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„The portrayal of sexual violence against Muslim women  
in the media:  
The case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina“

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a pervasive issue that continues to plague societies worldwide (World Health Organization, 2021). Despite increased awareness and numerous campaigns against it, this form of violence remains disturbingly prevalent (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; European Union. Agency For Fundamental Rights, 2014; Fulu & Miedema, 2015; Ebert & Steinert, 2021). The United Nations (UN) defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1994, p. 3).

An estimated 736 million women, almost one in three, have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life. This prevalence does not even include cases of sexual harassment. Furthermore, violence against women disproportionately affects low- and lower-middle-income countries and regions, with 37% of women aged 15 to 49 in countries classified as least developed having experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their life (UN Women, 2022). There is a rapid rise in violence against women and girls worldwide, and it is necessary to address this issue (Sokol, 2023).

A notably susceptible demographic that is disproportionately impacted by violence is that of marginalized women, who are subjected to more severe forms and elevated rates of abuse (Aeberhard-Hodges et al., 2023). Scholarly sources reveal a spectrum of perspectives on the portrayal of Muslim women in the media, particularly when it comes to sensitive subjects such as sexual harassment and acts of violence (Mastro, 2016).

The role of the media on this important topic is recognized by numerous scholars who, among other things, believe that their content, due to its influence on the audience, can have a prevention purpose (Sutherland et al., 2016; Sutherland et al., 2017; Simons & Khan, 2018; Sutherland et al., 2019). Unquestionably, certain media platforms depict women in passive roles and portray violence against them as a pervasive occurrence (Karim, 2020). Conversely, other media outlets employ sensationalism when reporting on such incidents, often omitting the social context of male-perpetrated violence against women and indirectly shifting blame onto the victims (Sutherland et al., 2015). In the age of digital technology (Casnovas et al., 2021), it is crucial to recognize the role of the internet and social media in

this discourse. Studies have indicated that online hate speech correlates with a global rise in violence against marginalized groups (Laub, 2019). Additionally, researchers have observed that women who have experienced online violence often disavow their experiences, as they perceive their online and offline lives as distinct and contrasting processes (Gosse, 2021).

The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is relevant to this topic as it pertains to an area that remains largely unexplored in terms of the intersection of media, politics, and religious dynamics. In this region, three distinct major ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) coexist alongside different religious affiliations (Islam, Christianity, and Orthodoxy), each offering diverse discourses and interpretative frameworks for the same events within the media and political spheres. It is essential to acknowledge the impact of the war in the 1990s, which profoundly shaped the region and influenced subsequent developments for years to come (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, 2013).

This study aims to address the gap in research by examining the portrayal of violence against women in the media within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Building upon the foundational work of Mujkić Jukić (2016), the present study adopts a content analysis methodology and adapts the codebook originally developed for her investigation to suit the specific requirements of this research. The analysis focuses on the most widely read online news portals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, representing three regions predominantly inhabited by Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Articles spanning the past ten years, specifically from the onset of the migrant crisis, were collected, as the majority of Muslim migrants, particularly Muslim women, fall into marginalized categories, and they are very often portrayed in media regarding this topic (Weichselbaumer, 2019). The articles were obtained through keyword searches on these portals. The paper begins by providing an overview of violence against women, followed by a discussion of the digital aspect and the unique context of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the research setting. Next, I explain the theoretical framework and research questions, followed by an explanation of the research method. Finally, I discuss the implications and limitations of the findings.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Violence against women**

Sexual violence is "any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular

when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction" (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 11). A gender equality framework is needed to address sexual and domestic violence as a result of discrimination based on gender (Irish Observatory on Violence against Women, 2013). Women may experience a wide range of abuses, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic forms of violence. Additionally, they may face stalking, forced isolation within their homes, and other forms of controlling behaviors (Slabbert & Green, 2014). Violence against women, encompassing intimate partner violence and sexual violence, represents a significant public health concern and a violation of women's human rights. Global estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that approximately 30% of women worldwide have encountered physical and/or sexual violence. Among these forms of violence, intimate partner violence is the most prevalent, affecting approximately 27% of women aged 15-49. The repercussions of violence can detrimentally impact women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive well-being (World Health Organization, 2021).

Although valuable, existing approaches to combating violence are inadequate in addressing the complexity and scale of the problem (Sokol, 2023). Another study conducted with more than 40,000 women revealed that acts of violence are frequently underreported to authorities (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). This research provides compelling evidence of the prevalence of such incidents. Approximately 1 in 10 women have encountered some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and 1 in 20 women has been subjected to rape. Surprisingly, the data demonstrate a significant discrepancy between the prevalence of violence and the number of reported cases. For instance, only 14% of women reported their cases of intimate partner violence to the authorities, and there is an even smaller percentage of reported non-partner violence cases (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Sutherland, with colleagues, in their study, aimed to examine the reporting of violence against women by the mainstream Australian news media, which revealed extensive coverage of violence against women; however, contextualization within the broader social context was infrequent. Information on available support services for women was rarely included, and survivor voices were seldom elevated (Sutherland et al., 2019). Improved media reporting that promotes public understanding of violence against women and incorporates survivor perspectives and support resources is needed now (Sutherland et al., 2019; Alimahomed-Wilson, 2017; Ahmad, 2019).



Muslim women face unique challenges due to the intersectionality of their identities, resulting in their marginalization across various domains of society (Mescoli, 2022; Ahmed, 2017; Mastro, 2016). A new term has been coined that attempts to indicate this particular type of problem faced by Muslim women, which is "Islamophobic gender-based violence," and they are often portrayed as victims of violence and sexism perpetrated by men (Ahmad, 2019, p. 45). The politicization of women wearing headscarves has enabled acts of violence against them, while the proliferation of stereotypes distorts public perceptions and may serve to justify discriminatory policies in Western contexts (Arik, 2012; Mekay, n.d).

