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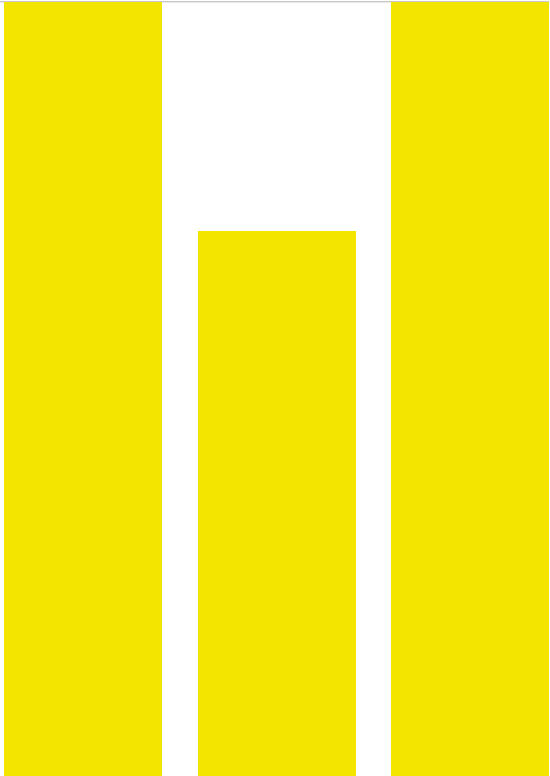
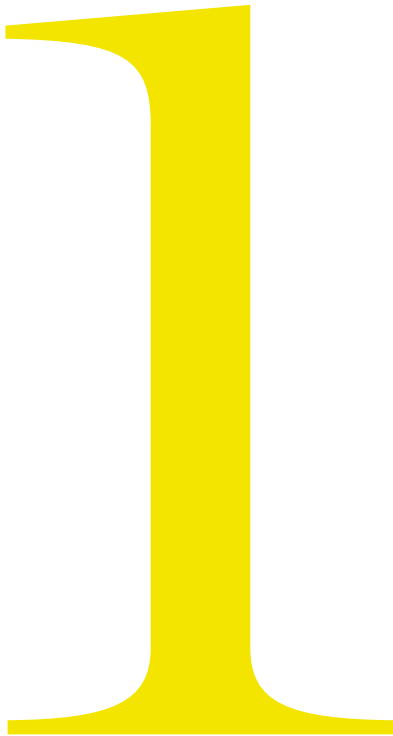
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Introduction

ISIDORA JARIĆ, DANICA LABAN

INTRODUCTION:

The Kosovo knot – episode two

In the last quarter of 2018, the media are completely redirecting focus on topics related to Kosovo, that is, throughout the second half of 2018, topics related to Kosovo dominate the sample. The pronounced presence of these texts also affected the significant increase in the number of actors involved in this topic – there were as many as 1254 appearances of actors in relation to Kosovo. This is only the second quarter since the start of the project *Mediameter* (in addition to the previous one), in which *political life in Serbia* is not the most common topic.

However, Kosovo, together with *political life in Serbia*, accounts for about 37% of all selected texts, and almost all other important topics are individually represented in less than 5% of texts. The only exception is regional cooperation / relations in the region; the topic is covered by about 7% of the texts, and traditionally presented in a very negative context in most media. For example, in *Informer* as much as 80% of the texts on the region are negatively connotated, while the ration in the daily *Alo!* is about 65%, in *Kurir* around 59% and in *Večernje novosti* about 53%. The opposite view of the region is clearly visible in *Danas*, where negative texts are not recorded, and somewhat in *Blic* (25% of negative texts).

In this quarter we also recorded an increased share of reports that dominate the sample. Reduction of the participation of articles in favor of reports, interviews and commentaries, just highlights the trends that prevail in today's journalism. Unverified information, which often have no basis in reality, are transmitted without any idea to thoroughly investigate or to think critically about them. If we put in this context the increase of participation of non-comprehensive texts, the image of the Serbian media becomes complete.

Nevertheless, the most intense impression is connected with a kind of radicalization of journalistic narratives. Examples are numerous, from the use of insulting words and hate speech in headlines on front pages, to the promotion of war crimes convicts to military and other analysts. The loss of professional standards is evident in every sense, and the most dramatic one is the use of a colloquial language, which includes numerous explicit vulgarities.

In the latest issue of the *Quarterly Mediameter* empirical material was explored in the same standardized way. A single text was chosen for the subject of analysis. Analysis itself represents the combination of two research methods: (a) content analysis, which was guided by a „specific theoretical and hypothetical frame... creating an objective and systematic empirical collection of the social communication content, which enables the formation of relevant conclusions about the social context

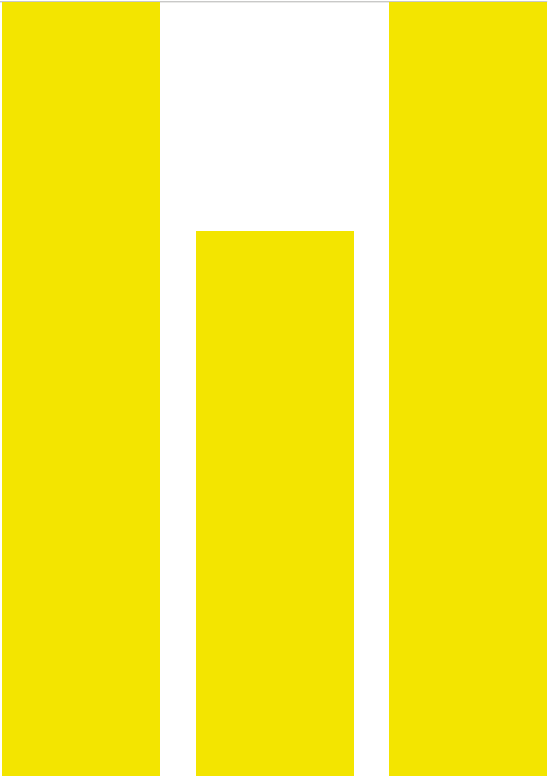
in which the communication takes part,”¹ and (b) a discourse analysis which enabled us to understand various, epistemologically and methodologically immeasurable,² authors' interpretative strategies and editorial policies which reflect perceptions of different, primarily ideological and political, discourse realities, by analyzing their specific discourse meanings.

In the interpretative sense, in order to offer better coherence of the text, the analysis is, as in the previous reports, divided into two wholes which refer to: (a) analysis of quantitative indicators collected using content analysis; and (b) discourse analysis of the qualitative content excerpted from texts which were included in the research sample.

¹ S. Gredelj, *S onu stranu ogledala* [On the other side of the mirror], Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1986, 19

² G. Couvalis, *The Philosophy of Science*, London, Sage Publications, 1997.

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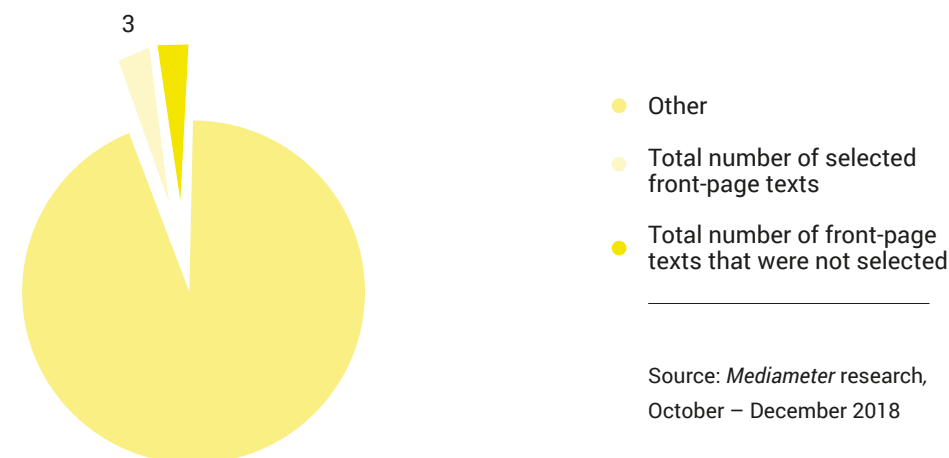
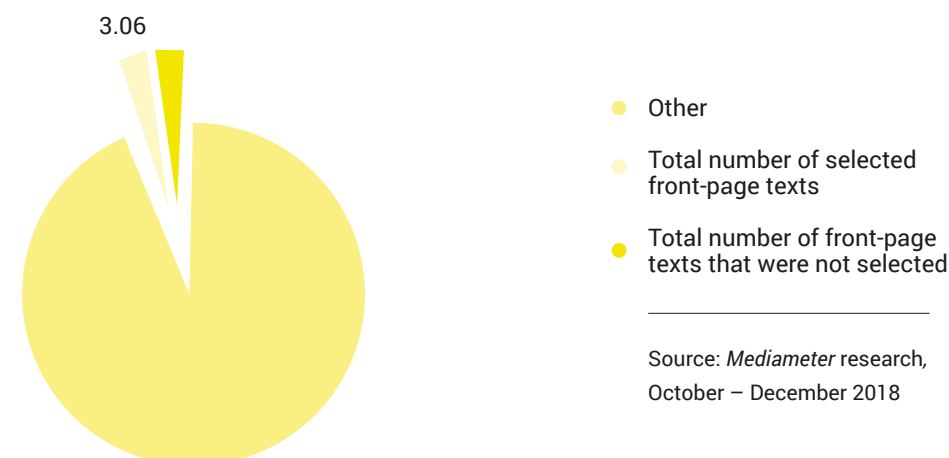
Sample

ISIDORA JARIĆ, DANICA LABAN

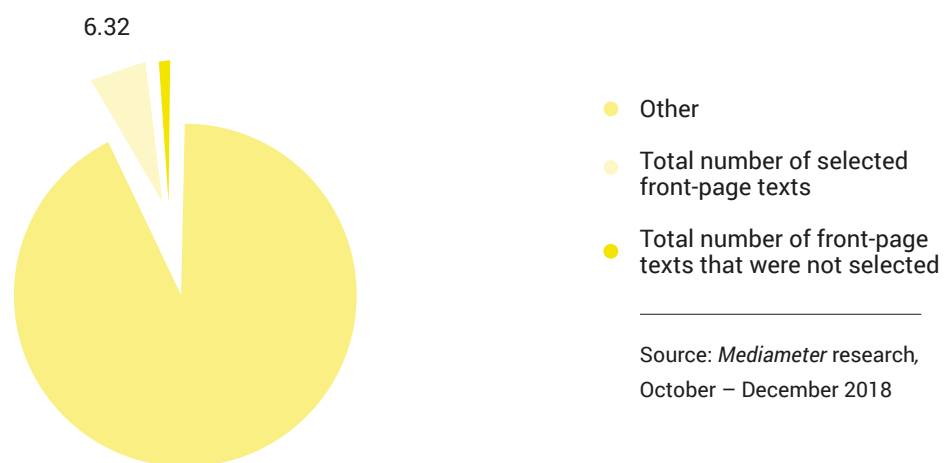
Sample

As stated in earlier publications, the basic idea of the project *Mediameter* is to try to reconstruct media reality of the dailies in Serbia, the way it can be defined considering the texts that are positioned (wholly or partially) on front pages, as various reflections of current political events and circumstances in both Serbia and the world. A sample of the dailies was composed in 2015 considering two selection criteria – the largest circulation and reputation of the print media. Newspapers *Alo!*, *Blic*, *Danas*, *Informer*, *Kurir*, *Politika* and *Večernje novosti* will compose the *Mediameter* sample in 2018, in order to facilitate parallel study of results. The front page is the part of the dailies that the readers connect the most with the identity/recognition of a media outlet. It is often responsible for the first impression, our potential affection or repulsion formed about some printed media. The front page comes into contact not only with the readers of that particular paper, but also the people who will perhaps never touch that paper. Through newspaper and TV advertising and shop windows, the front page reaches a wider auditorium than that forming the readers of individual dailies. The front pages, hence form, in a certain way, the public image of the newspaper which symbolizes its editorial policy, evaluative orientation and targeting of certain audiences. On account of the above-mentioned reasons, the front pages of dailies from our sample were in the focus of analysis of the project *Mediameter*.

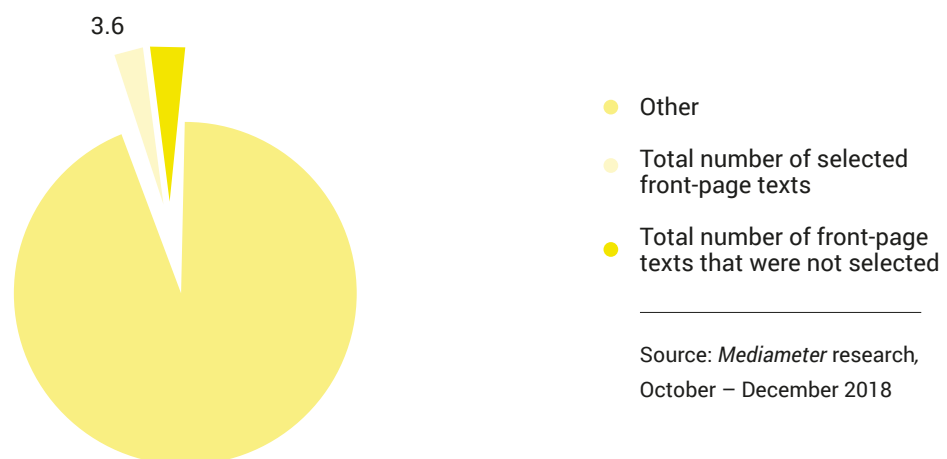
Texts from front pages reflect best the coordinates of editorial policies of daily print editions. Though this involves a small percentage of texts, editorial identity of a daily can be most easily identified through messages conveyed through front pages. The ratio of the total number of texts in each daily individually and the number of texts from the front pages that were included in the sample of our research are shown in the charts 1-7, for the period from October 1st to December 31st 2018.

Graph 1. – *Alo!*Graph 2. – *Blic*

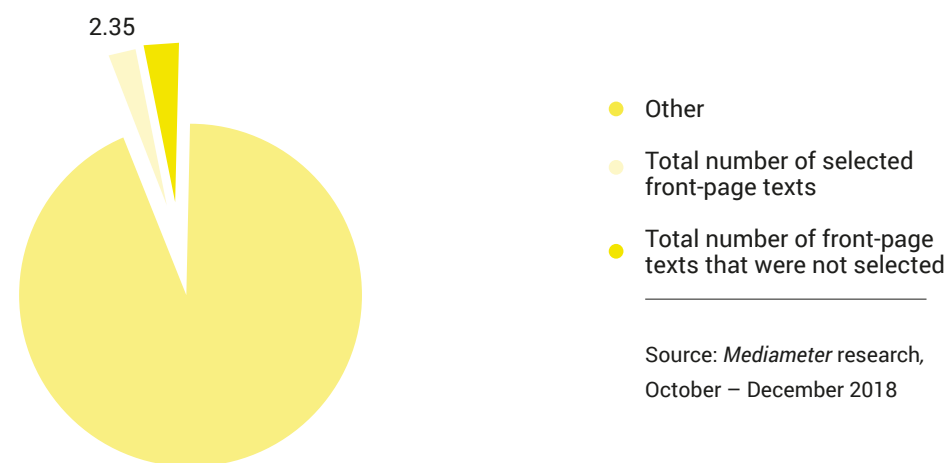
Graph 3. – *Danas*



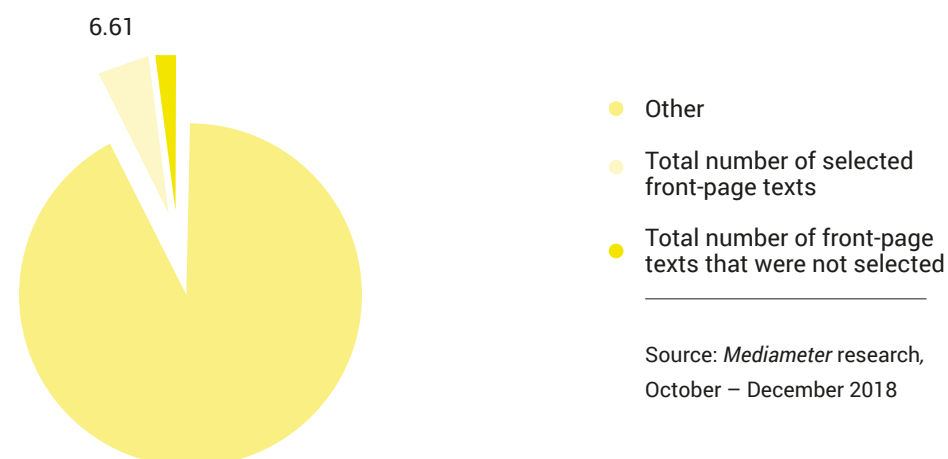
Graph 4. – *Informer*



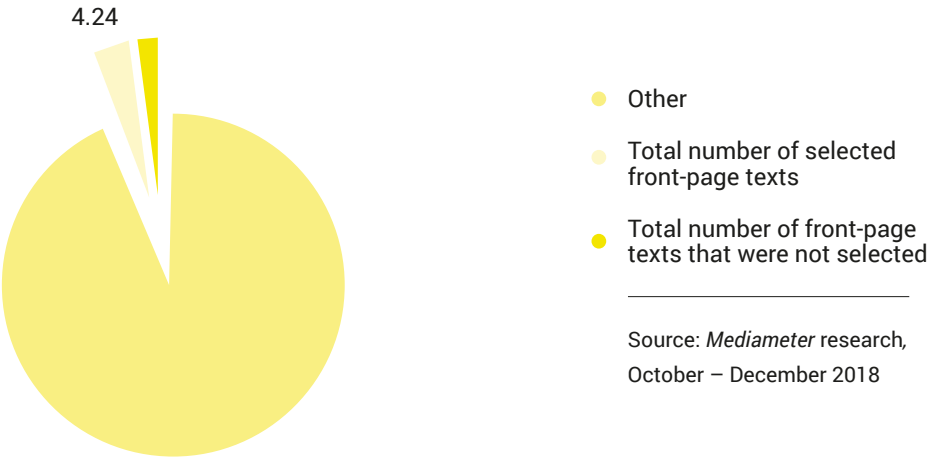
Graph 5. – *Kurir*



Graph 6. – *Politika*



Graph 7. – Večernje novosti



Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

The total number of analyzed texts in all seven media that entered the sample of our research is 2314, and this number makes on average 61,39% of headlines and 4,20% of the total number of texts.

