has male and female nouns, the word *candidate* in female form¹⁷ did not count as gender coverage.

¹³ Comparable with below and above the fold.

¹⁴ Number of sentences about the spouse or partner were counted; it was also observed whether children of the candidates were mentioned.

¹⁵ Example: this woman, the first woman, miss Radičová / mister Gašparovič, this man, etc.

¹⁶ Example: clothes, accessories, hair, make up, etc.

3.3.4. Viability coverage

Viability coverage focuses on chances of candidates to succeed in the elections. Statements about horse- race coverage¹⁸, possibility of candidates to pass to the second round or win the elections, mentions about candidates` qualifications for serving in the office, and past experiences, as well as statements about the lack of qualification of candidates were counted. The mentions about successfulness or unsuccessfulness of campaign were counted as well.

3.3.5. Issue coverage

Issue coverage is the kind of coverage focusing on issues or policies; it includes explanations of candidates` opinions about issues, candidates` plans to change policies in the future, etc. The number of articles mentioning issues was counted and the issues that appear were measured. To assess this concept an open- ended measure was used; the reason is that the issues being discussed in Slovak environment are different from the issues being discussed in other environments, or in previous research, the coder had to observe what issues were mentioned in each article and code each issue.

¹⁷ Male form: kandidát, female form: kandidátka.

¹⁸ candidates actual position in the polls

3.3.6. Personal trait coverage

Personal trait coverage is characterized by expressions of personal characteristics of candidates. The articles mentioning personal traits were counted and the traits mentioned were measured. This concept was measured as the previous one, using an open-ended measure, for the same reason as the previous concept. The coder had to observe what traits were mentioned in each article and code them.

3.3.7. General tone of headline and article

The tone of the headline and the tone of the article were observed separately. Because in each article there can be male and female candidate mentioned; tone of the article for each candidate were coded separately. So there will be a measure for the tone of the coverage of female and the tone of the coverage of male candidate in each article. The tone will be evaluated based on the overall impression for given candidate after reading the article.

Positive tone is the one which is affirmative, convenient and favorable for the candidate. It expresses agreement or support with candidate's personality, or with what the candidate said or did.

Neutral tone is the one which lacks bias, the author is not taking any side, it is the tone which is not positive, nor negative. It doesn't make any judgments. Normally it is just statement of facts.

Mixed tone is when both negative and positive tones are coexisting at the same time.

Negative tone is opposed to the positive one. It is inconvenient, unfavorable for the candidate; it expresses disagreement, contradiction and opposition to the candidate.

Because *Sme* and *Pravda* are considered non-partisan, non-tabloid newspapers, it is expected that the tone in many cases would be neutral. There is a difference between mixed and neutral coverage, mixed tone means that there were positives and negatives mentioned about the candidate, which is different from the neutral coverage, which lacks bias.

3.3.8 Differences between rounds

The coverage of female candidate in the first and the second round was compared. The research question eight related to these differences is a summary question including various categories: the researcher looked into the differences in the amount of coverage, prominence of coverage, and content of coverage as well.

After the collection of data was concluded, the researcher did the analysis of the data. Hence this study is a census; there is no need to deal with sampling, and sampling errors. Percentages, means and crosstabulations were used for analyzing and comparing the results.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptives

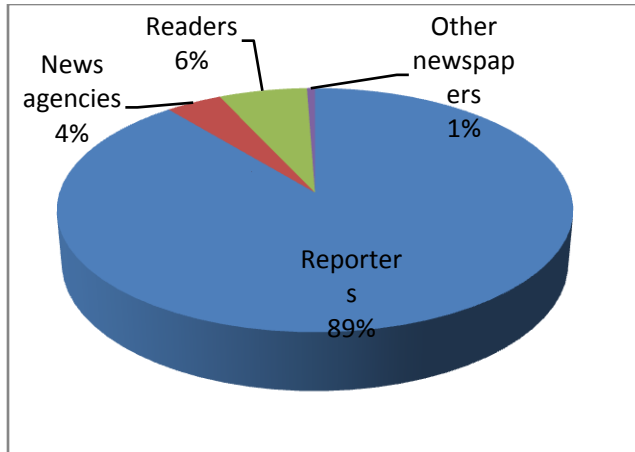
As mentioned previously, there were a total of 173 articles included in the analysis, of which 94 (54.3%) were from daily newspaper *SME* and 79 (45.7%) from daily newspaper *Pravda*. The articles were almost equally distributed between the first round and the second round. The first round accounted for 48.6% of the articles and the second round had 51.4% of the articles. Almost a quarter of the articles were published on Mondays (23.1%), and least articles were published on Fridays (8.1%).

As two different daily newspapers were observed for male and female candidate coverage, the researcher looked into differences between the two newspapers; however their coverage had very similar characteristics, therefore there is no need to pay attention to inter newspaper differences.

In terms of news source, about ninety percent (89%) were written by reporters, while the rest of the articles came from news agencies, readers or other newspapers (Figure 1). In order to be able to create the whole picture of how the Slovak newspapers portray female and male politicians, the analysis included all the articles that fulfilled the criteria independently from what was the source of the article¹⁹.

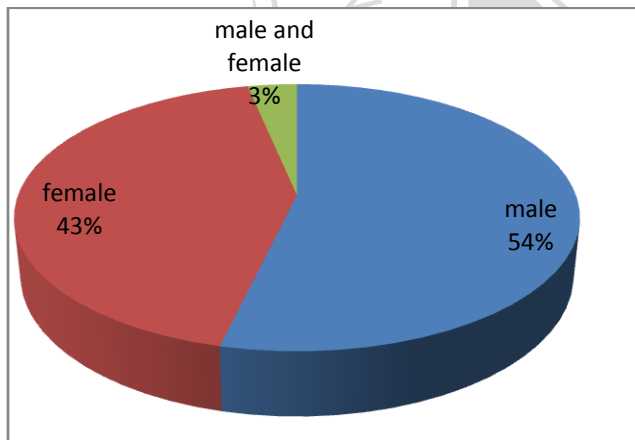
¹⁹ The articles in form of letter to editor, written by readers, may be more subjective, but there is always a gatekeeper who chooses these and not other articles, so it also expresses the way how media portray the politicians. Articles from advertising sections were not included, because it is a paid advertising which doesn't express the newspaper's point of view. Articles in form of interviews were excluded as well, because these articles express how the candidates talk about themselves.

Figure 1: Source of the Article



Regarding the authors of the article, in 30.1% the author is unknown, due to the origin of the article from a news agency, or due to the use of newspaper's abbreviation of the name of some journalists. As shown in the Figure 2, from the articles with known author, in more than fifty percent, the author is male. In 43% the author is female and only three percent of the articles have as an author a team of male and a female journalist.

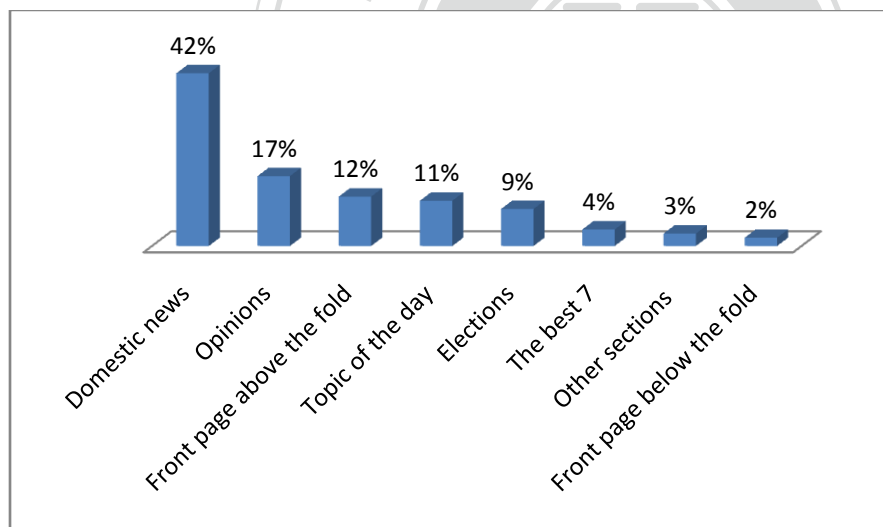
Figure 2: Author of the Article



The length of the articles varies from a minimum of three sentences²⁰ to a maximum of 108 sentences. The mean length of article is 23.73 sentences.

Accordingly to the character of presidential elections being an internal affair, more than forty one percent of the articles were published in the *Domestic news* section. There were 17.3% of articles published in the section *Opinions*, 12.1% were published on the *front page above the fold*, 11% in the section *Topic of the day*, and 8.7% of articles were located in special section *Elections*. Remaining 9.3% of the articles were published in other sections not mentioned above. For details see Figure 3. None of the articles were published in sections like Economic news, International news, Regional news, or Culture.

