



REBELS FROM THE COUCH:

Exercise of civic engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the
production of satirical user generated content

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“All of us are dreaming to live in a normal country, in which I wouldn't have to care who comes from which political party, and who is in which position, and who belongs to what nationality. And this what we are doing is our small resistance to all of that”

Senad, age 44, producer from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract:

The convergence potential of Web 2.0 brought more to the citizens than a new communication tool and a space in which one could watch funny memes. The Web 2.0 structure, combined with satirical expression also brought new understanding and new practices through which civic engagement is performed.

Following the engaging potentials of Web 2.0 and satire as a tool for expression, this thesis is seeking to understand the formation of active citizens through the production of satirical user generated content. Based on a data from the 12 semi-structured interviews with producers of satirical user generated content from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the main attempt of this thesis is to analyze how satirical user generated content could enable civic engagement outside town squares, voting booths and protests.

The examination of engaging potentials of Web 2.0 and producers' activities within, starts with the media convergence and the use of short, spreadable satirical messages that are disseminating knowledge around social media platforms. Further on, the activities of commenting on social reality in which Bosnian and Herzegovinian producers are engaging in is enabling the creation of new spaces and practices in which they are exercising citizenship beyond legal frames. Their dedication to the use of Web 2.0 features and satire to share knowledge, opinions and ideas, the passion that drives them, is also helping them to build new communities. Those communities are linking their offline experience with the online expression. And by using hashtags, memes, and satire, producers are trying to make sense out of incongruities of the events they are witnessing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key words: civic engagement, Web 2.0, satire, producers, knowledge, citizenship

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1. Introduction

“Our entire life is on social networks now, why wouldn’t critique be there as well?” (Nino, 25, meme producer)

People engage with the issues concerning their societies in many different ways: they protest, they write letters to the elected representatives, they follow and react to the news, they form communities with like-minded people. “Humans rarely engage in meaningless activities,” Jenkins (2013:198) said, and as this thesis will present, the way they engage is rarely trivial as well.

Ever since the Iranian uprising in 2009, the Arab Spring in 2010, the Occupy Wall Street in 2011 (van Dijck 2013:74-75) and similar social movements (Milan 2013:14) broke on the social media platforms, the participatory and potential democratic influence of Web 2.0 has become an object of the debate in the media and communication environment. Unlike the movements mentioned above, where the protests on the streets, interaction, and mobilization on social media were combined, in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, the dissatisfaction and rebellion of citizens usually stay inside the Web 2.0 frameworks. The country whose citizens have a widely famous saying “the one who has the last laugh, laughs the hardest,” are also inclined to express their opinions through the use of humorous messages. This thesis will deal with the production of satirical user generated content that acts as a practice of civic engagement.

The vast number of research on the connection between civic engagement and social media is focused on a youth engagement in the public debate and their use of Web 2.0 platforms as expression tools (Baumgartner 2007). Defined in various contexts, from “giving money to charity and involvement in political rallies” (Amna, Ekman 2012: 284) to the broad explanation like the “activity aimed at improving one’s community” (Raynes-Goldie, Walker 2007:162), civic engagement could mean different things. Dahlgren puts an emphasis on the term civic which, by his explanation “resonates with the notion of public, in the sense of being visible, relevant for, and in some way, accessible to many people that are situated outside the private, intimate domain” (2009:58). This notion of civic is colliding with the engagement of producers with satirical user generated content as well. As active members of social media, they are disseminating their ideas, knowledge, and observations publicly. Also, their content is accessible and available to great number of people.

When it comes to the use of humor as an expression, a significant number of previous research about the role of the humor in society or the media is focused on particular TV shows, starting

with *The Daily Show* and *Colbert Report* (Amarasingam 2011). Other research is maybe more accurate and investigating the content and effects of political humor on late-night television (Matthes, Rauchfleisch 2014), effects of online political humor on the attitudes of youth (Baumgartner 2007). When the research is not focused on already produced TV content, then it is tailored around the specific event like the Gezi Park protest (Gorkem 2015).

Contrasted from previous research on similar topic like the one from Yang ad Jiang (2015) whose work is conceptualizing online political satire as “networked social practices” (2015:216), or Sorensen (2008) who is writing about the use of humor in the resistance movement in Serbia, this thesis will not be focused on the produced content. Rather, the practice of user generating content will be analyzed. Similar to the work done by El Marzouki (2015) who focuses on the use of political satire as a tool to criticize the ones in power and to seek for the change, this thesis will look at the satire as a form of humor that serves to provoke laughter while “casting judgment” (Young 2014:3) at the same time.

Unlike Marzouki, who did the analysis of two online satirical shows, this research is looking at the producers of the content, and the performance of their civic engagement that’s enabled with that production. By doing so, it is the aim that this thesis will help to contribute to the deeper understanding of how producers engage through this kind of content and how is it connected with the expression and construction of their citizenship. Looking at the previous research where, in most cases, the focus was on the produced content and not on the people that are generating the content, it is the aim that on the macro level this thesis will join the discussion on how does civic engagement could be performed outside the town squares and protests. The question of engagement and its connection to Web 2.0 is usually researched from the perspective of the youth. Having in mind that twelve producers age between 24 and 44 participated in this research, it is clear that we are not talking only about the youth engagement. The examination of the engaging potential through tweets and memes is also significant from the micro level of B&H where very little writing (Media.ba, 2013b) about the civic engagement in the online spheres, could be found. One potential knowledge gap this thesis may fill as well is the demonstration of citizenship outside usually practices spaces such as voting booths, street protest, and rallies.

1.1. Aim and research questions

“Social texts are artifacts by which cultural participants piece together reality,” (Pearce, 2015:82) and that kind of behavior is widely visible in a process of satirical user generated content production in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The producers are taking bits and pieces from their everyday encounters and observation and they are transforming that into tweets, memes and other forms of Web 2.0 posts.

Following recent activities in Web 2.0 sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), and engagement potential that is manifesting through satirical tweets and memes, this thesis will focus on understanding the practices behind this kind of civic engagement. The overall aim of the thesis is to demonstrate how producers are exercising their civic agency through their actions in Web 2.0. Civic agency, following Dahlgren’s (2009) explanation means that producers of satirical content are driven by passion but still acts reasonably, that they believe that the actions they are taking have greater meaning and significance that goes beyond their individual needs. According to Dahlgren (2009:59), civic agency is a “fundamental notion to conceptually anchor people’s enactment of citizenship.” The data used for analysis will serve to understand these practices and the role they are playing in the constitution of civic engagement.

To accomplish that, the following research question has been established:

- How does the involvement with the satire and Web 2.0 empower the producers of user generated content to exercise their civic engagement?
- In which way does the creation of satirical user generated content build the performance of the citizenship and civic engagement?

In order to answer the research question, the qualitative research with semi – structured interviews will be conducted, where activities of 12 producers of satirical user generated content from Bosnia and Herzegovina will be analyzed. The analysis will be performed from the standpoint of Web 2.0, civic engagement and the role of satire in the production of user generated content.

1.2. Democracy from the Bosnia and Herzegovinian context

By its constitution, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a democratic country that functions on the basis of “law and free and the democratic elections” (Ustav BiH, 1995). But in reality, this country that has once been named the “world’s most complicated governmental system” (The Guardian, Dzidic, Jukic, Nardelli, 2014) is still in a post-war, transitional, and in a, not so much, democratic stage.

For instance, in 2009, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg ruled in a case “Sejdic - Finci” (Al Jazeera, 2013), that the Constitution of B&H is discriminatory because it allows only members from constitutional nationalities to run for the presidency. But even eight years after the Court’s decision has made enforceable, the government of B&H hasn’t implemented it. In a country that is divided into two entities, one district and that is ruled by three presidents; this “unexercised” democracy is visible in the other pillars of society as well. Even though, the right to vote and to elect representatives, remains one of the main elements of democratic society, according to data from the electoral commission, the voter turnout for the local elections in 2012 was 56,51 percent, while the general elections in 2014 measured even lower participation in the elections, 54,47 percent (Izbori.ba, 2014).

In its recent history, the B&H society had two protests which have been supported by the online presence and mobilization via hashtag and social media platforms that have served as an exercise of citizenship. The first protest occurred in June 2013 with the JMBG acronym as an established hashtag used on social media platforms. JMBG stands for Unique Master Citizen Number, and entire protest started because the government was delaying issuing a law which assigns personal identification to the newly born citizens of B&H. Planned on social media by a couple of journalists, JMBG soon moved on the Facebook group where the blockade of institutional buildings was designed. What started from one Facebook post (Media.ba, 2013c), soon spread in a couple of days to become large protest on the streets of the capital of B&H. Citizens mobilized to help a three-month-old baby, Belmina Ibrišević, who was in an appalling health condition, to get her JMBG so she could travel abroad for surgery, demanded from the authorities to issue a new permanent law.

The JMBG protests were the first, and still only successfully performed protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This protest lasted for days, with many follow-up actions, it brought more than 10.000 people to the street, and in the end, they succeeded to force the government to issue a permanent law (Klix.ba, 2015).

The second one emerged in February 2014 with simultaneously performed protests in several cities. Citizens of the main towns in B&H, went out to the streets to protest against generally bad living conditions in which they found themselves. Protests started in Tuzla, where workers of four factories went out on the street to protest after the state declared insolvency of their factories (N1, 2017). Again, Twitter and Facebook played a significant role in spreading the news and awareness on the protests (Media.ba 2016). The activities around the protest lasted for a month; citizens formed plenums, small gatherings continued. But in the end, the protesters didn't accomplish any result. The interference of politics, fake news and aggressive behavior some of the protesters exercised, has stopped the protests media tried to label as the "Balkan Spring" (BBC, 2014).

But while the dissatisfaction, political criticism, and protest are lacking in everyday life activities outside the wires, they are heavily existent on the social media platforms. With just one look at Facebook pages or Twitter activity, it is notable that dissatisfaction of people mistrust in the politics and the political system runs deep in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. Today, the same people who participated in the protests, and who were engaged in social networks with sharing the information about those protests, are the ones who are active on Twitter and Facebook with the dissemination of the satirical user generated content.

1.3. Audience online activity

In a research about citizen's protests in the Western Balkans, one of the protesters from Bosnia said: "The JMBG protests were the first wave, February was the second wave I think we'll get to see third and fourth wave until something changes..." (Media.ba, 2016). What this thesis will try to prove is that the third and fourth wave came in the slightly another form: as hashtags in satirical social media posts. In the absence of the other types of rebellion, the critique through user generated content or as Carty calls it "virtual methods of resistance" (2015:179), has become, apart from the election, almost the only signifier of the citizen's participation in the political debate.

As it has been stated, the most successful protests B&H managed to attract around 10.000 in the streets. On the other hand, a country with a 3.531.159 population (Statistics Agency, 2017), with more than a half million of unemployed citizens (ibid.), has an estimated number of one and a half million registered Facebook profiles (World Internet Stats, 2017). This data implies that almost half of the entire population uses Facebook. Just for the comparison, one of the most

popular Facebook pages with politically oriented memes, called “Raja sa Biroa”ⁱ has more than 82.000ⁱⁱ of followers with a steady growth. Further on, based on data from Alexaⁱⁱⁱ, Facebook is the second most used social network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, right behind YouTube, while Twitter is forth, with Instagram one spot above it (Alexa, 2017). Even as some authors like Couldry (2012) argue that the number of users doesn’t explain the significance of participation through social media, it is still a signifier of potential engagement of citizens.

On the 22nd of January of 2016, the BBC published a news article with the headline: “Bosnian leader derided over ‘wasteful spending’” (BBC, 2016). The mentioned leader is the Prime Minister of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fadil Novalić. The story focused on the Twitter campaign #FadileOprosti, (Twitter, 2016) which was triggered three days before the article was published when the Prime Minister stated that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a good life and that they are spending too much money on shopping. In a country where the average monthly salary is little over 400 euros (Statistics Agency B&H, 2017) this statement sparked a wave of comments on social media platforms. To express their opinion on the Prime Minister’s statement, citizens started to tweet about “their ‘extravagant’ lifestyle,” (BBC, 2016); using humor and sarcastic comments they criticized political notion in the country and reality in which they live. The campaign soon spread to the other social networks, mainly Facebook, entering mainstream media at the same time. One year later, the #FadileOprosti hashtag is still active, and it’s being used primarily to criticize moves of the Prime Minister.

But Fadil Novalić is not the only character in the online satirical content, and the hashtag isn’t the only weapon. Apart from the active involvement in the Twitter campaigns, citizens tend to create memes (Shifman, 2014:2), images with often humorous message extracted from everyday reality. Memes, because of their construction in the form of a funny picture, are often very widely spread, serving as what Millner (2013:1) called “nationwide inside joke.”

Just like any other audience, the Bosnian one is quite invested in the meme creation, and for them “nationwide inside joke” often has content extracted from the political life. Just like the #FadileOprosti campaign on Twitter, the satirical content with a political foundation can be found all over different Facebook groups, forums, in the status updates of the wider audience and the producers.

1.4. Media landscape

“Nowhere is the current pervasiveness of ironic/satiric humor more noticeable than in email inboxes and Facebook updates,” said Day (2011:24), and this kind of behavior is quite visible in the social media sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What is significant here, is that in a country that has 43 television stations, 144 radio stations, 10 daily papers (IREX report 2015), apart from the satire on the social media platforms and four websites (Šatro.info, Karakter.ba, Sarajevo365, SATIRAnje.com) media landscape doesn’t offer any other frequent satirical TV or radio show. Of course, there have been attempts, some shows have satirical segments even today, but the only constant satirical content is deriving from social media platforms. This may be the case because Web 2.0 and social media platforms are enabling "more lively and varied interaction between users," (Olsson 2014:1).

The reasons for the absence of satirical content remain unclear. According to the latest Freedom Index issued by Reporters without Borders (RSF, 2017), the media laws in B&H are pretty liberal, but the journalists are often the targets of political pressure. The political pressure on the journalists and media has been topic widely discussed in the media organizations as well. The issue of censorship is also not widely present, more, as Journalists Association B&H often cautions, the media landscape is affected by self-censorship (BH Novinari, 2015). The political pressure on journalists and the self-censorship may be one of the reasons for the lack of satire in the mainstream media space, but this thesis will not focus on making that conclusion.

From the side of humorous media content consumption, it is also not clear why this kind of content lacks in the mainstream media space. One of the most beloved satirical shows of the former Yugoslavia, called “Top Lista Nadrealista^{iv}” whose authors were quite familiar “households name through Balkans” (Al Jazeera, 2014), was created and recorded in Sarajevo between 1984 up until the middle of the war in 1993. Not only that this show lasted for around 10 years, but it gained the great audience, many of whom are still gladly paraphrasing some of the episodes. Also, having in mind the shared cultural space, similar languages, the audience from B&H (as producers involved in this research proved), follows satire and comedy from other Western Balkans countries. The producers of this research are more inclined to follow Serbia’s political comedy scene: Zoran Kesić’s 24 sata TV show and Njuz.net website than the ones that are produced in Croatia. Further on, as Jenkins et al. (2013:207), claimed: “humor builds on whether audience - gets - the joke, or shares a sensibility.” For the record, one of the producers who participated in this research and who is widely known for his sense of humor

has monthly reach of one million impressions on Twitter. “The sense of humor” is not the reason why satire is not present in the mainstream media.

With the obvious lack of satirical content, with the audience that has a historical tracking in the enjoyment of this type of content, and in the country where the material for mockery is present on every step, the producers in Web 2.0 found their place. As the thesis analysis will demonstrate while using satire and tweets and memes the producers are creating a practice of civic engagement.

1.5. Thesis outline

The first part after the introduction will deal with the literature review. In here, the theoretical framework but also previous research will be presented. Following after that is the analysis part, where data obtained from 12 semi structured interviews, will be analyzed using theoretical frameworks presented in the literature review.

2. Literature review

The literature review begins with the discussion about media convergence and the Web 2.0 and continues further into the discussion about civic engagement. The last chapter deals with political humor and its particular form with whom producers involve: satire.

2.1. Web 2.0: Who creates the content?

Challenges of the audience research did not appear with the “media convergence” (Jenkins, 2006), era. They have been present ever since the theater performances under the lamp (Hill, 2011), as well in the period in which as described by Abercrombie and Longhurst, being a member of the audience was not an exceptional experience, but rather it was a “constitutive of everyday life” (1998:69).