Table 1. – Alo!

Alo! / section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
current affairs	72	68	4
news	30	30	0
politics	61	60	1
society	63	33	30
chronicle	77	13	64
v.i.p.	107	3	104
sport	41	8	33
world	3	2	1
interview/interview of the week	3	2	1
Belgrade	3	0	3
reportage	1	0	1
supplement	2	0	2
TOTAL	463	219	244

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Table 2. – Blic

<i>Blic</i> / section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
politics	64	64	0
current affairs / interview	16	15	1
topic of the day / issue	89	77	12
society	80	43	37
chronicle	65	13	52
economy	16	14	2
culture	19	6	13
sport	80	3	77
destinies	6	0	6
world/planet	8	7	1
research/dossier	5	3	2
reportage	1	0	1
entertainment	38	1	37
Blic Foundation	4	0	4
supplement	13	3	10
Blic Scene	8	0	8
TOTAL	512	249	263

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018**Table 3. – Danas**

<i>Danas</i> /section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
Danas business	7	7	0
Danas special supplement	33	21	12
Danas weekend	37	24	13
event / topic of the day	10	10	0
society	94	84	10
economy	44	44	0

Globe	27	26	1
culture	30	20	10
front page	39	39	0
politics	152	152	0
Belgrade	2	2	0
sport	37	2	35
last page	10	9	1
dialogue	30	27	3
confrontation	2	2	0
chronicle	1	1	0
Periscope	4	4	0
scales	4	4	0
TOTAL	563	478	85

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018**Table 4. – Informer**

<i>Informer</i> / section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
breaking news	152	152	0
news	144	62	82
showtime	116	5	111
sport	67	4	63
TOTAL	479	223	256

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018**Table 5. – Kurir**

<i>Kurir</i> /section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
news	183	143	40
interview	1	1	0
chronicle	40	2	38
society	19	8	11
politics	25	25	0
stars	54	1	53

culture	12	1	11
sport	17	3	14
special	15	1	14
TOTAL	366	185	181

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Table 6. – Politika

<i>Politika/section</i>	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
world	59	48	11
society	77	34	43
economy	42	35	7
politics	27	27	0
event of the day	32	29	3
culture	36	5	31
chronicle	62	21	41
daily supplement	0	0	0
Serbia	33	17	16
sport	31	2	29
topic of the week / day	46	31	15
personalities	3	1	2
region	16	16	0
front page	252	246	6
views	16	16	0
consumer	27	20	7
Belgrade / Belgrade chronicle	21	9	12
TOTAL	780	557	223

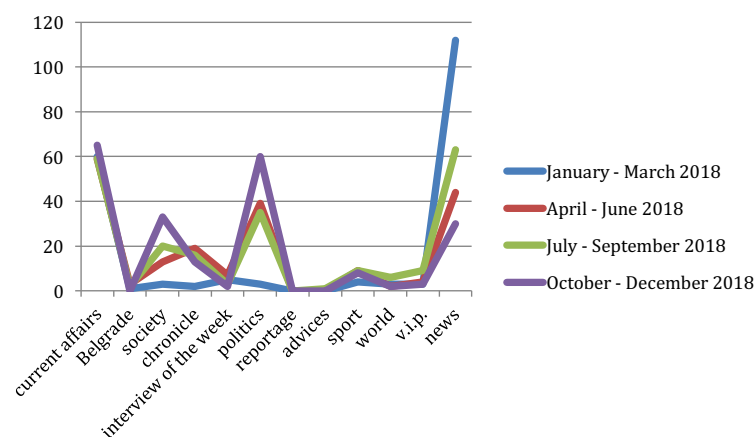
Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Table 7. – Večernje novosti

<i>Večernje novosti/section</i>	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
chronicle	83	10	73
society	100	84	16
politics	122	122	0
economy	34	30	4
current affairs	39	25	14
reportage	14	8	6
culture	20	8	12
interview	33	20	13
world	29	25	4
sport	51	8	43
Belgrade	11	8	3
topic of the day	34	28	6
reflector	8	3	5
events	11	11	0
supplement	7	3	4
second page	6	6	0
neighbours	4	4	0
TOTAL	606	403	203

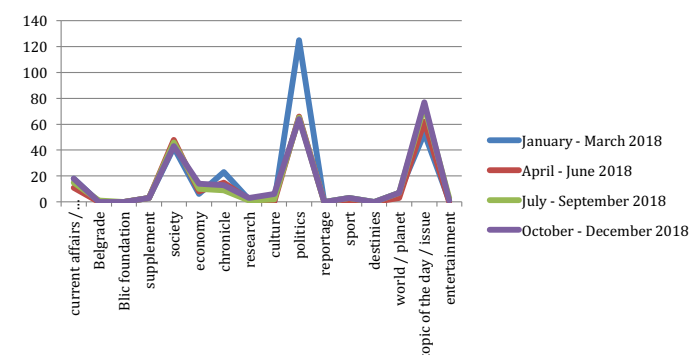
Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

By looking at the presented Tables 1-7, it is still evident that the structure of the analyzed daily newspapers follows two different logics. *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, *Danas* and *Blic* follow the classic structure of daily newspapers, while only *Informer*, with its reduced rubric structure, deviates significantly from this matrix. Although in the previous quarter *Kurir* began to approach the classic structure of the newspapers in a certain way, in the last quarter of 2018 we recorded the rapprochement of the *Kurir* editorial strategy to the one present in the daily *Informer*. This is also evident in Chart 12, in the form of a significant accent on the presence of texts in the re-unified *news* section. And in *Informer* the news is a dominant rubric, which unites various areas,¹ and special attention is given to entertainment content, such as information about famous people, then show business and sports, which increasingly receive a socio-political character. On the other hand, the daily *Alo!* in the previous three months has expanded the structure of the rubrics in a certain way, but still remains dominantly focused on the contents of a sensational and entertaining character. The editorial strategies identified in the previous fourteenth editions of the Mediameter are fully visible in the last quarter of 2018, as can be clearly seen in Charts 8-14.

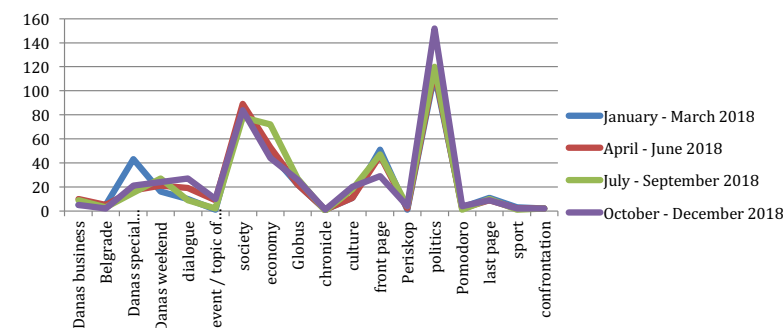
Chart 8. – *Alo!*

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

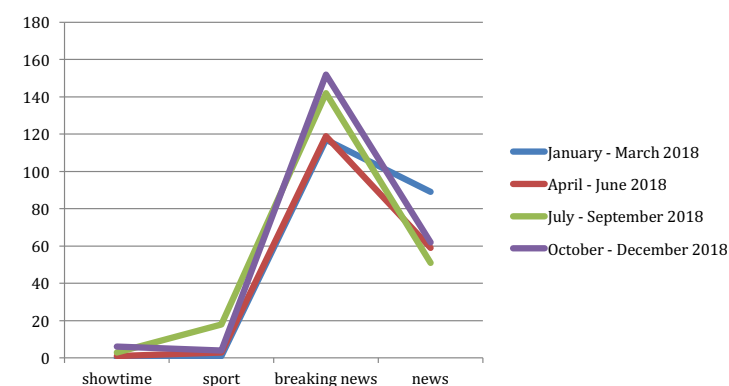
¹ The sections that exist in daily editions of the classical structure: *society*, *economy* and *politics* are merged in the *news* rubric

Chart 9. – *Blic*

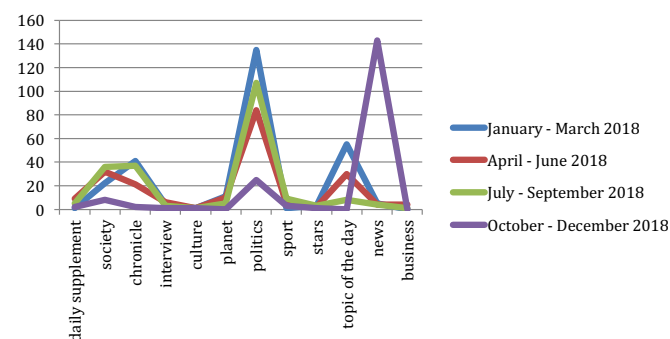
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Chart 10. – *Danas*

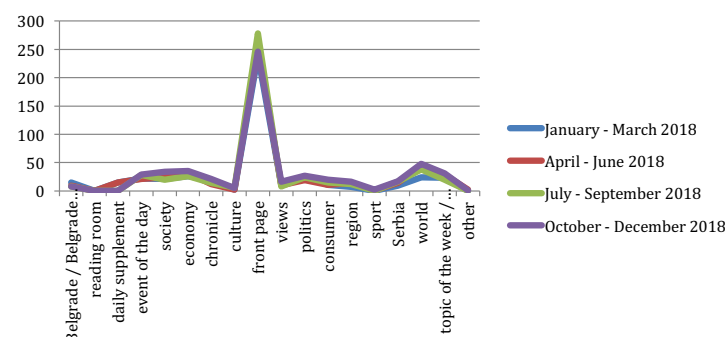
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Chart 11. – *Informer*

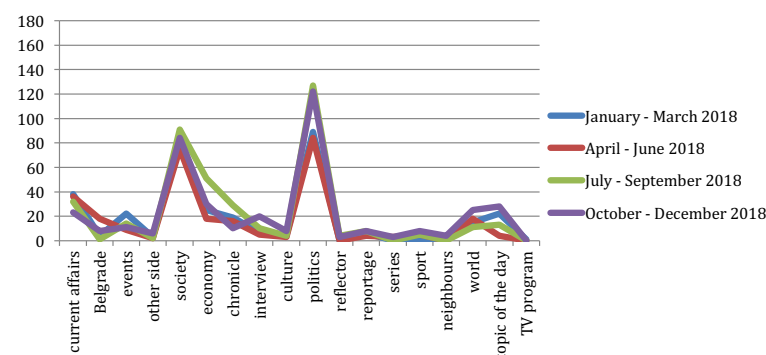
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Chart 12. – Kurir

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Chart 13. – Politika

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Chart 14. – Večernje novosti

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Table 8 gives an overview of the percentage participation of texts that entered the survey sample in relation to the total number of texts in all analyzed media in all four quarters of 2018.

Table 8. – Percentage participation of texts that entered the survey sample in relation to the total number of texts in all analyzed media in all four quarters of 2018

Media	% of selected texts in 2018			
	IV quarter	III quarter	II quarter	I quarter
<i>Alo!</i>	3.00	3.19	2.90	2.90
<i>Blic</i>	3.06	3.02	2.49	3.00
<i>Danas</i>	6.32	6.08	6.28	5.40
<i>Informer</i>	3.60	3.46	2.84	2.76
<i>Kurir</i>	2.35	2.67	2.58	3.17
<i>Politika</i>	6.61	5.70	5.40	4.81
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	4.24	3.97	2.59	2.79

Source: Mediameter research January - March 2018, Mediameter April - June 2018, Mediameter July - September 2018 and Mediameter October - December 2018

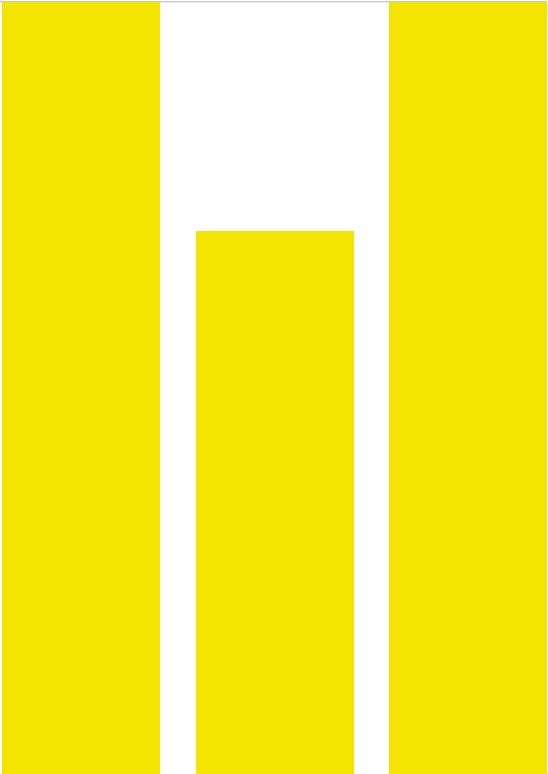
If we compare the number of selected texts in 2015 (7382), 2016 (8293), 2017 (8652), and 2018 (8744), we notice a clear trend in the increase in the number of analyzed texts (see **Table 9**). The increase in the number of texts that make up the sample is related primarily to the fact that 2015 was not election year, unlike the next three years. In the course of 2016, extraordinary parliamentary elections were held, in 2017 the regular elections for the president of the Republic of Serbia were held, while in March 2018 the Belgrade elections were held. Throughout the whole of 2018, and especially in the last two quarters, significant media attention was directed towards developments in Kosovo. In the third quarter of 2018 this topic was the first in terms of the representation in the texts that made the sample, for the first time since the Mediameter project began, and the same finding was also recorded in the fourth quarter of 2018. Considering that the focus of the Mediameter is primarily on socio-political events, and that this is one of the key criteria for selecting texts, it is precisely the reason for a significant increase in the number of articles in the sample, especially in relation to 2015.

Table 9. – Number of selected texts by quarter for period 2015 – 2018

	2015.	2016.	2017.	2018.
I quarter	1360	1924	2403	2173
II quarter	1673	2106	2091	2009
III quarter	2172	2012	1991	2248
IV quarter	2177	2251	2167	2314
UKUPNO	7382	8293	8652	8744

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

3



Research
results

ISIDORA JARIĆ, DANICA LABAN

RESEARCH RESULTS

Share of journalistic genres

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the share of reports in the total number of texts constituting the sample is 77.92% or 1803 texts, and is very similar to the previous quarter. The largest share of reports was again spotted in *Informer* - 94.62%, while the lowest proportion of texts written in this genre is in *Politika* - 65.89%. The next news form according to the participation is the interview - 8.21% of the articles were written in this form (the largest share was recorded in *Blic* - about 10% of the texts). The next are comment and article, which make up 5.96% and 4.84%, respectively, of all texts from the sample. The largest number and share of comments was recorded in *Danas* (78 or 16.32%), while the daily *Kurir* did not publish any text in this newspaper form. Very few news were published on the cover pages - 32 or 1.38%. Reports and other forms (such as hybrid genres or feuilletons) are present in a total of 1.69% or 39 entries (see more in following tables). Compared to the previous quarter, a somewhat different pattern of genres was recorded - the media published significantly fewer articles than comments in the last period of 2018.

Individual share of genres in reporting of seven media from the sample

Genre	Total number	%
Report	1803	77.92
Interview	190	8.21
Commentary	138	5.96
Article	112	4.84
News story	32	1.38
Reportage	28	1.21
Other	11	0.48
total	2314	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of journalistic genres in texts from the sample, per media, in numbers

Genre	<i>Alo!</i>	<i>Blic</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Informer</i>	<i>Kurir</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	total
report	190	216	323	211	167	367	329	1803
interview	16	25	46	4	15	45	39	190
commentary	4	5	78	3	0	47	1	138
article	0	0	9	2	1	84	16	112
news	9	1	15	3	1	2	1	32
reportage	0	0	1	0	1	12	14	28
other	0	2	6	0	0	0	3	11
total	219	249	478	223	185	557	403	2314

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of journalistic genres in texts from the sample, per media, in percents

Genre	<i>Alo!</i>	<i>Blic</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Informer</i>	<i>Kurir</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	total
report	86.76	86.75	67.57	94.62	90.27	65.89	81.64	77.92
interview	7.31	10.04	9.62	1.79	8.11	8.08	9.68	8.21
commentary	1.83	2.01	16.32	1.35	0.00	8.44	0.25	5.96
article	0.00	0.00	1.88	0.90	0.54	15.08	3.97	4.84
news	4.11	0.40	3.14	1.35	0.54	0.36	0.25	1.38
reportage	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.54	2.15	3.47	1.21
other	0.00	0.80	1.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.74	0.48
total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Individual participation of genres in reporting of the seven media from the sample in all four quarters of 2018

Genre	total number	%
report	6751	77.21
interview	713	8.15
article	556	6.36
commentary	418	4.78
news	144	1.65
reportage	88	1.01
other	74	0.85
total	8744	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Topics

In order for each article to be defined as clearly as possible, the selected texts that make up the sample are classified under a single topic, but nevertheless, all relevant elements present in these articles have been accounted for. This gave us a clearer insight into the manner of reporting and also into the manner of approach of the media to certain topics in the previous issues of the *Mediameter*. The texts in the field of chronicle, which have socio-political character, as well as the texts related to the murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović, were again included into the sample, as an example of the paradigm of the state of Serbian journalism, which is marked by various kinds of disrespect for the ethical principles of reporting.

Topic prominence

For the second quarter in a row, the first topic in terms of representation in the texts that made the sample was not political life in Serbia, but the focus of the media was once again directed towards Kosovo, i.e. relations between Belgrade and Priština. About this topic 18.76% of the article or 434 texts were written, which is about 3% or 85 texts more than in the previous quarter.