Figure 3: Location of the Article



²⁰ There is a special section 7 Naj (7 Best) in the newspaper Pravda, which chooses seven most interesting events of the day and describes them in a very short manner: therefore there were some very short articles, as the one with only three sentences.

4.2. Amount of coverage

After reviewing the descriptive information about the articles used in the study, the results of the research will be offered in next sections. The topic of amount of coverage is addresses in the research question one:

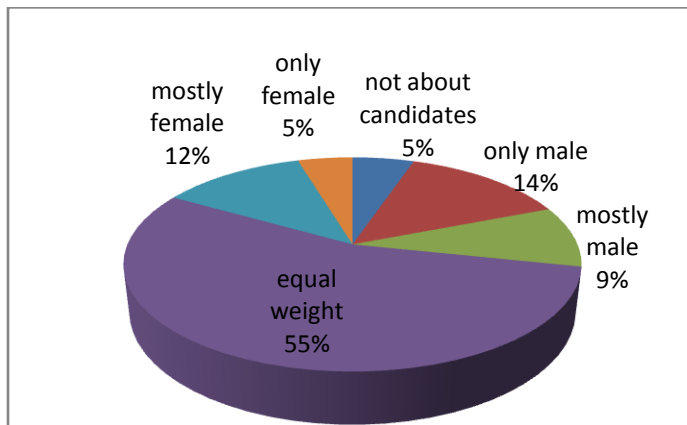
RQ1: Is there a difference in the amount of coverage of male and female candidates?

As shown in the Figure 4, there were nine articles included in the analysis that were not discussing any of the candidates. The study's selection criteria allowed these articles to be included in the analysis, but these articles didn't mention the candidates²¹.

More than a half of the articles (54.9%) were talking about both candidates, providing important or substantial information about both of them. The articles talking about male candidate, comprised from articles talking mostly about male (9.2%) and only about male (13.9%), embrace almost a quarter of all the articles (23.1%). While articles talking mostly about female (12.1%) and only about female (4.6%), comprised 16.7% of all the articles, which makes a difference between the amount of coverage of male and female candidate of 6.4%.

²¹ This situation was caused by the headline including the words *candidate*, *election*, or *campaign*, but the article was talking generally about the candidates, elections or campaign, and didn't talk concretely about candidates.

Figure 4: Amount of Coverage



If we take into account articles talking *mostly* and *only* about one of the candidates²², 58% of these articles talk about male candidate and 42% talk about female candidate.

There are 24 articles focusing only on male candidate, while 8 articles focus only on female candidate, which means there are three times more articles dedicated to the male candidate only. Moreover, in average the articles dedicated to only male are longer than the articles dedicated to only female candidate. The average only male article is 19.7 sentences long, while the average only female article is 16.1 sentences long.

When the number of sentences about candidates is counted, we can see that overall number of sentences for male candidate is higher. There are 1,103 sentences about male candidate and 939 sentences about female candidate during the studied period.

Based on these findings we can state that Iveta Radičová was less frequently covered than her male counterpart in Slovak media during the presidential election in 2009.

²² Excluding articles talking about both candidates, and articles not talking about candidates

4.3. Prominence of the coverage

To the prominence of coverage, this research dedicated research question two:

RQ2: *Is there a difference in the prominence of coverage of male and female candidates?*

Comparing the prominence of the coverage of two candidates means to compare the *location of the articles*, whether the candidates' *names appear in headline* and whether there is a *picture of the candidate* attached to the article.

In terms of the location of the article, there are 25 articles located on the front page (both below and above the fold), 64% of these are articles focusing both on female and male candidate. More than a quarter of the articles on the front page (28%) focused only or mostly on male candidate, and less than ten percent (8%) of the articles on the front page were talking mostly or only about female candidate.

As we can see in the Table 1, from the seven articles on the front page dedicated to male candidate, four of them were articles written about *only male candidate*; but from the two articles on the front page talking about female candidate, none of them was talking about *only female candidate*²³.

There are no other differences from gender bias point of view in terms of location of the article between female and male candidates.

²³ Both articles are categorized as *mostly female*, which means that male candidate is also mentioned in the article.

Table 1: Crosstabulation of Location of Article and Sex of Candidate

Location	gender of the candidate						Total
	not about candidates	only male	mostly male	equal weight	mostly female	only female	
Opinions	4	6	2	13	5	0	30
Topic of the day	1	2	2	9	4	1	19
The best 7	0	0	1	4	0	1	6
Elections	1	1	3	7	1	2	15
Other sections	0	0	2	3	1	0	6
Front page above the fold	0	2	3	14	2	0	21
Front page below the fold	0	2	0	2	0	0	4
Domestic news	3	11	3	43	8	4	72
Total	9	24	16	95	21	8	173

Regarding the candidates' names appearance in the headline, there is no difference between the candidates. Male candidate's name appeared in headline in 51 articles, and female's candidate name appeared in headline in 50 articles.

As for the picture of the candidate attached to the article, around one third of the articles for each candidate came with a picture of them attached. Specifically it was 34.7% of articles for male and 31.2% for female candidate.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that in terms of location of the article female candidate received less prominent coverage during the presidential elections in 2009, but this is not true in terms of candidates' name appearing in the headline and in terms of pictures attached to the articles.

4.4 Gendered coverage

To assess the idea of gendered coverage, a summary question was raised, there are various categories included in it:

RQ3: *Is the female candidate portrayed by Slovak media in a gendered way?*

According to the literature review, there are many possible categories measuring whether the coverage of candidates is gendered. In this study there were six categories included:

- marital status of candidates mentioned in the articles
- number of sentences talking about candidates' spouse or partner
- children mentioned in the articles
- number of sentences talking about the physical appearance of the candidates
- direct mentions of the gender of the candidates
- age of candidate mentioned in the articles

The category less presented in Slovak media, was the category *of children of the candidates*. In total, only four articles mentioned children of one of the candidates; and children of male candidate were mentioned three times, meanwhile children of female candidate were only mentioned once. According to this category, there is no gender bias toward female candidate.

The categories *marital status of candidates* and *age of candidates* showed the same results. In total, the age or marital status of candidates were mentioned in eight articles, and in both categories, four articles mentioned female's age and female's marital status, and four

articles mentioned male's age and male's marital status. These categories didn't show any gender bias toward female candidate.

As far as the mentions of the *physical appearance of candidates*, there were eleven sentences in seven articles stating something about Radičová's appearance. For male candidates, there were eight sentences in five articles about male candidate's appearance. The difference between the candidates is not very strong.

More obvious difference can be observed in the coverage of *candidates' spouse or partner*, nine articles mentioned at least one of the candidates' spouse or partner; seven of these articles mentioned female candidates' spouse or partner²⁴ using twelve sentences in total. Three articles talked about male candidate's spouse, and used four sentences in total. We can see a gender bias in this category. Media are focusing more on the partners of the female candidate than on the spouse of the male candidate.

The category, where the gender bias is most visible is the category of *direct mentions of candidate's gender*, from all the mentions of candidates' gender, almost ninety percent (89.7%) were referring to female's gender, the remaining 10.3% were referring to male candidate's gender. Iveta Radičová's gender was brought up in 28 articles (16.2% of all the articles), and in one of the articles her gender was mentioned up to eight times. Ivan Gašparovič's gender was mentioned in 4 articles (2.3% of all the articles), with a maximum of two mentions per article.

In sum, even though the categories age of candidate, marital status of candidates, candidate's children and the appearance of candidate didn't show gender bias toward female candidate, the difference between the coverage of male and female candidates was found in the

²⁴ The media mentioned either her deceased husband Stano Radič, or her partner, with whom she lived during the period before elections, Ján Riapoš.

category *number of sentences of candidate`s spouse or partner*, and even stronger difference in the category *direct mentions of candidate`s gender*.

4.5 Viability coverage

Next category observed media`s focus on candidates` viability. The research question raised was as following:

RQ4: *Is there a difference in the viability coverage of male and female candidates?*

According to the literature, media discuss more often female candidates` possibilities to get elected, and the content of this kind of coverage is often more negative²⁵ than when discussing male candidates. This study fails to find gender bias in the viability coverage.

In this research, there are 117 sentences discussing Ivan Gašparovič`s possibilities to win the elections, meanwhile there are 109 sentences discussing Iveta Radičová`s possibilities to win.

In terms of content of this kind of coverage, as shown in the Table 2, Ivan Gašparovič was more likely to be discussed *as likely winner, or likely winner, but losing ground*, and Iveta Radičová was more likely discussed as *competitive, but gaining ground, or likely winner but losing ground*. This difference cannot be attributed to gender bias, because Ivan Gašparovič was leading in all the polls before the first round, so the content of the coverage only copied the results of the polls.