Research shows that Muslim refugee women wearing headscarves frequently encounter more discrimination than those without them (Paz & Kook, 2020). Also, Weichselbaumer (2019) suggest that immigrant women who wear a headscarf experience discrimination based on multiple stigmas related to ethnicity and religion, indicating the intersectionality of their experiences. The intersectional nature of discrimination faced by hijab-wearing Muslim refugee women, with factors such as gender, racism, Islamophobia, and legal status playing interconnected roles in shaping their experiences in a multicultural society like Germany (Paz & Kook, 2020). Another research in its findings encompasses a range of violence, including attempted femicide, physical assault, sexual assault, and verbal abuse. It highlights the intersection of misogyny and Islamophobia in the experiences of Muslim women (Ahmad, 2019).

The media's approach to addressing sexual violence against Muslim women presents another significant concern. European press outlets demonstrate a tendency to marginalize Muslim women in their coverage, except in the context of terrorism-related issues (Triki, 2017; Khan, 2018). This exclusion highlights the limited opportunities for Muslim women to have their voices represented in the media. Numerous studies indicate that media reports often overlook the identity of perpetrators, neglecting to acknowledge the race and gender of Muslim attackers in cases that are covered (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2017; Ahmad, 2019; Clark & Saleh, 2019; Mescoli, 2022).

The important thing here is the understanding of religious principles or the distorting of their meanings. Namely, the misinterpretation and translation of Arabic words have empowered men to justify acts of violence in the name of religion which have resulted in wrong beliefs wherein Muslim women are expected to be submissive and subjected to degradation. This is later reflected in the public world discourse, where such beliefs are taken

as a starting point in reporting and sometimes even justifying violence against Muslim women (Begum & Rahman, 2016). The media's coverage of rape cases involving Muslim women is often influenced by the social and demographic attributes of the victims, leading to selective reporting (Fadnis, 2022). This phenomenon is exemplified in the Bilkis Banu gang rape case in India, where a young Muslim woman was subjected to sexual assault by a group of Hindu men. The analysis of this case highlights the significant impact of the politicized religious context on the media's portrayal of Banu's sexual assault, ultimately resulting in the marginalization of her experiences as a victim (Fadnis, 2022).

When we mention media reporting, it is important to clarify two important elements that I will also explore through the content analysis of this topic, namely sensationalism and the use of stereotypes in reporting. The theorists often discuss sensationalism in the context of appealing to emotional states such as fear, astonishment, shock, and excitement (Frye, 2005). Present-day journalism frequently incorporates sensationalism, wherein truths are amplified to create a heightened sense of excitement and drama. The objective is often to attract larger audiences, secure higher ratings, and generate greater financial gains in the modern media landscape (Frye, 2005). Sensationalism can also be characterized as being either positive or negative towards the accused or the accuser by choice of words, multimedia content, and the general tone of the text adopted by the author (Frye, 2005).

On the other hand, there is a wealth of research demonstrating that media content frequently adopts a simplistic, exaggerated, or partial approach when representing marginalized groups such as women and racialized minorities, thereby reinforcing stereotypical portrayals of social reality (Navarro et al., 2019). Stereotypes are social constructs that are shared and acquired through socialization, playing a role in categorizing groups and individuals and simplifying social interactions by essentializing social relationships. They play a role in reinforcing and sustaining power imbalances and hierarchies when we talk about genders, minorities, and other social groups and their characteristics that may have otherwise achieved greater equality or integration (Navarro et al., 2019). Unless individuals are able and motivated to consciously resist stereotyping, it tends to occur automatically as a default process (Lasorsa & Dai, 2007).

### **The importance of the digital aspect**

The news aspect that I want to incorporate in this work is how violence against women in the real world is transferred to the digital/cyber world. The cyber-violence is defined as:

"an act of gender-based violence perpetrated directly or indirectly through information and communication technologies that result in or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, whether occurring in public or private life, or hindrances to the use of their fundamental rights and freedoms. Cyber-violence against women is not limited to but includes violations of privacy, stalking, harassment, gender-based hate speech, personal content sharing without consent, image-based sexual abuse, hacking, identity theft, and direct violence. Cyber-violence is part of the continuum of violence against women: it does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it both stems from and sustains multiple forms of offline violence" (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022, p. 19).

The term cyberbullying can be used to refer to a variety of behaviors, including cyberstalking, cyberbullying, online aggression, flaming, 'happy slapping,' stalking, and trolling (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). The intersectionality of gendered norms, pervasive stereotypes, and discriminatory practices further amplifies the prevalence and severity of online violence directed toward women, highlighting the prominence of misogyny and racism in these digital contexts (Welsh Women's Aid, 2021). As technology-related violence extends beyond physical harm, it frequently encompasses psychological and economic abuse or a combination thereof (Rai, 2017). The digital realm has become a new battleground for violence against women, taking the form of cyberstalking, cyberbullying, revenge porn, doxxing, and online harassment. These types of violence have far-reaching implications for women's physical and mental well-being, as well as their social, economic, and overall welfare (Henry & Powell, 2016). Online violence encompasses the utilization of digital platforms and technologies to perpetrate actions that inflict physical, psychological, or emotional harm upon individuals (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2022). Cyberstalking, a form of online harassment, involves the use of technology to repeatedly threaten or falsely accuse someone, monitor their online activities, and even extend threats into physical spaces. This behavior instills fear and poses a significant risk to the victim's safety and well-being (Association for Progressive Communications, 2009). Online violence against women often stems from perpetrators seeking to subject their targets

to humiliation, fear, retaliation, manipulation, or embarrassment, among other motivations (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021).