Today’s audience, the one that tweets, likes, uploads, the one that is sharing and posting content over social media platforms are at the highest level of participation we have a chance to witness so far. Writing about the participatory possibilities of Web 2.0 Olsson said: “(...) the new web creates a lot of participatory opportunities for almost any of the roles available to contemporary human beings,” (Svensson, Olsson, 2012:42). In her work on social movements and technology, Stefania Milan referring to Gerbaudo’s work on social media and contemporary activism called administrators of Facebook pages “soft leaders” (2013:40), where she pointed out on the significance of these roles in today’s Web 2.0 society.

Many authors including Gauntlett (2014), Gerbaudo (2012), or Jenkins, Ford, Green (2013) believe in the participatory component of the Web 2.0. Gauntlett argues that new digital media environment is giving us the possibility of “connections between people, distribution of material, conversations about it, collaborations, and opportunities to build on the work of others” (Gauntlett, 2014:1). For the description of collaboration on social media, Milan (2013:40) uses term “cloud protesting,” that describes a collective action of individual users gathered around a hashtag. While the ability to access and to interact with the media text does matter, not every media interaction constitutes participation (Carpentier 2011:69).

The other side of thinking about the participatory element of social media producer is gathered around the term “slacktivism”. Coined by Evgeny Mozorov (Zuckermann 2014:153) the term serves to explain activities on social media that are easily performed and which are “considered more effective in making the participants feel good about themselves” (Christensen, 2011:4) than contributing to actual change. Many criticized Mozorov for his observation of social media production as only entertaining and feel-good activities. Gerbaudo (2012) even calls him “prince of techno – pessimists” (2012:8).

According to Christensen (2011:4), the events and causes with whom someone engages online are not the ones that are defining slacktivism, but the “lack of desire to get more heavily involved in these causes.” Zuckermann noticed that most of the critique towards engagement in the forms of social media posts is aimed towards the fact that the “something more effective the online activists could do with their attention and energies,” (2014:153). On the other hand, Clay Shirky (2008) whom Gerbaudo calls “techno-optimist (2012:8) has all the praises for the participatory and influential element of social media, saying that the activities on social media should complement and not replace actions in the “real world”.

Of course, the participatory element of the media didn’t show up with the emergence of first World Wide Web: the audience has been an active participant in content creation in TV programs, radio shows, newspapers. As van Dijck stated: “Over the past 15 years, viewers have increasingly acted as participants in game shows, quizzes, talk shows and make-over programs” (van Dijck 2009:41). Surely, this practice didn’t evaporate with the emergence of Web 2.0 features. People are still sending their ideas to the “old media.” This old media, as Carpentier (2010:52) states, still plays a significant role in everyday life of people. Moreover, now it is possible to find even entire show segments on TV created with the content derived from social media. One of those shows exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. A majority of the participants of this research mentioned that they saw their tweets and other social media posts being broadcasted and discussed on a TV show called Dan Uživo^v, produced by the N1 channel^{vi}. This behavior explained Jenkins when he said that regardless of the technological development, what we consider as old media does not vanish; it’s just the tools that are changing (Jenkins 2006:13). Linking on this is the other idea Jenkins proposed, the notion of “spreadability” (Jenkins et al.2013), with the “easy to share content” (2013:6), that can be transmitted over the different platforms.

The participatory element was enabled by the technological development of the “architecture for participation” (Olsson, 2014) but who are the people that are in fact participating, and how do we call the content that they are producing?

- Contemporary media audiences do not simply consist of a mass of separated individuals; rather they are made up of complex and interacting social groups and individuals. Furthermore, the audience does not simply respond to the media message; it interacts with it in a variety of different ways. - (Abercrombie, Longhurst, 1998:5)

In this quote of Abercrombie and Longhurst, we can read the description of one average social media user: he/she is acting as an individual, but still, uses global or currently trending hashtags to connect with the social groups they belong or support.

When it comes to the defining and naming of people engaged in the production of user generated content, there have been several suggestions and discussions about the term which should be used as an explanation. Taking into the account the mostly non – professional status of the research participants^{vii} and their active involvement with media content production, this thesis will lean on the Carpentier’s idea of “participants in the media,” (Carpentier, 2011:68). For Carpentier one of the signifiers of participation in the media is that it deals with the “production of media output (content-related participation),” (Carpentier, 2011:68). Others like van Dijck (2013), Jenkins et al. (2013), Ross (2010) also agree that amateurs could be labeled as producers. In his explanation of this notion, Ross uses Denis McQuail descriptions of essential media skills, which involves things like „ability to attract attention and arouse interest and to assess public taste “(McQuail 1987:149 in Ross 2010:913).

This kind of classification is enabling citizens to participate in content creation actively and to exercise their right to communicate (Carpentier, 2011:68). From this standpoint, it is clear that content creation does not belong only to the media professionals and mainstream media, but also to the audience and the alternative media. For Carpentier, alternative media are: “those media that provide a different point of view from that usually expressed, that cater to communities not well served by the mass media, or that expressly advocate social change,” (Carpentier 2011:98). Having in mind that this thesis deals with the members of the active audience that is producing content on Web 2.0 and engaging with the wider public, and following Carpentier’s notion of participation in the media, from now on, the word producer will be used to describe the participants of this thesis research.

The term Web 2.0 was coined in 2005 to “describe the next wave of participatory media platforms” (Zuckerman 2013:4). This feature has made possible for everyday people to gather, to share their ideas and to work on their creative productions. As an explanation of the collaborative effect of Web 2.0, this thesis is using Gauntlett’s approach in which he said that:

“Sites such as YouTube, Flickr, Facebook (...) only exist and have value because people use and contribute to them, and they are clearly better the more people are using and contributing to them. This is the essence of Web.2.0.” (Gauntlett, 2011:7)

By analyzing material derived from semi-structured interviews, it will be investigated how does the existence of Web 2.0 enable producers to engage in the production of satirical content in a first place.

2.2. Media Convergence

The creation and production of content are not reserved only for Web 2.0 platforms. Rather differently, Web 2.0 connects with what is sometimes called “old media.” As Jenkins said in the introduction of the Convergence Culture:

- Welcome to the convergence culture, where old and new media collide, where grassroots ad corporate media intersects, where the power of media producer and the power of media consumer interact in the unpredictable ways - (Jenkins, 2006:2).

Today, content is flowing across different platforms and outlets, it is influenced by many and not only producers, and it is created for the variety of purposes. What is important in the Jenkins’s idea of convergence is that it is influenced, not only by technological developments but moreover, the importance of convergence lies in the notion in which producers and consumers are not taking separate roles anymore, “we might now see them as participants who interact with each other” (Jenkins 2006:3). This idea is important since Jenkins acknowledge that the line between producers and consumers is lifted and that today their roles intersect and overlap. This kind of notion will be applied in this research as well, in which the people who are producing content on social media are also the audience of the same media. Furthermore, the producers of this research are everyday users of “old media” as well: they watch TV news, some of them read papers, they browse through websites and not just social media platforms.

The idea of convergence spins around the idea of joint contribution and participation of the audience in the content creation process. Convergence and the shift in the relationship between audience and the media are noticed in something Jenkins calls “serious fun” (Jenkins 2006:

207). He discusses the use of different platforms by the various groups which are using entertaining content to raise awareness or to draw attention to an individual problem or event. “Photoshop for Democracy” (Jenkins 2006:222) is a concept which explains effort of producers in creating photos which could serve as a starting point for civic engagement. Jenkins explained that the photoshopped images as forms of popular culture have: “political effect, representing hybrid spaces where we can lower the political stakes (and change the language of politics), enough so that we can master skills we need to be participants in the democratic process” (Jenkins 2006: 209).

The emergence and the production of user-generated content is also enabled by the existence of Web 2.0 platforms and the “participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2013, Shifman 2016). As Andreas Kaplan stated, for one content to be considered a user generated one, three conditions must be met: “first, it needs to be published either on a publicity accessible website or a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people; second, it needs to show a certain amount of creative effort; and finally, it needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices,” (Kaplan, Haenlin 2010:61). This definition of user generated content is supported by van Dijck as well, who said that user generated content supports: creativity, foreground cultural activity, and promote the exchange of amateur or professional content”, (Van Dijck, 2013:8).

One of the specific forms of user generated content that some of the research participants are producing are the memes. These images, usually created with short humorous message mixed with the familiar phrase and excerpt from everyday life are widely spread, and they are often serving as what Millner (2013:1) called “nationwide inside joke”. The biologist Richard Dawkins introduced term in his book “The selfish gene” published in 1976 (Shifman 2014). He defined memes as small cultural units of transmission, analog to genes, that spread from person to by copying or imitation, (Shifman 2014:2). This term has been taken from the biological sphere by the internet users who used this word to describe “the rapid uptake and spread of particular idea presented as written text, image, language, move or some other unit of cultural stuff”, (Shifman, 2014:13). Not only that they serve as entertainment, but memes are usually reflecting deep social and cultural structures. For the investigation of the meaning and the influence internet memes have on civic engagement, this thesis will use Shifman explanation of internet memes (2014:66).

2.3. Civic engagement: Performing the citizenship, one tweet at the time

Interaction with the media doesn't have to lead towards participation. Nor does engagement equate with the participation (Dahlgren 2009:80). The activities of producers on Web 2.0 platforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not actually defined as political participation in the sense of taking part in the membership of a various political organization, or in a protest forms, (Amna, Ekman 2012:291).

Yet, some traces of maximalist participation (Carpentier 2011:69), could be found here as well. There is a balance between professional and non-professional participation, in which producers are trying to contribute more to the social change than the simple interaction in the media. Some of them would move from the discussion online onto the action in an 'offline' space, they would combine their actions towards change in their environment while tweeting about it, some of their actions are political. But as Dahlgren mentions (2009:80), engagement could be a pre-stage of participation, and rather than on participatory element, this thesis will focus on the engagement. The reason for this decision lies in the work producers are doing: rather inspect their actions as potentially decision making, the thesis will focus on the 'background' activities, the ones who could lead towards future political participation.

The overall idea of this thesis that deals with the engagement of producers with satirical user-generated content is to demonstrate how their actions could be considered as civic engagement. "Social change is the techies' primary motivation for engagement," writes Milan (2013:58) where they use that motivation to create alternative spaces for communication, to foster and influence small scale changes and to support one another. While they may not be defined as techies', producers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the analysis will show are motivated with the same goal.

It is without the doubt that "democracy needs people's participation" (Dahlgren, 2013:11), to succeed as a practice. But there is more to citizens than a name and a "right to vote" (Amna, Ekman 2012:285). As explained by Blumler and Coleman (2009:4), "people have become used to having multiple social identities, and the role of being a citizen is one of the more confusing of these identities." Dahlgren explains that citizenship is not just a "formal, legal set of rights and obligations," but he also treats it as a "mode of social agency" (2009:57). Manuel Castells supports this idea, saying that the citizenship does not "equate with nationality," (Castells 2009:55). For him, as Blumler and Coleman mentioned it, citizenship is just one of the person's expression of identities. For Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2005:227) good citizenship, the ones

that goes beyond Dahlgren's formal set of rights, entails that individuals "should be actively involved in politics, they should be knowledgeable, and they should hold strong democratic values, such as tolerance." For Blumler and Coleman (2009:4) citizenship could be understood in three ways. As Dahlgren, he also starts with the legal concept of citizenship, meaning one's belonging to usual nation-state while possessing a 'passport'. The second one is "political citizenship" (ibid.) which is connected with the above mentioned but extended to an "active constituent of a body politics", (ibid.). The third way of understanding the citizenship by Blumler and Coleman is "affective citizenship" (2009:5), which is connected with the "feelings of belonging, loyalty and solidarity," (ibid.).

For one person to become a citizen, beyond the legal set of rights and the nationality, and to be a full carrier of citizenship, that person needs to be able to identify himself as a citizen. In Dahlgren words (2009:64), people identities as citizens become crucial for democracy when along with "their sense of belonging to political collectivities – and perceive possibilities for participating in politics." For Coleman and others, to name people as citizens is to "acknowledge that they are more than consumers who buy things, audiences who gaze upon spectacles, or isolated egos, obsessed with themselves" (Coleman et al.2015:2).

As the analysis will show, the activities producers are taking regarding content they are producing, could be perceived as one of the possibilities through which people are becoming engaging citizens. Linking on this notion, Stephen Coleman gave a description of a democratic citizen, which is the most suitable for the picture of the producers of user generated content, and therefore used in this thesis.

- To be a democratic citizen is, at the very least, to be informed – not about everything but about enough to feel capable of contributing to the political conversation; to be encouraged to participate – not all the time, but at least some of the time; to feel engaged – at least to the point of not feeling like a permanent outsider; and to experience a sense of political confidence – a subjective belief that one has at least some chance to influence the world around one, and particularly its institutions of governance - (Coleman 2013b:378, cited in Doona, 2016:17).

When it comes to engagement which is according Dahlgren requirement for participation of citizens in the democratic processes, he uses the term civic to describe the people's "involvement in public life" (Dahlgren 2009:58) or an action aiming to "engage in public matters and to offer a service" (Dahlgren 2009:59). Citizens need to be able to engage in a political process, beyond the elections. The democratic process in which equal rights are

guaranteed to all has to enable us to practice our “democratic responsibility” (Dahlgren 2009:81).

What provokes them to engage with the projection of their democratic responsibilities is another thing. Producers will engage with the content that has its base with their everyday life encounters: from the funny photos featuring one of the Bosnian presidents and his wife^{viii} while enjoying rich and careless life, to the state budget issues, nonsense of celebratory opening of the sidewalk^{ix}, the absurdity of Prime Minister’s statement and many other incongruities. As Coleman explains, leaning on the Stone (1988:122, in Coleman 201:72, edited by Olsson, Dahlgren), social problems are not defined by analyst and the experts, but they created based on what citizens are finding to be problematic.

As it has been briefly discussed in the introduction, today, civic engagement means different things: from voluntary work of citizens and community building up to the expression of dissatisfaction through protests. For Adler and Goggin (2005), civic engagement could be defined in a broad scope of activities from collective action and community service, to political involvement (2005:237). Zuckermann, on the other hand, uses term participation and engagement as synonyms while proposing a new term “participatory civics” (2014:156). For him, participatory civic is a term that describes “form of civic engagement that uses digital media as a core component and embraces a “‘post-informed citizen’ model of civic participation,” (ibid.). Just like Dahlgren, Zuckermann also connects engagement with the passion and concludes that participatory civics is often driven with a specific passion towards some issue.

Having in mind variety of issues with whom producers engage, the broad definition of civic engagement will be used as proposed by Michael della Carpini (n.d), as cited in Adler, Goggin (2005: 239):

- Civic engagement is individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to address an issue directly, work with others in a community to solve a problem, or interact with the institutions of representative democracy (...). -

The main idea of this thesis is to discover the engaging potential of producers’ practices and inspect the likely factors that are shaping their citizenship experience. Linking to this is the Dahlgren concept of “civic agency” which is “premised on people being able to see themselves as participants, that they find engagement meaningful, and that they experience motivation via

the interplay of reason and passion” (2009:102). Regardless of the fact that they are not having high hopes for the positive outcome of their work, producers are acting based on the reason and more often, passion. They are gaining but also disseminating knowledge in and through the media. Producers are pretty vocal with their trust or the lack of it which is leading them towards the anonymity. Dahlgren explains civic cultures framework as a:

- A way of answering, analytically and empirically, the question of what facilitates or hinders people acting as political agents, from engaging in the practices of participation- (Dahlgren 2013: 24).

Civic engagement of the producers will be analyzed using an analytical framework, the civic circuit that focuses on knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices, and identities.

2.4. The elements of citizenship

“People must have access to reliable reports, portrayals, analyses, discussion and debates about current affairs if they are to become civically engaged,” (Dahlgren, 2009:108). As it has been explained in the previous chapters the media landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly saturated, which is also one of the conclusions of latest Freedom House report (2017) on media freedom in this country. Therefore, the opportunity for various media content consumption is not lacking.

The satirical user generated content is dependent on the producer’s knowledge on a particular issue in focus. If they are not up to date with the latest event, they are not going to be able to construct their social media post. “We live in highly mediated society, and much of our civic knowledge derives from the media,” (2009:81) explained Dahlgren, and this is the direction in which notion of knowledge will be used in this thesis: the construction of knowledge through the media. And what drives them to engage with the dissemination of knowledge will be explained through the element of passion.

In the analysis of the data, passion emerged as something that is: “integrated into the taken-for-granted sensibilities of daily life” (Dahlgren 2009:112). Even though passion is more expression of emotional identity (Fineman, 2007) than a value, linking on the Dahlgren observation by which “engagement in politics require some kind of passion” (2009:81), the following section will treat passion as one of the values producers are expressing.