²⁵ In sense that female candidates are less likely to get elected

Table 2: Horse- Race Content for Male and Female Candidates

Horse- Race Content	Frequency MALE (articles)	Frequency FEMALE (articles)
Noncompetitive, sure loser	1	3
Competitive	1	3
Competitive, but gaining ground	1	13
Likely winner, but losing ground	22	18
Likely winner	22	5
Total	47	42

The development of the tone of the coverage between rounds copied the situation after the first round, when the female candidate succeeded and she passed to the second round with much more votes than expected.

There are other categories that can be taken into account when talking about viability of the candidates: *qualifications of the candidates, lack of qualifications and the coverage of campaign quality for each candidate.*

If we take all the mentions of qualifications into account, Slovak newspaper stated 238 times the qualifications of Ivan Gašparovič, and 35 times the qualifications of female candidate. This difference becomes smaller when we exclude the media use of male candidate's qualification of being President at the time of elections. The fact that he was that time President was stated 199 times.

The reason for excluding the mentions of Gašparovič being President is that the journalists used it mostly to vary the word *president* with the use of the word *candidate* or with the use of his name. Only in few occasions it was used to describe his political experience. After this exclusion, the media stated 39 time qualifications of the male candidate and 35 times the qualification of female candidate.

The statements of *lack of qualifications* didn't reveal gender bias toward female candidate. Against the expectations, the male candidate had four times more statements of lack of qualifications than female candidate. Journalists noted his incompetence in total 16 times, while female's lack of competence was mentioned in total four times.

The *quality of the campaign* of the candidates was not frequently covered in the media. Less than ten percent of the articles (9.2%) addressed the quality of the campaign. The male candidate's campaign was described in more negative and mixed tone (87.4%) than in positive and neutral tone (12.6%). The female candidate had also more negative and mixed coverage (75%) than neutral and positive coverage (25%). However, female candidate had more positive and less negative or mixed coverage than male candidate (see Table 3). Based on these facts we can say that there is no gender bias in term of coverage of quality of campaign.

Table 3: Successfulness of Candidates' Presidential Campaign

Campaign Successfulness	Female	Male
Positive	25%	6.3%
Neutral	0%	6.3%
Mixed	31.2%	37.4%
Negative	43.8%	50%

4.6. Issue coverage

This research also looked into the issue coverage of presidential candidates to see whether there was a difference covering female and male candidates. This concern was expressed in research question five:

RQ5: Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of issue coverage?

The issue coverage was measured by open-ended measure; coder had to detect all the issues in the article, and write them down in the codesheet. The list of issues mentioned was created and these issues were divided into three groups: female, neutral, and male issues. To divide the issues into these groups past research on gender bias was used (Norris 1997; Sczesny, Bosak et al. 2004; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008).

In total there are 30 articles (17.3%) that discuss issues in relation to female candidate, and 42 articles (24.3%) mentioning issues in relation to male candidate. There are 18 different issues mentioned for female candidate, and 19 different issues for male candidate, in total there have been 24 different issues counted²⁶. The male candidate has more issue coverage than female candidate.

Many of the issues were similar to the issues discussed in the past research, but some of the issues mentioned often in Slovak media are typical for Slovak environment, these issues couldn't be labeled as female or male issues, they were labeled as *neutral issues*.

Female issues mentioned in Slovak newspapers during the elections of 2009 were: *abortions, poverty, social solidarity, social security, social issues, pensions, human rights, women rights, gay rights, environment, unemployment, health care, education*. Male issues which appeared within the articles were: *economy, economic crisis and development of the country, foreign policy, domestic policy, judiciary, global topics, exercise of power, construction, fees and taxes, and sports*. The neutral issues were: *candidate's political contacts abroad,*

²⁶ To see the specific issues used, refer to the Appendix III.

possible cooperation with government and SMER²⁷, Slovak- Hungarian relationship, candidate`s political history²⁸, nationalism, functions, and duties of president.

The issues most commonly used for female candidate were *economic crisis and the development of the country, social solidarity, social security and social issues, and nationalism* each mentioned at least five times. The issues most commonly used for male candidate were *social solidarity, social security and social issues, Gašparovič`s political career, economic crisis and the development of the country, and Slovak- Hungarian relationship* each used at least nine times.

After the analysis of the frequency of use of these issues it can be said, that there is no gender bias in terms of media use of issues. The use of male, female, and neutral issues is almost the same for both female and male candidate. The bias in this category would occur if the media discussed more male issues for male candidates and more female issues for female candidates. As in the Table 4, Slovak media discussed female issues in 35.3% for female and in 33.3% for male candidate, male issues in 37.2% for female, in 39.8% for male candidate, and neutral issues in 27.5% for female and 26.9% for male candidate.

²⁷ Political party at coalition during the time of presidential election

²⁸ Gašparovič was a member of Communist Party. The political scandals he was part of in the past were mentioned often. The facts that Radičová was not involved in any political scandal and she was not a member of Communist Party were also mentioned frequently.

Table 4: Female and Male Issues

Issues	Radičová	Gašparovič
Female issues	35.3%	33.3%
Male issues	37.2%	39.8%
Neutral issues	27.5%	26.9%

4.7. Personal traits

Next topic to be observed in this study is the coverage of personal traits of candidates.

This interest is formulated through another research question:

***RQ6:** Is there a difference in the coverage of male and female candidates in terms of personal traits?*²⁹

Overall not many articles discussed personal traits of the candidates, there were 31 articles stating female candidate`s personal traits, and 25 articles talking about male candidate`s personal traits. In contrast with issue coverage, there were more articles discussing traits for female candidate than for male candidate. There was more variety in traits when describing female candidate, 28 different traits were used to describe Iveta Radičová, while 18 traits were used to describe Gašparovič³⁰.

²⁹ This category also used an open-ended measure. All the traits used in the coverage were observed and noted in the codesheet. After examining the traits, these were divided into three categories: female, male and neutral issues according to the literature on gender bias and BSRI (Mosher and Danoff-Burg 2005, Ozkan and Lajunen 2005, Atkeson and Krebs 2008, Kittilson and Fridkin 2008, Lopez-Zafra, Garcia Retamero et al. 2008)

³⁰ To see the personal traits used in Slovak media, see the Appendix IV.

The most frequently used female traits³¹ were: *non-confrontational, dependent, polite, distraught, fair, passive, communicative, calm, sympathetic*. The most common male traits³² used by Slovak media were: *rational, brave, independent, hypocrite, aggressive, and careerist*. The neutral traits used were³³: *nervous, old-fashioned, nice, happy, and not visible enough*.

The most frequently traits used for Iveta Radičová were *nonconfrontational, non aggressive, and polite*, these were used at least three times. All the other traits were used less than three times. The traits used most frequently for male candidate were *hypocrit, dependent, nervous, old-fashioned* and *aggressive* used at least three times.

As in Table 5, when describing and writing about Iveta Radičová, Slovak media discussed female traits in 55.3%, male traits in 29.8% and neutral traits in 14.9%. By contrast, when describing Ivan Gašparovič, Slovak media focused more on male traits, and used male traits in 48.9%, female traits in 22.2% and neutral traits in 28.9%. In summary, male traits were used more often to describe male candidate, and female traits were used more often to describe female candidate, the gender bias toward female candidate is observed.

Table 5: Traits Used for Female and Male Candidates

Traits	Radičová	Gašparovič
Female traits	55.3%	22.2%
Male traits	29.8%	48.9%
Neutral traits	14.9%	28.9%

³¹ Independently of for which candidate it was used.

³² Independently of for which candidate it was used.

³³ Independently of for which candidate it was used.

4.8. Tone of the coverage

The last research question was dedicated to see whether there was a gender bias in the tone of the coverage:

RQ7: Is there a difference in the tone of coverage of male and female candidates?

This study fails to demonstrate that female candidate is covered in more negative way. Against the expectations, the male candidate was covered more often in negative or mixed tone than female candidate. The male candidate was covered in negative tone in 33 articles, and in mixed tone in 36 articles. On the other hand, the female candidate was covered in negative tone in 8 articles and in mixed tone in 22 articles.

Iveta Radičová was covered in neutral tone in 51.4% of all the articles and Ivan Gašparovič in 46.8% of all the articles. Gašparovič had more coverage in negative and mixed tone than Radičová. Consequently female candidate had more articles covering her in positive tone. There were 17 articles written in positive tone for female candidate and one article covering Ivan Gašparovič in positive tone (see Table 6).