It is argued that digital media presents possibilities for the development of more comprehensive, discerning, and women-focused narratives and interventions (Lewis & Orderson, 2012). In numerous media reports, women are often stereotypically misrepresented, which can lead to a victim-blaming and victim-shaming phenomenon online (Khan, 2018). One of the examples we can observe in this context is the popular Netflix series *You*, which puts the perpetrator in the foreground instead of the victim, which aims to encourage the audience to sympathize with him, blame the victims for promiscuity, and support the narrative that the victims are consciously caused and deserved violence (Pedro, 2020). Also, research from Pakistan showed how the most popular channels on Pakistani TV portray violence against women stereotypically, misrepresenting their realities (Awais et al., 2015). According to Terman (2017), the portrayal of sexist stereotypes in media coverage of Muslims can potentially contribute to the formation of negative attitudes toward Muslims and influence policy discussions. Additionally, the study found that the American media's coverage of global women's rights exhibits a limited scope, primarily emphasizing issues related to Muslim and Middle Eastern countries while neglecting the oppression faced by women in other societies (Terman, 2017).

The digital form of violence is often underreported due to cultural norms and a lack of trust in the legal system, allowing perpetrators to persist and perpetuate harm. The consequences of online gender-based violence extend beyond psychological effects, leading to social isolation, loss of confidence, and negative societal outcomes, with potential escalation into physical and sexual coercion and even life-threatening situations (Ali, 2022). Violence serves as both a catalyst and a consequence of existing inequalities and mechanisms of social control, permeating various aspects of society in offline and online domains. These underlying forces influence the development, regulation, and utilization of technologies, thereby offering valuable insights into how violence is perpetuated, reinforced, and normalized (Harris, 2020).

When discussing the digital realm, it is important to highlight certain phenomena that have emerged from it, namely victim blaming and victim shaming (Maruna & Pali, 2020). These terms are commonly used to describe the public judgment of women, primarily in situations where media reports on cases of violence are followed by a portion of the public

engaging in public shaming and blaming the victim for the violence she experienced based on her physical, mental, religious, national, or other beliefs. It is often noted that the efforts to combat victim blaming and the genuine need to redirect shame away from victims must be carefully balanced to avoid stigmatization and punitive attitudes (Maruna & Pali, 2020). Attributing blame to victims of violence exacerbates their suffering by subjecting them to additional shame and humiliation (Fast & Richardson, 2019). Research consistently reveals that victims are frequently held accountable, with blame being placed on them for the violence they endure. This blaming process further compounds the emotional distress experienced by victims, compounding their already burdensome ordeal (Fast & Richardson, 2019).

Revenge porn is recognized as an additional manifestation of gender-based violence that emerges within the context of digital violence against women (Hall & Hearn, 2017). From these perspectives, revenge porn can be interpreted as a deliberate and structured action influenced by the gendered and sexual social order, often referred to as patriarchy. Authors claimed that it can also be understood as a performative enactment of gender, sexuality, or the intersection of gender and sexuality. The underlying dynamics of power and control are central to revenge porn, highlighting how these dynamics are exercised and perpetuated. Furthermore, online revenge porn can be viewed as instances of newly emerging and evolving forms of online violence, violations, sexual violence, and even sexualities (Hall & Hearn, 2017).

Bailey and colleagues (2021) expand on the concept of digital dualism as a bias and fallacy, highlighting its impact as a discourse and habit. The discursive practice of digital dualism denies women experiencing online abuse the recognition and validation they deserve, both from other social media users and support systems. Therefore, collapsing the online/offline divide is crucial in supporting victims of online abuse, as it acknowledges the significance of their experiences and existence, regardless of the digital realm (Bailey et al., 2021). The research in Serbia showed the correlation between increased technology use and digital violence while emphasizing the significance of employing various measures for digital violence prevention and legal enforcement in the country (Bojan Jevtić, 2020).

### **Contextualization of the region**

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been shaped by cultural, political, and religious influences throughout its history, with each nationality having its own distinct culture and

language yet also sharing common cultural elements due to their intertwined past (Todorova, 2009). The war in the 1990s had a profound impact on the region, and the Dayton Agreement, signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, brought an end to the conflict and established the current state organization creating a multi-ethnic government (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, 2013; Kozljak, 2020). The 2013 census revealed that 50.7% of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified as followers of Islam (Klix.ba, 2016). Despite progress, the country still faces challenges, with ongoing media coverage highlighting conflicts and animosities between different ethnic groups (Turčilo & Buljubašić, 2020).

According to Deljkić (2006), the legal framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding domestic violence is established based on the country's Constitution, which underscores the responsibility to safeguard the rights of families and children in accordance with international standards. Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified various international conventions and protocols, including the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to address the issue of domestic violence. Domestic violence is explicitly prohibited under the Criminal Code, Family Law, Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, and Gender Equality Law in different regions of the country. In 2005, laws were passed in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska to address domestic violence. These legal measures aim to prevent and punish acts of violence, ensure protection from physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, provide access to specialized courts for minor offenses, offer counseling services for psychological and substance abuse issues, implement protective orders, and provide support and assistance to victims (Deljkić, 2006).

Sexual harassment emerges as a prevalent form of gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Findings from a 2019 study conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reveal that approximately one out of three women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have encountered some form of sexual harassment since reaching the age of 15. Additionally, the study shows that Bosnia and Herzegovina has fewer reports of sexual harassment than the EU and other Western Balkan and Eastern European countries. (OSCE, 2022).