Further on, their passion expressed this way is also connected with the notion of identity. Because they are active, because they are passionate about what they are doing, their passion becomes a feature of identity “and serves to define the person” (Vallerand, et al. 2007: 508). This is explained and also observed in a very simple manner: a person that has a great passion for dance is usually described as a dancer. In the Bosnian language, a person that tweet often or has an interest in Twitter is being called: twiteraš. The English version of this word varies from the term tweeps (Gerbaudo, 2012) to Twitterer. Therefore “passionate activities are part of their identity—of who they are,” (Vallerand, et al. 2007: 508).

Trust also emerged as one of the points the of analysis. Based on Putnam’s idea (2000:236), Dahlgren writes about two kinds of trust, thick and thin (2009:112). Thick trust is the one we have constructed based on personal relationship, but thin trust is the one that is enabling “collective political action” (2009:113). Described as the value that “generalized honesty and expectations of reciprocity that we accord people we don’t know personally but with whom we feel we can give a satisfactory exchange” (ibid.), thin trust is perceived as exactly what producers provoke among each other. As Doona pointed out “trust is connected to values” (2016: 39), and in connection to that privacy is one of the values all Web 2.0 users have an opinion on whether they act under their name or pseudonym if they are sharing their personal beliefs or just retweet ideas similar to theirs.

According to Marwick who did a four-year-long qualitative research on teen understandings of online privacy in the USA, privacy is considered as “a social construct that reflects the values and norms of everyday people,” (2011:2). Following question of privacy, anonymity emerged as one of the performative acts producers are participating in.

Writing about reality TV, Anette Hill explained: “We all perform ourselves to some degree, putting on a mask to hide the “real me” from the world at large.” (Hill, Chapter 3, Performance of the self, 2015:1). While true for the Reality TV concept, this can be easily applied to the anonymity of user generated content creation as well. When it comes to the performance of the self in everyday life, Erving Goffman explained that performance could bring all activities participant is taking part in and define them as something which “serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (1956:8). While at the same time producers are influencing others with the content they are producing; they are also impacting with their choice for anonymity: because something may sound stronger, more believable if it comes from the person who is, for some reason hiding its identity. Of course, this relation could go in the opposite direction as well.

While, as it has been explained in the introduction, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not engaged in a participation and exercise of their civic agency in the open spaces, town squares and the streets, they have other spaces as meeting points. Authors like Gerbaudo, who wrote about social movements and the impact of social media are arguing for the spatial element of social media. “I stress how social media use must be understood as complementing existing forms of face to face gatherings (rather than substituting for them),” (2012:13) and this complementation of spaces has also been noticed and practiced by the producers.

“The media and information technology play major roles as communicative spaces alongside more physical ones” (Doona, 2016:40), and by portraying internet as a new square and Twitter and Facebook as a new “town hall” (van Dijck 2013:74), we will see how producers are making sense of this space practices.

“Practices can be and are learned; they often require special skills, especially communicative competencies,” writes Dahlgren (2009:117). On that notion, the ability of producers to engage and to create satirical user generated content which will serve as their contribution to the democratic debate is seen as a practice.

“Skills can develop through practices, and in this process, foster a sense of empowerment” (2009:118), explains Dahlgren, and what can be applicable here is that, besides their exercise of practice in the form of social media post, other practice also emerged. Dahlgren said that practice is also connected with the knowledge, and as it going to be explained, the producer’s knowledge is deriving from their media consumption and communication with others who are included in the Web 2.0 sphere.

The concept that is connecting all others, knowledge, values, space, and practice into one is built around the notion of identity.

- Identities build on knowledge and values; they can be reinforced by trust and embodied in particular space via practices – pursuing issues by and use of civic skills that in turn serve to reinforce identities, - (Dahlgren 2009:119).

An identity of one producer of user generated content is composed of various factors: starting from his belief, ideas about citizenship and belonging, the everyday life influences, the experience, and social and economic contexts. Citizenship is just one string of many that make one person’s identity.

The self of user generated content producers is expressed on social media platforms and through their posts, and that self is as Frosh explained: “directing agent of our consciousness and the

core of our being” (1991:12). As Doona notices that the issue of identity “as well as its connection to what Dahlgren calls - membership - is essential to all kinds of citizenship” (Doona, 2016: 41). What makes citizens identity, apart from their voting right, their choice of the favorite political party?

- Central to the study of engagement is identity, which is linked not only to media but to a wider set of societal and cultural conditions. We need to see ourselves as citizens, to be citizens, and we need to be able to imagine various realistic venues of engagement, to engage further. Everyone should have a chance to see themselves as potentially political - (Doona, 2016:34).

The above-written quote incorporates all previously mentioned concepts, but it also links the importance of identity to the engagement.

2.5. Satire: The laughter is all we have left

Humor is supposed to be simple: a genuine human reaction to the things and events we find entertaining and amusing. Yet, what we find entertaining and why something is considered as funny, and more importantly what comes after the laughter has been an object of the study in various disciplines: from sociology, linguistics, media, psychology and many others branches of social science (Raskin, 2008:4).

Some authors like Young (2014:3) explained the notion of political humor as an “umbrella term that encompasses any humorous text dealing with political issues, people, events, processes, or institutions”. Other’s like Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) who contributed tremendously to the research of humor with his idea of carnivalesque said that when it comes to the carnival laughter, it is ambivalent: “it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival” (1984:12).

But maybe the simplest explanation of political humor has been offered by Tsakona and Popa saying that “political humor is usually produced either by politicians, in order, for instance, to undermine their opponents, or by journalists, political commentators, artists, cartoonists, ordinary people, etc. in order to criticize politics and politicians,” (2011:5).

Other authors argue that the humor, namely satire is a good weapon to be used against oppression (El Marzouki 2015, Sienkiewicz 2012, Sorensen 2008, Pearce 2014).

- Political humor needs some incongruity and absurdity in order to thrive—if things are as the politicians say they are, then there is little to joke about and almost nothing on which to build satire, parody, and irony - (Sorensen 2008: 174).

This quote, from Sorensen's (2008) article on the use of political humor in the case of Serbian resistance movement Otpor, has been used by different authors discussing the satire and oppression as a tool for "passive resistance" (Tsakona and Popa 2011:12), starting from Morocco (El Marzouki 2015), to Azerbaijan (Pearce 2015). Sorensen's article explores the use of humor in a fight against oppression and dictatorship in Serbia in early 2000's. For him, resistance "is a response to power that challenges oppression and domination," (2008:170)

As it was stated before, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that is by its constitution (Ustav BiH, 1995) a democratic one. But ever-growing political instability, the lowest level of employment in Europe, and post-war history with still unresolved and unprosecuted war crimes has more than absurdity and incongruity that political humor needs in order to thrive.

The definition of the political humor used by Young along with the Sorensen's explanation of the environment in which political humor thrives will be used in this thesis. When it comes to the particular type of humor, the political satire, it has been described as stated in Doona (2016:14 from Corner et al, 2013), "comedy with serious political intent." Citing the work of humor scholar George Test, Young writes that political satire is "playful and is designed to elicit laughter, while simultaneously casting judgment" (Young 2014:3). This kind of usage of political satire within producers of user-generated content has been noted as well.

Explaining the complexity of Palestinian situation in which every city has two names "incongruity and absurdity are in abundance" and where the politics and everyday life are highly complicated Matt Sienkiewicz concluded that it is because all of that that Palestinian political satire program *Watan Ala Watar* "has never lacked for content" (2012:106). While the social and cultural contexts may defer, the same can be claimed for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because of the unstable environment, a questionable form of democracy and everyday issues, the online satirists have a wide selection of events and problems to comment every new day.

A country with a highly complicated political system that has more than 200.000 people working in the administration, a country with three presidents, divided into two entities and one autonomous area, and after all country that suffered greatly in the 90's war, has been a great inspiration for satire. But yet, while there have been several attempts (Nadreality Show, Monty Dayton^x) the only consistent satire that can be found in Bosnia remains in the digital world.

2.6. Digital environment and satire

“Whether or not satire has become verifiably more popular, satiric media texts have become a part of the mainstream political coverage, thereby making satirists legitimate players in the serious political debate,” said Amber Day (2011:1). Just for the comparison, shortly after *The Last Week Tonight* started with the broadcasting of the first season on the HBO, its host, John Oliver was named one of the best journalists of today (Time, 2014). His former mentor, John Stewart, had, with his *The Daily Show*, had the significant influence on the viewers on cable TV (PEW, 2008).

Today, in a Web 2.0 environment, as it has been explained previously, it is easier than ever to access various kinds of content. Hence, the access to the satirical content is no different. In her article about the use of humor as a dissent in Azerbaijan (2015), Kathy Pearce states that with the existence of Web 2.0: “combination of political, humor, and user-generated should be powerful one” (2015:70). What is also significant in connection with satire and Web 2.0 is that the line between professional’s producers of content and amateurs is deleted (Pearce 2015:69). Many authors, including the ones mentioned above, have written about the use of political satire as a weapon against the political systems and their connection with social media and a mobilization.

“Today with digital tools and social networking sites, humor can be an even more effective strategy for activism or dissent because of the affordability of content creation and the speed and efficiency by which it travels” (Pearce 2015:72). This kind of behavior, the mash-up of satire and social media posts we have a chance to see during the Arab Spring and many more social movements which occurred in recent history. As #FadileOprosti case has proved, B&H producers, lead with affordable tools and easy access, also used satire to express their dissent.

"Political humor is now a staple of the internet" (Baumgartner, 2007), and while this may be true, the difference between humor produced on social media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and social movements like Gezi Park protests and Arab Spring, is that Bosnian humor begins and stays on the internet. Except for the combination of humor and protest experienced during JMBG protest, the producers’ engagement with the satire and user generated content, performs within social media spaces.

Humor can be used for various kinds of purposes: it can be used to light the room, to break the ice or simply just to make someone’s mood get better. But it can also be used as a subtle way to point onto societies irregularities; it can be used to mobilize people and to engage them in a

democratic discussion. And as Sorensen argues in his article (2008) on the use of humor in a fight against oppression in Serbia, it can be used as a tool for resistance. To approach the topic of humor as a tool for resistance Sorensen developed a theoretical framework with whom humor can be understood as a way for nonviolent resistance. He is approaching them from three different ways: “facilitating outreach and mobilization,” “facilitating the culture of resistance” and “turning oppression upside down” (Sorensen 2008: 175). This theoretical approach will be used to explain the use of satire in online space in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. While it may not be officially oppressed country, B&H society still faces many issues. And while producers are not seeing their actions primary as the resistance, they are still responding to the power that politics is exercising towards them. But if we take for example Chiluba’s definition of resistance which for this author occurs when people “feel that change is desperately needed,” (ibid.) then we can talk even about the resistance as the driving force behind the actions of producers. Finally, having in mind that Sorensen’s article also revolves around citizens’ engagement in the democratic debate, his framework will be applied to the notion of satire in B&H.

3. Methodology and Method

The significant amount of the work that connects satire, civic engagement and Web 2.0 has been focused on a produced content. Authors of those research are usually dependent on content analysis as a method. “The purpose of qualitative studies is to describe a phenomenon from the participants’ points of view through interviews and observations” (Eisenhauer et al. 200:94), and having in mind that this study doesn’t inspect the content, its impact or consequence, but producer’s engagement and performance of citizenship, the qualitative interview has been chosen as the desired method.

Between different benefits of qualitative research, Jensen explained that qualitative researchers are “performing sampling of cultural settings, communities, activities (...),” (2002:236). Linking on his notion, this has also been the reasoning behind the choice to use the qualitative approach to looking at the practice of civic engagement through the production of satirical user-generated content as well.

“Methodology is ‘a theory of how the inquiry should proceed,’” wrote Bazeley (2013:8) citing on Schwandt (2007:193). The overall methodological approach of this research is tailored around constructivism because as Charmaz explained (2006:130 in Bazeley 2013:24), “constructivists study how and sometimes why participants construct meanings and actions.” The people's experience and understanding of everyday events are essential for constructivism and having in mind that this research deals with this kind of notion, the constructivism was a good choice of methodology.

The notion of constructivism teaches us that reality as much as the meaning is constructed and that one fixed meaning does not exist. Bazeley agrees with this idea as well saying that for constructivist “knowledge is constructed rather received or discovered” (2013:23). “When we define, or represent something in a particular way we are producing a special form of knowledge, which brings power with it,” (Vivien Burr 1995:68), and knowledge is the most fundamental component of citizen engagement. It is simple as that: without knowledge, there is no valid or any engagement at all.

“Methods are the tools employed by a researcher to investigate a problem, to find out what is going on there,” (Bazeley, 2013:8) and the qualitative interview is chosen as an investigative tool for this research. The understanding of the civic engagement practice through the production of satirical user generated content was investigated based on qualitative semi-structured interviews performed with the producers from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“The semi-structured interview is sufficiently structured to address specific dimensions of your research question while also leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic study” (Galletta, 2013:2), and while there may be other methods which are also efficient, the “not so strict” model of semi-structured interviews is what is making this method significant. The form of the semi-structured interview was chosen because it enables potential collection of knowledge that hasn’t been covered with the questions and the interview guide. Bazeley agrees with this kind of approach as well saying that researcher has to be focused but the attention shouldn’t be on the questions “otherwise you will be so concerned about asking the next question that you will miss and/or cut short something interesting that the interviewee is saying” (2013:54). The flexibility of qualitative interviews (Seale 2012:210) has been proven as beneficial since it allowed the researcher to focus on issues research participants were more inclined to engage. For example, one of the producers was more willing to talk about the satirical aspect of his work, while the other one was more involved in the dissemination of knowledge. Also, the semi-structured potential enabled the researcher to develop themes that weren’t being covered with the interview guide.

As disclosed in Seale (2012:207) there are many different styles of interviewing “from friendly, informal, to more formal and controlled” amongst many other types. Seale also mentions that the outcome of the interview depends on the other variables such as who is the participant, the choice of location, and the type of question (2012:208). Having that in mind, all interview locations and preferred time were chosen by the producers.

3.1. Sampling and interview process

The process of collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews has been performed in a couple of stages.

First, the pilot interview was conducted in December 2016. Due to the geographical restriction, the only possibility was to conduct the interview via Skype. The interviewee was one of the editors of the newest satirical website in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Sampson wrote (2004:399) the ability to perform pilot interviews is allowing us to discover any potential gaps in the research design. “A pilot may be regarded as essential before significant amounts of time are invested in a project, particularly in the context of today’s social science,” explained Sampson (ibid.) Following the data obtained with the pilot interview, it was discovered that

most of the proposed concepts from the interview guide were proven as needed. The small adjustments were made, and questions about the consummation of political content were added.

The initial plan for recruitment has been to engage in the snowball sampling. This was decided after the participant from pilot interview gave suggestions for further recruitment. But having in mind that all proposed participants denied participating, the researcher proceed with the different strategy.

In order to find the producers of user generated content, the recruitment continued with the proposed case studies in mind. The reason for starting the research process with a case in mind was because as Bazeley said (2013:48), case studies become “the basis for making comparison and exploring relationship between various aspects of experience.” With this in mind, case studies served as a starting point for the recruitment and for the conversation later during the interviews. First case study introduced during thesis proposal was #FadileOprosti campaign, which has started in January 2016 on Twitter in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has been ongoing ever since. The reason for this case study as a starting point of research is simple: this has been the most popular and by now, the longest Twitter action in the social media sphere in B&H.

The first part of the participants was selected based on Twitter search, with #FadileOprosti hashtag as a keyword. By searching on Twitter, it was possible to find people who have been engaged in this particular case and who have regularly been tweeting about political topics, while using satire in their posts.

The recruitment of the second group of producers came from the popular Facebook meme pages. The researcher selected widely popular Facebook meme pages from Bosnia and Herzegovina and started initial contact. This process proved to be much harder than the recruitment of Twitter producers.

Since these producers are active under Facebook page names, the only way of contacting them was to write to page administrators. Few administrators never replied on inquiry. One of them that responded wrote following: “Yes, we can answer your questions if you give us 1.500 Euros.” This response was followed by the public post in which they are saying that the only way they would give interviews is if they are being paid.



Photo: Screenshot of Raja sa Biroa Facebook page^{xi}

After a couple of more rejections from the Facebook page administrators, three people involved in meme creation were recruited. Two of them are solely running meme based Facebook page, while the third one is creating memes for Facebook and the website.