Table 6: Tone of Coverage of Male and Female Candidate

Tone	Radičová	Gašparovič
Positive	9.8%	0.6%
Neutral	51.4%	46.8%
mixed	12.7%	20.8%
Negative	4.6%	19.1%
articles not about candidate	21.4%	12.7%

This study also observed and compared the tone of the headlines. For the headlines with female candidate`s name in it, more than half are neutral, and 14% are positive. One fifth is covered in mixed tone and 14% were categorized as negative tone. For male candidate there are fewer headlines in positive and neutral tone and more headlines in negative and mixed tone, the difference is smaller than when comparing the tone of the article (Table 7).

Table 7: Tone of the Headline for the Candidates

Tone	Candidate	
	Radičová	Gašparovič
Positive	14%	15.7%
Neutral	52%	35.3%
Mixed	20%	27.5%
negative	14%	21.6%

4.9 Differences between rounds

After the female candidate passed to the second round of the elections with more support than expected, there was a possibility of media covering the female candidate differently in the second round. The question related to this was as followed:

RQ8: *Is there a difference in female candidate`s coverage between the first and the second round?*

Even though the overall number of the articles was almost equal in the first and the second round, there was a difference between the first and the second round in the number of articles talking about female candidate. In the second round there was an increase of 64% for articles talking mostly or only about female candidate.

For gendered coverage, there was a difference between the first and second round for female candidate in two categories: candidate`s gender mentioned and number of sentences about candidate`s partner.

For the category direct mentions of candidate`s gender, 36.5% of direct mentions of gender occurred in the first round, and in the second round it was 63.5%. Female candidate was covered in more gendered way in the second round of the campaign.

For the category number of sentences about candidate`s spouse or partner, the result is opposite. The majority (84%) of mentions of female`s partner or spouse occurred in the first round.

For female candidate there is an increase of forty two percent in horse-race coverage in the second round. Before the first round of elections, the female candidate had majority of the coverage as *competitive*, *competitive but behind* or *noncompetitive*, *sure loser*, less than forty percent covered the female as *competitive but gaining ground* or *likely winner*. After her success in the first round, the coverage was comprised from 34.8% as *competitive*, *competitive but behind* or *noncompetitive*, *sure loser*, and 65.2% as *competitive but gaining ground* or *likely winner*.

As for male candidate, the situation is opposing. During the period before the first round, his coverage contained three quarters of coverage as *likely winner*, and one quarter of *likely winner, but losing ground*. After the first round this changed to one quarter of coverage as *likely winner* and three quarters of *likely winner but losing ground*, *competitive but losing ground*, *competitive* or *sure loser*. Because the content of horse-race coverage copies the situation during the election, it cannot be attributed to gender differences.

In terms of coverage of candidates' qualifications, both candidates have more coverage of qualifications during the first round, during the second round the coverage of their qualifications decreased approximately 33% for both candidates.

As far as the tone of coverage, female candidate had different results in tone of coverage between rounds. In the second round, she had more positive and less mixed and negative articles. Ivan Gašparovič, opposingly, had more negative and mixed tone articles in the second round.

4.10 Summary

After reviewing all the results for the research questions, it can be summarized that there were no gender bias in terms of *candidates' viability*, *issue coverage* and *tone of coverage* in Slovak media during the presidential elections in 2009.

On the other hand, there were gender differences found in categories of *gendered coverage*, concretely on physical appearance, information on candidates' partner or spouse and direct mentions of candidate's gender. The remaining categories of gendered coverage were not often mentioned in Slovak media.

Similarly, this study found a gender bias in the *quantity and prominence of coverage*. The Slovak media in general, covered female candidate less frequently, and the difference is even more obvious for articles focusing on only male and only female candidates. There were three times more articles for only male candidate. The coverage of the female candidate was less prominent in terms of articles located on the front page. Moreover female candidate didn't have any article focused *only on female candidate* on the front page. There was no difference found in candidates' name in the headline, and picture of candidate attached to the article.

Next category showing gender bias is the category of *personal traits* used to describe the candidates. There is a strong evidence that female candidate was more likely to be described using so called female traits, while male candidate was more likely described by Slovak media using so called male traits.

Since this is the first study inquiring about gender biased coverage of female candidates, or female politicians in Slovak media, there are no past studies to compare these results with, and see whether there have been any improvements or change.



5. Discussion

This study's findings raise a number of important issues for discussion. The topics will be discussed in the same order as in chapter four, where the findings were presented.

5.1 Amount of coverage

On the first sight, the difference of 6.4% in the amount of coverage between male and female candidate may seem as not so significant, but when we extract from the articles that include both candidates, or don't mention any of them, the difference become more obvious. The male candidate got 58% and the female candidate got remaining 42% of articles talking about one of the candidates. This difference seems important, because during the election campaign the media should offer equal space for the presentation of the candidates. For private media this is not a written rule or law, but because both daily newspapers are declared to be non-partisan, they should give equal chances to both candidates. Moreover the difference in the amount of coverage is accentuated by the quantity of articles being published about *only male candidate*³⁴.

The male candidate was incumbent President during the time of elections; therefore there was a possibility of him getting more media attention because of his status. This study treated this situation by not including the word *president* in the articles selection criteria. In addition, the functions of the President of Slovakia are mostly ceremonial, so there are not so many activities to be covered about the President.

³⁴ There were three times more articles about *only male* than *only female*

The study detected that there was more coverage on female candidate in the second round, than in the first round, but there was not the same increase in male candidate`s amount of coverage. Gašparovič was standing out from the beginning of the campaign as a candidate with most chances to win, and his chances didn`t change markedly to the end of the elections. But Radičová noted an increase in popularity, and in chances to win throughout the campaign, especially after she passed to the second round of the elections, which is probably the reason for the increased coverage.

5.2 Prominence of coverage

For the prominence of coverage, this study reveals that male candidate had more coverage on the front page than female coverage which makes his coverage more prominent in terms of location of the article. For other measures as name of the candidate in the headline and picture attached to the article there wasn`t found a significant difference.

In summary, male candidate had more coverage and more prominent coverage during the presidential elections in 2009. Newspaper articles from the same period also mentioned, that Gašparovič was more frequently covered in television, mainly in national Slovak Television (Kern 2009).

However, more frequent and more prominent coverage doesn`t always mean an advantage for the candidate. There is a necessity to see what kind of tone of coverage was used to describe the candidate. As discussed in the chapter four, Gašparovič got negative coverage in almost twenty percent, mixed coverage in more than twenty percent, and less than one percent of

positive coverage. Thus, he appeared more often in media than the female candidate, but in almost fifty percent the coverage was negative or mixed.

When analyzing the location of the articles, the difference in the *Opinions section* was found: more articles were published about male candidate than about female candidate. From all the articles in *Opinions section*, 30.8% are dedicated to the male candidate, meanwhile 19.2% of the articles are dedicated the female candidate. This difference is not interesting from the gender bias point of view; it is interesting because of the character of *Opinions*, which is section, where journalists express their own opinions.

In this section there is no need to be objective, and sometimes the language is more expressive than in other sections. It seems that journalists felt more need to express their own opinion in relation to the male candidate. And they expressed it in negative tone. Almost half of the articles located in *Opinions section* for male candidate used negative tone (46.7%), and 20% used mixed tone. None of the articles in *Opinions* for male candidate was written in positive tone.

By contrast, almost half of the articles for Iveta Radičová from the section *Opinions* were written in positive tone, 25% in negative and less than 20% in mixed tone.

The measure for picture attached only included a possibility to code whether there was or wasn't a picture attached to the article, but there was no measure for how many pictures of each candidate appeared for each article. Some articles had more than one picture attached, and the total number of pictures published for each candidate could reveal other differences in coverage or bring more information about the prominence of coverage of the candidates.

Also a qualitative measure for the pictures could bring important information about the character of the pictures published about each candidate. Information about candidates' posture,

gestures, in what situations they are portrayed, whether they are depicted smiling, or frowning, what are the dimensions of the picture could give more insight of the pictures published for each candidate.

Only by a lay observation, the researcher could see that the female candidate is portrayed mostly in positive way. Radičová is almost always smiling; she is neat, photographed from the front. Gašparovič is often frowning, sometimes looks distracted³⁵, he is in some strange position³⁶ (Tódová 2009), or he is too red in the face (Petkova and Schniererova 2009). Future studies should develop more on this dimension of coverage as well.

5.3 Gendered coverage

On behalf of the gendered coverage, it need to be said, that except of the category of direct mentions of gender, there is not much coverage on other categories like age, marital status, children of the candidate, candidates` physical appearance, and candidates` spouse or partner. This means, that Slovak media during the presidential elections in 2009 were not very much interested or concerned with these categories, so they could use the space to cover other information related to the election in general or candidates and their political ideas, decisions, actions. This suggests that the newspapers *Sme* and *Pravda* are not really interested in topics which are more characteristic for tabloid media.