When it comes to the media coverage of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the analysis indicated a prevalence of shorter articles focusing on specific cases of violence against women rather than thematic articles addressing the concept of violence against women. Media outlets tend to report on incidents of violence against women in brief news pieces, often relying on information provided by sources such as the police or non-governmental organizations, while approximately one in every five articles challenges stereotypes or deviates from the conventional reporting approach (Mujkić Jukić, 2016).

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this analysis, I was interested in the relationship between the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other variables that can influence the understanding of media reports and also help create certain narratives in society.

### **Research questions**

Given that research has shown how stereotypical media reporting can contribute to distorted perceptions by employing a common strategy to streamline tasks and reduce cognitive dissonance between preconceived expectations and actual observations (Lasorsa & Dai, 2007), the first research question sought to explore the extent of stereotypical reporting regarding this topic.

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between emphasis on the religious identity of the victim and stereotypical reporting of violence against Muslim women in the media?

The second research question aims to investigate the impact of regional variation on the depiction of violence against Muslim women in the media within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This case study seeks to examine how different regions within the country may influence the representation and coverage of violence against Muslim women, considering different factors. By analyzing media content from various regions, the study aims to shed light on potential disparities in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women and contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between regional dynamics and media representations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**RQ2:** How does regional variation affect the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

The third research question explores the connection between the representation of stereotypical content in photographs and the reporting of exaggerated stereotypes regarding violence against Muslim women in the media within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It aims to investigate how the visual portrayal of violence against Muslim women, particularly through photographs, may contribute to perpetuating or amplifying stereotypes in media reporting. By examining the relationship between visual imagery and the content of news reports, it seeks to uncover whether there is a correlation between the use of stereotypical images and the exaggeration of stereotypes in media coverage of violence against Muslim women.

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between the portrayal of stereotypical content in photographs and the reporting of the exaggeration of stereotypes related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

In order to address the research questions, a content analysis of media content was conducted. The first step involved creating a coding book, which was adapted from an existing design by Mujkić Jukić (2016) to suit the needs of the study. The second step involved gathering the necessary content for analysis, and the third step entailed conducting the analysis itself.

## **Sample**

The sample for this research consisted of a total of 156 articles. In order to ensure a comprehensive representation of media content, a census sample approach was employed, meaning that all articles obtained through keyword searches were included in the analysis (Kish & Verma, 1986). The selection of articles spanned a period of ten years, starting from the onset of the migrant crisis when a significant influx of migrants, particularly those of the Islamic faith, passed through the countries in the region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bajrović & Arnautović, 2022). This period was chosen because it coincided with a substantial amount of media coverage focusing on Muslim women of migrant backgrounds, making it particularly relevant for examining the portrayal of violence against this specific group.

Keyword searches were conducted in the archives of nine online media portals in Bosnia and Herzegovina to collect the articles. The selected keywords encompassed a combination of terms such as Islam, women, violence, sexual violence, Muslims, and Muslim



women to ensure a comprehensive retrieval of relevant content. The chosen portals represented regions predominantly inhabited by three major ethnoreligious groups in the country: Bosniaks (Muslims), Croats (Christians), and Serbs (Orthodox). This approach aimed to capture the diversity of media representations across different regions and ethnoreligious communities within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Given the absence of official readership measurements, the selection of the portals was based on internal data provided by the portals themselves, which included information on readership and social media engagement. The aim was to include the most widely read portals in order to ensure a broad reach and influence in the analysis.

The list of portals included in the analysis, along with the number of articles from each portal, is as follows: Vecernji.ba (25 articles), Poskok.info (15 articles), Bljesak.info (20 articles), bl-portal.info (11 articles), Srpskainfo (12 articles), Glas Srpske (9 articles), Klix (20 articles), Avaz (22 articles), and Oslobođenje (22 articles).

By employing this comprehensive sample of articles, this research aims to provide insights into the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **Measurement**

This research conducted a content analysis on a collection of articles obtained through keyword searches, focusing on the portrayal of violence against Muslim women. The sample included articles that addressed the experiences of Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as those that highlighted the plight of Muslim women who were victims of violence in other countries or were migrant women themselves. This inclusive approach aimed to capture a holistic picture of how media outlets in Bosnia and Herzegovina report on violence against Muslim women in general.

To ensure consistency and facilitate analysis, all the identified articles were subjected to coding based on a predefined set of categories. These categories encompassed various aspects identified through the literature for the purposes of this research as well as based on the already created coding list that analyzed media reporting on violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mujkić Jukić, 2016). Each article was meticulously examined, and the presence or absence of each category was coded as a binary variable (present = 1; not present = 0) except for the Region category (1 = Herzegovina; 2 = Republika Srpska; 3 =

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). This coding process enabled a systematic and quantitative analysis of the data, providing valuable insights into the patterns and tendencies of media reporting on violence against Muslim women in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Region:* This category aimed to capture the geographical context of the media articles analyzed. It involved determining the specific region within Bosnia and Herzegovina where the article was published or focused on. This variable was important to understand if there were any regional variations in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media, and it was coded into three categories: Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By coding the region, it was possible to explore potential differences in media coverage across different areas within Bosnia and Herzegovina. This allowed for a more nuanced analysis of how violence against Muslim women was portrayed and addressed in specific regions, taking into account potential variations in cultural, social, and political factors. Understanding regional differences in media representation of violence against Muslim women can provide valuable insights into the complexities of the issue and shed light on any localized patterns or disparities that may exist.

*Sensationalism:* This category assesses whether the article exhibits sensationalistic elements. Sensationalism in media refers to the use of exaggerated, shocking, or provocative content to attract attention and engage audiences (Frye, 2005). By analyzing sensationalism, the study aims to understand the extent to which violence against Muslim women is presented in a sensationalized manner, potentially distorting perceptions and reinforcing stereotypes.