The third group of research participants was producers engaged with the three remaining satirical websites (Karakter.ba, SATIRAnje and Sarajevo365). All participants gave their consent, and they all agree to allow for the data obtained during the interview to be published. Some of them signed hard copy of the consent, while majority gave oral consent. Even though researcher would prefer to have written consents, participants were pretty vocal about the unnecessary for consent. One of the participants even said that whatever he said in the interview has already been published on his Twitter feed. Since the role of the researcher is to “listen to the voice of participants” (Eisenhauer et al. 2000:94), the further persuasions to sign consents weren’t implemented.

Even though some of the producers specifically pointed out that their full name should be mentioned in the research, following advice made by Bazeley (2013), and also researchers ideas about material sensitivity, the advice supervisor of this research gave as well, all producers received pseudonyms. This kind of behavior is also justified with Bazeley’s writing, in which it was stated that even though participants gave the permission for the identity to be revealed, “it is up to the ethical researchers to assess whether their participants are correctly weighing the risks associated with disclosure” (Bazeley, 2013:383).

The research resulted with 12 interviews in total: five were conducted in face to face conversations, one via telephone, two via email and four via Skype. In total, I interviewed 12 males and one female producer of satirical content, (full info in the Appendix 1). The youngest respondent was 24 years old, while the oldest was 44 years old. The age range was left open since the planned research wasn't focus on a particular age group.

The reason why research resulted with 12 interviews is explained with the idea of saturation (Bazeley 2013:50). During the interviews, it was noticed that the data are starting to repeat, going to that level in which almost the same quote from the pilot interview was repeated in the tenth interview. The element of saturation as a potential signifier that it is time to stop with data gathering was also proposed by the supervisor of this research.

It is the fact that this research ended up being gender unbalanced. But there is more than one reason for that. Firstly, the two other female producers were contacted, but even though the initially agreed to participate, they didn't follow through. The second reason is that, based on social media screening of non-anonymous producers, male participants are dominating the social media commenting sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This applies in particular if we observe content that has political/satirical elements. This does not serve to prove that women are not interested in politics or that, following stereotypical notion, they don't know how to be funny. But it is observed that this imbalance is a reflection of gender imbalance of political sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Firstly, from its independence in 1992, this country never had a female president or the prime minister. Secondly, the participation of women in the government is pretty low: based on the results of 2014 local elections in B&H, only 19,90 percent of women were selected on all state levels (Veličković, Aganović, Miftar, 2015).

3.2. Transcription and coding

The role of the researcher is to act as “interpretative subject” (Jensen 2002:236), while the data speaks for itself. This kind of behavior was a starting point in the analysis of the obtained data.

Approximately, interviews lasted between half an hour and one hour (one of them lasted more than an hour, while the average duration was around 40 minutes). After transcription (Appendix 3), the process of reading and re – reading (Bazeley 2013:101) begun. After the initial reading, the notes written on the paper were made. This was followed by repeated reading where the first stage of coding was conducted: some sections were color coded to make sense out of the

data (Appendix 5). Again, following Bazeley advice (2013:109), and since the researcher had paper copies of transcripts, the underlying and scribbling on the margins of the paper helped to explain the data.

Having in mind that all interviews were conducted in the Bosnian language (the native language of the researcher but the producers as well), the translation into the English language was also necessary. But as Bazeley explained (2013:77), to not lose meanings in the translation, the transcripts weren't translated. The codes have been translated into the English language, and later on, quotes supporting different analytical blocks derived from the data material.

As for the final coding, a Microsoft Word table (example in the Appendix 6) was used to make sense of the data, for which thematic coding as proposed by Seale (2012:386) served as a guidance. According to Seale (ibid.) this type of coding could be used for transcripts as well and one of the benefits is that it is going to reduce the data volume.

Some of the theoretical concepts that emerged with literature review were taken into account while preparing interview guide (Appendix 2) and analysis, making the coding approach more deductive. But still, having in mind openness of the questions and the freedom to shift the interview in the way that will draw the best content from each producer, this qualitative study could be seen as inductive as well. While the interview guide was formed based on four parts, where one of them was labeled a "political discussion", the open coding process reveal another potential theme to be observed here. While initially civic engagement was supposed to be analyzed based on concepts of everyday life and performance of the self, coding revealed that Dahlgren's civic cultures framework is much more suitable. "Coding line by line or sentence by sentence ensures that each part of the data is treated the same way and thus that representative and also new unexpected themes may be captured," (2012: 370), explained Seale as well. The process of data analysis started with open coding, or "chunks of data that capture something of the literal essence of the data" (Seale 2012:370). Each sentence was carefully read, observed and the codes were written using producers' language, without interpretation, with the process Seale calls "in vivo coding" (2012:372). Following the coding process, which resulted with "more codes than we need" as Seale said (2012:374), first categories were formed and then the themes which were used for the analysis.

3.3. Limitations

One unpredicted issue arose during this research was the question of anonymity. The anonymity aspect prevented the researcher from obtaining access to the Facebook groups initially proposed. Further on, two producers who ended up participating in the research remained their anonymity status during the whole process. Even though researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality with any kind of personal data, the people behind these two pages decided to remain anonymous even to the researcher. But the fact that they did answer the questions could be observed from the standpoint that the promise of anonymity “fostered access” to participants’ insights, (Walford 2005:89). According to Kelly (2008:2), the more people know about the research “the more vulnerable is anonymity to being broken.” Following this notion, the researcher didn’t share transcripts of two anonymous producers with anyone.

"The consideration of mechanisms to protect the identity of research respondents appears to have become central to the design and practice of ethical research" writes Grinyer (2009:49). Apart from these two cases, all participants’ names were protected as well. This was researcher’s decision based on the ethical principle of the right to protect personal data and to obtain privacy of the participants.

Of course, as with every project, the researcher could question its choices. Elisabeth Bird (2003:9) noticed, that when it comes to the potential difficulties with whom we may face during research, everything from “is this the right question” to the influence of the “personal identity to the research,” could be called into question.

One of the issues qualitative research often is facing with is the “power of the researcher” (Bazeley 2013:52) and the standing point of the researcher that could potentially influence participants. This research didn’t detect those kinds of issues on a big scale, but on small scale, it was noticed that as Bazeley explained “because you impact on people participating in your research, your role and responsibilities as a researcher are brought into focus,” (2013:51). Having in mind the responsibilities a researcher is carrying towards participants, the decision to protect private data such as a name of all participants have been made.

On the side of more technical limitation, even though researcher traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina to perform interviews, only five of them ended up being face to face. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that three participants lived more than six hours travel away from the capital, where the researcher was staying.

4. Data analysis: Overall information

The analysis of the content obtained during the interview phase is divided into following sections: first, the use and the convenience of the Web 2.0 platforms was investigated. What followed as the next concept is the issue of the engagement in which the notion of citizenship has been investigated through the use of Dahlgren's civic cultures analytic framework which entails: knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices, and identities. The last chapter in the analysis part explores the political satire and use of political satire to draw attention to everyday life problems.

4.1. Web 2.0: easy to use

Following Carpentier's (2011) definition, social media platforms were classified as modes of alternative media. Firstly, the participants of this research are using social media platforms to state the different opinion to the ones mainstream media are usually broadcasting. Secondly, most of the research participants are using social media platforms to draw attention to a certain issue or to inform others. The third way, as explained by the producer below, is that they use information that has been served to them, and then, they decide which information to believe and to disseminate further.

“You cannot shoot and miss on the internet. You know how they say it is an informational highway, and that is, maybe the best explanation of internet. You want this, you want that, that is the advantage of social media, it is the power of the web. Before, you were doomed to daily newspapers, TV and what they serve you with. And after a while, you wanted or not, you start to believe in what they say. Now, you have ten websites, ten different people, and the same news. And now, advantage of all of that I think is that you as the eleventh person can sit and think about it from various angles”,
Amer, 37

The access to the information is necessary for producers. Amer gets his information from Twitter and websites, and the possibility to choose and to decide which news source to trust is important to him. His usage of the received information is exactly what Tim O'Reilly had in mind when he was explaining the Web 2.0 advantages. Amer is a representative of the “former audience, as O'Reilly calls them (2005:17), the one that decides which information is relevant. He uses the previously obtained knowledge, his memory, and the reasoning to decide which news is trustworthy and hence worthwhile of his attention.

Whether they have chosen Twitter because, as their platform, because as Senad, age 44 one of the producers engaged on Twitter, described it: “it is art to say something in three words and not spend three days explaining”, or Facebook through which they publish posts, memes and share content, because, as Majdin, age 29, said: “Facebook pages have incredible influence, and they can shape public opinion”, the producers involved with this research are active participants in a content creation on Web 2.0 platforms.

The reasons why they have chosen this type of expression and usage can be different from one producer to another, but the overall impression is that first of, they are using Web 2.0 platforms because it is easy, it is accessible, and it allows them to have some reach.

“Look, for everything else, you need to invest some resources: the time that you don’t have, money which you don’t have. This is simple. I open Photoshop, and in literally two minutes, I make a photo.” – Samir, 37

Samir, the person behind widely popular meme page, has chosen this type of his citizenship expression because it’s not time demanding, and yet it is efficient: in just very short time span he is able to demonstrate what is it that he finds troubling. When writing about memes, Shifman (2014:123), pointed out that its creation doesn’t cost much and it is “enjoyable route for voicing one’s political opinions.” Samir, an active user of Facebook and Twitter, and consumer of content with, as he describes “music, cats, and politics” themes, he embraced the expression through the Web 2.0 platform because they are easy to use and they do not require additional resources. The same idea about the simplicity of social media posts was supported by Gauntlett as well (2011:96).

“My phone is always in my pocket, and I always have the 3G network. When the message arrives, you take a look, when the comment comes, you take a look”. Adnan, 37

“Since almost all of the social media networks are available on the phone apps, I can reasonably say that I spend all day on social media,” Nino, 25

The accessibility of Web 2.0 platforms is also one of the reasons on why they are chosen to engage with this type of content. The first quote comes from a 37-year-old active Twitter user, while the second description of social media use comes from 25-year-old meme producer. As Gauntlett explains the popularity of Web 2.0 is significant because of: “easy to use online tools which enable people to learn about, and from each other, and to collaborate and share resources”, (Gauntlett 2011:13). The fact that this producer can take his phone in any given moment and share his thoughts with more than five thousand followers, is enabled with the

existence of Web 2.0. But also, easy access to the Web 2.0 platforms, the easy-to-use mode, enables is enabling the opportunity for producers to share their ideas with the broader audience, that can, as Shifman pointed out (2014:19), “scale up to mass levels within hours.”

For some producers, reasons for picking tweets or memes as expression tools lies in the fact that they are short.

“While I was using Tumblr, I realized that the most efficient posts are the ones that hits you in a core with just two sentences. Longer posts are really useful, they educate you, they expand your horizons and inform you. But to get a memorable point, the most efficient ones are the short posts”, Alma, 24

“I mean hashtag is an incredibly powerful thing. If it happens, if things really start to roll, you can make pretty strong impact in other media who then have more influence in the society” – Majdin, 28

“Creation of memes has been my way of reacting for some time now. And in a way, it is the simplest one, you can say everything with just one post, and particularly when it comes to political events”, Nino, 25

“This is a great story. Because it is a short form, and it satisfies a person. Because if you are competent enough, you can use one sentence to express the core of things.” Senad, 44

When writing about what makes one meme to become viral, Shifman (2014:82), pointed out the element of simplicity. The simpler video was, the more chance it had to become popular. This notion was widely accepted by B&H producers as well. While some of them will engage with the production of short tweets, because they are more understandable to people, others will create a meme in which they will share not just a funny caption featuring some politician, they will also disseminate their opinion about that figure. The low effort needed to create one user generated content was something that has been recognized by Gauntlett (2011:96) as well.

The above-written quotes are the evidence that all producers are understanding the benefits of a short message: they are easy to understand, easy to share, and because they are constructed in that manner, the chances for other people to understand them are much higher (Shifman, 2014:69). This kind of production could also lead towards the term “spreadability” for which Jenkins said that it is used to “emphasizes producing content in easy-to-share formats, such as the embed codes that YouTube provides, which make it easier to spread videos across the Internet, and encouraging access points to that content in a variety of places (2013:6).

But when one producer posts, uploads, or shares his latest satirical intake on one social/political event or some statement, they are disseminating more than just their competency to use latest

Web 2.0 gadgets. “When I post a funny clip on Facebook, I distribute a cultural item and at the same time express my feelings about it (2014:19), explained Shifman. The example of 24-year-old meme creator is a good signifier of how our own experiences, our culture, and competencies are enabling new perspective.

“I studied in England, and I lived there for a long time. And from that side, I had this minority point of view and a different way of looking at things. When I moved here, I talked with one of my friends and I asked her why don’t you just take free condoms from the clinic. And she told me that she doesn’t know what I mean by that. That’s not possible here. And how would you expect for young people to have safe sex if they have to pay 4,5 KM for a box with three condoms in it. (...) Ok, so many things are wrong in this country, but it is so because we decided that we shouldn’t even talk about it”

The tactical use of Web 2.0 advantages to draw attention to the issues one society is facing, as in the case this 24-year-old meme creator, who’s daily effort on Facebook page are focused on the issues of sexism, reproductive rights and feminism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When we share something online, let alone create, we are also communicating something about “who we are” (Jenkins, 2013:199). What Jenkins also notices, and which collides with Alma’s engagement with the memes is that when we are disseminating some material online, we are doing that in a way “to grow or activate a community” (ibid.). Memes also are allowing us to “convey complex ideas within a short phrase or image” (Shifman, 2014:173), and what Alma created is a new online space in which the conversation about sexism could be performed and encouraged with just one meme.

4.2. Engaged citizens: Our dream is to live in a healthy society

Whether they are producing user generated content because it is cheap and simple, or because it's accessible, the existence of Web 2.0 platforms enabled producers the chance to express their civic engagement. "There are many ways of being a citizen and of doing democracy" (2009:119) Dahlgren said. And the following analysis will inspect the engaging potentials of satirical user generated content production, by applying Dahlgren's analytical framework which entails: knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices and identities.

4.2.1. Dissemination of knowledge

For the producers of satirical user generated content, the access and the availability of the media content is not the issue: if they are not watching TV, they are going to read the content on social media platforms and other Web 2.0 outlets. While they are active consumers of media content, the way they use media may differ from one producer to another.

"All interest I have in a media content with political nature is just because I want to get inspired for my next satirical text, and that it's what I use it for," Sarajevo365.

For some of them the knowledge they are gaining from the media is serving just as "inspiration", as this producer explained. For others, the media text has much more significance:

"I write because I want to encourage people to, when they read my text, they go and investigate the news by themselves. As I said, we are following daily political events, and every text, every meme is a reaction to something that happened that day, and that's why we are always aiming to produce at least partially true content," Nino, 25

Despite the opinion of some political humor theorist such as Day (2011) and Tsakona and Popa (2009), who believe that humorous text doesn't carry information or serves to inform its audience, some of the producers are still aiming to do so. Nino, 25, is using his platform to inform others and to participate in the construction of knowledge. This contribution to new knowledge is what drives most of the producers to interact with others on social media with a hope that "one's own selfish interests pushes people to shift their attitudes, "(Hibbing, Theiss-Morse 2005:230).

During the public conversation, Henry Jenkins and Stephen Duncombe had in 2008^{xii}, they said that: "This is how we tell our stories now – we quote from the media and the culture around us" (Duncombe, Jenkins, 2008). But to be able to "quote from the media", and to be able to engage

in the dissemination of knowledge, as Nino does, one has to be able to receive knowledge from the media first.

“On a daily basis, I follow at least two news programs. The one at 19:00 has been my habit for the past 20 years. And you drink coffee, watch the news, and then I switch from BHRT to Federalna. This is my routine, to watch two news programs a day, and in the morning when I wake up, I am reading websites, while drinking coffee. But during the day I don’t watch TV. I read from the sites in the morning and maybe sometimes, if I am in the car I listen to the radio.” Adnan, 37

This producer described himself as a news junkie, someone who, to quote him “eats, sleep, work and watch the news”. It is evident from his explosion to the media that he draws his knowledge from the text he consumes. His participation in the creation of satirical user generated content is directly connected with the “images and ideas provided by the media” (Bird 2003, 167). Apart from the knowledge what is noticeable here, is that this producer is also using TV content to create a structure for his day: for him, the media content is helping in “fixing of events in time” (Abercrombie, Longhurst, 1998:70).