There are not many references to candidates` physical appearance, and even the articles that do mention one of the candidates` appearance don`t evaluate the way of the clothing, the

³⁵ Example: somebody is trying to shake his hand, but he doesn`t seem to pay attention.

³⁶ Example: he is hiding his face by his hand.

fashion style, or haircut. In all the cases, they just describe their facial expressions: whether they are smiling, frowning or look tired. Radičová is often described as smiling, and Gašparovič as with a tired expression of his face.

For the category mentions of candidates` spouse or partner, where a gender bias can be observed, it could be discussed that because two male partners are included in analysis for Iveta Radičová³⁷, it is more likely that they will be discussed more often than a wife of the male candidate. But even if we choose only one of the Radičová`s partners, each of them was mentioned more frequently than Gašparovič`s wife. It also has to be mentioned, that wife of Ivan Gašparovič was at a time the current First Lady, so there could be more coverage of her, because of her status, which didn`t happened.

Moreover Stano Radič, Iveta Radičová`s deceased husband, was mentioned in the sense, that he was the one, introducing Radičová to the politics, and therefore, he was the one backing her up in her career. Ján Riapoš was mentioned in a sense of supporting Radičová, and her political career; in sense that he chose her as a partner, and the public should choose her as well. But Silvia Gašparovičová is covered only as a company of male candidate, not as a support or help in his career.

For direct mentions of gender, the category that showed greater gender bias toward the female candidate in terms of gendered coverage, it need to be said, that 52 mentions of female gender during one month period of elections seems too much. In Slovak language the nouns have designated gender, so words like *politician*, *candidate* and alike have their version for male and female gender, therefore it is not necessary to say “female politician” or “female candidate”.

³⁷ Stano Radič, and Ján Riapoš

Also verbs in past tense distinguish between male and female³⁸. In this sense we can consider Slovak language self-explanatory regarding the gender of the subject, but still there were 52 mentions of Iveta Radičová being a woman. These numbers were so high also due to articles like “Will a first female or the first re-elected President enter the Palace?” (Odu 2009), “He or she? You decide today “ (Chorvantovič 2009), or “Fico`s man or Dzurinda`s woman?” (Krpelan 2009).

5.4 Viability coverage

Regarding the viability of coverage, the study hasn`t found gender bias in the quantity of horse- race sentences. Male candidate had more coverage of horse-race than female candidate, which means, the journalist were not discussing more frequently female`s possibilities to get elected. The content of the horse-race didn`t reveal any gender difference either. The journalists reported candidates` possibilities to win the elections according to the results of the polls.

For the qualifications of candidates, it was mentioned earlier, that for Gašparovič, the study excluded the use of word *president* from qualifications, because the researcher thinks that the journalists didn`t use this word to express Gašparovič`s qualification, but they used it to vary the word *president* with the word *candidate*, or with his name.

In all the cases, this fact is important, the high number of statements of Gašparovič`s qualifications as president expresses different treatment of Radičová, who has an academic title of Professor, but the journalist didn`t use this title to vary it with the word *candidate* or with her

³⁸ There are different forms for past tense according to the gender.

name. This fact should be taken into account in the future studies and should be handled correspondingly.

Surprisingly there have been four times more references of lack of qualifications for male candidate. This can be explained by Gašparovič's long and controversial political career, the journalists often criticized his political past, they reminded him of many affairs from the time he was serving as the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic during Vladimír Mečiar's government which was generally perceived as authoritarian. The journalists claimed that someone with that kind of political past shouldn't or is not able of serving the post of President of Slovak Republic.

On the other hand, Radičová has a short political experience, and by the time of elections, she hasn't been included in any kind of affair or scandal, so there were no criticisms of her past actions. Due to her short political career, there could be more mentions of her being not well prepared for the post, but in all of the articles, there were only four mentions of this kind.

For both candidates the coverage of campaign quality was prevalently negative, this was caused by media experts evaluating the campaign and stating that the campaign was not good quality, conservative, lacking modern elements, boring, and in general not professional (Dia 2009; Potocky 2009; Tódová 2009a).

5.5 Issue coverage

It is remarkable, that there is no gender bias towards female candidate in issue coverage. The issues discussed during the campaign were distributed proportionally among the male and

female candidate. Male issues were slightly more present for male candidate, but the difference cannot be considered as gender bias.

Issue coverage is an important category; because when media are talking about issues, they are actually expressing what candidates think, what are their stands on political, social or other issues within the given society. When media in certain country treats equally male and female politicians in covering the issues, they are offering equal chances about the substantial part of the politics.

Specific issues appeared in Slovak media often because of the actual political situation in the country. Issue of Slovak-Hungarian relationship was one of the most discussed topics; this was caused by gradual worsening of relationship between Slovakia and Hungary in the last four years³⁹. The topic closely related to this one was the nationalism of candidates. Other frequently discussed issue was the political past of the candidates and whether some past actions could discredit a candidate from the competition.

One more important thing to say about issue coverage is that the issues didn't appear in too many articles. Even though the journalists were not gender- biased in this category, they also didn't pay so much attention to the issues. The same feeling had also Zálešák (2009) in his article, he states that there was no much said about candidates stands on important issues as crisis, but instead they are talking about whether the candidates are nationalist enough.

³⁹ This is generally attributed to the government of SMER and Slovak National Party. Slovak National Party can be considered discriminatory toward minorities, especially toward Hungarians.

5.6 Traits coverage

By contrast the use of personal traits showed existing gender bias. Slovak media did use different traits to describe male and female candidates during the presidential elections. Even though Slovak media treated the candidates equally when talking about ideas or policies, there is still a difference when describing politicians by means of personal traits and characteristics.

5.7 Tone of the coverage

In this study it is observed that female candidate was covered in a more positive manner and male candidate was covered in more negative tone. The probable reason for this is not related to the gender of the candidates, but to the personality of the politicians. There was a strong debate about Ivan Gašparovič and his past political career, many journalists expressed negative feelings towards his past actions and his involvement in many political scandals from the years of Vladimir Mečiar's government⁴⁰.

Seeing these results, it is possible that a relationship between the reputation of the politicians and tone of the coverage exists. Perhaps the presence of a male candidate with negative reputation can take more attention by media, and drove away the attention from having a female candidate in the campaign, so the media don't cover the candidates in gender-stereotyped ways. The future research could focus on this possibility.

⁴⁰ during Vladimir Mečiar's government Slovakia was criticized of having an authoritarian government, and Slovakia was in some extent isolated from European community

5.8. Differences between rounds

The results of female candidate noting an increase of coverage in the second round suggest, that after the first round, when Iveta Radičová officially passed to the second round, and when the other five candidates finished in the competition, the interest in Iveta Radičová noted a great increase, while the interest in the Gašparovič increased less. This increase cannot be attributed to the gender of the candidate. Even though there is this difference between the first and the second round in the quantity of articles focused on female candidate, there are still more articles about the male candidate during the second round.

In spite of female candidate getting increased coverage in the second round, her coverage was equally prominent in both rounds.

Female candidate was covered in more gendered way in the second round of the campaign in terms of *direct mentions of gender*. This could be caused by the second round being the competition between one female and one male candidate. Media often stress differences, and write emotional headlines to attract readers' attention.

The possible cause for having more attention on female candidate's partners during the first round of elections is that the candidates need to be introduced to the readers in the first round, readers want to read some personal information during the first round of elections.

Female recorded an increase in horse-race coverage in the second round; it was possibly caused by the second round of the elections approaching and by female candidate's good result in the first round.

As described earlier, in the first round, there were seven candidates, of which Ivan Gašparovič and Iveta Radičová were the most probable candidates to pass to the second round.

Eventually, they both passed to the second round with the vote difference between them much smaller than all the polls expected. The expected difference in the polls before the first round was around 15% depending on the agency, but the real difference in the elections was less than 9%, which was surprisingly good result of the female candidate. This according to Jenkins (1999) could be the reason for the improved horse- race coverage for female candidate in the second round, and consequently for the worsening of male candidate`s coverage in the second round.

For the coverage of candidates` qualifications there is a similar explanation as for the information about candidates` partners. It seems that during the first round the media offer more information on the candidates, in the second round the candidates are already known, so less information is needed.

Radičová`s mostly positive and Gašparovič`s mostly negative coverage was probably caused by media discussing Gašparovič`s political past later in the campaign, as it was already mentioned, his political past was full of scandals, and political affairs.

5.9. Summary

This study not only brings new facts about coverage of female candidates in Slovak Republic, but also opens a space for new studies to be done and developed on the topic. After completing the first academic research on the topic in Slovakia, there is a necessity of finding answers to new challenges brought up in the discussion.