*Negative Sensationalism:* This category focuses specifically on the presence of negative sensationalism in the article. Negative sensationalism refers to the use of sensationalistic elements that may have harmful or exploitative effects, perpetuating negative stereotypes or reinforcing biases (Frye, 2005). This category allows for a nuanced examination of the potential negative impact of sensationalized portrayals of violence against Muslim women.

*Emphasis on religious identity:* This category explores whether there is a significant emphasis on the religious identity of the individuals involved in the violence against Muslim women. It examines whether religious identity is prominently portrayed and how it may shape the overall narrative or perception of the issue.

*Stereotypical reporting:* This category focuses on the presence of exaggerated stereotypes tied to a certain culture (Lasorsa & Dai, 2007). It assesses whether the article reinforces existing stereotypes related to violence against Muslim women, potentially distorting public understanding and perpetuating harmful biases.

*Visual stereotypical content/photography:* This category examines the presence of stereotypical content in photographs related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women. It investigates whether the photographs reinforce cultural stereotypes and how they contribute to shaping the overall narrative and perception of the issue. It focuses on the visual representation of religious identity and its potential impact on the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media.

| Elements               | Categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The story           | 1.1. Media name<br>1.2. Region<br>1.3. Date (26/06/2016 format for June 26, 2016)<br>1.4. Title of the article<br>1.5. Gender of journalists<br>1.6. Article length<br>1.7. Source/Origin<br>1.8. Genre<br>1.9. Sensationalism<br>1.10. Negative Sensationalism |
| 2. PHOTO               | 2.1. The presence of stereotypical content                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3. Topic               | 3.1. Physical violence<br>3.2. Sexual violence<br>3.3. Psychological violence<br>3.4. Economic violence                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4. Actors              | 4.1. Subject<br>4.2. Identity of the subject                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5. Religious component | 5.1. Emphasis on religious identity<br>5.2. Stereotypical reporting                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Table 1: Overview of the codebook

## Reliability

The coding process was carried out by a single coder as part of her master's thesis research, focusing on several variables related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media. These variables included region, emphasis on the religious identity of a

victim, stereotypical reporting, negative sensationalism, sensationalism, and stereotypical multimedia content/photographs. Each variable was coded as binary, indicating the presence or absence of specific characteristics in the media articles.

To assess the reliability of the coding, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was calculated, resulting in an acceptable value of .75. This indicates a sufficient level of consistency in the coding process and strengthens the reliability of the study's findings.

The variable "region" ( $M = 2.03$ ;  $SD = 0.894$ ) provides insights into any regional variations in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women, examining whether media articles from different regions differ in their reporting. The variable "emphasis on the religious identity of a victim" explores whether the media articles placed particular emphasis on the religious identity of the victims, potentially contributing to the perpetuation of stereotypes ( $M = 1.28$ ;  $SD = 0.448$ ). The variables "stereotypical reporting" ( $M = 1.42$ ;  $SD = 0.496$ ) and "negative sensationalism" ( $M = 1.56$ ;  $SD = 0.497$ ) assess the presence of stereotypical elements and sensationalistic reporting, respectively, in the media coverage of violence against Muslim women. The variable "sensationalism" ( $M = 1.63$ ;  $SD = 0.485$ ) provides a broader measure of sensationalistic reporting, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. Lastly, the variable "stereotypical multimedia content/photographs" ( $M = 1.69$ ;  $SD = 0.466$ ) examines the extent to which visual representations in media articles perpetuated stereotypes.

## **FINDINGS**

In the following section, I will present the main findings of the research, which aimed to examine the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media. The analysis focused on several key variables, including region, emphasis on the religious identity of the victims, stereotypical reporting, negative sensationalism, sensationalism, and stereotypical multimedia content/photographs.

### *Religious Identity and Stereotypical Reporting of Violence against Muslim Women*

The results of the analysis revealed several significant correlations between the variables under investigation. Firstly, there was a moderate positive correlation between Sensationalism and Emphasis\_on\_religious\_identity\_Victim ( $r = 0.386$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between sensationalist reporting and the emphasis placed on the religious identity of the victim. Specifically, a

greater emphasis on the victim's religious identity tends to coincide with a more sensationalist style of reporting.

Secondly, a moderate positive correlation was found between sensationalism and stereotypical reporting ( $r = 0.444$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates a significant relationship between sensationalist reporting and the presence of stereotypical reporting related to a specific culture. In other words, a higher degree of sensationalism is often accompanied by the presence of stereotypical reporting that reinforces cultural stereotypes.

Lastly, a strong positive correlation was observed between `Emphasis_on_religious_identity_Victim` and `Stereotypical_reporting` ( $r = 0.662$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding highlights the significant relationship between the emphasis on the victim's religious identity and the presence of stereotypical reporting. It suggests that a greater emphasis on the religious identity of the victim is likely to coincide with the presence of stereotypical reporting that perpetuates cultural stereotypes.

The cross-tabulation results for the variables "`Emphasis_on_religious_identity_Victim`" and "`Region`" revealed interesting patterns in the distribution of cases across different regions. In Herzegovina, 43 cases (71.67%) highlighted the religious identity of victims, while in Republika Srpska, the emphasis on religious identity was present in 30 cases (93.75%). In Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 40 cases (62.5%) emphasized the religious identity of victims. These findings indicate regional variations in the extent to which the religious identity of victims is emphasized in media coverage of violence against Muslim women.