In the period October-December 2018, all political topics were present in a total of 508 or 21.95% of texts from the sample: *political life in Serbia* in 433 or 18.71% of articles, *activities of the President of Serbia* in 1.94% or 45 articles, *activities of the Government of Serbia* 1.17% 27 and *activities of the President of the Government of Serbia* 0.13% - 3 texts. Compared to the previous quarter, *the political life in Serbia*, which is the second in terms of representation, was recorded in 6.52% more texts than the total number of articles that make up the sample, or expressed in absolute numbers, as many as 159 texts more. The next topic of participation is *regional cooperation / relations in the region*, about which the media published 163 or 7.04% of texts, while the economy was topic of 105 texts, or 4.54% of the writing. To *media / media freedom* were devoted 85 texts or 3.67%, while in 82 texts (3.54%) the media reported on *international relations*. Other topics that attracted the attention of the media were *culture* (69 - 2.98%) *judicial topics* (60 or 2.59%), the *EU / EU policy* (56 - 2.42% written) and *economy* (54 - 2.33%).

If the value context of 2314 selected texts is observed in the fourth quarter of 2018, 36.78% of the texts are connotated - 5.75% positive and 31.03% negative, which is about 4% more than the value of connotated texts compared to the previous quarter. Traditionally, the most negative texts were written on *topics related to Kosovo* - 46.54% or 202 of 434 texts. Negative attitude towards *Kosovo/Belgrade-Priština relations* is certainly also being built through a narrative in which Albanians settled in Kosovo are a pejoratively called Šiptars. This practice, which differs from the standards of the profession, is most present in the daily *Informer* (in as much as 54 texts), which also names non-Albanian nationals that way, in order to discredit them, for example, “Šiptar puppet”¹ (Zoran Zaev), “Šiptar mercenary”² (US analyst Janusz Bugajski). Almost identical practice, only to a lesser extent, is recorded in the daily *Alo!* in 10 texts, while in *Večernje novosti* and *Politika* in 3 and 2 analyzed texts there is a practice of transmitting statements by interlocutors (such as Emir Kusturica or a representative of the Serbs from Kosovo), who use the word “Šiptar” in the mentioned connotation. The only daily that condemned this kind of offensive narrative is *Blic*.³

¹ “NATO pukao u Makedoniji [NATO is broken in Macedonia],” *Informer*, 01.10.2018, 6

² “Putin preuzeo Makedoniju pravi od nje novu RS! [Putin has taken over Macedonia, he's making new RS out of it!],” *Informer*, 08.10.2018, 4

³ “Dnevnik uvreda [Diary of insults],” *Blic*, 13.12.2018, 2

A significant number of negative texts were written on regional themes - 42.94% (70). One third of the articles on international relations (37.8%), judicial topics (33.33%) and political life in Serbia (31.64%) are also negative, as well as a quarter of texts related to media / media freedom (27.06%), the economy (26.67%) and the EU (25%). In the fourth quarter of 2018, more positive connotations were recorded - even 16 articles on *economic topics* were positively connotated (15.24%), as well as 9 texts (16.67%) that talked about *economy*.

Compared to the previous period, in the last quarter of 2018, the media were slightly more interested in topics related to the European Union – 56 texts or 2.42% were published (versus 34 or about 1.5% in the third quarter). Mostly neutral ones were written - 42 or 75%, with 14 or 25% negative and no positive texts.⁴ On the other hand, a very similar number of texts were published about Russia, as well as in the last quarter - 42 or 1.81% of the sample (compared to 43 or 1.9% in the third quarter). Daily newspapers *Večernje novosti* (7 articles), *Informer* (5), *Politika* (4), *Alo!* (3) and Kurir (2) wrote in 21 (50%) positively connotated texts, while negative texts were not recorded (**Chart 15**).

⁴ In *Večernje novosti* 5 negative connotations were published, *Alo!* and *Politika* 3, *Blic* 2 and *Danas* 1.

Distribution of topics and their value context in seven media from the sample ⁵

	Value context with reference to the topic							
All media	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	434	18.76	2	0.46	230	53.00	202	46.54
Political life in Serbia	433	18.71	1	0.23	295	68.13	137	31.64
Regional cooperation /relations in the region	163	7.04	4	2.45	89	54.60	70	42.94
Economy	105	4.54	16	15.24	61	58.10	28	26.67
Media / Freedom of the media	85	3.67	1	1.18	61	71.76	23	27.06
International relations	82	3.54	3	3.66	48	58.54	31	37.80
Culture	69	2.98	3	4.35	63	91.30	3	4.35
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	60	2.59	1	1.67	39	65.00	20	33.33
EU/ EU policy	56	2.42	0	0.00	42	75.00	14	25.00
Trade	54	2.33	9	16.67	44	81.48	1	1.85

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

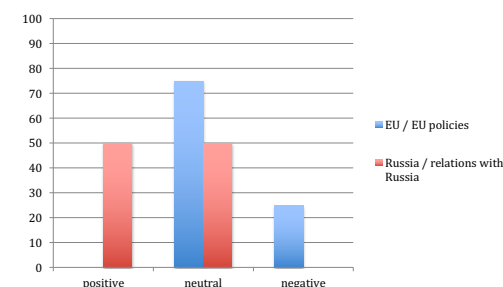
Value context in relation to all the topics in all seven media

Total	No.	%
Positive	133	5.75
Neutral	1463	63.22
Negative	718	31.03
total	2314	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

⁵ In all the tables that relate to the fourth quarter of 2018, the ten most common topics are presented.

Chart 15. – Value context in all media from the sample with reference to topics *Russia/relations with Russia and the EU/the European Union policy*



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

When it comes to selecting topics throughout the year 2018, the media paid the most attention to *political life in Serbia* (1735 or 19.84% of all the texts that made the sample), and the other topic of interest was *Kosovo/Belgrade and Priština relations* (1275 - 14.58%). The *economy* follows (514 - 5.88%), followed by *regional themes* (538 - 6.15%) and *international relations* (379 - 4.33%). It is noticeable that, when compared with 2017, *political life in Serbia* was a topic of significantly smaller number of texts, that is, the participation of this topic in relation to the total number of analyzed courses decreased by as much as 18.4%. Also, there is a noticeable increase in the number of texts that talk about Kosovo. Although participation has been increased by about 5%, the absolute number is significantly higher - 1275 (2018) versus 525 (2017).

Distribution of topics and their value context in seven media from the sample for all four quarters of 2018⁶

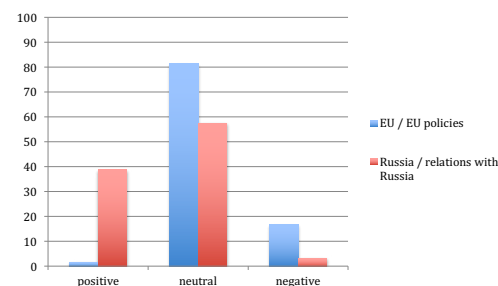
	Value context with reference to the topic							
All media	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	1735	19.84	6	0.35	1318	75.97	411	23.69
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	1275	14.58	5	0.39	749	58.75	521	40.86
Economy	514	5.88	58	11.28	349	67.90	107	20.82
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	538	6.15	7	1.30	272	50.56	259	48.14
International relations	379	4.33	19	5.01	247	65.17	113	29.82

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Media relations towards Russia and the EU remained unchanged in 2018. Topics related to Russia were presented in 57.69% of texts in a neutral context, positive connotations were around 39%, while negative texts were very small - only about 3%. About the EU was mostly written in a neutral tone (about 81%), while about 2% of the texts were positive and close to 17% were negatively connotated (**Chart 16**).

⁶ The table presents the five most common topics.

Chart 16. – Value context in all media from the sample with reference to topics Russia/relations with Russia and the EU/the European Union policy for all four quarters of 2018



Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Distribution of topics according to media

Alo!

Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Alo!*

	Value context with reference to the topic							
<i>Alo!</i>	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	55	25.11	0	0.00	36	65.45	19	34.55
Political life in Serbia	54	24.66	0	0.00	35	64.81	19	35.19
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	17	7.76	0	0.00	6	35.29	11	64.71
Economy	10	4.57	0	0.00	6	60.00	4	40.00
Media / Freedom of the media	8	3.65	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Activities of the President of Serbia	7	3.20	2	28.57	5	71.43	0	0.00
Russia / attitude towards Russia	7	3.20	3	42.86	4	57.14	0	0.00
International relations	7	3.20	0	0.00	2	28.57	5	71.43
Issues of faith, church and religion	7	3.20	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	6	2.74	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
sport	6	2.74	1	16.67	4	66.67	1	16.67

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Alo!*

<i>Alo!</i>	No.	%
Positive	10	4.57
Neutral	137	62.56
Negative	72	32.88
total	219	100

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Blic

Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Blic*

	Value context with reference to the topic							
<i>Blic</i>	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	64	25.70	0	0.00	44	68.75	20	31.25
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	56	22.49	0	0.00	43	76.79	13	23.21
Culture	16	6.43	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Economy	15	6.02	1	6.67	8	53.33	6	40.00
Social issues / social policy	10	4.02	0	0.00	8	80.00	2	20.00
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	9	3.61	0	0.00	6	66.67	3	33.33
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	8	3.21	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Trade	7	2.81	1	14.29	6	85.71	0	0.00
Traffic	5	2.01	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Infrastructure	5	2.01	0	0.00	3	60.00	2	40.00
Crime	5	2.01	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Legislature	5	2.01	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Blic*

<i>Blic</i>	No.	%
Positive	2	0.80
Neutral	189	75.90
Negative	58	23.29
total	249	100

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Danas

Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Danas*

<i>Danas</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Political life in Serbia	160	33.47	0	0.00	126	78.75	34	21.25
Media/freedom of the media	54	11.30	0	0.00	44	81.48	10	18.52
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	46	9.62	0	0.00	45	97.83	1	2.17
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	28	5.86	1	3.57	27	96.43	0	0.00
Economy	27	5.65	0	0.00	20	74.07	7	25.93
Culture	19	3.97	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Social issues/social policy	12	2.51	0	0.00	7	58.33	5	41.67
Local government	11	2.30	0	0.00	7	63.64	4	36.36
EU/EU policy	10	2.09	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Historical topics	9	1.88	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Trade	9	1.88	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Danas*

<i>Danas</i>	No.	%
Positive	1	0.21
Neutral	398	83.26
Negative	79	16.53
total	478	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Informer

Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Informer*

<i>Informer</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Political life in Serbia	53	23.77	0	0.00	13	24.53	40	75.47
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	52	23.32	0	0.00	14	26.92	38	73.08
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	17	7.62	1	5.88	9	52.94	7	41.18
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	15	6.73	0	0.00	3	20.00	12	80.00
Economy	10	4.48	2	20.00	2	20.00	6	60.00
Media/freedom of the media	7	3.14	0	0.00	1	14.29	6	85.71
Russia / attitude towards Russia	7	3.14	5	71.43	2	28.57	0	0.00
International relations	7	3.14	0	0.00	3	42.86	4	57.14
Army	7	3.14	4	57.14	3	42.86	0	0.00
Social issues / social policy	5	2.24	1	20.00	2	40.00	2	40.00
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	5	2.24	0	0.00	2	40.00	3	60.00
Political life in Monte-negro	5	2.24	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Informer*

<i>Informer</i>	No.	%
Positive	15	6.73
Neutral	70	31.39
Negative	138	61.88
total	223	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018*Kurir*Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Kurir*

	Value context with reference to the topic							
<i>Kurir</i>	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Political life in Serbia	50	27.03	1	2.00	37	74.00	12	24.00
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	35	18.92	0	0.00	9	25.71	26	74.29
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	17	9.19	0	0.00	7	41.18	10	58.82
Activities of the President of Serbia	7	3.78	3	42.86	4	57.14	0	0.00
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	6	3.24	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Crime	6	3.24	0	0.00	3	50.00	3	50.00
Corruption	5	2.70	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	5	2.70	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00
Activities of the Government of Serbia	5	2.70	2	40.00	3	60.00	0	0.00
Crisis in Ukraine	5	2.70	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Kurir*

<i>Kurir</i>	No	%
Positive	15	8.11
Neutral	90	48.65
Negative	80	43.24
total	185	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018*Politika*Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *Politika*

	Value context with reference to the topic							
<i>Politika</i>	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	80	14.36	0	0.00	28	35.00	52	65.00
International relations	36	6.46	3	8.33	20	55.56	13	36.11
Economy	36	6.46	11	30.56	21	58.33	4	11.11
Political life in Serbia	35	6.28	0	0.00	24	68.57	11	31.43
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	35	6.28	2	5.71	21	60.00	12	34.29
EU/EU policy	28	5.03	0	0.00	25	89.29	3	10.71
Political life in Montenegro	20	3.59	0	0.00	8	40.00	12	60.00
Energetics	16	2.87	5	31.25	8	50.00	3	18.75
Culture	16	2.87	0	0.00	14	87.50	2	12.50
Issues of faith, church and religion	16	2.87	3	18.75	11	68.75	2	12.50

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Politika*

<i>Politika</i>	No.	%
Positive	55	9.87
Neutral	329	59.07
Negative	173	31.06
total	557	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Večernje novosti

Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper Večernje novosti

Večernje novosti	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	110	27.30	2	1.82	55	50.00	53	48.18
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	43	10.67	1	2.33	19	44.19	23	53.49
Economy	21	5.21	3	14.29	18	85.71	0	0.00
International relations	18	4.47	0	0.00	12	66.67	6	33.33
Political life in Serbia	17	4.22	0	0.00	16	94.12	1	5.88
Activities of the President of Serbia	13	3.23	3	23.08	10	76.92	0	0.00
Culture	12	2.98	2	16.67	10	83.33	0	0.00
Army	11	2.73	4	36.36	7	63.64	0	0.00
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	11	2.73	0	0.00	9	81.82	2	18.18
USA/attitude towards USA	10	2.48	1	10.00	4	40.00	5	50.00
Issues of faith, church and religion	10	2.48	0	0.00	6	60.00	4	40.00

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Value context in relation to all topics in the paper Večernje novosti

Večernje novosti	No.	%
Positive	35	8.68
Neutral	250	62.03
Negative	118	29.28
total	403	100.00

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

Balance

When we take into consideration all the texts from the sample for the last quarter of 2018, it can be noticed that most of the topics presented are not treated in a comprehensive way, as evidenced by the fact that the balance is present in only 15.34% of all writing, which is 2.63% less overall texts than in the previous quarter. The smallest number of balanced texts was recorded in *Informer* 0.45% or 1 of 223 entries, followed by *Kurir* - 2.7%, *Alo!* - 4.57%, *Politika* - 15.26%, *Večernje novosti* - 18.61%, *Danas* - 22.59% and *Blic* - 28.51%. Major differences compared to the previous quarter are noticeable in the daily *Kurir*, where the share of unbalanced texts increased by 12.37% and in the *Alo!* in which we record 6.24% of complete texts less.

Although the value context is not expressed in 63.22% of all texts, consideration must be given to the fact that the vast majority of texts from the cover pages we have analyzed are not comprehensive, and that one-sided approach reflects the general situation in the Serbian media. Balanced texts, of course, necessarily show some degree of restraint, which, obviously, does not represent a particularly widespread phenomenon in Serbian journalism. Taking sides, which is sometimes very passionate, attracts the audience but reduces seriousness. It's about the speed of the reaction, not the detailed and rational information required by the research, a larger number of interlocutors and reliable and verifiable data, along with available information sources. In this way, circulation and popularity are gained in a short time, but not a reputation.

The balance in relation to all the topics and all seven media from the sample

All media	Yes		No	
media	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Informer</i>	0.45	1	99.55	222
<i>Kurir</i>	2.70	5	97.30	180
<i>Alo!</i>	4.57	10	95.43	209
<i>Politika</i>	15.26	85	84.74	472
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	18.61	75	81.39	328
<i>Danas</i>	22.59	108	77.41	370
<i>Blic</i>	28.51	71	71.49	178
total	15.34	355	84.66	1959

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2018

The balance in relation to all the topics and all seven media from the sample for all four quarters of 2018

All media	Yes		No	
media	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Informer</i>	0.85	7	99.15	819
<i>Alo!</i>	11.24	94	88.76	742
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	19.51	273	80.49	1126
<i>Kurir</i>	13.58	121	86.42	770
<i>Politika</i>	21.70	441	78.30	1591
<i>Danas</i>	22.46	402	77.54	1388
<i>Blic</i>	30.00	291	70.00	679
total	18.63	1629	81.37	7115

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Actors

Media in Serbia, at least according to the analysis of the empirical material collected from the front pages, mainly deal with political events within Serbia. Individual and collective political actors, who occupy different positions within the political life of Serbia, account for 41.17% of the total number of actors spoken by selected texts from the cover. If we include this number and the texts that speak of foreign political actors, the percentage of the participation of political actors in the total number of actors on the headlines rises to 76.85%. The second group by frequency of occurrence is different social actors that make up 14.62% of our sample. Economic and economic actors are the protagonists of the texts with the cover only in 5.92% of cases.

Total distribution of actors appearing in the texts which are a part of sampled research (expressed in absolute numbers)

Actors					
Political actors	9894	Domestic	5300	Individual	3805
				Collective	1495
		Foreign	4594	Individual	3315
				Collective	1279
Economic actors	763	Domestic	731	Individual	269
				Collective	462
		Foreign	32	Individual	3
				Collective	29
Other social actors	1883	Domestic	1823	Individual	1322
				Collective	501
		Foreign	60	Individual	24
				Collective	36
Unnamed sources					333
Total					12873

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearance of individual political actors from **the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Republic of Serbia**

The Government and the President of the Republic of Serbia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Aleksandar Vučić	731	45.52	25	3.42	678	92.75	28	3.83
Ana Brnabić	163	10.15	0	0.00	160	98.16	3	1.84
Ivica Dačić	149	9.28	1	0.67	145	97.32	3	2.01
Aleksandar Vulin	107	6.66	0	0.00	100	93.46	7	6.54
Nebojša Stefanović	97	6.04	1	1.03	95	97.94	1	1.03
Zorana Mihajlović	74	4.61	0	0.00	61	82.43	13	17.57
Rasim Ljajić	65	4.05	0	0.00	65	100.00	0	0.00
Siniša Mali	33	2.05	0	0.00	32	96.97	1	3.03
Vladan Vukosavljević	28	1.74	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Đorđević	24	1.49	0	0.00	20	83.33	4	16.67
Zlatibor Lončar	21	1.31	0	0.00	20	95.24	1	4.76
Jadranka Joksimović	20	1.25	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Ružić	16	1.00	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Nela Kuburović	15	0.93	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Antić	12	0.75	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Nenad Popović	12	0.75	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
Mladen Šarčević	11	0.68	1	9.09	10	90.91	0	0.00
Vanja Udovičić	7	0.44	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Branislav Nedić	6	0.37	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Trivan	5	0.31	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Slavica Đukić Dejanović	5	0.31	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Krkobabić	3	0.19	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Knežević	2	0.12	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
total	1606	100.00	28	1.74	1516	94.40	62	3.86

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

As in the previous quarter, the most frequent actor on the front pages of daily newspapers in Serbia was Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, about which the media from our sample report predominantly neutral

(in 92.75% of cases). About 3.42% (25) positive⁷ and 3.83% (28) texts with negative⁸ connotation were written about him. The President of Serbia, as the protagonist of the texts on the front pages, appears 731 times, which is significantly higher than the first ranked actor, Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, who is present in 163 texts and Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, who is present in 149 articles. The highest frequency of the appearance of Aleksandar Vučić, expressed in absolute numbers, is recorded in daily newspapers *Danas* (202), *Večernje novosti* (134) and *Politika* (116). Expressed in the relative numbers of the percentage participation of the texts in which he appears as an actor, and in relation to the total number of selected texts from the same individual newspapers, we can see that he is the most frequent in *Danas* (42.26%), *Večernje novosti* (33.25%) and *Kurir* 32.97%). The lowest participation of the texts in which the actor is the president of Serbia is recorded in the daily *Politika* (20.83%).