„Satire is just a way our brain functions, the way we understand things. You have the same story ever since Monty Python until Top Lista Nadrealista. You tell your story, using one way which is the right one, so that people who are thinking with their own head, could understand you. The most important thing is for message to reach its final destination: to the people who are maybe blind, deaf on everything that is happening and you are making them think, “Senad, 44

„When I write, I am using jargon, so everyone could understand me. I believe that communication is important and that it could be a solution for the lack of understanding, “Amer, 37

These Twitter producers are using the platforms to impact other people’s knowledge. As active consumers of media content, both of them are using “what the media provide in daily life” (Abercrombie, Longhurst, 1998:104), to participate in knowledge construction. Having in mind their media habits, they are using previously obtained “background knowledge” (Dahlgren, 2009:109), to make sense of the new information they are receiving.

4.2.2. Passion, the driving force

Although producers are inclined to engage with social media posts because they are easy to use, as it has been discussed in the section about Web 2.0 features, that doesn't mean that these actions are not requiring time and energy. When talking about the feeling of passion towards something Dahlgren says that passion requires of us to devote time and energy to what we are doing (2009:85).

What is noticed in the case of satirical user generated producers, is not only that they are devoting their time, they are putting a lot of creative effort behind the posts they produce. It is their passion for this kind of expression that drives them to further engage:

“When you take a look at all of those discourses they are launching in the public space, everything spins around their education (...). And for me, this was (laughing)... I know, it's mean, but my goal was to create this character: a guy who is totally illiterate, who does not know how to form a proper sentence. And then he is the one that is messing around with them, with people who graduated from world class universities and picked up diplomas and who see themselves as the smartest people in the world. And then, a guy who does not know where to put capital letter is messing with them,” Samir, 37

For Samir, his passion for challenging the image that elites are projecting of themselves is a clear motivation. Regardless of the fact that he said that it only takes two minutes to actually create one meme, all knowledge he obtained prior the creation also requires time. His decision to create memes with political figures and members of social elite structured in frames with flower patterns, demands a certain level of creativity. His passion is pushing him toward the idea that what he is doing is right.

“This is a form of personal satisfaction. Not a single sentence is written because you don't have anything to do. But you do write because you want to contribute to something”, Senad, 44

The existence of passion towards doing the right thing, for Senad means that he believes that his actions are right. He sees tweeting as something which could potentially help foster some desired change, and the presence of passion is helping him to justify it. For other producers, the presence of passion is even more visible.

“Majority of the satirical content in here is quite reactionary. Most of the time they resent elites for their lack of efficiency. And me, well, I would burn them all. But I can't do that, so, instead, I am making memes,” Samir, 37

“You know, everybody lies. And I guess we have reached this point in which people are fighting against it, this way. Because clearly it is illegal to take a wooden stick and beat

them with it, because you will wind up in jail. But it is rational and legal, and human, after all, to say that you are against something,” Amer 37

“In practice, I skip two out of three urges to react. Firstly, I don’t want to bother people too much. Secondly, I don’t have to be the one that is commenting on everything. And the third thing that leads me to post is if I have an idea that is original enough and for which I think that no one else will think of it, well that’s the moment in which I react. Trust me, I don’t shoot at least one third of the tweets I think of”, Adnan, 37

Regardless of the fact that some authors like Fineman who writes about the connections between emotions and politics in organizational life, would say "being passionate" is one thing, while "being reasonable" is other, (2007:155) passion does not always lead towards irrational and rash decisions. Just like Amer and Samir demonstrated, even if they are highly passionate and have violent ideas on their mind, it is their “reason lead them to make other decisions,” (Dahlgren 2009:86). Dahlgren also says that “reason incorporates passion” (2009:84). Amer and Samir are driven by passion, just as well as Adnan who uses reason to decide when and what to publish. Perceived as someone who has a “great sense of humor on Twitter”, Adnan is nurturing that perception of himself: on one side, he is building his identity on Twitter, and on the other hand, his passion for commenting on everyday political events is pushing him towards publishing.

The importance of passion in the engagement, Dahlgren described with the words “no passion – no participation” (2009:84). What is visible from the quotes is that producers are committed to their work in the Web 2.0 sphere, they care about the issues they are discussing. Hence, the passion as their driving force.

4.2.3. Trust and anonymity

As it its explained in the literature review, the idea of thin trust (Dahlgren, 2009:113) is linked with the engagement of producers in the Web 2.0. Because of their passion, the knowledge they possess about certain issues, they have become the ones other citizens trust.

“I am facing with this in the past months. I am realizing that people are actually following me, you know. Everything started as a joke, I would write a tweet, I don’t care about anything else, you have the same behavior like you do on Facebook. People are liking your stuff, you know. But now, people are contacting me, telling me, I registered on Twitter just to follow you. And the people from the media, as well. You start to recognize your tweets in their texts, or they start to offer you some kind of collaboration”, Adnan, 37

“You can only trust those people who would say, yes this and this happened. But you can't find the media that does that. People are looking someone to put their trust in. When we had protests here, I would tweet, and then people would look for me, I mean televisions were there, but people are looking at what you wrote. And they can't believe. The foreign media called us as well. There were around 10 of us, and they would always come to us to ask the questions,” Eldin, 38

The experience of these two producers is the evidence that the content they are producing is serving not just for outreach, but that they are also builders of trust amongst the citizens. Their credibility, popularity and the spreadability of their content is based on the trust, wider audience, but also mainstream media is giving to them. Not just that they are disseminating trust with that audience, but they are also one another source of information. In a sense, they are the ones that are carrying the trust, since the audience is relying on them to forward the trustworthy message.

In a research published last year by the B&H Journalist Association and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have the least trust in politicians and political parties (RadioSarajevo, 2016). On the other hand, while the 84.2 percent believes that the freedom of media is lacking, still the majority of research participants said that they do trust the media (ibid.). This kind of behavior is noticed by one of the producers as well:

“B&H audience gave up on politics and politicians. They no longer believe that they can bring something good to citizens and to the state. That's why they decided to make fun of everything”, SATIRAnje

Even though most political humor theorists, as it has been noted in the previous chapters, do not believe in a revolutionary effect of humor, still most of the satirists are dealing with politics in their work. What most of the political satirists, producers of this research included, are writing about is how politics can't be trusted. But on the other hand, as Baumgartner explained low trust “would result from exposure to political humor” (2007:325).

While the audience does have a trust in the producers of satirical user generated content, and the producers are willing to offer the trustworthy knowledge, there is still one question that puts a mark on their relationship: the anonymity. From twelve producers who participated in this research, six of them are participating on Web 2.0 under their own names, while other six acts anonymous. Some of them, like Adnan, are choosing to stay anonymous so they can protect their privacy:

“Whoever texted me, wanting to meet me, to have coffee with me, ask me who I am, I met with them. I am anonymous just because I don't want for people to interfere with

my privacy, I don't want to be recognizable and I don't want to have to drink coffee with someone I don't really like,” Adnan, 37

For Adnan, who acts on Twitter behind a made-up name and a cartoon character for an avatar, the performance of anonymity is important because it allows him to offer just one side of his identity to more than five thousand followers he has. He tactically approached to the construction of his online identity by choosing bits and parts he wants to expose. Others have different reasons for anonymous performing:

We all have jobs, families and more importantly, this is just a good fun for us from which we don't have any financial gain. If we would to expose ourselves, it wouldn't bring us financial gain for sure, but we could end up with problems at work, in the society and so on. So, it is better like this, anonymous, SATIRAnje

A person behind this pseudonym remained anonymous even during the interview process. By demanding to answer the questions only via email this person “stayed in character” (Goffman, 1956:107). For this person, the anonymity exists like a safety net, something that is guarding his/her personal data and protecting the existence and security. But this is what anonymity on the internet serves for: the ability to “express oneself freely” (Serracino-Inglot, 2013:219), and to be able to do that without potential consequences, which is precisely what SATIRAnje is doing.

Even though he agrees with SATIRAnje, Nino, one of the meme producers on Karakter.ba website, explained their reason for going public with their own names:

When I came to Karakter and when we discussed with the others, we decided to go with our full names, because we believe that we are criticizing and not mocking. And every post we make is a critique with a background. Because when you have a critical background behind the post, that shouldn't be anonymous, because you have supported the claim. And with the satire, its goal is to make you smile but also to critique. But that's all if you don't have a job, and you don't work in the state company. If you are, then it is better if you are anonymous”, Nino, 25

While every producer will agree that the right to be anonymous is one of the basic principles of the internet and that privacy is important, many of them will still decide to go public. But still, just like SATIRAnje, Nino believes that the performance of anonymity protects people who have something to lose. The connection between anonymity and identity have much more links than the performance of one excluded part of self.

“At first, I was anonymous, but then one website did an interview with me, and then I figured that I want for people to know that I am on this page. The moment of social

privilege was important to me. Because, I am privileged in a way: I live in Sarajevo, I lived abroad, I am educated, financially and socially stable, I hang out with people from the same group. And it was important to me that, when I fail, and I will fail because I have the blind spots just like everyone else, that people could call my name. Which happened couple of times, and I was glad,” Alma, 24

“I have been transparent from the start. I don’t have anything to hide, and I stand behind everything I say. I don’t want for someone to come at me and say that I’ve been hiding. I am not hiding, I say what I mean. But I am not saying anything illegal anyways”, Eldin, 38

Alma started a Facebook page with memes as an anonymous person. Even today, she has a fake name on Facebook, but the information about admins of her page are available and as she explains “it is easy to find out who is behind the page”. But moving from hiding phase to openness resulted because other strands of her identity were at play. No longer was she imaginary person creating memes about sexism, now, she started to be aware of, what Frosh calls “the variations of self–presentation” (1991:12) in which she experienced self as “directing agent of our consciousness and the core of our being” (ibid.). Her awareness about the responsibilities one Facebook meme carries, and the idea of the accountability made her shift from anonymous mode to the transparency.

On the other hand, Eldin always performed as transparent producer. For him the accountability for what he is saying is important, and he wants to be portrayed as someone who is not hiding on social media platforms. Van Dijck has an explanation for this kind of behavior, saying that people are willing to show who they are online because they have “vested interest in identity construction by sharing pieces of information because disclosing information about one’s self is closely linked with popularity” (van Dijck, 2013:51). It is without the doubt that Eldin, with his more than six thousand followers, is a popular person on Twitter. It is unlikely right that his popularity is deriving from the fact that he is transparent on Twitter. On the other hand, his consciousness about accountability, determination to bring new knowledge to the wider audience, are probably the reason for his popularity.

4.2.4. Spaces and Practices: Connecting online and offline habits

Explaining the similarities between the culture in which people are gathering in common places like the bowling alley and forum chats (Duncombe, Jenkins 2008) Jenkins said that people are creating the areas in which they could communicate together. “We form community around

things which seem trivial at first glance but become the common culture” (Duncombe, Jenkins 2008). This idea of the continuation of communicative practice and the mash-up between online and offline places is something producers are noticing and practicing as well:

“Social networks are just extension of the social life of one person. Before, when we didn’t have them, you would comment between your family, in your workplace, in a bar with friends. Now, besides those places, you have a chance to share your opinion with a bigger circle of people in the online world. (...) Now we have a chance to do that without going on concerts, rallies and such”, Majdin, 28

For some of them, social media are the extension of the life lived outside the wires. Producers like Majdin, are taking the opportunity media convergence has brought to him and using that to foster conversation about the issues he finds important. For others, offline activities and gatherings are serving as an inspiration to spark the conversation in the online environment, creating a new space for the “broad social participation” (Dahlgren, 2009:152).

“It all started with the feminist book club my friends and I launched. And during those readings we would talk and then, you figure out that all of us are facing the same problems with the sexism on a daily basis. It is one thing that we have sexism but the other thing is that everybody is acting like it does not exist and that you are crazy for noticing it. And book club was a great way to discover that I am not the only one that is experiencing this. And that’s why I created Facebook meme page so that we would start to talk about it more”, Alma 24

Alma, who explained that she first started used the platform to paraphrase funny dates she and her friends had soon realized the power of memes on Facebook which directed her to proceed with the conversation about reproductive rights, mental health and similar topics she was experiencing in everyday life. The practice in which she is creating a conversation in a new space while embracing the experiences from the life outside wires, collides with what van Dijck said about values of social media. For her, social media have the power not only to connect us with friends and like-minded but also to “control self-presentation or make us belong to the community” (van Dijck 2013:34).

Dahlgren also has the idea about use of internet as alternative for town squares, in which he said that power of internet as a space which citizens could use, offers producers more than a space in which they can participate: “it also allows them to collectively construct new spaces, by launching Web sites, news groups, blogs (...)” (2009:116).

“I was watching the news, and there you have the protests in a city that is two hours’ ride outside Sarajevo and we do not know what is happening. I packed my phone and

drove to Tuzla. And I started to tweet what is happening, I made a video of protesters coming inside the building, leaving the building, everything,” Eldin, 38

The experience Eldin, one of the Twitter engaged producers has shared, demonstrated his use of Twitter as a space in which conversation could be initiated: In this event, he combined his knowledge, technological one, that enables him to share his thoughts on Twitter, with the knowledge, or the lack of knowledge derived from the media, which eventually has lead him to engage in a creation of a new space for conversation. Other producers had a similar way of using social media as a space in which conversation is happening:

„Maybe one month before #Trotoar happened, I tweeted something about it. Because, I am walking in that direction every day, and you catch it, the ongoing construction on something that seems like 100 meters of the sidewalk. And I took a photo of that and tweeted something like how National Geographic will come to record their Mega Structures show here. And then that thing happened, when they sent invites the for the official opening of the sidewalk. When I saw it on the agency news, I felt on my butt,” Majdin, 28

What is noticeable in both of these cases is that producers engaged in expression of their citizenship, by participating in the conversation in the online space. On the other hand, their participation in this new space was influenced by their practice in everyday life: for Eldin it was TV viewing while for Majdin engagement in the new space derived from his everyday life structure. Dahlgren also talks about this way of connection between practices and spaces, in which he explains that “new forms of communicative activity” (2009:156) are impacting on the way we are living our daily life.

But more than a newly created space in which people could gather, talk and express their ideas, Web 2.0 features are connected with the new practice, the one that is “innovative and unexpected” (Dahlgren 2009:156) and can “empower individuals as well to lead to new social encounters” (ibid.). This event in which producers are using Web 2.0. as a space for communication and Twitter and memes as a new practice, is capacitating citizens to embrace their citizenship, and more importantly, it is giving them hope that some change could happen.

„This should be used as a tool to correct the authorities. Mainly Twitter, because it is faster, but Facebook as well, because both of them are incredibly fast if we compare them with the media from 20-30 years ago. And they (meaning politicians), can't do whatever they want anymore. Well, just look, not just one revolution started because people raised their voice and gathered on social media, “Senad, 44

As an active member of Twitter community, Senad believes that this “symbolic work” (Bird 2003:165) that they are performing by engaging with the comments on Twitter has some

potential to foster a change. Referring to the social movements like Arab Spring, but also #JMBG protest in Bosnia, he is positive that their work is bearing some significance. Linking to his belief of the changing potential social media could carry is the idea Blumler and Coleman have on the potential significance of digital media in which they say that they “have a potential to improve public communications and enrich democracy” (2009:11).

While they are tech-savvy citizens who are using Web 2.0 platforms to produce and obtain new knowledge about everyday political events, at the same time they are expressing regret that more people is not involved in it:

“I would like If I could reach people who aren’t on Twitter. They are so distressed. Those are the people that turn their TV, they get their hit of news at night, they get stressed out really good, and then they go to sleep in all of their misery. And they wake up in the morning, and do everything the same from the start. I am not claiming that my life is too good to be true. But I use much more information sources, so no one could pull one over me”, Željko, 37

The importance of “being on Twitter” and being able to practice and experience tweeting, is something producers find enough meaningful. For Željko, “technological potential and conceptual framework” (Dahlgren 2009:156), is a practice which will lead to new information, and therefore, towards the new perspective. While he doesn’t believe that his daily tweeting will bring revolutionary change, he is assured that this practice of using the Twitter as conversational space would encourage new knowledge and therefore, “enhance people’s capacity to more things for themselves” (Dahlgren 2009:157).