Statistical analysis using Chi-square tests further confirmed the presence of significant differences between regions in terms of emphasizing the religious identity of victims (Pearson Chi-Square = 10.463,  $p = .005$ ). However, the Linear-by-Linear Association test did not yield a statistically significant result ( $p = .237$ ), suggesting a weak linear relationship between the variables. The results suggest that media coverage in Herzegovina and Republika Srpska tends to place a greater emphasis on the religious identity of victims compared to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These regional differences may be attributed to various factors, including cultural, historical, and religious influences specific to each region.

These findings provide valuable insights into the relationship between sensationalism, the emphasis on religious identity, and the presence of stereotypical reporting in the media's

portrayal of violence against Muslim women. They underscore the need for critical examination of media practices and the potential impact on shaping public perceptions and attitudes.

### *Regional Variation in Media Portrayal of Violence against Muslim Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Based on the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine the presence of regional variation in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, several conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, the variables `Emphasis_on_religious_identity_Victim` and `Stereotypical_reporting` (Exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture) exhibited statistically significant differences between regions, indicating that the mean values of these variables vary across different regions. This implies that the emphasis on the religious identity of the victim and the presence of stereotypical reporting differ depending on the region.

Similarly, the variable `sensationalism` also demonstrated statistically significant differences between regions. This suggests that the mean values of sensationalist reporting differ across regions, indicating regional variations in the level of sensationalism in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media.

Additionally, the variable `PHOTO_stereotypical` (PHOTO: stereotypical content) displayed statistically significant differences between regions. This signifies that there are variations in the presence of stereotypical content in photographs related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media across different regions.

Examining the Partial Eta Squared values, which indicate the effect size, it can be concluded that the associations between the regions and the variables `Emphasis_on_religious_identity_Victim`, `Stereotypical_reporting`, `Sensationalism`, and `PHOTO_stereotypical` are relatively weak. The R-squared values provide insight into the percentage of variability explained by the independent variables. It is important to highlight that all of the obtained results are statistically significant, as indicated by the very low p-values (less than 0.01). This indicates the presence of significant regional differences in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In line with the research question, an exploration was conducted to examine the regional variations in the utilization of sensationalist and stereotypical narratives when reporting on violence against Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This investigation aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns and tendencies within different regions of the country.

The cross-tabulation analysis of the variables "Sensationalism category: Negative" with the variable "Region" revealed interesting findings. Specifically, the distribution of these variables across the regions of Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated notable variations.

The results indicate that the Herzegovina region exhibited the highest frequency of cases (60%) where negative sensationalism content was present. In comparison, the Republic of Srpska region had a slightly lower frequency of cases (56.25%) with such content. On the other hand, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina region had a significantly lower presence of negative sensationalism content, with only 21.88% of cases demonstrating its presence. These disparities suggest that different regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina employ varying degrees of sensationalist reporting techniques.

The statistical analysis further confirmed the presence of a significant relationship between the variables "Sensationalism category: Negative" with the variable "Region" ( $\chi^2(2) = 20.930, p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, the Linear-by-Linear Association test indicated a linear association between the presence of negative sensationalism content and the region ( $\chi^2(1) = 18.386, p < 0.001$ ). These statistical findings reinforce the observed regional differences in the utilization of negative sensationalism narratives.

In order to explore the relationship between regional variations and the presence of stereotypical reporting, a cross-tabulation analysis of the distribution of the variables "Stereotypical\_reporting" and across the regions of Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The results revealed notable differences in the prevalence of stereotypical reporting across these regions. The highest frequency of cases (71.67%) with an exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture was observed in the Herzegovina region. The Republika Srpska region displayed a lower frequency of cases (25%) with such stereotypical reporting, while the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina region had the lowest frequency (64.06%).

The statistical analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between the variables "Stereotypical\_reporting" with the variable "Region" ( $\chi^2(2) = 21.137, p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, the Linear-by-Linear Association test indicated a linear association between the presence of stereotypical reporting and the region ( $\chi^2(1) = 16.350, p < 0.001$ ).

These findings highlight distinct regional variations in the utilization of stereotypical reporting when portraying violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The higher prevalence of stereotypical reporting in the Herzegovina region compared to the Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina regions suggests divergent reporting practices and cultural influences across different parts of the country.

#### *The Link between visual elements and stereotypes in Media Coverage of Violence against Muslim Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables "PHOTO\_stereotypical" and "Stereotypical\_reporting." The obtained correlation coefficient of 0.356 indicates a moderate positive correlation between these variables. The significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) associated with the correlation coefficient was found to be 0.000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant.

Interpreting these findings, we can conclude that there is a positive relationship between the presence of stereotypical content in the photographs (variable "PHOTO\_stereotypical") and the exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture in reporting (variable "Stereotypical\_reporting"). As the level of stereotypical content in the photos increases, there is a tendency for the reporting also to exhibit a higher degree of exaggeration of stereotypes related to a specific culture. This suggests that the use of stereotypical content in photographs may contribute to the perpetuation and amplification of cultural stereotypes in media reporting.

These findings highlight the importance of considering the visual elements accompanying media reports, as they can influence the portrayal and perception of violence against Muslim women. It is crucial for media professionals and practitioners to be aware of the potential implications of using stereotypical visual content and to strive for more balanced and nuanced representations that avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes. Further research is



needed to explore the underlying factors and mechanisms that contribute to the observed relationship between photographic content and the exaggeration of stereotypes in reporting.

The examination of the relationship between the presence of stereotypical content in photographs (variable "PHOTO\_stereotypical") and the regions of Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina provides insights into the regional dynamics of media portrayal in the context of violence against Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following interpretation presents an analysis of the cross-tabulation results and the statistical tests conducted. The cross-tabulation table shows the distribution of cases across different regions based on the presence or absence of stereotypical content in photographs. Out of the total 156 cases analyzed, 49 cases (33.97%) had stereotypical content present, while 107 cases (66.03%) did not.