When it comes to the value context, the biggest share, as well as the number of negative texts, are again present in *Danas* (13.37% or 27 entries). The most positive connotations were published in *Alo!* - 9 or 13.43%, followed by *Informer* - 7 or 9.86%, *Kurir* - 5 (8.20%), *Večernje novosti* - 3 (2.24%) and *Politika* - 1 (0.86%)

Aleksandar Vučić: Value context with reference to the media

Aleksandar Vučić	Positive		Neutral		Negative		total	
Media	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	9	13.43	58	86.57	0	0.00	67	100
<i>Blic</i>	0	0.00	79	98.75	1	1.25	80	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	175	86.63	27	13.37	202	100
<i>Informer</i>	7	9.86	64	90.14	0	0.00	71	100
<i>Kurir</i>	5	8.20	56	91.80	0	0.00	61	100
<i>Politika</i>	1	0.86	115	99.14	0	0.00	116	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	3	2.24	131	97.76	0	0.00	134	100
total	25	3.42	678	92.75	28	3.83	731	100

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

7 Somewhat less than in the previous (third) quarter when it was 28, but more than in the first two quarters - in the second 21, and in the first 22 positive connotations.

8 Significantly more than in the other (14 negative connotations) and the third (13 negative connotations).

Number of appearances of Aleksandar Vučić in respect of total numbers of texts in particular daily newspapers

Aleksandar Vučić per media	No. of appearances	Total no. of texts	% share against total no. of texts
<i>Danas</i>	202	478	42.26
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	134	403	33.25
<i>Kurir</i>	61	185	32.97
<i>Blic</i>	80	249	32.13
<i>Informer</i>	71	223	31.84
<i>Alo!</i>	67	219	30.59
<i>Politika</i>	116	557	20.83
total	731	2314	31.59

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Prime Minister Ana Brnabić is the protagonist in 163 (10.15%) analyzed texts and the second is according to the frequency of appearances among individual political actors from the Serbian political scene. In the fourth quarter of 2018, three texts with negative connotations were written about Ana Brnabić, 2 in the daily newspaper *Danas* and 1 in the daily *Kurir*. There were no positive texts about the current prime minister in this quarter.

The biggest number of articles in which the Serbian prime minister was active was published daily *Danas* and *Politika* (35 each), then *Večernje novosti* (29) and *Blic* (27). The largest share of texts in relation to the total number of texts in the media was recorded in *Blic* (10.84%) and *Kurir* (8.65%).

Ana Brnabić: Value context with reference to the media

Ana Brnabić	positive		neutral		negative		total	
Media	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00	12	100
<i>Blic</i>	0	0.00	27	100.00	0	0.00	27	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	33	94.29	2	5.71	35	100
<i>Informer</i>	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00	9	100
<i>Kurir</i>	0	0.00	15	93.75	1	6.25	16	100
<i>Politika</i>	0	0.00	35	100.00	0	0.00	35	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	0	0.00	29	100.00	0	0.00	29	100
total	0	0.00	160	98.16	3	1.84	163	100

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Number of appearances of Ana Brnabić in respect of total numbers of texts in particular daily newspapers

Ana Brnabić per media	No. of appearances	Total no. of texts	% share against total no. of texts
<i>Blic</i>	27	249	10.84
<i>Kurir</i>	16	185	8.65
<i>Danas</i>	35	478	7.32
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	29	403	7.20
<i>Politika</i>	35	557	6.28
<i>Alo!</i>	12	219	5.48
<i>Informer</i>	9	223	4.04
total	163	2314	7.04

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

All actors in this group are presented in 94.4% of texts in a neutral value context. As in the previous quarter, the largest number (13)⁹ and participation (17.57%) of negative connotations were recorded with Zorana Mihajlović.

The following table gives an overview of the most represented actors in the group of members of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Republic of Serbia for all four quarters of 2018. The most important actor on the cover of our daily newspapers is the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, with a total of 2698 appearances,¹⁰ the most positive (95) and negative (72)¹¹ texts being written. The largest percentile participation of negative connotations in 2018 was recorded in the case of Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin (3.98%).

The most represented actors in the group Government and President of the Republic of Serbia in all four quarters of 2018

The Government and the President of the Republic of Serbia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Aleksandar Vučić	2698	40.74	95	3.52	2531	93.81	72	2.67
Ivica Dačić	679	10.25	7	1.03	662	97.50	10	1.47
Ana Brnabić	676	10.21	8	1.18	658	97.34	10	1.48
Aleksandar Vulin	402	6.07	1	0.25	385	95.77	16	3.98
Nebojša Stefanović	363	5.48	3	0.83	358	98.62	2	0.55

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

⁹ This is more than double in relation to the previous quarter, in which 6 negative texts were written about Minister Zorana Mihajlović or 8.33% of the total number of texts in which it appeared.

¹⁰ A little less compared to 2017 when a total of 3042 appearances of President Aleksandar Vučić on the cover of daily newspapers were recorded.

¹¹ Almost twice less than in 2017, when 151 negative connotations were recorded.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, there was a slight increase in the number of occurrences of opposition actors - 1030 compared to 932 in the previous quarter. However, this is still significantly lower than the noticeable increase in the number of opposition parties in the first quarter of 2018 (1781), which was spurred by activities related to the Belgrade elections. In the fourth quarter, the most represented opposition actor was Dragan Đilas with 162 appearances, followed by Vuk Jeremić (99) and Boško Obradović (71). The most negative texts, expressed in absolute numbers, were written about Dragan Đilas (56),¹² followed by Vuk Jeremić (40)¹³ and Boško Obradović (25).¹⁴ Regarding the more represented opposition actors, the largest percentage participation of negative connotations is present with Zdravko Ponoš (44.44%) and Vuk Jeremić (40.40%). About the representatives of the opposition in the fourth quarter of 2018 no positive text was written.

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearance of individual political actors from **the opposition**

Opposition- individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Đilas	162	15.73	0	0.00	106	65.43	56	34.57
Vuk Jeremić	99	9.61	0	0.00	59	59.60	40	40.40
Boško Obradović	71	6.89	0	0.00	46	64.79	25	35.21
Vojislav Šešelj	62	6.02	0	0.00	54	87.10	8	12.90
Boris Tadić	56	5.44	0	0.00	49	87.50	7	12.50
Saša Janković	49	4.76	0	0.00	42	85.71	7	14.29
Borko Stefanović	34	3.30	0	0.00	30	88.24	4	11.76
Nebojša Zelenović	26	2.52	0	0.00	25	96.15	1	3.85
Zoran Lutovac	19	1.84	0	0.00	15	78.95	4	21.05
Velimir Ilić	17	1.65	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Čedomir Antić	17	1.65	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Čedomir Jovanović	16	1.55	0	0.00	13	81.25	3	18.75
Sulejman Ugljanin	16	1.55	0	0.00	10	62.50	6	37.50
Miloš Jovanović	15	1.46	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Srđan Nogo	14	1.36	0	0.00	12	85.71	2	14.29
Saša Radulović	14	1.36	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Sanda Rašković Ivić	14	1.36	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Živković	14	1.36	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Marinika Tepić	11	1.07	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Nikola Jovanović	11	1.07	0	0.00	9	81.82	2	18.18
Zdravko Ponoš	9	0.87	0	0.00	5	55.56	4	44.44
Đorđe Vukadinović	9	0.87	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00

¹² Significantly more compared to the previous quarter when there were 29 of them.

¹³ Significantly more compared to the previous quarter when there were 23 of them.

¹⁴ Significantly more compared to the previous quarter when there were 15 of them.

Vjerica Radeta	8	0.78	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Rade Veljanovski	8	0.78	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Veselinović	6	0.58	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Radimir Lazović	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Stefan Stamenkovski	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Balša Božović	6	0.58	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Branka Stamenković	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Vladan Glišić	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Teodorović	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Stamatović	6	0.58	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Nenad Čanak	6	0.58	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Janko Veselinović	5	0.49	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Aleksandar Šapić	5	0.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Pajtić	5	0.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Borislav Novaković	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Srbijanka Turajlić	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Pavlović	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Branislav Mihajlović	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Janko Baljak	4	0.39	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Saša Paunović	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Gordana Čomić	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Radoslav Milošević Kena	4	0.39	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Marko Đurišić	4	0.39	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Ćirić	3	0.29	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Konstantin Samofalov	3	0.29	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Tatjana Macura	3	0.29	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Sreto Malinović	3	0.29	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	142	13.79	0	0.00	135	95.07	7	4.93
total	1030	100.00	0	0.00	843	81.84	187	18.16

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

The following table gives an overview of the most common opposition activists in all four quarters of 2018. Dragan Đilas with 652 appearances (24.85% in a negative context) and Vuk Jeremić with 403 appearances (28.04% of negative connotations) were the most represented actors from the opposition on the front pages of our daily newspapers.

The most represented actors among the opposition in all four quarters of 2018

Opposition- individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Đilas	652	14.21	1	0.15	489	75.00	162	24.85
Vuk Jeremić	403	8.79	0	0.00	290	71.96	113	28.04
Saša Janković	317	6.91	0	0.00	250	78.86	67	21.14
Vojislav Šešelj	298	6.50	0	0.00	274	91.95	24	8.05
Boris Tadić	223	4.86	0	0.00	204	91.48	19	8.52

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual political actors representing the position

Position- individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Muamer Zukorlić	31	8.31	0	0.00	30	96.77	1	3.23
Aleksandar Martinović	21	5.63	0	0.00	13	61.90	8	38.10
Dragan Marković Palma	18	4.83	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	5.56
Vladimir Đukanović	17	4.56	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Milenko Jovanov	14	3.75	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Vladimir Orlić	14	3.75	0	0.00	9	64.29	5	35.71
Miroslav Lazanski	14	3.75	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Milovan Drecun	12	3.22	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Milutin Mrkonjić	12	3.22	0	0.00	10	83.33	2	16.67
Darko Glišić	11	2.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Đorđe Milićević	11	2.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Vuk Drašković	9	2.41	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Marković	9	2.41	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Linta	8	2.14	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Novica Tončev	7	1.88	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marijan Ristićević	7	1.88	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Branko Perić	6	1.61	0	0.00	3	50.00	3	50.00
Marija Obradović	6	1.61	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ištvan Pastor	5	1.34	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Žarko Obradović	5	1.34	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Bečić	5	1.34	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Veroljub Arsić	4	1.07	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Marinković	4	1.07	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Nebojša Bakarec	3	0.80	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Darko Bulatović	3	0.80	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ivica Tončev	3	0.80	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Momo Čolaković	3	0.80	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Radomir Nikolić	3	0.80	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	108	28.95	3	2.78	93	86.11	12	11.11
total	373	100.00	3	0.80	335	89.81	35	9.38

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual political actors: **representatives of State bodies, agencies and institutions**

State bodies, agencies and institutions - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Marko Đurić	65	16.97	0	0.00	65	100.00	0	0.00
Maja Gojković	58	15.14	0	0.00	51	87.93	7	12.07
Goran Vesić	43	11.23	0	0.00	41	95.35	2	4.65
Tomislav Nikolić	29	7.57	1	3.45	21	72.41	7	24.14
Milovan Drecun	17	4.44	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Selaković	14	3.66	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Miloš Vučević	12	3.13	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Mirović	11	2.87	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Gajović	11	2.87	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Radojičić	10	2.61	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Veljko Odalović	10	2.61	0	0.00	6	60.00	4	40.00
Suzana Vasiljević	10	2.61	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Biljana Popović Ivković	5	1.31	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Strahinja Sekulić	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	84	21.93	0	0.00	78	92.86	6	7.14
total	383	100.00	1	0.26	355	92.69	27	7.05

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution and frequency and value context of appearances of individual political actors: **representatives of military and police**

Military and police - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milan Mojsilović	17	16.35	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Dijana Hrkalo	14	13.46	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Bratislav Gašić	11	10.58	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Rebić	8	7.69	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00

Ljubiša Diković	6	5.77	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Parezanović	4	3.85	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Novica Antić	4	3.85	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	40	38.46	0	0.00	39	97.50	1	2.50
total	104	100.00	0	0.00	103	99.04	1	0.96

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of **other** individual political and social actors

Others	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Slobodan Milošević	79	23.44	0	0.00	72	91.14	7	8.86
Sergej Trifunović	33	9.79	0	0.00	20	60.61	13	39.39
Zoran Đinđić	26	7.72	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
Emir Kusturica	19	5.64	3	15.79	16	84.21	0	0.00
SANU	16	4.75	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Vojislav Koštunica	16	4.75	1	6.25	15	93.75	0	0.00
Slavko Ćuruvija	12	3.56	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Mlađan Dinkić	11	3.26	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Dejan Savić	10	2.97	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Siniša Jasić	10	2.97	0	0.00	1	10.00	9	90.00
Matija Bećković	10	2.97	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Mirjana Marković	9	2.67	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Veran Matić	8	2.37	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Vladimir Kostić	8	2.37	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Lazar Ristovski	8	2.37	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović	7	2.08	2	28.57	5	71.43	0	0.00
CIRSD	6	1.78	0	0.00	2	33.33	4	66.67
Jelena Milić	6	1.78	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Aleksandar Karađorđević	5	1.48	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Hubač	5	1.48	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Jurić	5	1.48	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Filip David	4	1.19	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Vesna Pešić	4	1.19	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Siniša Kovačević	4	1.19	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragica Nikolić	4	1.19	1	25.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
Dražen Milovanović	3	0.89	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Humanitarian law center	3	0.89	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Kovačević	3	0.89	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Women in black	3	0.89	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
total	337	100.00	7	2.08	291	86.35	39	11.57

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of domestic collective political actors: **state bodies and institutions**

State bodies, agencies and institutions	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Government of Serbia	159	25.98	5	3.14	145	91.19	9	5.66
Ministry of Interior	64	10.46	0	0.00	64	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Construction, Traffic and Infrastructure	37	6.05	0	0.00	37	100.00	0	0.00
National Assembly of Republic of Serbia	29	4.74	0	0.00	26	89.66	3	10.34
Ministry of Culture and Information	29	4.74	0	0.00	26	89.66	3	10.34
Ministry of Justice	28	4.58	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Defence	24	3.92	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
National Bank of Serbia	23	3.76	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy	21	3.43	0	0.00	18	85.71	3	14.29
Ministry of Finance	21	3.43	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	19	3.10	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Health	13	2.12	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	11	1.80	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	10	1.63	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Restitution Agency	10	1.63	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	10	1.63	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	9	1.47	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
City of Belgrade	8	1.31	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of economy	8	1.31	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Republic fund PIO	8	1.31	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Business Registers Agency	6	0.98	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Tax Administration	6	0.98	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	5	0.82	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Customs direction	4	0.65	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
National employment agency	3	0.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Youth and Sport	3	0.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Prime Minister's Cabinet	3	0.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
President's Cabinet	3	0.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Office for cooperation with China and Russia	3	0.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Ministry for European integrations	2	0.33	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of environment	1	0.16	0	0.00	1	100.00	0	0.00
others	32	5.23	0	0.00	31	96.88	1	3.13
total	612	100.00	5	0.82	585	95.59	22	3.59

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of domestic collective political actors: **military and police**

Military and police	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Serbian Armed Forces	42	53.16	5	11.90	37	88.10	0	0.00
Security Intelligence Agency	26	32.91	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian Army Union	4	5.06	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	7	8.86	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
total	79	100.00	5	6.33	74	93.67	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of domestic collective political actors: **position**

Position	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
SNS	197	70.61	2	1.02	179	90.86	16	8.12
SPS	44	15.77	0	0.00	42	95.45	2	4.55
SDPS	11	3.94	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
United Serbia	8	2.87	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Socialists' Movement	6	2.15	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
PUPS	6	2.15	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
others	7	2.51	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
total	279	100.00	2	0.72	259	92.83	18	6.45

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of domestic collective actors: **opposition**

Opposition- parties	No.	%	positive	%	neutral	%	nega- tive	%
Alliance for Serbia	125	25.15	0	0.00	109	87.20	16	12.80
DS	48	9.66	0	0.00	47	97.92	1	2.08
People's party	45	9.05	0	0.00	41	91.11	4	8.89
Dveri	44	8.85	0	0.00	41	93.18	3	6.82
SRS	36	7.24	0	0.00	35	97.22	1	2.78

PSG	32	6.44	0	0.00	32	100.00	0	0.00
DSS	28	5.63	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
SDS	23	4.63	0	0.00	22	95.65	1	4.35
Enough is enough	18	3.62	0	0.00	16	88.89	2	11.11
Citizen's block 381	17	3.42	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Initiative: Let's not drown Bel-grade	13	2.62	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
LDP	12	2.41	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
Serbian Left	12	2.41	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
LSV	10	2.01	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
New party	9	1.81	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
SDA Sandžak	7	1.41	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
New Serbia	5	1.01	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
SPAS	3	0.60	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Movement for Turnaround	3	0.60	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	7	1.41	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
total	497	100.00	0	0.00	467	93.96	30	6.04