6. Future studies

The recent presence of Iveta Radičová in politics made a lot of space for media coverage observation and research, because there were not so many politically active female politicians before who would receive so extensive coverage as Iveta Radičová did recently. Because this was the first study of its kind done in Slovak Republic, more studies should be done in the future to compare the results over time and in different kind of situations.

Presidential elections are a very good case to study media coverage, but there could be also similar study done on Parliamentary elections of June 2010. Iveta Radičová was elected election leader of the party she belongs to⁴¹ and consequently there was enough coverage of her to be observed. She got a lot of attention in the media along with at that time Prime Minister Robert Fico.

Future studies could observe the evolution of media coverage of Iveta Radičová. In this paper she was observed as a presidential candidate, but in July 2010, after the parliamentary elections in June 2010, she became Prime Minister of Slovakia, politically the most powerful person in the country, it is possible that the her coverage will change substantially.

To enrich even further the body of knowledge about the coverage of female politicians in Slovak Republic, a study comparing the campaign lead by the candidates and the coverage of their campaign in media would be useful. This way it would be clearer whether the candidates can influence the media agenda or not.

⁴¹ Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party

Because there was a lot of campaigning on the internet, it would be interesting to see which candidates used internet, why and how⁴². There were also a lot of civil movements supporting or opposing candidates on the internet. A possible question to research on would be: Does all the internet based campaigning have any impact on internet users?

An interesting comparison could arise from studying the differences between coverage of men and women during the elections in newspapers and diverse TV stations in Slovakia⁴³, and maybe the most interesting comparison would be coverage of the daily newspapers *Sme* and *Pravda* and coverage of daily tabloid newspaper *Nový Čas*, whose circulation is bigger than *Sme*'s and *Pravda*'s circulation altogether⁴⁴.

As mentioned earlier, this study suggests to future studies to include a qualitative measure for attached photographs of candidates in order to have better idea of what the pictures can say about candidates.

In addition to coding personal traits used to describe candidate as male, female, and neutral traits, it would be interesting to code the traits also in terms of the tone of the traits. Many of the traits used in Slovak media were negative such as liar, or hypocrite. Other traits were positive such as polite, or happy. It could be interesting to compare the use of tone of the traits among male and female candidate.

As described earlier, a relationship between candidates' reputation and tone of the coverage could be observed in the future in terms to see whether a presence of male candidate with negative reputation have some influence on female candidate's coverage.

⁴² Web pages, twitter, facebook profiles, advertisements on internet, etc

⁴³ Public and private TV stations.

⁴⁴ About 160,000.

Due to the recent extensive presentation of women in media⁴⁵ there are many topics which could be studied in the field of politics, communication, and male- female relationship in society.



⁴⁵ Presidential elections in 2009, Parliamentary elections of 2010, Iveta Radičová becoming the new Prime Minister of Slovakia in July 2010.

7. Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is given by the duration of the presidential campaign in Slovak Republic and the media itself. There were only a limited number of articles, and there was no possibility of using more than selected 173 articles.

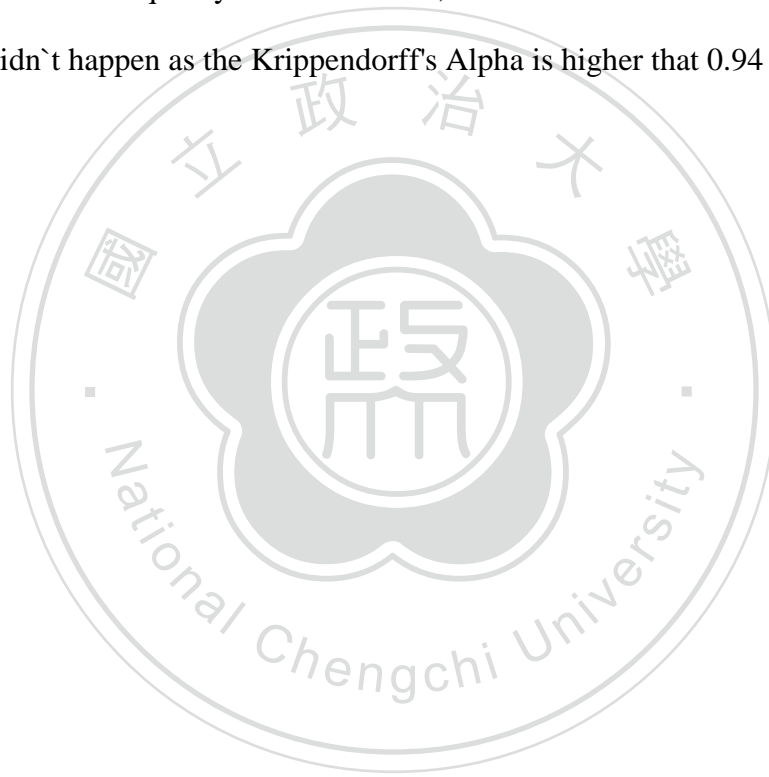
It is very important to realize that this research focuses on a specific situation in Slovak media. Situation when there was a strong female candidate for a presidential post. This situation of having a female politician so frequently covered is a novelty and therefore we cannot generalize these results to all the female politicians in Slovak media, and certainly not to all female coverage.

During the coding process, the coder has realized that there were still some articles that didn't fulfill the criteria to be included in the analysis, but were talking about presidential candidates, mostly in *Opinions* section. The reason for this is that the section *Opinions* by its character is freer in terms of the headline; the headline often contains the nicknames of the candidates, or some other indirect ways to address the candidates.

On the other hand nine articles were included in the analysis, which finally didn't mention any of the candidates. This was caused by headline including the word *candidate* or *elections*, but article was eventually talking very generally about the elections, it was mentioning some of the candidates from the first round not included in the study, or about another person linked to the elections. The media often discussed the influence of that time Prime Minister Róbert Fico, who publicly supported the candidacy of Ivan Gašparovič and Fico often acted in favor of Gašparovič or against Radičová.

Other limitation of this study is the impossibility to include more candidates in the research. Even though there were seven candidates in the presidential elections in 2009, because of reasons explained earlier only two candidates were included in the analysis. In this case we are observing the coverage on one female and one male candidate, we cannot say we observe the coverage of female candidates and male candidates.

The use of subjective measures as tone of the headline, and tone of the coverage for candidates could lessen the quality of the research, but the results of intercoder reliability test suggest that this didn't happen as the Krippendorff's Alpha is higher than 0.94 for these variables.



8. Conclusions

After a close examination of the results and discussion made about presidential elections of 2009 in Slovak Republic, it can be concluded that even though Slovak Republic isn't a country with high participation of women in public life, and Slovak women feel that their personal and family life keep them from career, Slovak media didn't show a strong gender-bias toward female candidate. Despite the situation in which one male and one female candidate were competing, the media didn't cover the campaign as man versus woman encounter. It seems like the gender of the candidates in these elections was not an important feature.

Male candidate was favored in the amount and prominence of coverage, but this as discussed earlier doesn't need to be an advantage when the tone of coverage is negative, as it was in Gašparovič's case. The discussion of Gašparovič's political past was more appealing to media than the gender of female candidate. Media never mentioned Radičová being a woman as a barrier for being suitable for serving functions of President. This fact might open a new door for other researchers to study the influence of politician's reputation in relation to his or her coverage, especially in terms of the tone of the coverage and viability coverage. No gender difference was observed in issue coverage either. The candidates were offered equal chances while expressing their opinions and stands.

What could be taken amiss to the Slovak media was that the personal traits of candidates were reported in gender-biased way: female candidate received a lot of coverage of female traits that are not considered as leadership traits, which could result in not being perceived as a good leader. Lastly, the media mentioned female candidate's gender much more often than male

candidate`s gender, as the literature suggests, this is can be caused by male politicians being perceived naturally in public sphere, while female politicians are not considered so.



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Appendix I. Codebook

1. **Coder ID:** Indicate the ID of the individual who coded this article:

1: Lenka Babaríková

2: Lydia Jakubíčková

2. **Newspaper:** Fill in the newspaper:

1: *Sme*

2: *Pravda*

3. **Story ID:** Each story selected for the analysis has its unique number; this number is located on the right top of each selected article, written by hand, fill in this code.

4. **Day:** Fill in the day of the edition of the newspaper; it is located on the top of the front page.

5. **Month:** Fill in the month of the edition of the newspaper; it is located on the top of the front page.