4.2.5. Identities: Making of citizens

It is a unique challenge to discuss citizenship of Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizens within the legal and official parameters. The Dayton Agreement, the peace treaty that stopped the 1992-1995 war in that country, also gave B&H its Constitution. What is explicit about B&H notion of citizenship is that the Constitution recognize three constitutive peoples: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, (Ustav BiH, 1995). This division basically means that if a person belongs to any other group of individuals, they will officially be called “the others” (Ustav BiH, 1995). Regardless of the idea that Castells gave on citizenship in which he didn’t equate it with nationality (2009:55), this is the only way formal citizenship has been defined in B&H. In a nutshell, even from the legal point of declaring the belonging to one group of people can be complicated in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“Everything is so constructed. You have three truths in here. And you constantly have three truths, and no one wants to face theirs. Those who face with it get attacked from all three sides. If you are a Muslim and you say that crime happened here and here, you will get attacked by Muslims, by Serbs, you know, it doesn’t make sense at all”, Eldin, 38

“If my name is Adnan does that means that you as a Muslim wants to mess around with Serbs? Or, I lived in Banja Luka for 10 years, then they will say, yeah you absorbed their way of thinking, you are attacking Bakir. Who are you, what are you? You know us, everything is personal for us”, Adnan, 37

Identity is personal as much as it is public: what we share tells a lot about us, but also, since the identity is never ending construction, what we share also further creates our own identity. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, citizenship, the legal or the one we are practicing as fully participating citizens in social media is far beyond the private. With just as much as the name of a person, as Adnan explained, one can establish to which group of people someone belongs to. This kind of identification and equation with one group of constitutive peoples is what Eldin finds troubling as well. Because, unlike for Shakespeare, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the name does mean something. This also contributes to the constitution of civic identity, because as Dahlgren stated (2009:120), “received citizenship, (...) recognized citizen of the state, is probably the most fundamental source of civic identity.” But as these two quotes are proving, even if one person does not identify with the legal citizenship provided by the Constitution, the surrounding will, based on the name, location, determine one’s citizenship.

The fact that the issue of legal citizenship is problematic in B&H could be one of the reasons why some of the producers believe that their actions do not have any impact. Željko, for example, regardless of the fact that he is active in the disseminating his idea about improvements which could be made in the country, still does not believe that he will make an impact. Similar to him are the others:

“This is just an illusion. #FadileOprosti was a circus, he still works, the man is a professional clown. And I don’t believe that anything can change in this way,” Željko, 37

“Having in mind that people are always voting for the same politicians, I am starting to believe that they are being manipulated or freaked. And then they go on and vote for the same people, even though they are aware of critique. I don’t know is this carrying any power, but as an individual, I feel the need to react in some way”, Nino, 25

“This is just a good laugh, it’s just a humor. Did Fadil got fired or lost the support of his party? I mean right now you have the ruling party that will win majority in the next elections as well. SDA will win again. It doesn’t matter that their secretary general and

two vice presidents have confirmed indictments. Alternative sucks. And what the voter is supposed to do? He goes on, vote, and plays it safe with SDA. At least with them, we know where we stand. Get it? Even this satire that we are doing, we are doing it the wrong way. Because we are forming echo chambers, and we are laughing with people who are like-minded,” Adnan, 37

Beyond the “rule of three” in the B&H citizenship, the performance of identity doesn’t get easier. As it has been already discussed the act of “most basic practice of political citizenship” as Doona (2015:128) describes voting, happens every two years in Bosnia and Herzegovina (with the local and presidential elections performed separately), with an electorate that usually doesn’t go beyond 53-55 percent. The practice of ones’ citizenship through voting process is pretty small in B&H, which could be a signifier that people, in fact, do not sense that they are making “contributions in a political struggle,” (Dahlgren, 2009:121). What these producers above recognize is that even when people do vote, they rarely vote for change. While the producers are trying to be “empowered political agent” (Dahlgren, 2009:120), the insecurity of the state, the rarely accomplished changes, the “manipulated and freaked” people as one of the producers labeled voters, are making them feel like their actions are not contributing to any kind of change. But having in mind their practices, it is clear that producers are engaging in the construction of the citizenship, they are forming groups of others “with whom they can laugh”, as Adnan explained. Those groups of like-minded could be observed as Dahlgren’s “political communities,” the ones that are existing to empower citizens and to connect them in a group where they can act together.

As Dahlgren, but others like Frosh pointed out, identity builds up with the experience. Having participated in both protests, engaged in various activities that are connecting online and offline space and practices, these producers gained experience which “contributes to the sense of their political selves,” (Dahlgren, 2009:119). Still, as active contributors to the Web 2.0 sphere with their tweets and memes, these two producers are also recognizing that there is life “beyond citizenship.”

“I get tired from all the reacting. I mean I can’t make it find time always. You know, you have your job, your life, you can’t deal with all of this all the time. OK if someone pays me for this. But besides all the other things that you are doing, work, home, you get me? (...) but this has become so normal, your mind just starts to work this way. You don’t even try, you just follow, and react. Or read and react to be precise,” Amer, 37

“You know what, I am a precarious worker. I live absolutely antisocial life, in a sense that I am in my house all the time, I don’t go anywhere, I don’t know what to do with

myself. Honestly. If I have a little bit more normal life, healthier social life, then I would have less time to deal with Fudo Backović^{xiii} and all of those shit,” Samir, 37

“We as citizens have a democratic responsibility to become engaged and to participate,” Dahlgren (2009:81), claimed. While recognizing the importance of engagement with the satirical user generated content, some of the producers are also pointing out that there is more to identity than what we see on their social media timelines.

Amer, a Twitter producer carries a belief that it is his duty as an active citizen to react, which makes him a “member and participant of democracy” (Dahlgren 2009:118) and pushing him towards the production. Samir on the other hand is letting his “personal meanings and interpersonal relationship” (Frosh, introduction, 1991) to determine his projections of identity and his “interpretation of the world” (ibid.).

With the work that they are doing, Amer on Twitter and Samir with memes, they are projecting their citizenship beyond the “go and vote” activity.

In a still transitional society, these and other producers who participated in this research are embracing the opportunity to shape the citizenship according to the surrounding, their citizenship “evolve in relation to social milieus and institutional mechanisms” (Dahlgren 2009:119). One tweet, one meme at the time.

4.3. Satire: From the producer’s perspective

Humor is an integral part of every society, or as Michael Billing describe it (2005:13) “comedy, just like warm water, is constantly on tap in contemporary affluent society.” In the stereotypical description of Western Balkan nation, Bosnians are perceived as the funny ones. But while satire is lacking in the mainstream media, the amateurs took the stage to fill in the gap.

“In Bosnia, entire satire has been reduced to Facebook and Twitter. And there you see how frustrated people are. They start to laugh, laugh and then in one moment everything blows, and then the dark stuff begins.” Eldin, 38

Numerous Facebook pages with political satire exist, people engage on Twitter around hashtags, they share jokes, they mock politicians and criticize the reality in which they live in. Eldin, one of them, regularly uses satire to point out to the irregularities in the society (Sorensen, 2008:175).

“Laughter is all we are left with. It seems that pessimism, the feeling of infirmity, defeatism or however we call it, won. We have lost faith in a better future, in a possibility of change, and satire comes like some group therapy for us.” Almir, 28

Most of the producers are agreeing with Almir. Even though they choose satire as an expression, they are inclined to believe that it does not serve to deliver changes. For them, just like for Almir, satire serves as an instant reliever, something which will make them feel better for a short while.

Apart from the general ideas about everyday satirical expression that’s making producers feel better, less frustrated, it was noted that they are using satire for different purposes. For some of them, this is a tool through which they can reach more people to, and as, Amer one of the producer said to “help them see through”. For others, use of satire through user generated content production is a way of resistance. Thirdly they are using satire to point out to the incongruities. This can mean a lot of things: engaging with mockery in order to diminish the politician’s or other elite member’s reputation, or using satire just as an extension of what is happening in everyday social and political branches in which as one of the Bosnian journalists wrote “satire become serious competition to the reality” (MC Online, 2017).

4.3.1 Reaching to more people

Despite the fact that some authors are still questioning the engaging potential of Web 2.0 platforms, Amber Day said that technology made critique more accessible. “Though many worry that the presence of irony must signal a lack of real engagement or sincerity, there has, in fact, been a flowering of irony wielded for earnest political aims” (2011:24), explains Day. This is highly visible in the usage of satire with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian producers. But what is significant in their usage of satire, is that they are considering it as a useful tool for outreach.

“With the satire, you can reach more people who need to understand some message. Because a lot of people won’t watch some political show, because they find it boring. But if you present them a problem with a satire and because of that dose of humor, the message will reach more people” Nino, 25

“This is the best way to draw attention and to get people to understand something. In their core, people are simple. Not everyone is educated, but when you tell them something through a joke ... I mean you talk about analysis, research and what not, but make a performance, he will talk about that, he will get the point.” Eldin, 38

When it comes to humor as a “recruitment” tool, Sorensen (2008:175) said that it is best used to establish the “contact with people who are not part of the resistance movement.” This is logic behind Nino’s and Eldin’ usage of satire. While they are not mobilizing people for the protest or the social movement, they are using satire with the purpose of mobilizing so they can make some changes by themselves. For them, mobilization means that the user generated content serves as a tool to “inform, organize and engage those people who are currently marginalized from the existing political system,” (Norris, 2001:218). This kind of mobilization could lead to the practice of civic engagement as well.

What Sorensen discovered during the interview with Otpor movement participants is that humor attracts more people because it becomes “fun to participate and it brings energy with it” (2008:175).

“What is interesting is that the ones who are using humor on Twitter are likely to be more popular. When you say something serious about the certain issue, when you have some serious attitude about some social problem, a lot fewer people will follow on that, a lot less will hit like button. Unlike when you say something funny”. Majdin, 28

The revelation that the humorous text has a better pass with the audience, is driving Majdin to engage with satire as well. His finding about humor having better acceptance rate with the audience links to the Shifman’s explanation that “humorous content may be particularly shareable as it tends to be surprising,” (2014:67).

In their article about the online practice of political satire in China, Yang and Jiang (2015) established that "online political satire can be a form of individual resistance" against the political system. What they also found relevant when it comes to satire, is that there is more than just content. The practice of engaging in the media production is what is relevant here as well. “It is a participatory activity involving multitudes of people interacting through digital networks” (2015:216).

“It is important the for message to get out. I cannot lie and tell you that I don’t care, but it interests me when I see that N1, BBC, Index.hr took my tweets. The message went out. Now, are people going to agree... I would be happy if someone reads and then just starts to think with its head. So maybe next time when some shit happens, they will sit and think for themselves. And that is your satisfaction. It is all about that in the end.”
Amer 37

In Sorensen's words (2008:175), “humor can make one stand out, and it may become easier to get attention from the media,” and this is exactly what this producer is describing. Labeled as someone who is very active on social media, with Twitter as his primary platform, Amer’s

tweets have been used numerous times by mainstream media as well. With more than 4.000 followers himself, and with the account that some of the mainstream Bosnian media such as N1 are using his tweets on a regular basis, either to start the conversation about something or to support already established argument, his tweets at the end reach a significant number of people. Another way of explaining Amer's actions and reach could be done with the use Jenkins explanation of civic media. For him, "civic media is content intended to increase civic engagement or to motivate participation in the political process," (2013:219). Individual citizens, like Amer could also participate in this type of action, in which as Jenkins explains "civic media producers typically care more about getting their message out to the world," (ibid.).

4.3.2. A safety valve

When asked about why are they decided to engage with satire as an expression of their beliefs and observation, the term "safety valve" was mentioned by almost every producer. The "safety valve" has been used to describe satire as a non-threatening way for producers to "blow off some steam" by different authors as well (Rodrigues, Collinson 1995, Bhattacharya, Tang, 2011).

"I honestly believe that social media were the best possible thing that could have happened to the countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina. And to the governments of countries like this one. Where people got a vent to blow off some steam, to shot all the frustrations they have and the dissatisfaction. And to produce some kind of relief from the crowd," Željko, 37

"Sometimes I think that we would have much more protests if it weren't for social media. Maybe I am wrong, but that is the impression I have. We blow off the steam in the discussions and with the critiquing on social media and we are not allowing for frustration to grow into the rebellion," Almir, 28

Both of these producers are using humorous text to communicate with the broader audience. And they are valuing the possibilities Web 2.0 brought to them, so they can "blow off some steam." Still, apart from the "soothing" element, humor can help in the creation of "solidarity and group identity within the group" (Sorensen 2008:177).

"You have this direction that helps us to relax, to make us feel better, to connect us as two individuals, as group, as individuals in a group, to connect us with humor and laughter" Amer, 37

“The audience is bitter with the politicians, and when someone says something against politicians and politics, then that evokes positive reaction with the audience. Because in those situations, we are putting ourselves on the side of unsatisfied audience. And then citizens realize that they are not alone, that other people are not ok with this or that in the country as well” SATIRAnje.

Linking on the usage of satirical content for outreach and mobilization, producers are, as they explained, using satire to express solidarity, to connect themselves with the groups of people and to challenge “everything they feel is worth fighting for.” This creation of communities’ the producers are talking about, is also connected with the civic engagement in which they are forming the new practices in a Web 2.0 space so they can express their citizenship.

In the research about Serbian resistance movement Otpor, Sorensen writes that humor is important drive for the group of people to work together and to work on “its internal dynamics, creating a culture of resistance where members support each other and overcome political and individual apathy”, (2008:176). This links on Amer’s idea of the connection between people as well.

4.3.3. The absurdity and the satiric response

Following Sorensen’s idea mentioned in the literature review in which political humor needs “some incongruity and absurdity to thrive” (2008:174), answers from producers have shown that Bosnian and Herzegovinian media but also political landscape is an inexhaustible source for satire and mockery.

“The best indicator was #FadileOprosti. Something like that was boom on Twitter, and it started there. And it went on rolling on a right moment and it moved a lot of stuff that are happening in offline world. The man was forced to speak up, to hold a press conference, he has been in the media ten times since then trying to wash his hands from that statement,” Majdin, 28

As a reaction to the statement that Fadil Novalić, Prime Minister made about extravagancy of life in B&H, people on social media, Majdin included, started to post bits from their “extravagant” life. Behavior under this hashtag was a clear example of absurdity, which producers online embraced with both hands, because it allowed them to state their voice. This joint contribution with the hashtag on social media platforms has been labeled by Milan (2013:40), as cloud protesting. “It connects individual stories into a broader context that gives them a meaning” (2013:41), one hashtag collected individual reactions every producer had on

the Novalić statement and formed one group meaning. For the producers, as well for the wider audience, hashtag served as a tool which will connect them in one group of like-minded people forming a community at the same time.

Apart from #FadileOprosti campaign in which almost all producers from this research took part, one other example has been mentioned often during the interview processes. On 23rd of November 2016th, press release has been sent from the governmental office, inviting people to come to the opening ceremony of newly reconstructed sidewalk in front of the building of Presidency. Reconstruction of a couple of meters long sidewalk that has cost 363.000 KM (app. 155.000 euros), (Klix.ba, 2016) the fact that the official authorities planned a ceremony for opening and invited people via press release, provoked numerous comments. Around 50 people gathered in front of the building, protesting, but still majority of observations came from Twitter and Facebook. Here, just as Sorensen explained in a case of Serbian resistance movement and the same could be applied in the Bosnian context, that “it was not necessary to invent new absurdities because reality in itself was absurd enough,” (2008: 182).

“You have a guy who is in charge of public relation, and he sends an official invite to the media the for official opening of the sidewalk. You don’t have to do anything there. Maybe only to make sidewalk look orange. It is satirical enough just as it is”, Senad, 44

“Incredible. Just shift forward you know. You don’t even have to comment”, Adnan, 37

The absurdity of the reality has been a drive for satirical content in many societies. Authors such as Tsakona and Popa are arguing that political humor is driving the bad political decisions on the surface, “it is usually based on how political reality is, while, at the same time, points out that this is in fact an incongruous reality: political affairs and politicians are not what they are expected to be” (2011:6). Writing about the use of humorous messages in the Gezi Park protest in Turkey, Gorkem pointed out that “being laughed at is always something that degrades people’s reputation, be it in kindergarten or in politics,” (2015:592) and this is something producers of satirical user generated content are counting on. Memes and tweets they are producing are in able to “shape mindset, forms of behavior and actions of social groups” (Shifman 2015:19), and even if, as some authors claims, satire could not change political system, but could help to degrade reputation, or at least to start the conversation about absurdity of some events. What happened with #Trotoar and #FadileOprosti are signifiers that humor, in fact, can move some borders.