Statistical analysis using Chi-square tests revealed significant differences between the regions in terms of the presence of stereotypical content in photographs (Pearson Chi-Square = 10.326,  $p = .006$ ). The Likelihood Ratio test also yielded a statistically significant result ( $p = .004$ ), indicating that the observed differences are not due to chance. Furthermore, the Linear-by-Linear Association test indicated a linear association between the presence of stereotypical content and the regions ( $p = .006$ ).

The findings suggest regional variations in the utilization of stereotypical content in photographs related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women. In Herzegovina, 24 cases (48.98%) exhibited stereotypical content, while in Republika Srpska, 14 cases (43.75%) showed such content. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 11 cases (17.19%) had stereotypical content present.

These results highlight distinct regional patterns in the use of stereotypical imagery in media coverage. It is important to note that the presence of stereotypical content in photographs may contribute to the reinforcement and perpetuation of cultural stereotypes. The higher prevalence of stereotypical content in Herzegovina and Republika Srpska compared to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina suggests diverse media practices and reporting styles across the regions.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research provides insights into the regional variations in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The higher prevalence of

negative sensationalism content in the Herzegovina and Republika Srpska regions compared to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina region suggests diverse journalistic practices and reporting styles across the country. These variations may stem from factors such as cultural influences, historical context, and the media landscape specific to each region.

It is important to note that the research findings are based on a sample of articles, and the analysis focuses specifically on the presence of negative sensationalism content. Future studies could delve deeper into the underlying factors influencing these regional variations, considering additional variables such as media ownership, audience preferences, and cultural dynamics.

The findings of this research shed light on several key aspects related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The analysis examined the relationship between various variables, including the emphasis on religious identity, stereotypical reporting, negative sensationalism, sensationalism, and stereotypical multimedia content/photographs. Additionally, regional variations in the media portrayal of violence against Muslim women were explored.

The results revealed significant correlations between the variables under investigation. The presence of a moderate positive correlation between sensationalism and the emphasis on the religious identity of the victim suggests that sensationalist reporting often coincides with a greater emphasis on the religious identity of the victim. This finding implies that the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media may involve sensationalist narratives that focus on the religious aspect, potentially leading to biased or distorted representations.

Furthermore, the presence of a moderate positive correlation between sensationalism and stereotypical reporting indicates that sensationalist reporting is often accompanied by the presence of stereotypical reporting related to a specific culture. This finding highlights the potential impact of sensationalism on the perpetuation and reinforcement of cultural stereotypes in media coverage of violence against Muslim women.

The strong positive correlation observed between the emphasis on the religious identity of the victim and stereotypical reporting suggests that a greater emphasis on the religious identity of the victim tends to coincide with the presence of stereotypical reporting. This finding underscores the need for media professionals to critically evaluate their reporting

practices and consider the potential implications of emphasizing religious identity in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women.

These findings collectively emphasize the complex interplay between religious identity, sensationalism, and stereotypical reporting in the media's portrayal of violence against Muslim women. They highlight the importance of adopting a balanced and nuanced approach that avoids perpetuating stereotypes and biases.

The analysis of regional variations in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina revealed significant differences between regions. The variables related to the emphasis on religious identity of the victim and stereotypical reporting exhibited statistically significant variations across different regions.

The presence of significant differences in the emphasis on religious identity and stereotypical reporting between regions indicates the influence of regional factors on the media portrayal of violence against Muslim women. These variations may stem from diverse cultural influences, historical contexts, and the specific media landscape in each region. The findings highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of regional dynamics in media representations and the potential impact on public perceptions.

The statistically significant differences observed in the variable of sensationalism across regions suggest varying levels of sensationalist reporting in the portrayal of violence against Muslim women. This indicates that different regions within Bosnia and Herzegovina employ distinct reporting practices and styles, potentially reflecting unique cultural and contextual factors.

Moreover, the significant differences in the presence of stereotypical content in photographs related to the portrayal of violence against Muslim women further underscore the regional variations in media representations. These differences may reflect the diverse perspectives and reporting practices prevalent in different regions of the country.

## **LIMITATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of considering regional variations in media portrayals of violence against Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They highlight the need for media professionals, policymakers, and society at large to critically

evaluate regional dynamics and work towards promoting inclusive and accurate representations that avoid perpetuating stereotypes.

The analysis also explored the relationship between the presence of stereotypical content in photographs and the exaggeration of stereotypes in media reporting. The moderate positive correlation found between these variables suggests that as the level of stereotypical content in photographs increases, there is a tendency for reporting to exhibit a higher degree of exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture.

These findings underscore the role of visual elements, specifically photographs, in shaping media narratives and perpetuating stereotypes. The presence of stereotypical content in photographs may contribute to amplifying and reinforcing cultural stereotypes in media reporting on violence against Muslim women.

It is crucial for media professionals to be aware of the potential implications of using stereotypical visual content and to strive for more balanced and nuanced representations. By promoting a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of violence against Muslim women, the media can play a significant role in challenging and combating stereotypes.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the portrayal of violence against Muslim women in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings highlight the relationships between sensationalism, the emphasis on religious identity, and stereotypical reporting. They underscore the need for a critical examination of media practices and regional variations in media representations.