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective actors: **Kosovo**

Kosovo	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Hashim Thaçi	209	16.67	0	0.00	171	81.82	38	18.18
Ramush Haradinaj	175	13.96	0	0.00	108	61.71	67	38.29
KFOR	89	7.10	0	0.00	83	93.26	6	6.74
KLA	65	5.18	0	0.00	47	72.31	18	27.69
Oliver Ivanović	59	4.70	0	0.00	59	100.00	0	0.00
Kadri Veseli	49	3.91	0	0.00	36	73.47	13	26.53
Serbian list	46	3.67	1	2.17	45	97.83	0	0.00
ROSU	45	3.59	0	0.00	40	88.89	5	11.11
Kosovo security forces	37	2.95	0	0.00	29	78.38	8	21.62
Goran Rakić	32	2.55	0	0.00	32	100.00	0	0.00
Unmik	30	2.39	0	0.00	29	96.67	1	3.33
Milan Radojičić	30	2.39	0	0.00	30	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Simić	25	1.99	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
Behgjet Pacolli	23	1.83	0	0.00	17	73.91	6	26.09
Enver Hoxhaj	21	1.67	0	0.00	15	71.43	6	28.57
Kosovo police	18	1.44	0	0.00	15	83.33	3	16.67

Fatmir Limaj	18	1.44	0	0.00	12	66.67	6	33.33
"Kosovo authorities"	16	1.28	0	0.00	7	43.75	9	56.25
Kosovo Government	14	1.12	0	0.00	12	85.71	2	14.29
Euleks	12	0.96	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Special court for KLA crimes	12	0.96	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Agim Çeku	9	0.72	0	0.00	3	33.33	6	66.67
Citizen initiative SDP	7	0.56	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Kosovo Special Prosecution	6	0.48	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dalibor Jeftić	6	0.48	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Rada Trajković	5	0.40	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Selfdetermination movement	5	0.40	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Daut Haradinaj	4	0.32	0	0.00	1	25.00	3	75.00
Albin Kurti	4	0.32	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Isa Mustafa	3	0.24	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Illir Deda	3	0.24	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	177	14.11	0	0.00	155	87.57	22	12.43
total	1254	100.00	1	0.08	1033	82.38	220	17.54

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Croatia**

Croatia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Kolinda Grabar Kitarović	15	12.30	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Andrej Plenković	8	6.56	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Franjo Tuđman	8	6.56	0	0.00	5	62.50	3	37.50
Milorad Pupovac	8	6.56	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
HDZ	7	5.74	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
"Croatian authorities"	5	4.10	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00
Ante Pavelić	4	3.28	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Savo Štrbac	3	2.46	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	64	52.46	0	0.00	56	87.50	8	12.50
total	122	100.00	0	0.00	101	82.79	21	17.21

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Montenegro**

Montenegro	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milo Đukanović	48	23.08	0	0.00	23	47.92	25	52.08
Democratic front	13	6.25	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Duško Marković	11	5.29	0	0.00	6	54.55	5	45.45
Andrija Mandić	9	4.33	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Medojević	8	3.85	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
DPS	8	3.85	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Montenegrin authorities	6	2.88	0	0.00	1	16.67	5	83.33
Svetozar Marović	6	2.88	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Montenegrin police	3	1.44	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
ostali	96	46.15	0	0.00	92	95.83	4	4.17
total	208	100.00	0	0.00	164	78.85	44	21.15

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Federation of BiH**

BiH	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milorad Dodik	94	24.16	3	3.19	89	94.68	2	2.13
SNSD	20	5.14	1	5.00	18	90.00	1	5.00
Željka Cvijanović	19	4.88	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Bakir Izetbegović	17	4.37	0	0.00	14	82.35	3	17.65
Davor Dragičević	16	4.11	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Naser Orić	15	3.86	0	0.00	7	46.67	8	53.33
Mladen Ivanić	15	3.86	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Željko Komšić	14	3.60	0	0.00	11	78.57	3	21.43
Ministry of Internal Affairs of RS	12	3.08	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
BiH Presidency	11	2.83	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Čović	10	2.57	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
SDA	6	1.54	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
SDS	6	1.54	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
BiH Prosecution	5	1.29	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Crnadak	5	1.29	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Mektić	5	1.29	0	0.00	2	40.00	3	60.00
Denis Zvizdić	5	1.29	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Alija Izetbegović	3	0.77	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
SIPA	3	0.77	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	108	27.76	0	0.00	106	98.15	2	1.85
total	389	100.00	4	1.03	360	92.54	25	6.43

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Macedonia**

Macedonia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Zoran Zaev	30	25.21	0	0.00	24	80.00	6	20.00
Nikola Gruevski	16	13.45	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
VMRO-DPMNE	16	13.45	0	0.00	15	93.75	1	6.25
Hristijan Mickoski	11	9.24	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Đorđe Ivanov	8	6.72	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Talat Xhaferi	6	5.04	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Ivan Stoilković	4	3.36	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
SDSM	4	3.36	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ali Ahmeti	3	2.52	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	21	17.65	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
total	119	100.00	0	0.00	110	92.44	9	7.56

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors

Foreign political actors	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Emmanuel Macron	83	15.87	0	0.00	77	92.77	6	7.23
Edi Rama	32	6.12	0	0.00	23	71.88	9	28.13
Petro Poroshenko	29	5.54	0	0.00	28	96.55	1	3.45
Recep Tayyip Erdogan	24	4.59	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
Xi Jinping	20	3.82	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Sebastian Kurz	19	3.63	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Theresa May	17	3.25	0	0.00	16	94.12	1	5.88
Li Manchang	16	3.06	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Viktor Orban	15	2.87	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Alexis Tsipras	15	2.87	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Boyko Borissov	11	2.10	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Marine Le Pen	8	1.53	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Heinz-Christian Strache	7	1.34	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Tonny Blair	7	1.34	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
“Chinese authorities”	4	0.76	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Miroslav Lajčák	4	0.76	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Benjamin Netanjahu	4	0.76	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Alexander Lukashenko	3	0.57	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Bashar al Assad	3	0.57	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
David Cameron	3	0.57	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	199	38.05	0	0.00	193	96.98	6	3.02
total	523	100.00	0	0.00	496	94.84	27	5.16

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual foreign political actors outside the region: **Germany**

Germany	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Angela Merkel	85	46.70	1	1.18	84	98.82	0	0.00
CDU	9	4.95	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
AfD	8	4.40	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Heiko Maas	7	3.85	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
others	73	40.11	0	0.00	73	100.00	0	0.00
total	182	100.00	1	0.55	181	99.45	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region: **Russia**

Russia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Vladimir Putin*	168	43.98	11	6.55	155	92.26	2	1.19
Alexander Chepurin	44	11.52	0	0.00	43	97.73	1	2.27
Dmitry Peskov	25	6.54	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
Sergey Lavrov	24	6.28	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
“Russian authorities”	16	4.19	1	6.25	13	81.25	2	12.50
Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs	10	2.62	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Maria Zakharova	8	2.09	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Sputnik	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Konstantin Kosachev	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Sergey Shoygu	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
FSB	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Russian Ministry of Defense	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dmitry Medvedev	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	66	17.28	2	3.03	64	96.97	0	0.00
total	382	100.00	14	3.66	363	95.03	5	1.31

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

* Vladimir Putin is the most represented foreign political actor in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region: **USA**

USA	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Donald Trump	154	28.52	2	1.30	147	95.45	5	3.25
Kyle Scott	42	7.78	0	0.00	37	88.10	5	11.90
State Department	26	4.81	0	0.00	23	88.46	3	11.54
Mike Pompeo	23	4.26	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
John Bolton	18	3.33	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Matthew Palmer	18	3.33	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
US Congress	15	2.78	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
CIA	15	2.78	0	0.00	8	53.33	7	46.67
“American authorities”	14	2.59	0	0.00	9	64.29	5	35.71
Democratic Party	11	2.04	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
US Embassy	10	1.85	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Barack Obama	10	1.85	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
US Administration	8	1.48	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Hillary Clinton	8	1.48	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Republican Party	8	1.48	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Wess Mitchell	6	1.11	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Bill Clinton	6	1.11	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
US Embassy in Priština	6	1.11	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Pentagon	6	1.11	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
James Mattis	5	0.93	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
CNN	5	0.93	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
George Bush	4	0.74	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
New York Times	4	0.74	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
George Soros	4	0.74	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
John Kerry	4	0.74	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Melania Trump	3	0.56	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
others	107	19.81	0	0.00	96	89.72	11	10.28
total	540	100.00	3	0.56	496	91.85	41	7.59

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors:

representatives of EU institutions and EU institutions

EU	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
EU	178	40.92	0	0.00	156	87.64	22	12.36
Federica Mogherini	60	13.79	0	0.00	59	98.33	1	1.67
Johannes Han	33	7.59	0	0.00	32	96.97	1	3.03
European Commission	28	6.44	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Maja Kocijančič	27	6.21	0	0.00	26	96.30	1	3.70
European Parliament	23	5.29	0	0.00	21	91.30	2	8.70
Donald Tusk	11	2.53	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Jean Claude Juncker	10	2.30	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
David McAlister	9	2.07	1	11.11	8	88.89	0	0.00
Sem Fabrizi	8	1.84	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
EU Delegation in Serbia	3	0.69	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	45	10.34	0	0.00	42	93.33	3	6.67
total	435	100.00	1	0.23	402	92.41	32	7.36

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of individual and collective foreign political actors: **representatives of human rights organizations and Council of Europe representatives**

Human Rights	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Council of Europe	15	34.88	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
OSCE	15	34.88	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
European court for human rights	7	16.28	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
others	6	13.95	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
total	43	100.00	0	0.00	42	97.67	1	2.33

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors:

representatives of UN institutions and UN institutions

UN	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
United Nations	40	36.04	1	2.50	38	95.00	1	2.50
UN Security Council	37	33.33	0	0.00	37	100.00	0	0.00
António Guterres	13	11.71	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
UNESCO	10	9.01	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
others	11	9.91	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
total	111	100.00	1	0.90	109	98.20	1	0.90

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors: **NATO**

NATO	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
NATO	157	76.59	0	0.00	136	86.62	21	13.38
Jens Stoltenberg	40	19.51	0	0.00	40	100.00	0	0.00
others	8	3.90	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
total	205	100.00	0	0.00	184	89.76	21	10.24

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective actors: **actors related to**

The Hague Tribunal

The Hague Tribunal	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Hague tribunal	21	25.93	0	0.00	18	85.71	3	14.29
Ratko Mladić	17	20.99	0	0.00	16	94.12	1	5.88
Radovan Karadžić	7	8.64	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Pavković	4	4.94	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Vasiljković - kapetan Dragan	3	3.70	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Lazarević	3	3.70	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	26	32.10	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
total	81	100.00	0	0.00	77	95.06	4	4.94

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Already from this cursory review of the frequency of the appearance of individual actors on the front pages of the selected printed daily newspapers from our sample, it is clearly noticed that the media are dealing with issues from the domain of foreign policy with minor interest. In the fourth quarter, foreign political actors account for 46.43% of all political actors, compared to 53.56% of the incidence of domestic political actors.

Economic actors in the third quarter of 2018 constitute 5.92% of the total sample of actors, which, compared to the previous quarter, represents an increase of about 2.46% or, expressed in absolute numbers 270.

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective **economy/economic actors**

Economic actors - individually	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Šolak	23	8.55	0	0.00	15	65.22	8	34.78
Dušan Bajatović	12	4.46	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Miroslav Mišković	9	3.35	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Zoran Drobnjak	6	2.23	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67

Nebojša Atanacković	6	2.23	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Srđan Milovanović	5	1.86	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Čadež	5	1.86	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Dmitar Đurović	5	1.86	0	0.00	1	20.00	4	80.00
Blagoje Spaskovski	5	1.86	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Predrag Čulibrk	4	1.49	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milorad Grčić	3	1.12	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Mišković	3	1.12	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Zoran Babić	3	1.12	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	180	66.91	1	0.56	158	87.78	21	11.67
total	269	100.00	1	0.37	231	85.87	37	13.75

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of collective **domestic economic actors**

Economic actors	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
Telekom Serbia	28	6.06	4	14.29	24	85.71	0	0.00
Gazprom neft	15	3.25	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0.00
Roads of Serbia	15	3.25	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Electrodistribution of Serbia	14	3.03	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
SBB	13	2.81	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Corridors of Serbia	12	2.60	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Tesla Airport	11	2.38	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
RTB Bor	11	2.38	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Lidl	10	2.16	4	40.00	6	60.00	0	0.00
Commerce Chamber of Serbia	9	1.95	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Railways of Serbia	9	1.95	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Srbijagas	8	1.73	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Vinci Airports	8	1.73	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Coca Cola	8	1.73	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Air Serbia	7	1.52	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Commercial bank	7	1.52	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
PKB	6	1.30	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Smederevo Ironworks	5	1.08	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
NIS	5	1.08	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Constantine the Great Airport	4	0.87	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Energoprojekt	4	0.87	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
NALED	4	0.87	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Delhaize	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Nitrogen plant Pančevo	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Diners	3	0.65	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
JKP Infostan	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Petrochemistry	3	0.65	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
Siemens	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Merkator S	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Traffic institute CIP	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Delta holding	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Telenor	3	0.65	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	219	47.40	3	1.37	205	93.61	11	5.02
total	462	100.00	14	3.03	432	93.51	16	3.46

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective **foreign economic actors**

IMF/World Bank	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
IMF	17	53.13	0	0.00	15	88.24	2	11.76
World Bank	7	21.88	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Christine Lagarde	3	9.38	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	5	15.63	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
total	32	100.00	0	0.00	30	93.75	2	6.25

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

In addition to already mentioned political and economic actors, the protagonists are also various other social actors, who in different ways influence the social and political situation within the Serbian society. Based on the collected empirical material, we divided them into:

(a) representatives of independent and independent governmental bodies and institutions, (b) political, social, economic, security and other analysts, (c) representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations, (d) actors from the media, (e) representatives of judicial authorities, (f) lawyers and protagonists of various court proceedings, (h) media affairs protagonists and (i) actors from the past

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective domestic social actors: **representatives of independent bodies**

Independent bodies	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
Fiscal council	16	19.05	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Rodoljub Šabić	12	14.29	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
REM	10	11.90	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Pašalić	8	9.52	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50

Anti-Corruption Agency	8	9.52	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
State Audit Institution	5	5.95	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Pavle Petrović	4	4.76	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	21	25.00	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
total	84	100.00	0	0.00	82	97.62	2	2.38

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Analysts (experts) have special role in the texts on the front pages of the media from the sample, and the media treat them in a neutral context as much as 99.33% of the texts. During the entire fourth quarter of 2018, the analyzed daily newspapers significantly promoted the views of these experts, so their opinion was represented 601¹⁵ times. The largest share and the number of analysts represented was recorded in *Informer* (181).

Distribution of the frequency of the appearance of analysts on the covers in different media from the survey sample

Media / Analyst	No.	%
<i>Informer</i>	181	30.12%
<i>Kurir</i>	88	14.64%
<i>Politika</i>	84	13.98%
<i>Danas</i>	82	13.64%
<i>Blic</i>	77	12.81%
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	45	7.49%
<i>Alo!</i>	44	7.32%
total	601	100.00%

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic and social actors: **analysts**

Analysts	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
Dragomir Anđelković	47	7.82	0	0.00	47	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Klačar	20	3.33	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Dejan Vuk Stanković	18	3.00	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Krstić	15	2.50	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Spasić	15	2.50	1	6.67	14	93.33	0	0.00
Vladislav Jovanović	14	2.33	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Radun	14	2.33	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00

15 This is a notable increase compared to the previous quarter when analysts on the cover of the analyzed daily newspapers were present in 568 texts, and significant compared to the second quarter when the presence of analysts was recorded in 390 texts.

Ljuban Karan	13	2.16	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Boban Stojanović	11	1.83	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Đukanović	11	1.83	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Orhan Dragaš	10	1.66	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Živadin Jovanović	9	1.50	1	11.11	8	88.89	0	0.00
Marko Matić	9	1.50	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Milivojević	9	1.50	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Popov	9	1.50	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Veselin Šljivančanin*	9	1.50	1	11.11	8	88.89	0	0.00
Ljubodrag Savić	9	1.50	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Ratko Božović	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Cvijetin Milivojević	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Vlade Radulović	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Mario Spasić	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Nicović	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Janjić	7	1.16	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Milojko Arsić	7	1.16	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Toma Fila	7	1.16	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Stojiljković	7	1.16	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Mladen Kovačević	7	1.16	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Dževad Galijašević	6	1.00	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Petrić	6	1.00	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Radić	6	1.00	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ljubomir Madžar	6	1.00	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Pejić	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Saša Borojević	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Kovačević	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Delić	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Obrad Kesić	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Dragišić	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Jovo Bakić	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Dobrašinović	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Mahmud Bušatlija	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Rodić	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nemanja Nenadić	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Prelević	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Ninić	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Nikolić	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dimitrije Kalezić	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Draško Đenović	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Dragovan Milićević	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Vuletić	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Ivošević	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Danilo Šuković	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	182	30.28	1	0.55	181	99.45	0	0.00
total	601	100.00	4	0.67	597	99.33	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of the frequency of the appearance of analysts on the covers in different media from the survey sample in all four quarters of 2018

Media	No.	%
<i>Informer</i>	654	31.19
<i>Danas</i>	344	16.40
<i>Kurir</i>	281	13.40
<i>Politika</i>	262	12.49
<i>Blic</i>	230	10.97
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	168	8.01
<i>Alo!</i>	158	7.53
Total	2097	100.00

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

Distribution of frequency of SOC representatives and other religious communities on the covers in different media from the survey sample

Media/religion	No.	%
<i>Politika</i>	100	37.74%
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	66	24.91%
<i>Kurir</i>	30	11.32%
<i>Alo!</i>	27	10.19%
<i>Danas</i>	24	9.06%
<i>Informer</i>	12	4.53%
<i>Blic</i>	6	2.26%
total	265	100.00%

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective domestic social actors: **representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and religious organizations**

Religion	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
SOC	50	18.87	2	4.00	48	96.00	0	0.00
Patriarch Irinej	38	14.34	1	2.63	36	94.74	1	2.63
Amfilohije, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral	25	9.43	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
Russian Orthodox Church	14	5.28	1	7.14	13	92.86	0	0.00
Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral	12	4.53	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus'	7	2.64	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople	6	2.26	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Montenegrin Orthodox Church	6	2.26	0	0.00	3	50.00	3	50.00
Miraš Dedeić	4	1.51	0	0.00	1	25.00	3	75.00
Teodosije, bishop	4	1.51	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Patriarch Pavle	4	1.51	1	25.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
Islamic community in Serbia	4	1.51	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Alojzije Stepinac	3	1.13	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Porfirije, Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana	3	1.13	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Irinej, bishop of Bačka	3	1.13	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	82	30.94	1	1.22	78	95.12	3	3.66
total	265	100.00	6	2.26	246	92.83	13	4.91

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective social domestic actors from **the media**¹⁶

Mediji	broj	%	pozitivan	%	neutralan	%	negativan	%
Dragan J. Vučićević	24	5.73	0	0.00	21	87.50	3	12.50
RTS	19	4.53	0	0.00	15	78.95	4	21.05
NUNS	15	3.58	0	0.00	13	86.67	2	13.33
Dragan Bujošević	13	3.10	0	0.00	6	46.15	7	53.85
Danas	13	3.10	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Informer	12	2.86	0	0.00	9	75.00	3	25.00
Ljiljana Smajlović	10	2.39	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00

16 The actors who were the subject of the writing of other media are presented, that is, the media company that were reported by other media.