6. **Day of the week:** Fill in the day of the week of the edition; it is located on the top of the front page:

1: Monday

2: Tuesday

3: Wednesday

4: Thursday

5: Friday

6: Saturday

7. Sex of author: Indicate the sex of the author of the article:

1: male

2: female

3: male and female

0: not know

8. Source of the article: Indicate whether the article comes directly from the newspaper or from news agencies:

1: reporters from the newspaper: For *Sme*, at the end of the article, just after the name of the author there is written ©*SME*. For *Pravda*, if just under the headline there is a name of author and the location of the news, this article comes from the newspaper.

2: news agency: For *Sme*, if at the end of the article there is no name, but there is an acronym in brackets (ex: *tasr*, *čtk*), this article comes from agency. For *Pravda*, under the headline, if there is not a name of author, but there is the acronym without brackets, then this article comes from news agencies.

3: readers: For *Sme*, at the end of the article, under the name of the author there is written that he or she is a reader, or there is written his or her profession, and where he or she is from, there is no ©*SME* written. For *Pravda*, under the headline, there is a name of the author,

but there is also written, he or she is a reader of the newspaper, or there is his or her profession and where he or she comes from mentioned.

4: other newspaper: For *Sme*, at the end of the article, instead of the name of the author, there is the name of the newspaper, where does the article come from. For *Pravda*, at the end of the article there is the name of the newspaper, where does the article come from. There is no name of the author in the beginning of the article.

9. Article's focus on candidate: Indicate the focus of the article according to this chart:

1: only male: articles which only mention the male candidate Gašparovič, without mentioning any female candidates.

2: mostly male: articles which are focused on Gašparovič, but mention the female candidate one to three times (to five if the article covers more than half of the page). These mentions only say that she is the opposing candidate, or compare their percentage results, but they don't give any substantial information about the female candidate.

3: equal weight: articles which contain information about both candidates, they not only mention the candidates, but give detailed information about both and can be comparing them, report on their activities, talk about their opinions, stands, etc.

4: mostly female: articles which are focused on Radičová, but mention the male candidate one to three times (to five if the article covers more than half of the page). These mentions only say that he is the opposing candidate, or compare their percentage results, but they don't give any substantial information about the male candidate.

5: only female: articles which only mention the female candidate Radičová, without mentioning male candidate.

0: not about candidates: the articles doesn't mention any of the two candidates (Radičová, Gašparovič).

10. Length of article: fill in the total number of the sentences of the article.

11. Number of sentences about female candidate: Indicate the number of sentences talking about the female candidate. As sentences talking about female candidate count sentences talking about her opinions, activities, her campaign, her possibilities to win the elections, the percentage of supporters, her appearance, her family situation, her personal traits, etc.

12. Number of sentences about male candidate: Indicate the number of sentences talking about the male candidate. As sentences talking about male candidate count sentences talking about his opinions, activities, his campaign, his possibilities to win the elections, the percentage of supporters, his appearance, his family situation, his personal traits, etc.

13. Location of the article: Indicate the location of the article according to this scheme:

11: Front page above the fold: The article is located in the front (first) page of the newspaper.

For *Sme*, when folded it is in the part where the title *SME* appears. For *Pravda*, it is located in the upper part of the front page, from the middle towards the upper side.

12: Front page below the fold: The article is located in the front page of the newspaper.

For *Sme*, when folded it is on the down side, where there is not the title *SME*. For *Pravda*, it is located in the lower part of the page, from the middle towards down.

2: Opinions: The article is located in the section called *Opinions*, *Opinion journalism*, or *Column*; the name of the section appears written on the top of the page.

3: Topic of the day: The article is located in the section with the same name, the name of the section appear written on the top of the page.

41: Domestic news: For *Sme* the article is located in the section with the name of *News* (*Spravodajstvo*), for *Pravda* the section is called *Events News* (*Udalosti Správy*). The name of the section appears written on the top of the page.

42: International news: The article appears for *Sme* in the section called *Foreign*, for *Pravda* the section is called *News, Internationally*. The name of the section appears written on the top of the page.

43: Economic news: The article appears for *Sme* in the section called *Foreign*, for *Pravda* the section is called *News, Internationally*. The name of the section appears written on the top of the page.

44: Regional news: The article appears for *Sme* in the section called *Regions*, for *Pravda* the section is called *News, Regions*. The name of the section appears written on the top of the page.

5: Cultural section: The article appears in the section called *Culture* (for both *Sme* and *Pravda*).

6: *The best 7*: The article appear in the section called *The best 7* (Only for *Pravda*, there is no equivalent for *Sme*)

7: *Elections*: The article is located in the section called Elections (both for *Sme* and *Pravda*)

8: *Other sections*: the article is located in any other section as: *Sport, Extra, Household*, etc.

14. The picture of the female candidate: Indicate whether there is a picture of Iveta Radičová included with the article:

1: yes

0: no

15. The picture of the male candidate: Indicate whether there is a picture of Ivan Gašparovič included with the article:

1: yes

0: no

16. Female candidate mentioned in headline: Indicate whether Iveta Radičová's name appear in the headline:

1: yes

0: no

17. Male candidate mentioned in headline: Indicate whether Ivan Gašparovič's name appear in the headline:

1: yes

0: no

18. Tone of headline: Evaluate and indicate the overall tone of the headline of the article as following:

1: **Positive tone:** is the one which is affirmative, convenient and favorable for the candidate. It expresses agreement or support with candidate's personality, or with what the candidate said or did.

2: **Neutral tone:** is the one which lacks bias, the author is not taking any side; it is the tone which is not positive, nor negative. It doesn't make any judgments. Normally it is just stating the facts.

3: **Negative tone:** is opposed to the positive one. It is inconvenient, unfavorable for the candidate; it expresses disagreement, contradiction or opposition to the candidate's personality, or with what the candidate said or did.

4: **Mixed tone:** is when both negative and positive tones are coexisting at the same time.

19. Overall tone of the article for female candidate: Evaluate and indicate the overall tone of the part of the article written about Iveta Radičová (categories defined the same way as in the number 18)

1: positive tone

2: neutral tone

3: mixed tone

4: negative tone

0: not about female candidate

20. Overall tone of the article for male candidate: Evaluate and indicate the overall tone of the part of the article written about Ivan Gašparovič (categories defined the same way as in the number 18)

1: positive tone

2: neutral tone

3: mixed tone

4: negative tone

0: not about male candidate

21. Number of "Horse race" sentences for female candidate: Indicate the number of the sentences related to the possibilities of Iveta Radičová to win, or lose; her possibilities to pass to the second round; or the sentences mentioning her as a minion or loser.

The sentences announcing the percentage of the candidate from polls, or simple saying in which place she stands in the polls will not be counted as *horse race* coverage.

22. Number of "Horse race" sentences for male candidate: : Indicate the number of the sentences related to the possibilities of Ivan Gašparovič to win, or lose; his possibilities to pass to the second round; or the sentences mentioning her as a minion or loser.

The sentences announcing the percentage of the candidate from polls, or simple saying in which place he stands in the polls will not be counted as *horse race* coverage.

23. "Horse race" content for female candidate: Indicate the nature of the horse race coverage for Iveta Radičová according to this scheme:

- 1:** Noncompetitive, sure loser
- 2:** noncompetitive but gaining ground
- 3:** competitive, but losing ground
- 4:** competitive, but behind
- 5:** competitive
- 6:** competitive, but gaining ground
- 7:** likely winner, but losing ground
- 8:** likely winner
- 0:** no mentions about horse race

24. "Horse race" content for male candidate: Indicate the nature of the horse race coverage for Ivan Gašparovič according to this scheme:

- 1:** Noncompetitive, sure loser
- 2:** noncompetitive but gaining ground
- 3:** competitive, but losing ground
- 4:** competitive, but behind
- 5:** competitive
- 6:** competitive, but gaining ground
- 7:** likely winner, but losing ground
- 8:** likely winner

0: no mentions about horse race

25. Campaign successfulness for female candidate: Indicate the nature of mentions about the quality of Iveta Radičová`s campaign according to this scheme:

1: Positive

2: Neutral

3: Mix

4: Negative

0: No mentions about the campaign

26. Campaign successfulness for male candidate: Indicate the nature of mentions about the quality of Ivan Gašparovič`s campaign according to this scheme:

1: Positive

2: Neutral

3: Mix

4: Negative

0: No mentions about the campaign

27. Number of qualifications for female candidate: Indicate the number of the qualifications of Iveta Radičová as a possible president that are mentioned in the article. The possible qualifications are:

Mention of prior elective office: chairperson of a political party, Member of Parliament

Mention of prior appointive office: Minister, Professor appointed by President of Slovakia: the title of Professor, not a profession.

Mention of Other Qualifications: previous studies; previous jobs not included previously

0: **No Mentions of Qualifications:** there aren't any mentions of qualification.