Further research is warranted to deepen our understanding of these relationships and explore their implications for media representation and societal perceptions. Further research is needed to explore the underlying factors driving these regional differences and their implications for media representation and societal discourse. By gaining a deeper understanding of the regional dynamics, policymakers, media professionals, and researchers can work towards promoting more balanced and accurate portrayals of violence against Muslim women, free from the influence of harmful stereotypes.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Codebook**

#### **1. THE STORY**

**1.1.** Media name

**1.2.** Region

**1.3.** Date (26/06/2016 format for June 26, 2016)

**1.4.** Title of the article

**1.5.** Gender of journalists

*1.5.1.* Feminine

*1.5.2.* Male

*1.5.3.* Not checked

**1.6.** Article length

*1.6.1.* Long (more than eight paragraphs)

*1.6.2.* Medium (four to eight paragraphs)

*1.6.3.* Short (up to four paragraphs)

**1.7.** Source/Origin

*1.7.1.* Original Content (Signed Articles)

*1.7.2.* News agency

*1.7.3.* Not checked

**1.8.** Genre

*1.8.1.* Factual (news, report, reportage, research)

*1.8.2.* Comment (opinion)

*1.8.3.* Interview

1.8.4. Other

**1.9. Sensationalism**

1.9.1. Yes

1.9.2. No

**1.10. Negative Sensationalism**

1.10.1. Yes

1.10.2. No

**2. PHOTO:**

2.1. Stereotypical content

2.2. No stereotypical content

**3. TOPIC**

3.1. Physical violence

3.2. Sexual violence

3.3. Psychological violence

3.4. Economic violence

**4. ACTORS**

4.1. Subject

4.1.1. A victim

4.1.2. The perpetrator of violence

4.1.3. The family of a victim

4.1.4. The family of the perpetrator of violence

4.1.5. A witness to violence

4.1.6. The police

4.1.7. Judiciary

4.1.8. An expert in the field

4.1.9. Others

**4.2. Identity of the subject**

4.2.1. Protected / not disclosed

4.2.2. Revealed

**5. RELIGIOUS COMPONENT**

**5.1. Emphasis on religious identity**

5.1.1. Yes

5.1.2. No

**5.2. Stereotypical reporting**

5.2.1. Exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture (Yes)

5.2.2. Exaggeration of stereotypes tied to a certain culture (No)

## **ABSTRACT (English)**

Violence against women is a pervasive global issue that disproportionately affects marginalized women, including Muslim women. The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions, yet it often perpetuates stereotypes. The emergence of the internet and social media platforms has further influenced the discourse on violence against Muslim women, with online hate speech being linked to real-world acts of violence. Within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the portrayal of violence against Muslim women is influenced by a complex interplay of historical, political, and religious factors. This study aims to examine the media's portrayal of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically focusing on online news portals. Through content analysis, the research explores significant correlations between variables such as sensationalism, emphasis on religious identity, and stereotypical reporting. Findings suggest that sensationalist reporting frequently places a heightened emphasis on the religious identity of victims, potentially distorting the overall representation. Moreover, regional variations are observed in terms of the emphasis on religious identity, stereotypical reporting, sensationalism, and the presence of stereotypical content in photographs. The study underscores the importance of nuanced and balanced media representations to avoid perpetuating stereotypes. Media professionals and policymakers need to critically assess regional dynamics to ensure accurate and inclusive portrayals of violence against Muslim women. Future research should delve deeper into the underlying factors driving these regional differences and their implications for media representation. A comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is vital in combating harmful stereotypes and promoting accurate portrayals.

**Keywords:** Violence against women, Media portrayal, Sensationalism, Stereotypical reporting, Religious identity, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## **ABSTRACT (Deutsch)**

Gewalt gegen Frauen ist ein weitverbreitetes globales Problem, das marginalisierte Frauen, einschließlich Musliminnen, unverhältnismäßig betrifft. Die Medien spielen eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Gestaltung der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung, perpetuieren jedoch oft Stereotype. Das Aufkommen des Internets und sozialer Medien hat den Diskurs über Gewalt gegen muslimische Frauen weiter beeinflusst, wobei Online-Hassrede mit realen Gewalttaten in Verbindung gebracht wird. Im Kontext von Bosnien und Herzegowina wird die Darstellung von Gewalt gegen muslimische Frauen von einer komplexen Wechselwirkung historischer, politischer und religiöser Faktoren beeinflusst. Diese Studie zielt darauf ab, die Darstellung von Gewalt gegen Frauen in den Medien in Bosnien und Herzegowina zu untersuchen und dabei insbesondere den Fokus auf Online-Nachrichtenportale zu legen. Durch Inhaltsanalyse erforscht die Forschung signifikante Zusammenhänge zwischen Variablen wie Sensationalismus, Betonung der religiösen Identität und stereotyper Berichterstattung. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass sensationalistische Berichterstattung häufig eine verstärkte Betonung der religiösen Identität der Opfer legt und dadurch die Gesamtrepräsentation möglicherweise verzerrt wird. Darüber hinaus werden regionale Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Betonung der religiösen Identität, stereotyper Berichterstattung, Sensationalismus und dem Vorhandensein von stereotypischem Inhalt in Fotografien beobachtet. Die Studie betont die Bedeutung nuancierter und ausgewogener Medienrepräsentationen, um Stereotype zu vermeiden. Medienfachleute und politische Entscheidungsträger müssen die regionalen Dynamiken kritisch bewerten, um genaue und inklusive Darstellungen von Gewalt gegen muslimische Frauen zu gewährleisten. Zukünftige Forschung sollte sich eingehender mit den zugrunde liegenden Faktoren befassen, die diese regionalen Unterschiede antreiben, und deren Auswirkungen auf die Medienrepräsentation untersuchen. Ein umfassendes Verständnis dieser Dynamiken ist entscheidend, um schädliche Stereotype zu bekämpfen und genaue Darstellungen zu fördern.

**Keywords:** Gewalt gegen Frauen, Medienporträt, Sensationalismus, stereotype Berichterstattung, religiöse Identität, Bosnien und Herzegowina.