NDNV	10	2.39	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Politika	10	2.39	1	10.00	9	90.00	0	0.00
Ilustrovana politika	10	2.39	0	0.00	6	60.00	4	40.00
NIN	9	2.15	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
UNS	9	2.15	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Željko Mitrović	9	2.15	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Slaviša Lekić	8	1.91	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
TV Pink	8	1.91	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Ivanović	8	1.91	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Vreme	8	1.91	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
TV Prva	8	1.91	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
TV O2	7	1.67	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Milomir Marić	7	1.67	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Milorad Vučelić	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Jovanović	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Kesić	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
TV Studio B	5	1.19	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Jugoslav Ćosić	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Nedim Sejdinović	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Radomirović	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoljub Draža Petrović	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Tanjug	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Petričić	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
TV N1	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Ćulibrk	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
BIRN	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Sarapa	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
RTV	3	0.72	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Gordana Suša	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Olja Bečković	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Kurir	3	0.72	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
others	131	31.26	2	1.53	114	87.02	15	11.45
total	419	100.00	3	0.72	366	87.35	50	11.93

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

During the collection of empirical material, a significant presence of actors in connection with the activities of the judicial and investigative bodies was noted on the cover pages. The actors from this group are shown as representatives of judicial authorities (201), lawyers (86) and other protagonists of current or completed court / investigative proceedings (48).

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of collective domestic social actors: **representatives of judicial bodies**

Judicial system	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Court of Appeals in Belgrade	26	12.94	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
Prosecution for Organized Crime	23	11.44	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
Higher Public Prosecutor in Belgrade	19	9.45	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Higher Court in Belgrade	12	5.97	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Chamber of bailiffs	10	4.98	0	0.00	8	80.00	2	20.00
Prosecution for War Crimes	9	4.48	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Vukčević	7	3.48	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Special Prosecution for Organized Crime	6	2.99	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Administrative Court	5	2.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
High Council of Judiciary	5	2.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Supreme Court of Cassation	4	1.99	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Constitutional court	4	1.99	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Special Court in Belgrade	3	1.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	68	33.83	0	0.00	60	88.24	8	11.76
total	201	100.00	0	0.00	189	94.03	12	5.97

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **lawyers**¹⁷

Lawyers	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Vladimir Gajić	4	4.65	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Savić	4	4.65	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Petronijević	4	4.65	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoslav Miša Ognjanović	3	3.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Vlajić	3	3.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	68	79.07	0	0.00	68	100.00	0	0.00
total	86	100.00	0	0.00	86	100.00	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

¹⁷ Some lawyers in the texts of the media from the sample played the role of analysts, and are therefore shown in that group of actors.

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **actors of court proceedings and investigations**

Actors of court proceedings and investigations	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Darko Šarić	6	12.50	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Ražnatović Arkan	5	10.42	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Rodoljub Radulović Miša Banana	4	8.33	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Lazarević	3	6.25	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Stanković Sale Mutavi	3	6.25	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Milorad Ulemek Legija	3	6.25	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Luka Bojović	3	6.25	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	21	43.75	0	0.00	20	95.24	1	4.76
total	48	100.00	0	0.00	47	97.92	1	2.08

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

The following table shows all the actors who were linked by the media with the murder of singer Jelena Marjanović, as well as members of her family, acquaintances and friends. In the fourth quarter of 2018, these actors were present in 226 appearances. It is important to note that this case, although there are no significant breakthroughs in its solution, persists on the covers since April 2016, when the murder took place.

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **“The murder of Jelena Marjanović”**

The murder of Jelena Marjanović	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Jelena Marjanović	25	34.25	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Marjanović	24	32.88	0	0.00	20	83.33	4	16.67
Jana Marjanović	14	19.18	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Nenad Šipka	3	4.11	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Zorica Marjanović	1	1.37	0	0.00	1	100.00	0	0.00
others	6	8.22	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
total	73	100.00	0	0.00	68	93.15	5	6.85

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors from the field of **sports**

Sport	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
FC Red Star	17	25.37	3	17.65	14	82.35	0	0.00
FC Partizan	7	10.45	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Zvezdan Terzić	4	5.97	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Slaviša Kokeza	4	5.97	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Čović	3	4.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	32	47.76	6	18.75	25	78.13	1	3.13
total	67	100.00	9	13.43	57	85.07	1	1.49

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors from the **past**

Past	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Josip Broz Tito	29	74.36	0	0.00	29	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Nedić	2	5.13	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
others	8	20.51	1	12.50	6	75.00	1	12.50
total	39	100.00	1	2.56	37	94.87	1	2.56

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

UNNAMED SOURCES

In the selected front page articles from the sampled media, unnamed sources have also been the second most prominent actor. This time there were 333 instances of quoting anonymous sources, or rather 14.39% of texts, which represents a decrease of about 2.78% in comparison to the results from the previous quarter (17.17%).

The widespread usage of unnamed sources has been precisely determined thanks to the manner of qualifying anonymous sources, which we have been applying since the second *Mediameter* issue, so as to not only classify those sources which the very media has defined as anonymous, but also those who provide information that cannot be verified, no matter the manner in which they have been incorporated into an article. Of course, the presence of information gained from anonymous sources speaks more about the manner of the reporting done by the seven media found in our sample, than about the actual need of protecting the identities of the individual who provide certain information.

As Matt Carlson, in his book “On the Condition of Anonymity” has said: “Journalism is woven into the fabric of our environment, and in turn is based on it, meaning that it can never be an objective observer, as it is claimed...These sorts of questions are better answered through an approach that recognizes the culture of unnamed sources as a *culture*. This view steers an inquiry into unnamed sources away from frequency and implementation, toward issues of meanings that we share and patterns of collective interpretation between journalists, sources and the public. The securing of anonymity is not just a question of technique. It is, actually, a request for a certain type of imagining of relations between these three sides.”¹⁸

18 M. Carlson, *On the condition of anonymity*, Urbana, Chicago, Springfield, University of Illinois Press, 2011, 7

A news form that contains the largest number of information obtained from an unnamed source is a report. Of the 1803 texts written in this form, 313 or 17.36% contains anonymous sources.

Share of “unnamed sources” in all journalistic forms, in seven media from the sample

Genre	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
Report	1803	313	17.36
Article	112	15	13.39
Reportage	28	1	3.57
News	32	1	3.13
Commentary	138	2	1.45
Interview	190	1	0.53
other	11	0	0.00
total	2314	333	14.39

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

The largest number, as well as the participation of texts containing information obtained from unnamed sources, in relation to the total number of published articles, is recorded in *Blic* (26.91% ili 67 texts), followed by *Informer* (26.01% - 58), *Alo!* (22.37% – 49), *Kurir* (17.3% – 32), *Večernje novosti* (9.43% – 38), *Politika* (8.8% – 49) and *Danas* (8.37% – 40).

Share of unnamed sources per analyzed media

Media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
<i>Blic</i>	249	67	26.91%
<i>Informer</i>	223	58	26.01%
<i>Alo!</i>	219	49	22.37%
<i>Kurir</i>	185	32	17.30%
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	403	38	9.43%
<i>Politika</i>	557	49	8.80%
<i>Danas</i>	478	40	8.37%
total	2314	333	14.39%

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

In the course of 2018, the seven analyzed media used anonymous sources in 17.47% (1528) of texts from the front pages. This method of obtaining information was chiefly used by *Informer* (32.2% or 266 articles), while the smallest number of anonymous sources was on the cover of *Politika* (8.42%). Compared to 2017, in 2018, the media reported about 6.5% less anonymous sources in their texts.

Share of unnamed sources per analyzed media in all four quarters of 2018

Media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
<i>Informer</i>	826	266	32.20
<i>Alo!</i>	836	206	24.64
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	1399	208	14.87
<i>Kurir</i>	891	193	21.66
<i>Blic</i>	970	261	26.91
<i>Danas</i>	1790	223	12.46
<i>Politika</i>	2032	171	8.42
total	8744	1528	17.47

Source: *Mediameter* research January - March 2018, *Mediameter* April - June 2018, *Mediameter* July - September 2018 and *Mediameter* October - December 2018

The largest number of texts containing information from anonymous sources (87) was noted when the topic of the text was related to *political life in Serbia*, however, the largest share of unnamed sources in relation to the total number of texts published on a topic was again noticed when the texts wrote about crime - about 43%.

Number of texts containing information obtained from “unnamed sources” according to topics in seven media from the sample¹⁹

Topic/All media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
Political life in Serbia	433	87	20.09%
Kosovo/Belgrade and Priština relations	434	77	17.74%
Economy	105	23	21.90%
Regional cooperation/relations in the region	163	16	9.82%
Russia/attitude towards Russia	42	9	21.43%
Crime	21	9	42.86%
International relations	82	8	9.76%
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	25	7	28.00%
Issues of faith, church and religion	42	7	16.67%
media/freedom of the media	85	6	7.06%
trade	54	6	11.11%

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2018

19 Ten topics are presented with the largest number of unnamed sources.

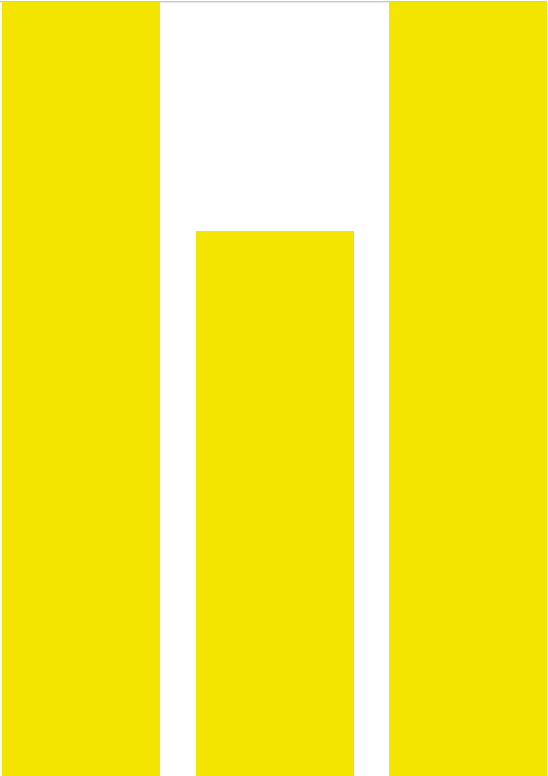
Conclusion

The topics covered by print media on their cover pages during the fourth quarter of 2018 differed somewhat from the usual matrix. Kosovo issues and internal political turmoil, this time, overwhelmed all other topics of great importance to our society. Increasing media interest in resolving Kosovo issues and increased emotions present in reporting on this issue have produced additional malignant complications in the media reality of Serbia's society. This again, in a dramatic fashion, opened the issue of disregard and further downgrading of professional reporting standards. Some media wrote without any reservations about topics of importance to society in an inappropriate language, waking ghosts from the past that should not be returned to the public sphere.

Endnote

Despite the fact that Veselin Šljivančanin, "the former chief of the YPA Guard Brigade, sentenced to 10 years for aiding and abetting the torture of Croatian prisoners at the Ovčara farm near Vukovar in November 1991, was released in 2011 as he served two-thirds of the sentence" ("Zašto Vulin promoviše osuđeničke iz Haga [Why Vulin promotes convicts from The Hague]," *Blic*, 25.10.2018.), is a convicted war criminal, in most of the articles he appears as a military analyst (for example, in the texts: "Vojni plan za Kosovo [Military Plan for Kosovo]," *Informer*, 01.10.2018; "Haška ćelija spremna za Tačiju i ekipu [Hague cell is ready for Thaci and his crew]," *Alo!* 01.10.2018; "Albanci i Hrvati spremaju udar na Srbe [Albanians and Croats are preparing a blow to the Serbs]," *Alo!* 30.10.2018. i "Stižu još četiri Miga 29 [Four more MiG-29 are arriving]," *Informer*, 31.12.2018.) Therefore, in this issue of *Mediameter*, he appears in the analyst table.

4



Discourse
Analysis

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The fatality of political conflicts and the infinite variations of the denial among political opponents

The high level of political polarization, the supremacy of challenging approach to political opponents, lack of concrete initiative, decision or political move as well as the categorical form of writing about a specific topic, are the main features weekly press discourse and daily newspapers editorial columns. The last quarter of 2018, together with all the previous ones, testifies to the diversity of approaches, attitudes, arguments, stylistic figures and conclusions that, occasionally or frequently, appear in a fairly dynamic media landscape in Serbia.

Images of political actors and interpretations that are supposed to describe political, economic and other processes are dominantly negative, inclined to emphasize the fallacies of political actors. Almost as by some unwritten rule, the texts continuously point to negative motivation, elaboration and outcomes of political decisions and processes.

The reality presented from the angle of the weekly press is intoned with political and value-based nihilism towards the current Government. General socio-historical and political-economic decadence – this is the conclusion that the persistent and tireless journalistic work draws.

Notwithstanding the fact that the above-stated assessment of media work is nothing original, it should be emphasized that the critical discourse emphasizes two extremely negative and politically provocative moments - madness and fascism. The Government, and generally the whole social situation, is described as madness, abnormality, deviation from common sense, lack of any meaning. On the other hand, the political order is hastily, easily, and simply marked as fascist. Alongside the journalistic “branding” of the current political order as a fascist, present are other highly negative adjectives, such as “anti-civilizational”, “mafia”, “pathological” ...

Also, it is noticeable that the practices of the present government are usually compared with the functioning mechanisms of secret services of totalitarian political regimes, such as Eastern German and Soviet. This political-value stigmatization discourse which, as a rule, neglects the facts and is based on a negative emotional charge that burdens the political momentum, seeks to establish a radical distance between the conceptual definition of democracy and the practices of the current Serbian political order led by the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić.

The irrationality of reality along with the politically radical, morally problematic and historically dangerous systematization of political order produces a critical discourse filled with continuous production and reproduction of propaganda messages and images.

Indicators of political propaganda narratives are present in both the written word and the image. A suggestive image and its “signature” in the form of the front page of a weekly newspaper, or the cover page with the image of a political leader of the opposition or an engaged intellectual is the backbone of the identity of weekly newspapers. The writing associated with the front page represents the elaboration of the main message, with a clear aim of explaining, justifying and, if necessary, recommending the message as a basis for the formation of political opinion and action.

In the spotlight of critical narratives is the negative obsession with Aleksandar Vučić, the current president of Serbia, who has been assigned negative epithets repeatedly and permanently, regardless of the job he has done or the project he has started. The moral judgment and political condemnation of the first man of Serbian politics is portrayed as a proof of journalistic virtue and represents a moral and political imperative of journalism. In order for a journalist to gain the epithet of a professional, he always has to question, show or think of fallout in Vučić’s rule.

In their writing, journalists are allowed to be eclectic. More specifically, a journalist does not have to be consistent in their liberal, leftist or conservative orientation. The ideological profile of the story or even the entire orientation of the newspaper is subject to modification depending on the needs of the political moment. The only thing that is important is to constantly and tirelessly question every President’s or one of his closest associates’ moves. The tendency of “media pressure on every issue” is noticeable also in the writing about the second most important factor of political life - the opposition – only to much smaller extent and exclusively in a negative context in pro-Government daily newspapers.

Content-wise, stories that critically challenge the opposition, its personnel, decisions and ideas have a distinctively negative tone. They are pervaded by moralizing, patriotic suspicion, and impose a conclusion on the political, moral, and every other type of insufficiency of the opposition for the complex and risky business of leading the state and implementing reforms in society.

Conclusion about Serbian weekly newspapers and editorial columns remains unchanged. Images of political actors are predetermined and extremely negative. To challenge a political competitor or competition is more important than to affirm of one’s own point of view. The journalist on the other hand, has the ultimate task to find and emphasize the illogicalness of the decision, the lack of a solution, relativize the positive statistics, and ultimately, play the “dedicated journalist” card in order to politically encourage those that are dissatisfied with the Government’s work, or to reinforce the belief in the moral, political or any other inadequacy of the opposition.

Beyond the general presentation of the approaches, argumentation, rhetoric and conclusions of journalistic stories and interviews, the analysis has established and confirmed some clearly visible manners of the print media way of functioning.

In the sphere of print journalism, especially in the weeklies, there were no “forbidden” or “untouchable” topics. Many important topics were covered in many different, often sharply conflicted ways and diametrically opposite starting points. The outcome of this form and the content of journalistic writing results with vast presence of many different views on the identical topic, whether it directly refers to actors or political, economic and wider social events.

Realistic presence of political pluralism and number of angles and topics written about, testifies to the existence of freedom speech, freedom of expression and freedom of opinion in this specific socially and politically relevant form of journalism. Namely, it is possible to publish and write whatever comes to journalist’s mind and

thus send various types of messages. In addition, various political orientations are represented, ranging from the radical right to the left. In the analysed relevant weekly magazines there is no censorship or self-censorship. This circumstance is important for two reasons which, strictly speaking, are not from the sphere of politics.