28. Number of qualifications for male candidate: Indicate the number of the qualifications of Ivan Gašparovič as a possible president that are mentioned in the article. The possible qualifications are:

Mention of prior elective office: chairperson of a political party, Member of Parliament

Mention of prior appointive office: Minister, Professor appointed by President of Slovakia: the title of Professor, not a profession.

Mention of Other Qualifications: previous studies; previous jobs not included previously

0: **No Mentions of Qualifications:** there aren't any mentions of qualification

29. Of which president: Indicate how many of the mentions of male's candidate qualification are as being "President of Slovak Republic".

30. Mention of lack of qualification for female candidate: Indicate how many times female's incompetence for the post of President of Slovak Republic was stated in the article.

31. Mention of lack of qualification for male candidate: Indicate how many times male`s incompetence for the post of President of Slovak Republic was stated in the article.

32. Marital status female: Indicate whether the marital status of Iveta Radičová is mentioned in the article:

1: Mentioned

0: Not mentioned

33. Marital status male: Indicate whether the marital status of Ivan Gašparovič is mentioned in the article:

1: Mentioned

0: Not mentioned

34. Number of sentences about female candidate`s spouse or partner: Indicate the number of sentences written about Iveta Radičová`s current partner Ján Riapoš, or about her deceased husband Stano Radič in the article.

35. Number of sentences about male candidate`s spouse or partner: Indicate the number of sentences written about Ivan Gašparovič`s wife Silvia Gašparovičová in the article.

36. Children of female candidate: Indicate whether the children of Iveta Radičová are mentioned in the article:

1: Mentioned

0: Not mentioned

37. Children of male candidate: Indicate whether the children of Ivan Gašparovič are mentioned in the article:

1: Mentioned

0: Not mentioned

38. Number of sentences about female candidate`s appearance: Indicate the number of the sentences talking about Iveta Radičová`s appearance. Every mention about her clothes, hairstyle, accessories she uses, her fashion sense, the way she looks, and alike will be counted.

39. Number of sentences about male candidate`s appearance: Indicate the number of the sentences talking about Ivan Gašparovič`s appearance. Every mention about his clothes, hairstyle, accessories her uses, his fashion sense, the way he looks, and alike will be counted.

40. Number of sentences about female candidate`s gender: Indicate the number of sentences talking about Iveta Radičová as a woman. All the direct mentions of her gender like: *this woman, this lady, the first woman, pioneer* in female form (it is focusing on her being the first woman to run for president), *miss Radičová*, will count. The word candidate, politician in female form in Slovak language (kandidátka, politička, prezidentka) won't count as gender coverage.

41. Number of sentences about male candidate`s gender: Indicate the number of sentences talking about Ivan Gašparovič as a man. All the direct mentions of his gender like: *this man, the first man* (he was the first president to be re-elected), *mister Gašparovič*, will count. The word candidate, politician, president in male form in Slovak language (kandidát, politik, prezident) won't count as gender coverage.

42. Age of female candidate mentioned: Indicate whether the age of Iveta Radičová is mentioned, mentions as *too young*, or *young* without openly stating her age will also count.

1: age mentioned

0: age not mentioned

43. Age of male candidate: Indicate whether the age of Ivan Gašparovič is mentioned, mentions as *too old*, or *old* without openly stating his age will also count.

1: age mentioned

0: age not mentioned

44. Issues mentioned for female candidate (open ended measure): Issues are the topics, the matters of public interest discussed by politicians. Observe occurrence of these topics and note down each issue appearing in relation to Iveta Radičová.

45. Issues mentioned for male candidate (open ended measure): Issues are the topics, the matters of public interest discussed by politicians. Observe occurrence of these topics and note down each issue appearing in relation to Ivan Gašparovič

The examples of issues: Defense Issues, Nuclear Arms Control, Foreign Affairs, Child Care, International, Organizations, Treaties, Welfare, Parental Leave, Economy, Taxes, Education, Employment, Pensions, Energy/Oil, Trade, Women in Politics, Environment, Abortion, Drugs, Crime, HIV/AIDS, Health, Business, Women's Rights, Gay Rights, Violence Against Women

46. Personal traits mentioned for female candidate (open ended measure): Traits are distinguishing features as of a person's character, or typical characteristics of a person. Observe occurrence of these traits and note down each issue appearing in relation to Iveta Radičová.

47. Personal traits mentioned for male candidate (open ended measure): Traits are distinguishing features as of a person's character, or typical characteristics of a person. Observe occurrence of these traits and note down each issue appearing in relation to Ivan Gašparovič.

The examples of traits: Honest/Trustworthy, Attractive, Compassionate, Strong Leader, Gentle, Expressive, Moral, Objective, Analytical, Effective, Knowledgeable, Consistent, Hardworking, Tough, Strong, Vital, Intelligent, Independent, Weak, Passive, Noncompetitive,

Untrustworthy, Biased, Emotional, Dependent, Immoral, Unattractive, Uninformed, Erratic, Aggressive, Weak Leader, Unintelligent, Ineffective, Insensitive, Competitive, Unexpressive, Ambitious/Power-Hungry.



Appendix II.

Intercoder Reliability Test

VARIABLE	Percent Agreement	Krippendorff's Alpha
Newspaper	100	1
Day	100	1
Month	100	1
Day of the week	100	1
sex of the author	100	1
source of the article	100	1
sex candidate	100	1
Length	64.70588235	0.633333333
No. sentences female	76.47058824	0.728395062
No. sentences male	82.35294118	0.800804829
Location	100	1
Picture female	100	1
Picture male	100	1
Female candidate in headline	100	1
Male candidate in headline	100	1
Tone of headline	100	1
Tone article female	94.11764706	0.923787529
Tone article male	94.11764706	0.926503341
No. horse-race sentences female	94.11764706	0.897196262
No. horse-race sentences male	94.11764706	0.857142857
Horse-race content female	100	1
Horse-race content male	100	1
Campaign successfulness female	100	1
Campaign successfulness male	100	1
Qualifications female candidate	100	1
Qualifications male candidate	100	1
Marital status female candidate	100	1
Marital status male candidate	100	1
No. sentences female spouse/partner	100	undefined*
No. sentences male spouse/partner	100	undefined*
Children of female mentioned	100	undefined*
Children of male mentioned	100	undefined*
No. sentences female appearance	100	undefined*

No. sentences male appearance	100	undefined*
No. sentences female gender	100	undefined*
No. sentences male gender	100	undefined*
Age of female	100	1
Age of male	100	1

Undefined* are caused by no variation within the category.



Appendix III.

Mentioned Issues

male/female/neutral	Issue	Radičová	Gašparovič
F	Abortion	3	2
F	Poverty	1	0
F	Social solidarity, social security, social issues	8	12
F	Pensions	0	2
F	human, women, gay rights	3	1
F	Environment	0	5
F	Unemployment, health care, education	3	4
N	Politician`s contact abroad	1	0
N	Cooperation with government and SMER	1	0
N	Slovak-Hungarian relationship	3	9
N	politician`s history	2	10
N	Nationalism	5	1
N	Functions, work of president	2	1
M	Amendment to the constitution	1	2
M	Economic crisis and development of the country	8	10
M	Foreign policy	2	4
M	Domestic policy	1	2
M	Judiciary	4	4
M	Global topics	2	0
M	Exercise of power	1	0
M	Construction	0	4
M	Economy	0	2
M	fees, taxes	0	2
M	Sports	0	1
TOTAL		51	78

Appendix IV.

Mentioned Personal Traits

female/male/neutral	Traits	Radičová	Gašparovič
f	Quarrelsome	1	0
f	Weak	1	2
f	Emotional	1	0
f	Unpersuasive	1	0
f	Loyal	1	0
f	Sympathetic	2	0
f	Calm	2	0
f	Communicative	2	0
f	Passive	2	0
f	Fair	2	0
f	Polite	3	0
f	Dependent	0	5
f	Distraught	0	2
f	nonconfrontational, non aggressive	7	1
m	Strong	1	0
m	Angry	1	1
m	Professional	1	0
m	strong leader	1	0
m	Hardworking	1	0
m	Independent	2	1
m	not critical	1	0
m	quick-witted	1	0
m	Brave	2	0
m	Disloyal	0	2
m	Careerist	0	0
m	Aggressive	0	3
m	Hypocrite	0	15
m	logical, rational	2	1
n	Opened	1	0
n	Cultural	1	0
n	Liberal	1	0
n	Acceptable	1	1
n	Happy	1	0
n	Nice	2	0
n	Friendly	0	1

n	Tired	0	1
n	Shallow	0	1
n	Conscientious	0	1
n	old-fashioned	0	3
n	Nervous	0	3
n	not visible enough	0	2
TOTAL		45	46