“When they think that they can do whatever they want, something happens and they realize that they really can’t. You know, he (Fadil Novalić) employs his daughter and

entire public raises its voice in 24 hours. And she quits. She didn't quit because of her moral principles, but because she felt pressured. Which means you can do something," Senad, 44

Chiluwa (2012:218) writes that when a person or a group of people starts to feel oppressed "or perceive that their individual/collective human rights are violated, they begin muster strength to change." What Sorensen noticed is that, when humor works, it can be confrontational "it provokes, mocks, or ridicules, which escalates the conflict and puts pressure on the oppressor" (2008:180). The situation which is explaining Senad, one of the producers, was directly influenced by the use of the satire in the social media space to provoke politicians, to mock them, all in order to get some kind of reaction. He believes that satire in a combination with user generated content could impact some changes, indicating that civic engagement behind his actions does have significance. But, some other producers are more inclined to believe that hardly anything could be accomplished.

"There is no chance that satire carries any power, from a simple reason where 99 percent of people just laughs, like or maybe they get angry because someone is making fun of their party colleague, and that is it. Particularly in the Balkans, someone's text or meme could not make any difference. They have they electorate, for whom they buy a bag of flower or give 50 KM before the election. And that carries much more power than some meme or article", Sarajevo365

The reality in which political change comes slowly, or even not at all, makes even the engaged producers like Sarajevo365 less optimistic about changing potential their content can have. "Satire questions the existing political or social order, usually by juxtaposing the existing imperfect reality with visions of what could or should be," writes Young (2014:3) regardless of the fact that this producer does not believe that his actions could result in a change, he is engaged because is using this tool to point out to irregularities. His explanation about why satire does not carry power is a signifier of a producer that is informed, that is critical towards ruling elite. And having in mind that, despite his lack of optimism, he continues with his satirical contribution, at least as a way to express himself and to connect in the community of people with whom he can further discuss.

5. Conclusion: What comes after the laughter

“All of us are dreaming to live in a normal country, in which I don’t have to care who comes from which political party, and who is in which position, and who belongs to what nationality. And this what we are doing, is a small resistance to all of that,” Senad, age 44.

If just one quote had to be used to describe the reasons behind the producers’ activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it would be this one. Uttered by one of the producers, during a morning interview in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina capital, this quote assembles all the characteristics of a democratic citizen as explained by Coleman (2013b:378, cited in Doona, 2016:17). They are informed and aware of political events occurring in their surroundings, they are frequent contributors to the political conversation. And above all, they are taking part in the activities for which they believe, could foster some level of social change. In a country that is still figuring out how to practice democracy, their citizens found a way how to be active contributors to the political debate: through the hashtags and satirical posts on the social media.

The overall aim of this thesis was to demonstrate how producers of satirical user generated content in B&H are projecting their citizenship through the activities on Web 2.0. On a macro level, with this thesis, the researcher wanted to join a discussion on how civic engagement could be performed outside the town squares, voting booths and protests. To succeed in that, the process of qualitative research with semi structured interviews as a method were performed with 12 producers of satirical user generated content from Bosnia and Herzegovina age 24 to 44.

The first proposed research question served to examine how does the involvement with the satire and Web 2.0 empowered producers of user generated content to exercise their civic engagement.

As demonstrated in the analysis, producers are using Web 2.0 platforms in order to obtain and to further spread the knowledge they have. They are also using tweets, memes, and other forms of posts to disseminate their offline experience which then helps them to connect with the others and to form communities in a Web 2.0 space.

When Tim O’Reilly defined Web 2.0 (2005:17) he said that it is an outlet for the audience that will decide which information is relevant for them. This behavior was highly noticed with the producers of satirical user generated content. Producers, all active consumers of news, mainly from the Web 2.0 platforms, are following various sources. They are combining newly obtained

knowledge with their experience and the previously acquired information: all for the purposes of creating their own opinion which they will publish in a form of social media post.

As it was noted by Shifman (2014) and Gauntlett (2011), the accessibility, the low effort, even lower cost and the Jenkins's (2013) chance for high reach with the "spreadability" were the primary choices on why producers decided to use Web 2.0 as their tool for expression. The existence of Web 2.0 enables producers to engage with the creation of content at any given moment.

Other point discovered in the relation to Web 2.0 derived from producers understanding of the effectiveness of short messages. While this thesis didn't inspect the virality potentials of the produced content, for which simplicity is one of the core criteria, the simple and short social media messages like tweets and memes had other benefits for the producers. According to them, but also following Shifman's (2014) explanation of simplicity on which memes are based, other people are more likely to understand short messages. Further on, they will get spread easily, enabling for the message to reach more people.

The other side of shortness and simplicity of Web 2.0 messages is the element of spreadability for which Jenkins (2013: 227) created a base, saying that they "people want to share media text which become a meaningful resource in their ongoing conversations."

Following with the notion of spreadability, another revelation with the way Web 2.0 is used was discovered. As concluded by Shifman (2014) and Jenkins (2013), when we share something online, we are sharing more than just a post. As it was noticed in the way producers are using and explaining their actions on social media, when they post something, they are also sharing knowledge on the particular matter, their standpoint, their culture, and traces of the identity.

Linking on the dissemination of knowledge through Web 2.0 sphere, and the practice in which producers became carriers of information, is a use of satirical expression as an outreach. Satire, as Sorensen explained, needs "incongruity and absurdity in order to thrive" (2008:174). As the producers invested in this research argued but also based on the events occurring in Bosnia and Herzegovina, everyday absurdity is not lacking in that country. In a country where a couple of meters long sidewalk deserves a ceremony of the official opening, a country that is run by three presidents and numerous other officials, the material for satire and dissent is possible to find on almost every corner. And the way producers are usually using that satirical potential is to draw attention to the issues they are discussing. Linking on the idea of spreadability and Sorensen's

(2008) notion in which humor can be used to draw attention, the producers are combining social media posts with the satire so that their message could travel further. In many cases, this means that, apart from the online audience, mainstream media will pick up on their posts as well.

Satire, besides the fact that provokes laughter, also brings relief to the people. Most of the producers pointed out, that while they are using satire to mobilize people, so that they would also engage in the discussion, this type of expression also acts as a *safety valve*. This safety valve serves not only to make people feel better, at least for short while, but also connects producers and their followers in the community that acts based on solidarity. This solidarity often emerges when some absurd event occurs (as #FadileOprosti and #Trotoar examples have shown). Triggered by the incongruity of these events, producers gathered around hashtags, and with satirical posts, they expressed their opinion and connected themselves in the communities of likeminded individuals. Their activities, that combine satire and Web 2.0 expression, serve as a tool with which they are communicating resistance against everyday incongruities. Their resistance reflects in different manners, but most often, they are using mockery to lower the influence of political and elite figures, and to advocate for the change while making jokes at the same time. “I contend that Moroccan social media activists use satire as a communicative strategy to negotiate change and demand solutions to important social, political, and economic problems,” (El Marzouki 2015:283), and this opinion is shared amongst Bosnian and Herzegovinian producers as well, starting from the idea of mobilization and gathering like-minded people, and continuing to the resistance.

Having in mind research findings it can be concluded that the existence of Web 2.0, the producers’ usage of the platforms in the combination with satire are a good starting point for civic engagement potentials. Web 2.0 posts are traveling across different media outlets, they are being spread by the other users and the information they are carrying could be used for others to join the conversation about different issues citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing with. Combined with the satire, as producers explained, the chance to form an online community and to act together against the absurdity of everyday political events, gets even more likely.

The second proposed research question tried to answer which way does the creation of satirical user generated content builds the performance of the citizenship and the civic engagement. Examination of civic engagement potential through Dahlgren’s civic cultures analytic framework has brought several interesting points about producers’ exercise of citizenship.

The first signifier that the actions are carrying engaging potential has been demonstrated with their involvement in the dissemination of the knowledge. It was noticed that producers are relying on the information derived from the media, their consumption is quite high, or as one producer vividly described his everyday activities in which he “eats, sleep, work and watches the news”. Every reaction, every tweet and every meme that the producers are creating are bound to the media content they will receive that day. The other side of the knowledge construction is that the producers are using satire and user generated content to disseminate information and to impact their followers.

One of the most often used critiques toward the actions producers are taking in the Web 2.0 sphere is that they are not actually contributing to social change, but that they are “slacktivists”: people who do low effort things just for the sake of feeling better. But the clear presence of passion, amongst other elements, is a signifier, that there is more to their actions than “slacktivism”. The amount of time they devote to media consumption, the effort they put in to share the knowledge they obtained, and all that followed with the creativity, is driven by pure passion: a passion for making a stand, to participate in the democratic conversation. Their passion towards reacting on everyday absurdity through tweets and memes, sometimes hinder the more violent solutions, which more than one producer mentioned. But the fact that they are deciding to express their opinion and attitude about some issue through Web 2.0 posts and not with the violence, also shows that they can be passionate, while “being reasonable” at the same time, regardless of the fact that some scholars, like Fineman (2007:155) are convinced that reason and passion are having two different bases.

Because of their passionate involvement with the satirical user generated content, the producers also became the ones other members of the audience trusts with their information. Their credibility, popularity and the spreadability of their content is based on the trust of the wider audience, but also the trust mainstream media is giving to them. In a sense, they are the ones that are carrying the trust, since the audience is relying on them to forward the trustworthy message.

The research also showed that the use of Web 2.0 as a space for conversation brought new practices for producers. While there is a well-accepted opinion that social media are just an extension of the offline world, the existence of media convergence Jenkins (2006) is talking about, and the fact that today content is flowing across the platforms, mixing online and offline, mixing different forms, enabled producers to create new practices. In those practices, they would take the meanings from their everyday life and they would transfer them to the online

sphere, creating, not only a new space for conversation but also a new community of people. This kind of behavior enables them also to engage in the offline activities based on the knowledge they obtained in a new online constructed place.

The dissemination and construction of new knowledge, the establishment of new values and the creation of new spaces and practices also builds up the identity of the producers. The research found out that the actions they are taking are helping in the formation of their citizenship as proposed by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2005:227): no longer are they just legal carriers of citizenship, but they are possessing knowledge, they are contributing to democratic debate and they are advocating for change through the expression of the democratic values. By engaging in the formation of new communities with whom they have a feeling of belonging, producers are exercising one strand of their identity: citizenship.

This is also noticeable through their actions regarding Web 2.0 and satire, where they are pointing out to irregularities of everyday life and advocating for change. One issue that arose during the research is that the producers don't share positive attitudes towards their legal citizenship. Because of the complicated Constitutional structure, their citizenship is equated with nationality. Other legal citizenship signifiers they mentioned are the elections, for which they are inclined to believe that are not bringing any change.

Identity is built upon all the above-discussed dimensions: it grew and formed itself with knowledge, values, and trust are shaping it, while practices and spaces are enabling its performance. The identity, as Dahlgren explains (2009:119), is "at the centerpiece of civic cultures."

Having in mind the efforts producers are putting into dissemination of knowledge, the building of new spaces and practices in which they can engage in the discussion about issues they find relevant, and take into the account that their actions are driven by passion to contribute to the social changes, it can be concluded that this formation of their citizenship is a signifier that their actions are carrying civic engagement potential. Their "*readiness or willingness to take action*" (Amna, Ekman 2012:297) is giving hope that their engagement could "open the door for participation" (Dahlgren 2009:83).

"Perhaps nothing is more human than sharing stories, whether by fire or by "cloud" (2013:3), said Jenkins. Linking to his statement, what this research found out is that more even "human" than sharing stories, would be sharing them with the goal to demand changes. As 12 producers of satirical user generated content proved, civic engagement, the act of seeking for the rightful

and participative role in the society, doesn't have to be exclusive to the offline activities in which one citizen goes to cast a vote or engage in a protest. Small resistance could be performed in the online space, where producers are forming communities, sharing knowledge and using satire and hashtags to lower the power of the ones who are in charge. This kind of knowledge could help to investigate similar behaviors in other countries that are lacking offline activity but have plenty of online ones, particularly between the wider age range of producers. The combination of satire, Web 2.0 and citizens acting as producers, has a participatory potential and rather to focus on satirical content, the further research should be focused on these practices.

When it comes to the potential continuation of this research with Bosnian and Herzegovinian satirical user generated production in focus, the next step in the examination would be to analyze actual "mobilization" and "knowledge sharing" impact producers are having. This would deepen the research but also brought more significance to the developments around citizenship building in the Web 2.0 sphere.

The other possible approach would be to focus research on the narrative content analysis of the produced content. As some of the producers claimed, memes and tweets have the power to impact the ratings of political figures and to diminish their significance. From that standpoint, it would be significant to detect the messages, the narratives that those memes and tweets are disseminating.

Thirdly, and less likely, in the events of potential future protests and social movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this particular research could be used as a background research and as an explanation for the Web 2.0's contribution to the mobilization and dissemination of information amongst citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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6.1. Endnotes:

ⁱ The Crew from the Employment Office

ⁱⁱ Just for the comparison: during the initial writing of master thesis proposal in November 2016th, this Page had 52,925 followers

ⁱⁱⁱ Alexa is an online tool for analytics and measurement of the internet users' traffic

^{iv} The Surrealist Hit Parade

^v Live Day is a daily show that has one block in which guests of the show are commenting on latest tweets.

^{vi} CNN affiliate network for Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia)

^{vii} As the Appendix 1 shows, out of 12 producers, there's one journalist, one contributing author, one PR and one Social media manager. But the work they are doing professionally and this one, differ in terms of topics and scope of their work.

^{viii} The Bosniak member of the tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegović and his wife, Sebjica, Director of University Clinical Center, are often used characters in memes

^{ix} The case of „official“ opening of the sidewalk, on social media greeted with the hashtag #Trotoar has been describe in analysis chapter

^x These shows and some other similar were broadcasted on public and private networks for a short time after canceling.

^{xi} How do you don't get it. We are not giving interviews below 3.000 KM

^{xii} The conversation was held under the headline: „Politics in the Age of YouTube“

^{xiii} Fudo Backović is a pop singer, two times representative of the country on Eurovision Song Contest, and a socialite

7. Appendix 1 – Details of the participants

No.	Name	Age	Occupation	Platform	Media consumption	Anonymous or transparent ?	Social media presence
1.	Samir	37	Translator	Facebook meme page	Web 2.0 other users	Anonymous	Facebook, Twitter
2.	SATIRA.nje	N/A	N/A	Web, Facebook, meme	Web 2.0 TV shows	Anonymous	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn
3.	Nino	25	Student	Memes for Web and Facebook	Web 2.0 political TV shows	Transparent	Facebook and Instagram
4.	Sarajevo365	N/A	N/A	Web, Facebook meme	Political comedy	Anonymous	Facebook and Twitter
5.	Almir	28		Web, Twitter	Web 2.0 satirical websites	Transparent	Facebook and Twitter
6.	Amer	37	Auto industry	Twitter, Facebook	Various	Transparent	Facebook Twitter
7.	Majdin	28	PR	Twitter	Web 2.0, daily newspapers, TV shows	Transparent	Twitter
8.	Eldin	38	Social media manager	Twitter	Twitter and other social media	Transparent	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest
9.	Senad	44	Marketing	Twitter	Various	Anonymous	Twitter and Facebook
10.	Adnan	37	Contributing author	Twitter, YouTube	Web 2.0, TV news, radio sometimes	Anonymous but transparent when asked	Twitter, Facebook, YouTube
11.	Željko	37	Public affairs	Twitter, YouTube	Various, but gets nervous when watches a lot of political content	Transparent	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn
12.	Alma	24	Writer, PhD	Facebook meme page	Web 2.0	Anonymous but transparent when asked	Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr

8. Appendix 2 – Interview guide:

Age, occupation

I - Media usage:

Social media use (which networks), Traditional media use (type of shows). Types of content participant is following? Interest in political content? Political comedy? which shows, regional, international)

II – Participants platform:

Type of platform, what kind of content (theme and outline), frequency (what do they react on), engagement in #FadileOprosti and Facebook pages (why, reasons for this kind of reaction). Meme creation (new way of communicating?) Free labor? Why does this content spread so much? What triggers someone to create meme (in his everyday life, what is influencing meme creation).

III – Satire:

Why satire (what's so funny about that?), is it informative, relieve providing? Expectations after you hit submit? What's the endgame? Laughing on the issues we should be crying about? Difference between local and regional/international satirical content?

IV – Political discussion:

UGC and satire as a tool for criticizing? UGC as an open and free space for critics in B&H (why anonymity)? Power of criticizing (soft power)? Offline activities? Exercise of citizenship with a click?

9. Appendix 3 - Transcribed and translated interview

Male, 28, PR, active on Twitter

Q: Which networks are you using?

A: Currently I only use Twitter. I don't have a Facebook profile. I have one on Instagram but I haven't posted anything there in the past 2-3 years I think.

Q: Why you use just Twitter?