To begin with, in Serbia it is possible to legitimize any claim or interpretation model in relation to events, actors and socio-historical processes in the public field. Additionally, there is no censorship or media dictatorship by the Government or any other centre of power in the domain of print media. Finally, the significance and influence of stories themselves is much greater than the circulation of daily or weekly newspapers. Moreover, the general impression is that articles, interviews and editorial columns are sent viral through social networks. Therefore, the interpretive codes tend to have the potential for continuous expansion on the Internet, and consequently, are a baseline for numerous television programs or interviews. It is necessary to emphasize two characteristics of weekly press particularly.

Structure-wise, there has been a significant presence of the interview as a journalistic genre. The interviewees are selected according to the political-value criteria which correspond to the orientation of the members of the editorial board. There is a noticeable and pronounced tendency of repetition of interviewees with the aim of intensifying the effect of the message, both in value and political sense. Often, these are the prominent individuals in their professions, but there are also those who wish to represent themselves as such. This is mostly about a desire to position certain public figures (singers and actors, for example) as role models with their civic stance which is almost in all cases negatively intoned against the Government. It is a skilful transfer of social recognition to the domain of politics, a precise example of the fact that propaganda goes “hand in hand” with advocacy journalism. This kind of public sphere modelling turns the public landscape into an endless space of constant disputes and never-ending conflict with high intensity. Content-wise, majority of messages from the interview (which is, as by rule, conceptually linked to the front page) is repeated according to the already prepared a political-value matrix established by the editorial board of the weekly or daily newspapers.

Repetition of the media message is at the core of its control in the public space. This is another important feature of the weekly press. The message has a significant political impact- its outcome is the creation of environment characterized by sharpened divisions. The frequency of repetition of the same message, communicated by various interviewees, creates a pattern of reactions and feelings with the readers who finally form rigid stands. “Fixating” the image of the actor or an event is one of the most common weapons in the political and propaganda war. “Fixating” the image is a process in which, and thanks to whom, one subject remains “frozen” in time despite their potential and actual transformations or the changes in the political, economic, social and historical circumstances.

This rigid pseudo-intellectual matrix operates according to the permanently assigned roles. Actors are portrayed as the “good” or “bad” guys in public space. Morally and politically acceptable “positive” attributes are ascribed to a particular group of political figures and organizations, while negative ones are irrevocably and unquestionably assigned to the opposite side – the permanently “unfit ones”. At the heart of the conflict in the public-political field is the Manichean division of the media and political elite. After analysing the print media in Serbia, and in the spirit of this moral and political division, one can say that all of the weeklies are in fact – biased. In their bias, they are very clear and sharp, and therefore, very irrational.

The collision of events, processes and actors’ interpretations is so vivid, that rationality that is supposed to characterize a democratically constituted public, cannot exist either as a useful illusion nor a regulatory mechanism in the process of written or visual selection of reports. Thus, we live in the landscape where anyone can be

against anyone, motivated by „their own” reasons which are rarely detectable in the in-depth analysis, and where the arguments of the „other side” rarely serve any purpose. The spirit of argumentation in the Serbian weeklies, especially the columns and interviews, is characterized by radicalism, political defamation of the opponent and first-class moral exclusivity.

In parallel with this, the repetition of one and the same message leads to the rigidity of the editorial policy. From this point it is easy to form an image of the actor, process or a specific event. Repetition of the message and unhidden tendency to form a concrete image shows the importance of print media as a tool for political communication, more precisely, a weapon in the constant political war among the actors on Serbian political scene. The rigidity of a specific media also shows the intention to skip the debate on certain issues and go straight into the „judgmental” mode of portraying actors, processes or events.

Moreover, and this is especially relevant for weeklies, an important role is played by the choice of the front page, for its message is constructed both visually and verbally in the form of election poster (for example: an image of the actor with a choice of the most dramatic/suggestive/direct quote from the interview, chosen as the headline which is to carry a straightforward message intended to form the reader’s one and only choice of opinion).

In the weeklies, for example in *NIN*, the cartoon caricature also plays a significant role. This dynamic unity of a drawing and words serves a strong political-propaganda message. Another important feature of headlines in weeklies and editorial columns is the rhetorical match in the opinions and attitudes of the editorial board and the subjects being interviewed. This tendency shows that print media are most usually a sophisticated tool in the political battle, especially in the sphere of construction and maintenance of the image.

There are several possible ways to classify the weeklies, among which, for the purposes of this analysis, we will be mentioning two. According to the criterion of division that is common and usually present in a democratic society, the classification should entail the ones close to the Government and ones that are critical towards it. In Serbia, this criterion cannot be consistently applied since most weeklies only belong to the disapproving category. Weekly *Pečat* falls under the category of partially critical of the authorities, because of its open criticizing of the Government’s pro-European foreign policy under the Vučić’s rule. However, this weekly shows strong critical stance towards moral credibility, axiological orientation and political views of the 5th October winners. On the other hand, weeklies like *NIN*, *Vreme*, *Novi magazin* and *Nedeljnik* fall under the category of completely critical of the Government. The difference is very clear and it lies in the so-called intonation of the criticism.

While in *Vreme*, and to some extent in *NIN*, there is a full, concrete and severe critique of Government (especially in the domain of domestic politics and economics), a more moderate tone in the expression of critical views is expressed in *Novi Magazin* and *Nedeljnik*. They don’t “accuse” and “label” the at the personal level, like it is the case with the first two, according to many, most influential Serbian weeklies *Vreme* and *NIN*.

Similarly, weeklies can be divided according to their foreign policy orientation. *Vreme*, *NIN*, *Novi magazin* and *Nedeljnik* are more or less pro-European. On the other hand, the weekly *Pečat* clearly emphasizes the anti-Western and pro-Russian stance, intended to support the nationalist discourse, close to the one which was dominant in wars in the 1990s.

The image of the government - authoritarian, non-democratic, fascist, mad, anti-civilizational, amoral, clientelistic, uses totalitarian mechanisms of governing, without results in the economy, lacking competencies for foreign policy, suspicious patriotism-wise.

Presentation of the most common messages about the Government that are diffusely spread in weekly newspapers and editorial columns, should begin with the examination of the broader picture of the socio-historical, political and cultural reality formed in the above-listed media.

The general image of the society is negatively determined. Serbian society is shown as deeply and fatally decadent, with almost no progressive and enlightened areas of life. All events and processes are depicted as morally controversial and politically unacceptable. Most of the messages are treated as false and everything that happens is destructive to the very social substance. Of course, the assumption is that such a deeply controversial reality is produced in a morally corrupt society with an incapable elite in power.

Participating in the creation of a general negative image about Serbia today, famous poet and theater writer, academic Ljubomir Simović gave an interview to Olja Bečković for the weekly *NIN*. The conversation was more interesting not only because of the general nihilistic tendency deeply rooted in the Serbian opposition media, but also because of the intellectual “word game”, with an aim to further stigmatize the present situation in society:

Olja Bečković: “I beleive you have a more creative word to describe the state that we live in, which is ‘abnormal’”.

Academician Ljubomir Simović: “That for once we will live in a normal country, I hoped during the demonstrations in the autumn and winter 1996/97. It was a huge energy, which promised big and decisive changes. I believed we were on the threshold of normality on October 5th. But since 5th October I waited for months for the 6th to arrive slowly realizing that it will not. When they killed Đinđić I was sure it won’t. I wrote numerous articles which were then compiled into books about what happened to us in the nineties and continues to this day. The titles of these books can be used as a diagnosis for our condition: *A gallop of the snails*, *A new gallop of the snails*, *A goose in the fog* ... That word you are looking for, which would creatively describe the state of abnormality that we live in, is best described by the book title *Titanic in the aquarium*. I’m afraid we’re just that.”¹

Therefore, the current socio-historical situation is compared not only to “madness,” “abnormality,” “pathology,” “historical regression,” but also to something more than that. It is a matter of deep deprivation of political and historical paradoxes, the failure to make a step forward, in one word, a historical paradox. The irrationality and deep-rooted character of historical-political reality is best detected by the tendency to associate the hopelessness of this historical and political moment with a difficult and brutal jail sentence such as Goli Otok, a former communist party jail in which the disobeying dissidents were systematically liquidated and tortured. Evoking the Goli Otok experience is part of the diagnosis of the current moment, which recursively appears as an integral part of any political analysis in each interview with carefully selected interviewees.

1 Ljubomir Simović, „Bićemo ljudi ili ovce [We will be people or a flock of sheep],“ interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3547, p. 22-23

In the already established journalistic-political matrix, Tatjana Mandić Rigonat, Belgrade drama writer, assesses the current historical and political moment as decadent, historically regressive and essentially dangerous. In the already known manner of producing false analogies and propaganda hyperbola, she vividly advocates about the current state of Serbia: “It’s no longer Goli Otok on which you at least know where those opponents to the regime are. This Goli Otok covers the entire country covered by the media. The larger the media coverage, the larger the space for targeting people.”²

The “support” to the current view of events, political actors and socio-historical and political processes, came from the thoughts and words of the cardiac surgeon Boško Đukanović, who has basically repeated the words of the previous interviewees of *NIN*: “We touched the bottom of life with fanfares and fireworks. But the collapse of this government is evident, since it showed that it is completely incompetent. Humiliation is underway, as if the people do not know anything about Murat, all of this goes through the collapse of institutions and media terror. But they are cutting off their own branch to stand on. The situation is unbearable, and the epilogue is unknown, God forbid that it is the scenario that many have in their minds.”³

In the “decadent” political community that resembles the “Titanic in the Aquarium” (Simović) or “The Goli Otok which covers the entire country covered by the media” (Mandić-Rigonat) or in the “unbearable state which reached its very bottom” (Đukanović), the key and only culprit is the current regime, more precisely its first man, Aleksandar Vučić. The last quarter of 2018 offers a powerful “explosion” of negativity that, in relation to Vučić, manifests itself in an almost infinite variety of ways. Although variations are numerous, there are several that form the very core of a radically critical discourse.

The government is presented as morally and politically evil, more precisely as a dictatorship with totalitarian tendencies, profoundly repressive, psychologically and morally immature, antidemocratic, mafia-clientelistic, ideologically colorless, corrupt, incompetent, extremely manipulative, intolerant towards political opponents, incompetent for foreign policy, without success in European integrations, without economic results. A list of negative epithets can further be filled with a whole series of more or less striking terms or idioms, but they are all negatively intoned and judgmental.

The common denominator of all these markers is the negative obsession by Alexander Vučić. This obsession is supported by the often problematic use of liberal-democratic discourses as a critical standard for evaluating the principles, structure, ways of functioning and the effects of his rule. Žarko Korać, an independent opposition MP in one of the interviews for the weekly *Novi magazin*, gave the vicious definition of Vučić as an undemocratic and authoritarian ruler:

“For the first time since Slobodan Milošević, Serbia has an authoritarian leader. The parallel between Milošević and Vučić is obvious. In those first elections, in the 1990s, next to every electoral candidate from Socialist Party stood the picture of Slobodan Milošević. Some people forgot about that, of course younger ones do not know that there were always two pictures there. As a capo di tutti capi. Today the Serbian Progressive Party is the same - not only on the state level but also in all local elections, Vučić’s picture dominates. There are almost no pictures of local officials, so it is actually even worse than during Milošević’s time. Vučić, of course, does not explicitly say this, but essentially he clearly tells us that Serbia has come to an era of en-

2 Tatjana Mandić Rigonat, „Pretvorili su državu u Goli Otok [They turned the country into Goli Otok],“ interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3536

3 Boško Đukanović, „Pohlepa će im doći glave [Greed will destroy them],“ interview with Dragan Todorović, *Vreme*, No. 1455, p. 14

lightened absolutism. And as you know, in the Balkans, enlightened absolutism is just another word for absolute absolutism. This is manifested in one other thing. The current president of Serbia, the former prime minister, very often speaks about the people, about their ungratefulness, that the people do not understand him and that makes him angry with the people and so on. So Vučić almost reached a level of the so-called majestic plural, where the ruler speaks of himself in the plural - 'we', projecting himself to his people. I do not know that any politician in the last 27 years said: see, people do not let me, people do not understand me. This is in fact the definition of classical populism, in which there is nothing between the governments and people, institutions are unnecessary. Another characteristic of the current state of affairs is that, as in Milošević's time, the opposition is treated as treacherous. Not only treacherous but also works for foreign services. This is claimed by a senior official of the State Security Service, who, incidentally, is a member of the Serbian Progressive Party in the Parliament, which I am not sure is in accordance with the regulations. And thirdly, which in some way stems from the two preceding characteristics, at this moment we have an endeavor of one party, moreover one man, wanting to put almost all aspects of social and political life under his control."⁴

Vesna Mališić, the editor-in-chief of the weekly *NIN* who writes about the political situation, uses the identical semantic and rhetorical constructions for the explanation of her values and political views and claims categorically: "Serbia is a one-party state with the make-believe pluralism, with a rare oasis of critical thinking, filled with fear and self-censorship that spreads like octopus, with preordered support and conducted applause, in which dissatisfaction is hidden and suppressed by the need for bare survival. The price that this society has to pay to be sufficiently prepared for her President's dream is too high."⁵

Even a superficial view of Žarko Korać and journalist Vesna Mališić's attitudes unambiguously confirms the overlapping of views expressed by the opposition leaders and the critically acclaimed journalists. It is also a symbiosis in the approach, analysis, argumentation, conclusion and evaluation of the current political order, and above all, its structure, ways of functioning and its effects.

Narratives of Mališić and Korać about the Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić as an extremely undemocratic ruler with open authoritarian tendencies, provide support for the words of the above quoted academician and poet Ljubomir Simović. He emphasizes the almost absolutist pretensions of the current president of Serbia. What is interesting is that Simović, as well as Korać and Mališić, lacks the arguments for his claim. He simply implies that the power of Aleksandar Vučić is essentially determined by the desire for an absolutist rule, the intent to dominate and literally enslave all spheres of society, together with the spiritual level that determines an individual or a society. The politically inspired poet, one of the better in the Serbian literature of the past few decades, says: "It has long been known that there are rulers who think that power is not power if it is not absolute, if it does not give them the right to change countries, nations, languages, history, geography, climate, past, even the very future! If we find ourselves in the situation that we have accepted what the government chooses for us as our choice, we must be aware that we will then need to choose whether we will remain a nation, or become a flock of sheep."⁶

The words of Janko Baljak, the politically-engaged theatre director, will confirm that the critical discourse to-

wards the current government is almost certain, almost identical with the opposition discourse of the nineties. He believes that there is no significant difference between Vučić and Milošević, but draws attention to the fact that the current President of Serbia perfected the techniques of Slobodan Milošević's rule. In a similar manner of Žarko Korać, Ljubomir Simović, Tatjana Mandić Rigonat and Janko Baljak manners of speaking, he also emphasizes the undemocratic practices demonstrated by Vučić.

Baljak's critical position is the equivalence of the current president of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić with the former Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. Baljak's persistence on equivalence between these two politicians is a distant echo of the Democratic Party's remembrance campaign which won Boris Tadić the 2008 elections. The lack of innovation in the approach is demonstrated in the already familiar content of the "anti-Vučić Serbia" political speech: "What makes Vučić more dangerous and tougher, for a probably longer period of time, is the fact that he perfected Milošević's system. All the mistakes Milošević made, Vučić is trying not to repeat, as he learned a lot from them. This is what currently makes us lethargic, apathetic, since it does not give us a concrete cause until the real violence erupts. And then the number of people in the streets, as we saw, significantly increases. The crawling dictatorship I talked about a year and a half ago turned out to be a complete, open dictatorship, followed by a total occupation of the media."⁷

That this reminiscing of the 90s is not an incidental thought of a critically-minded intellectual, but a part of a wider organized political campaign in which opposition politicians actively and uninterruptedly participate, is evident from the words of Zdravko Ponoš, the former chief of the Serbian Army's General Staff: "It was a matter of time when Vučić would return to his original vocabulary which led him on the road from Šešelj's breakfast and tripod carrier to Milošević's Minister for Information and finally licenced him to label people as domestic traitors and foreign mercenaries, while perfecting the discipline of avoiding his own responsibility and concealing his own incompetence and ignorance. Basically, it is a populist manner which serves any despotic government to prepare the people for the upcoming repression and insensitivity towards the political opponents."⁸

The saga on the repressive character of the government and its constant tendency to produce enemies in the political and public arena was further continued by the publicist and writer Gojko Božović, who in a comprehensive interview with the weekly *NIN*, portrayed Serbia as an extremely undemocratic country governed by fear and terror, despite the fact that in reality there are no banned organizations, newspapers, websites, televisions, nor political prisoners. However, these facts are not enough for Božović. His intention is identical to the intentions of all the above-quoted interviewees of weekly newspapers: to deny the current government any democratic legitimacy, anything that makes it politically justified in the light of fundamental liberal values and democratic procedures.