A: Well I never used Facebook, I never get that appeal, it's too invasive in my privacy. I never wanted that. But Twitter is attractive because it is not connected with me and my private life, as much as it is connected with the opinions and attitudes I have about different situations. So, I find Twitter much more practical.

Q: How much time do you spent on Twitter?

A: Well, I don't really know, I use it when I am going to work, when I am coming back.

Q: Do you follow daily political news there?

A: On Twitter no. Because of my job, I watch other media more. I use Twitter to receive information about international events, if you know what I mean. I don't follow foreign policy in our media but I follow other people on Twitter. And if I have some special interest, I can find news about that on Twitter as well. I am quite interested in the question of Palestine and on Twitter I follow news about that, because in here, apart from some basic info in the agencies, I can't find anything else. So, it's better for me to follow some profiles of people who are reporting on them.

Q: And these daily news, where do you follow them?

A: Look, since I am PR, I follow everything from print, to websites, to electronic media.

Q: Do you follow politics?

A: Yeah, that's all I am following.

Q: And what about political comedy?

A: Well, look, apart from social media, I can't find political comedy anywhere else. I like it, I am fond of it. It is nice and interesting form of critique. People are more likely to say what they mean through humor than they would when they talk serious. It is easier to say things through humor.

Q: Yeah, it appears that satire is not present in the mainstream media as much as it is online.

A: Yeah you are right. I have to admit, I stopped reading Slobodna Bosna almost four years ago. But Senad Avdić had these columns, and they were... I can't say that they were satirical, but they were written with a lot of humor. He knew how to make fun of everyone through satirical and interesting way. Besides him, I haven't noticed anyone doing something seriously, someone with familiar name, if you know what I mean. Someone, who writes something in the

mainstream media and who will manage to make some impact with their use of satire and humor.

Q: Do you follow people who are active on Twitter with this kind of expression?

A: I do, I do. What is interesting is that the ones who are funny on Twitter have better reach. When you write something serious about some topic, when you have some serious attitude about certain social topic, a lot less people will follow you. Unlike when you write something funny on the same issue.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: Well, I don't know. First, it's smooth. Second, there is a general mistrust here, you know. And then when someone publish some serious political attitude, people will look at that with skepticism. Particularly politically oriented people. And then they will just walk over that. Because they are being careful. You know, he gives you is trust and you betray him. Especially Twitter community is like this. At least most of the community I follow. They are like in their own bubble. People who like to critique are dominant, the ones who have more expressed opinions, but at the same time, they are more skeptical.

Q: And what do you publish on Twitter?

A: Well critique mostly, tweets about politics, critique of some general social condition, little bit of humor, but still it's a political humor. I also share interesting stuff I find, and so on.

Q: What pushes you to publish reaction on some daily political news? Why?

A: I don't know what to tell you. I mean by its nature Twitter doesn't allow you a lot of time to give any relevant comment. Any serious comment asks form more space and time. I mean you can give short comment which will be short and truth at the same time, but something deeper is pretty impossible in 140 characters. I mean that could be one of the reasons why people are more inclined to use humor on Twitter. It is much easier to write a joke in 140 characters than to write a serious reflection on social or political condition. And you will get the same result at the end. The message will be the same, so it is probably easier to spread that message through humor. People accept humor easier than some serious analysis because people are no really reading those anyways. But for me, I don't know, I react when something shocks me. And what shocks me is that some absurd thing gets by. And then I have a need to comment on that.

Q: When you post tweet like that, what would you expect to happen?

A: Best case scenario is to someone who is like-minded shows up. I assume that's the reason why anyone would share anything on social media, because they want to find people with similar opinions. Or to share their opinion with someone who may not have the same opinion but maybe will change it when they see your post. Or maybe someone will change my opinion and then I would say, well I wasn't right.

Q: A lot of people had similar opinion during #FadileOprosti?

A: Well yeah, that was really obvious. Those are some things that are happening, as long as I follow politics and as I remember: almost cyclically those prime ministers and rulers appear and they are totally closed in their crazy world, and their own circle. And all of the sudden they start to criticize people based on spending, or they start to talk how the life is good in here. I

remember there were some cases and prime ministers, I can't remember their names, but they would say how people are living good life here, like they are carrying bags from the store, they are traveling and so on. Those people somehow appear, and they are totally disconnected from the reality and they are very confident with their statements. And then the audience reacts on that. Every time. I mean people are reacting to the arrogance ever since that time "you don't have bread, eat cookies."

Q: It appear so that Twitter usage has been on the rise ever since JMBG protests?

A: Well yeah, the biggest commercial for Twitter is when something like that happens, when things starts to roll. This is what I noticed. When JMBG happened, all of the sudden bunch of people came on Twitter, or when this #FadileOprosti happened. There are cases like that. But I think basically, the other media are responsible for this. Because they started to broadcast what is happening on Twitter. And then people go like on a field trip to see what is happening on Twitter. It happens often that TV shows are broadcasting tweets, that newspapers are publishing them as well. I mean you have news sections where you can find tweet of the day. And it became popular that those media are popularizing Twitter now. What is specific in B&H is that majority of that community is formed by journalists, politicians and some intellectuals. Some social influencers. And they have impact in the society.

Q: Did you noticed that any kind of change happened in offline world because of the things that happened on Twitter first?

A: Definitely. The best show case was #FadileOprosti. That was boom on Twitter, and it started to roll in the right moment, and it moved some things that are happening in offline world. I mean men was forced to say something, to hold a press conference. He was in the media ten times since then, trying to wash his hands from that statement.

Q: There was that case with his daughter as well?

A: Yeah, but I don't know if that started-on Twitter. But hashtag is incredibly powerful thing. If it happens in the right moment, for things to roll, it can make a really good impact in other media, who then have more influence in the society. I don't know did you follow, Ma hajte molim vas case?

Q: A little bit, but that was popular on Facebook?

A: Yeah it was. Ma hajte molim vas, was specific for Facebook. I mean I am not on Facebook, but because of the nature of my work, I have to follow those things. It is incredible that one, I don't even know how to call it, humor, something that can be so harmless on a first look, could harm man's reputation.

Q: Could you tell me what was happening there?

A: Well, people figured out that he uses phrase Ma hajte molim vas too often. Željko Komšić. That he uses that as a response on very serious questions. So, someone asks you something seriously and you like a charlatan say Ma hajte molim vas. And his, usually really good rating, allowed him to do that. However, a moment came when that became obvious and just someone had to push and to say the Emperor is naked. Everything started with one Facebook group....

Q: Raja sa biroa?

A: Yes, Raja sa biroa, which is really influential group. And they started first to do that, a series of memes. And now, not a single news could happen with his name, that someone doesn't write the comment, on any network, Ma hajte molim vas. And it became like a catchphrase.

Q: Facebook pages that deals with politics and political comedy are pretty popular in Bosnia as it seems?

A: Well, yeah, they have incredible influence, and they can shape public opinion. Simply, one photo says much more than a thousand words. You see one photo and in it you have hundreds of different announcements. So, people are willing to say what they mean in one easy way, and then they can shape opinions, which is not surprising at all.

Q: But people are reacting to that: is it because it's funny or because those photos are diminishing rating of one politician?

A: Yeah, possibly. People like to put the powerful ones to the ground. I mean sometimes it's really washed out. It can get bad. Sometimes you have good people, I mean it's rare, but sometimes you have good people who are trying to do the right thing but they end up being mocked at, because they are on the stage and they have to be mocked at.

Q: What do you think it's the endgame of these types of content?

A: I think it is realistic to expect that the highest reach of this is to share information and opinions. Simply, you can't expect anything more. If you are active on some media, basically you are sharing information, you are exchanging information. Possibly, some bigger media, like Facebook and Twitter could enable you to get organized and to act together. But still that is the information sharing within a group of certain people. So, I don't know if that has some bigger reach in online world. But in the offline, when people share enough information, it could lead it from the conversational topic when you arrive at work in the morning, or for everyone to talk about it, up until protest organization and potential attempt to take down the government.

Q: Were you part of these protest that we had so far?

A: I haven't been active on the February ones. At the beginning, I would pass by there, when people were gathering and some groups. But when the violence started I walked away. I didn't want to be a part of that. But I was active at JMBG protest.

Q: What I also noticed recently was that event with the #Trotoar?

A: (LAUGH) Yeah, #Trotoar was amazing.

Q: It seemed like that entire event was satirical, don't you think?

A: Well that is what I'm telling you, you get shocked with the events. I mean someone decided to announce in the news and to invite people to come to the sidewalk opening. It really shocks you. You can't believe that something like that is happening. I mean even before that happened, maybe month before, I was really in my eye, because I am passing by that place every day. And you see the ongoing construction on what appears less than a 100 meters long sidewalk. And I took a photo of that and I wrote something in tweet like how National Geographic will come and record that Mega Structures show about this grandiose thing.

Because, it is obvious people are passing by, it's a really crowded street and I am not the only one who noticed this. And then it happens that they sent an invite. Because of the nature of my work, I saw that on the agencies, and when I saw that they are sending an invite for the sidewalk opening, I fell on my butt. And I am sure that everyone reacted the same way. That shock become an initial capsule that turns everything in humor and messing around.

Q: What's your opinion, when you react on something is it just a reflex or something else?

A: I mean people will comment either way. There are some theories saying like how all the anger is shifted to social media now. Social networks are just extension of social life of one person. Before, when we didn't have them, you would comment between your family, in your work place, in a bar with friends. Now, besides those places, you have a chance to share your opinion with bigger circle of people in online world. So, it is my opinion that this is just a safety valve, because commenting generally is just a safety valve, but not just online, but everywhere. You talk out and you feel better, you shared with someone. And you feel better. But I don't think this is just an online media phenomenon. People commented on things that are happening to them since forever. Now we have a chance to do that without going on concerts, rallies and such. I mean it speeded up the process, because all of the sudden you get to see that there are 100.000 people thinking the same way you do. And before that was unusual.

Q: What do you think why people act anonymously on social media?

A: I mean its... When you say something, you have to be able to look in the eyes of the people who are not agreeing with you. I mean it is the easiest to write that your name is John Doe and put a photo of Coca Cola and then you write whatever you want. But when I say what I mean, I will have to look people in the eyes. Because you never know, maybe I will get in the situation where some of them will want to employ me and then I go to the interview, and I will look at those people and they would say "O you are the one who said all of those things. "And so on. So, I guess is a natural human reaction. I absolutely support the choice and the opportunity for people to be anonymous, I mean it's the one of the leading characteristics of the internet. But on the same note, I don't have anything against the people who will stand with their name and last name behind the things they are talking about. Because that is usually harder. You have these profiles, they are hilariously popular, and they are not connected with any name or character.

Q: Like Raja sa Biroa? They are anonymous and they don't want to talk about their actions.

A: And it is clear why they don't want to. They generated a lot of political damage to very tricky people. And that is the benefit of anonymity. Because if they didn't have a chance to be anonymous, then they wouldn't speak about the things they are speaking now. And those things need to be said. But in here nobody has a courage to say things with their name on it. So that is why we need anonymity, to protect us but to information to go public still.

Q: What do you think, do people believe in things they are saying?

A: Look, they trust media more than they trust to politicians. I think that the trust is pretty high. I mean a level of mistrust will always be present, but in here you have the people who trust the media a lot. I think even too much, because then you don't have the culture of critique. When people read something in the media they act like it is a holly letter. If it's in the media the it

happened 100 percent. And I think that they trust media too much. And that we have the opposite problem. Of course, you always have group of people, one layer, let's call them intellectuals, who poses critical thinking, and who are weighting on everything, and who are thinking with their head. And thank God for that. But most of the people who will make a decision in the elections are the ones who trust the media a lot.

10. Appendix 4 – Consent form

OBRAZAC ZA SUDJELOVANJE ISPITANIKA

Naziv zadatka: Uticaj satiričnog korisničkog sadržaja na politički kriticism i angažman javnosti

Ime istraživača: Una Čilić

Opis zadatka:

Cilj zadatka je da se ispita da li korisnički sadržaj koji objavljuju satirični portali ali li pojedinačni članovi publike, djeluje kao oblik društvenog i političkog kriticisma

Aktivnost:

Ovaj intervju bit će obavljen putem email-a.

Povjerljivost:

Izjave učesnika u intervjuu mogu biti korištene samo za pomenuti zadatak istraživača i to bez spominjanja identifikacionih podataka učesnika kao što su ime i kontakt podaci.

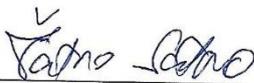
Dobrovoljno učešće:

Vaše učešće u intervjuu je potpuno dobrovoljno i možete odabrati da ne učestvujete u njemu u bilo kojem momentu. Ako učesnik odabere da prekine intervju, ta odluka neće uticati na odnos sa istraživačem sada ili u budućnosti.

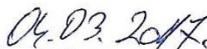
Potpisi

Ja, _____, pristajem da učestvujem u projektu _____ koji izvodi Una Čilić. Razumijem prirodu ovog projekta kao i intervjuja i želim da učestvujem u njemu. Moj potpis potvrđuje moj pristanak.

Potpis



Datum



Ime učesnika

Potpis



Datum

12. Appendix 6 – Example of coding process

Open Codes	Characteristics	Themes
twitter is more for sharing your ideas and statements	Expression through Web 2.0	Web 2.0
I watch everything	Media consumption, formation of knowledge	Knowledge
I follow other people's posts on Twitter as well	Knowledge obtained from other users	Knowledge
I like political comedy		
I don't find political comedy anywhere outside social media networks		
people will say stuff through humor more often than when they have to say it seriously	Humor as a communication tool	Satire for outreach
people will like your status more if it's funny	Importance of humor	satire
there is' general state of mistrust		
twitter is dominated with people who like to critique	Expression through Web 2.0	
you can give short comment which will be short and truth at the same time	Effectiveness of short messages	Spreadability,
And you will get the same result at the end. The message will be the same, so it is probably easier to spread that message through humor.	Effectiveness of short messages combined with humor	Spreadability, satire, knowledge
People accept humor easier than some serious analysis because people are no really reading those anyways	Humor is effective in attracting people to read message	Satire as outreach
I publish critique with a little bit of humor, usually political humor	Uses humor in his tweets	
it is easier to write a joke in 140 characters than serious critique	Short messages are good combination with humor	Spreadability, memes

people will accept critique more easily if it's through humor	Humor is effective in attracting people to read message	Satire as outreach
I react when something shock's me, and what is shocking is that something can pass by	Reacting on absurd events	
When I react, I expect to people with similar ideas and opinions to show up	Wants to join community of like – minded people	Spaces and Practices
people share their ideas because they hope to change opinions for some people	People want to influence others with their posts	Knowledge dissemination
other media are making twitter popular	Content flows across different platforms	Media convergence
TV shows are broadcasting tweets, that newspapers are publishing them as well	Content flows across different platforms	Media convergence
changes are happening in the offline world because of online activities	Online activities influence offline	Spaces and Practices
Fadile oprosti was a great example, he had to react several times because of that	The change could happen with online activities	Satire – resistance
hashtag is incredibly powerful thing	Social media tools have influence	Spreadability
if it really rolls you can make great impact in other media which then have the influence on the society	Internet enables material to share easily and to influence changes	Spreadability, Web 2.0
Ma hajte molim vas movement harmed political credibility of usually respected politician	Memes and mocking are diminishing politicians' reputation	Memes, Satire
Facebook pages have incredible influence and they can shape publics opinion	Memes on Facebook pages constructing knowledge	Memes, knowledge
picture says thousand words	Simple message has better reach	Memes
people like to bring powerful down to earth		

endgame would be share of information and opinions		knowledge
you react on shocking stuff like the Trotoar case	Reaction to absurdity and incongruity	Satire – absurdity
it's a shock that is initial capsule that makes everyone react with humor	Humor as a reaction to absurd situations	Satire - absurdity
social media are just extension of the social life of one person		
we have a chance to do that without going on concerts, rallies and such. I mean it speeded up the process, because all of the sudden you get to see that there are 100.000 people thinking the same way you do	Internet enables instant reaction from other people	Spaces and Practices
it's a human nature, it makes you feel better, easier, like the burden has fallen from your shoulders	commenting and satire as a relief	Satire - Safety valve
because when you say something you still need to look into the eyes of people who do not agree with you	The responsibility for published material	Trust
anonymity is probably human reaction		
I support the right of people to be anonymous	Anonymity is welcomed	Anonymity and trust
Raja sa Biroa wouldn't have that much influence if they are not anonymous	Facebook pages working under fake names	Anonymity as protection
people trust media much more than they trust politicians	High trust in the media	Trust