The current government is actually like modern tyranny, it is founded on the fear, terror and the immaculate dehumanization of political opponents: "Serbia is no longer governed by Vučić, Serbia is governed by fear and Vučić is the face of this fear and its personalization. In a political order in which so many people are scared, while others are in a state of submissiveness, apathy and political passiveness, there is no possibility for the development of society. If all the decisions are made in one place, it has a bad outcome for everyone. The largest part of

4 Žarko Korać, „Vučić od Đilasa pravi lidera [Vučić is turning Đilas into a leader],“ Interview with Mijat Lakićević, 18.11.2018, *Novi magazin*, No. 392, g. 11

5 Vesna Mališić, „Fatamorgana [Mirage],“ *NIN*, No. 3536, p. 3

6 Ljubomir Simović, „Bićemo ljudi ili ovce [We will be people or a flock of sheep],“ *NIN*, No. 3547, p. 22

7 Janko Baljak, „Nismo ni svesni koliko smo okupirani [We are not even aware that we are occupied],“ interview with Radmila Stanković, *NIN*, No. 3548, p. 40

8 Zdravko Ponoš, „Vučić je guverner porobljene Srbije [Vučić is the governor of conquered Serbia],“ interview with Filip Švarm, *Vreme*, No. 1449, p. 6

the population is between personal bankruptcy and some kind of life on one shared salary. Under these circumstances, you can easily manipulate people, especially when you are creating some form of anaesthesia through realities and tabloids. They serve to anesthetize the masses so that they do not actually think about their life and the conditions they live in. People need to know that if we have unannounced press conferences, a permanent pre-election campaign, the production of enemies, the creation of fear- this cannot be called a normal political life. If the President of the Republic addresses opposition leaders as thieves, robbers and criminals, then how can one imagine a regular political match and a democratic change of government? How can one imagine that the president who swore to the Constitution to the same people he calls thieves, robbers and scum will surrender power democratically if he loses in the elections? And the elections must be lost one day. But if you proclaim political opponents to be thieves or secessionists, criminals, drug dealers ... you dehumanize them, exclude them from a genuine human community and say that all is allowed in a fight against them- then this government is irreplaceable. Do people who say such words know what they are saying? Power must be changeable. Violence and control can delay changes, but not endlessly.”⁹

A contribution to the typology of the current government led by Aleksandar Vučić was also given by the priest of the Visoki Dečani monastery from Kosovo, Sava Janjić. His position could be summarized in the following: the current government is a rude and noticeably deviant from the democratic-liberal political order and practice. In an interview for the weekly *NIN* prior Janjić says: “... There is a regime in this territory which, on the one hand has a rather well-embedded façade of democracy, but in reality this is just a backdrop for the system of family and criminal clans that control all aspects of society and sovereignly use Kosovo’s institutions as means of preserving their authority. Democracy is always at risk in the hands of the oligarchs without moral scruples and it can easily become an open dictatorship. After all, was the Roman Empire not called the Roman Republic to the end of its history? Did the Nazis in Germany not come to power in a democratic way?”¹⁰

From Janjić’s and Božović’s words, it is easy to conclude that the present government represents, as already mentioned, a significant and visible departure from the democratic-liberal political order. This deviation is deeply and fatal, incurable and unconditional. It reaches the level where this political order is, without any euphemisms, identified as fascist.

The construction about the fascist character of the government repeated several times by almost every columnist and numerous interviewees of weekly newspapers in Serbia. The most striking example of the stigmatization of the government as fascist came from Dragan Đilas, the leader of the Alliance for Serbia. At the time of the protests, due to an incident at the gathering of his political group in Kruševac in the end of 2018, despite the arrest of the abuser and the explicit apology of the ruling SNS to the opposition, in his column for *Vreme*, Đilas angrily claims: “These are the protests against the government which has shown serious indications of fascism and is up for anything. Citizens went into the streets to fight against this state they live in, together with Borko’s bloody head, as a symbol of violence to which the regime exposes us every day. Everything around us is falling apart, criminals are the leaders of Serbia, people live under unprecedented fear and pressure, and coming to Belgrade streets is their answer to the lies we were told for years, to the fact that our friends are leaving, to not seeing any prospect for future, to not feeling safe when walking on the street or

9 Gojko Božović, „Srbijom ne vlada Vučić već strah [Serbia is not governed by Vučić but by fear],“ interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3541, p. 45

10 Sava Janjić, „Oligarhija demokratiju pretvara u diktaturu [Oligarchy turns a democracy into a dictatorship],“ interview with Olja Becković, *NIN*, No. 3543, p. 12



NIN, 22nd October 2018

sitting in a café, to the insane people constantly threatening us with war ... And, in the end, to all the Vučićs, Vesićs, Stefanovićs and others, who simply put, insult our intelligence.”¹¹

Similar to Đilas, cartoonist Predrag Koraksić Corax, will try to portray as Vučić as Führer through an allusion about Hitler and Gebels and his followers in the Serbian Parliament as orthodox fascists. Thus, when *Danas* newspaper was criticized by SNS deputies in the Assembly, he says that Vučić appears in the consciousness of his followers in the same way Hitler appeared in the minds of his fanatic and malicious ideological supporters. His critical allegory, directed to the present government and its first man, is recognized in the following sentences: “I watched the Assembly on television when MP Martinović said that the newspaper *Danas* is leading a lynch campaign against SNS, ‘unseen from the time of Gebels and Hitler’. It immediately occurred to me to turn to the other side and put them in the places of the ones they are accusing of slander. And then Aleksandar Martinović recognized Hitler in Vučić?! How and why I don’t know. I did not draw Vučić! In psychology this is called ‘Freudian slip’. That’s what happened to everyone who saw Vučić where he was not. Martinović, Orlić, Vučević and all the others who have been attributing to me what was actually in their minds.”¹²

The culmination of the negative attitude towards Vučić and the present government lies in the words of Dušan Petričić, who denotes it, in a moralistic pathos, as anti-civilizational, but also as the embodiment of destruction and shame: “Let’s simplify things, the two most numerous political groups in this nation are those who are not ashamed and those who are. I am ashamed to sit at home while this corrupt, dishonest, criminal, and truth be told - fascist regime, destroys the last atoms of normality and elementary conditions to breathe and live as a dignified human being. Red line separating them from legitimate political options was crossed even before they came to power. And bloody metal bars and shirts are a relatively small crime. They committed much larger ones. They killed education. They killed the judiciary. They killed health. They killed culture, art. They killed the parliament. There are many big crimes. They will have to be held accountable for this. Fighting this government is not a political issue but a civilizational one.”¹³

Destructive and criminal, as noted by Dušan Petričić, the existing government deserves the epithet of anti-civilizational. This determinant is an umbrella that encompasses its basic antidemocratic and authoritarian-tyrannical nature, which critics talk about constantly, glibly and loudly.

In addition to the political descriptions and evaluations expected to be radically negative, critics of the government also focused on its psychological and moral side which is inseparable from the personality of its first man, Aleksandar Vučić. The Serbian president is portrayed as a psychologically and morally controversial person, above all prone to lying, personal insecurity, aggression, leaning on his closest relatives like his own brother, and inappropriate manipulations of media. Thus, the leader of the opposition Nova Stranka, Zoran Živković, says: “When you are confident, you do not lie. When you are confident, you do not insult. When you are sure about something, you are talking to everyone, even your opponents, in the desire to convince them of your attitude. You’re not tense. You do not whine about working for 25 hours every day. This means that Vučić knows he is weak. Vučić is the ruler of lies, a lie is his truth.”¹⁴

11 Dragan Đilas, „Ili ste protiv zla na vlasti ili ga podržavate [Either you are against this ruling evil or you support it],“ *Vreme*, No. 1459, p. 12

12 Predrag Koraksić Corax, „Vučić je Hitler u njihovim glavama [Vučić is Hitler in their heads],“ interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3541, p. 16

13 Dušan Petričić, „Borba protiv ove vlasti je civilizacijsko pitanje [Fight against this regime is a civilizational issue],“ *Danas*, 24.12.2018.

14 Zoran Živković, „Vučić zna da je slab [Vučić knows he is weak],“ interview with Mijat Lakićević, *Novi magazin*, No. 398, p. 18



Novi magazin, 13th December 2018

The same motive of Vučić's alleged dishonesty appears in the political interpretation of the government's actions by the former leader of the Democratic Party, Dragan Đilas, who is currently trying to return to the political scene. The alleged production of lies also leads to a profound, almost fatal division in the society: "I never said to the SNS: you are against Serbia. People who vote for you think it will be better for them, stop dividing us into those who are for Serbia and against Serbia, stop spreading hatred, stop lying to these people."¹⁵

Personal obsession by Aleksandar Vučić exceeds the obsession with him personally and is also transmitted to his brother Andrej, who is presented as a business eminence in some circles. Dragan Đilas tends to spread this rumor: "Because Andrej Vučić is sitting on the board of directors of the MKS, Azotara, Petrohemija and Srbijagas, in Kula before the elections at the membership meeting. And he decides about everything in Serbia just as much as Aleksandar Vučić. Simply, this is why. I have a brother, but you never heard of him. How does everyone know about Vučić's brother?"¹⁶

The obsession with Aleksandar Vučić's personality demonstrated by Živković and Đilas is further accompanied by the accusations of criminal behavior which is direct, fierce and consistent. In an extremely simplified manner, this type of propaganda is manifested by Nebojša Zelenović, the current president of the Šabac municipality, who intends to politically attack Serbia in European institutions.

His political speech abounds with insinuations and accusations of the undemocratic character of the government and irregularities in the electoral procedure. Seeking to challenge any democratic foundation of Vučić's authority, Zelenović calls him a political criminal. The basis for such accusation is contained in a number of irregularities that allegedly happened during the local elections where the Serbian Progressive Party, led by Aleksandar Vučić, dominantly and unequivocally won.

On the eve of his stay at the headquarters of European institutions in Strasbourg, specifically the Council of Europe, Nebojša Zelenović talks about the political crime in Serbia: "I will talk about political crime that occurs before, during and after the elections. Behind each of these individual situations there is one political project that includes: marginal web portals, journalists and media influenced by the SNS, who criminalize a particular person or organization through their reporting; this is then taken on by the authorities in the abused institutions, whether police or prosecution, then someone is deprived of liberty and a change is invoked in the local self-government council's majority and situation for urgent elections is prepared. Among other things, we will enclose the statements of the President of the Municipality of Novi Beograd Nenad Milenković, who was in detention for six months, and Miloš Simonović, Mayor of Niš, who was in detention for more than a month, and nothing happened afterwards. Simply, this was supposed to serve the political purposes which should lead SNS to power in the local community in the future."¹⁷

Identifying the government with the infamous Zemun Clan, active during the 1990's and early 2000's, the former party colleague of the current Šabac Municipality President and former leader of the Democratic Party, Bojan Pajtić, criminalizes the government even more brutally. The Zemun Clan was connected with the classic criminal activities - murder, kidnapping and trafficking of enormous amounts of drugs - as well as for the direct involvement

¹⁵ Dragan Đilas, „Strah, mržnja i agresija moraju da prestanu [Fear, hatred and aggression need to stop],“ interview with Nenad Čaluković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 360, p. 22

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 23

¹⁷ Nebojša Zelenović, „Upoznaću Evropu sa političkim kriminalom u Srbiji [I will tell Europe about the crime in Serbia],“ interview with Radoslav Čebić, *Vreme*, No. 1451, p. 12

in the murder of the first non-communist prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Đinđić, who is frequently regarded as the symbol of modernization reforms in the Serbian society and the state. Interestingly, although he had been the political opponent to Zoran Đinđić, Aleksandar Vučić was the one who started the initiative for erecting the monument in honour of Zoran Đinđić. In addition, quite a few politically active persons have recognized the similarities between Đinđić's legacy and Vučić's political activity. Interpretation of Pajtić's remark should therefore be sought within a malignant political framework. It is best recognized by the vulgar metaphor meant to criminalize Aleksandar Vučić and undermine the respect shown to Đinđić by the current government, both symbolically and realistically. In a storm of opposition slander, aimed at underestimating any idea about Vučić's reformatory agenda and practice, Pajtić claims: "Vučić has no special talents. He simply decided to design Serbia as a mafia formation, controlled and ruled by him for as long as he desires. It is common knowledge that Serbian Progressive Party is the political wing of the 'Zemun Clan', and that *Informers* is the Serbian Progressive Party news bulletin."¹⁸

The anticivilisational, non-democratic and fascist government, as seen by the critics of current politics, carries out acts of political repression towards the media. Two important circumstances in the present, politically highly controversial story of the Serbian media, reveal all the bias and argumentative weaknesses of the current situation criticism. Namely, the proponents of the "journalistic guild rights", self-proclaimed as morally, politically and socially unique and exceptional, assume this self-assigned role provides them the status of impunity from government criticism, as well as preferential treatment over other political actors by those in power. Open government criticism of journalistic publications or statements has been deemed immoral. This opinion was expressed in a lapidary statement made by Dragana Pejović, journalist of *NIN*: "It is non-democratic to comment on the media from the public offices, as they are not football clubs with a personal choice on who to support."¹⁹

Regardless of the indicative circumstances - that none of the major politically hostile media is prohibited, or in any way unable to appear or advertise on the Serbian media market - most journalists, sharing the misconception as to journalistic excellence, claim to be under government pressure and report constant government controversy over journalists that propels or spreads fear, and closes or narrows horizons of critical thought.

The general perception on journalism, politics, as well as social and cultural atmosphere, as portrayed by government critics, has best been summed up in one part of the interview with the abbot Sava Janjić, published in a Belgrade weekly: "In the existing Serbian imaginary of politics and media, everything has become a reality show with no morals or responsibility. Free media are an important corrective factor, much like judicial independence and other elements of a democratic society. However, similar to politics with no morals which ultimately leads to totalitarianism, media with no responsibility or morals become cheap tabloids or serve as means of some interest groups in their effort to manipulate the public. Media should not give straightforward answers, but offer fact-based arguments which indicate possible conclusions, to be made by the readers on their own free will. Unfortunately, this is a rare example today because politization of the media has become a usual event, either for the purpose of serving the government or fighting against it; professional journalism in Serbia is therefore questionable, except in a couple of dailies and weeklies including *NIN*. A society where no room is left for serious investigative journalism, criticism, or even healthy political satire, able to improve the life of that very society, condemns itself to languishing

¹⁸ Bojan Pajtić in Olja Bečković article, „Na vlasti je političko krilo zemunskog klana [Political wing of the Zemun Clan is in power]“, *NIN*, no. 3541, p. 12

¹⁹ Dragana Pejović, „I vaši su naši [Yours are also ours]“, *NIN*, no. 3548

in the sphere of immoral tabloids which use political gossip, bizarre information and open pornography to turn people into an ignorant, passive, easily politically manipulated mass. The atmosphere in the media is much more complicated than 20 years ago, and the fear of public lynch, open threats and insults to journalists have become a part of the everyday political (non)culture. With this treatment of the media, speaking of European orientation of Serbia is totally absurd.”²⁰

The same spiritual and political relationship with this high member of the clergy is shared by the director of the opposition television N1 - official partner of the CNN, Jugoslav Ćosić, who states the following: “Everything that Aleksandar Vučić does aims to discourage the freedom of media and discredit the reporters. In addition, he has stated on several occasions that he would not disturb media independence. But the truth is completely different. The manner used by the president of Serbia in communication with the reporters and the press representatives he dislikes is rude, abnormal, and unacceptable by the standards of the society we aim to establish. Editors and reporters of television N1 do not accept it. The minister of the police has directly put the reporters of N1 in danger. It is outrageous, unseen before. By referring to us as the Đilas–Šoljak’s television, while his political party androids continue parroting the same lines, the president creates a context in which we are an opposition television, not a professional one. I believe that the president of Serbia directly and deliberately keeps intimidating the media, although the true meaning of his words is wrapped up in an entitled, so-called freedom of speech. Reporters and media outside the grip of government control are in fear again and so is the whole society. Causing this fear is none other than Aleksandar Vučić himself.”²¹

Aleksandar Vučić has been denounced as the generator of fear among journalists because of his unconventional public performance, often permeated by a combination of emotion and polemics. As such, his presence in politics and in the media is, in fact, disputable. Moreover, Vučić’s numerous manifestations of excess emotion, and often the hypocritical lack of rational restraint, are not the only source of controversy in the eyes of his critics. Vučić’s access to the media has also been overshadowed by how the Serbian president perceives the media. Vučić’s realistic perception – that the media are not and could not be politically neutral, but always communicate and protect certain political and financial interests – has become the grounds for open attacks on him by the “endangered journalistic species” in Serbia. In that respect, the journalist of *NIN* Dragana Pejović writes: “The press is not free; they always belong to someone, while journalists are paid to fight against him. Journalists do not protect the interests of citizens, but the opposition. He refrains from reading the newspapers in which he is criticized, and so should you. He supports freedom and democracy, but will be faster than the courts to accuse newspapers of publishing fabrications. A man must really be the grand master of propaganda to be able to use so many fallacious arguments in one sentence. Anyway, hats off to him for that; however, it is not in line with his ‘I never conduct propaganda’ statement. And even if he does, spreading propaganda is not the same thing as abusing power, especially not to settle accounts with his political opponents and, more importantly, few media who are prepared to criticize the work of government - not him personally. The truth of the matter is that criticism in the media, which is rarely personal, becomes personal in this case simply because one person controls all the levers of power in the country. After all, Vučić is quite open about being involved in all decision-making.”²²

20 Sava Janjić in Olja Bečković article, „Oligarhija demokratiju pretvara u diktaturu [Oligarchy turns democracy into dictatorship]“, *NIN*, no. 3543, p.13

21 Jugoslav Ćosić in Radoslav Čebić article, „Društvo je u strahu od Vučića [The society fears Vučić]“, *Vreme*, no. 1452, p. 11

22 Dragana Pejović, „I vaši su naši [Yours are also ours]“, *NIN*, no. 3548, p. 43



Vreme, 1st November 2018

Vučić's skepticism towards media neutrality and his awareness of the sheer interest present in every newsroom, research portal, television, radio and other media, brings to the politically suggestive, albeit quite irrational conclusion that the president of Serbia promotes violence towards reporters of the unsympathetic media. The editor-in-chief of weekly *Vreme*, Dragoljub Žarković, therefore insists on the assumed repressive nature of Vučić's governing style, revealing both his evil intentions towards the opposing media and insecurities regarding his unquestioned maintenance of power: "It is a sure sign of weakness when the regime starts to hunt domestic traitors, mercenaries and foreign spies. Denouncing all those who criticize the government as enemies of the state is a dangerous rhetoric, or playing with fire. And one never knows how that might end. It has no other purpose but to intimidate few of the reproachful public, and if you think that it will simply pass by, think again. Us and them included."²³

All the critical narrative about the political opponents of Aleksandar Vučić and his party could not be articulated without the reminiscence of the period from 1998 to 2000, when the current president of Serbia was the minister of information. With this in mind, a particular "culture of remembrance" is being revived, using razor sharp words to challenge the democratic legitimacy and political credibility of the first man in power. Political and moralistic charge which connects indignation and anger, can easily be recognized in the quote from an article written by the politically active journalist Tamara Skrozza regarding the Public Information Law from 1999: "Nobody was punished for the crimes against the media, violation of the freedom of speech and public information; neither judges, socialists, radicals, JUL party members, nor others who silently approved the media bloodshed that reached its grand finale on 11th April 1999 when Slavko Ćuruvija was shot to death. In the meantime, well-versed in additional skills, the mastermind behind this project, the former minister of information Aleksandar Vučić, has been awarded an office which gives him the chance to apply modern methods and reduce to rubble the remains he missed out on from 1998 to October 2000. The minister of information in time of the establishment and validity of such a law today publicly selects targets and condemns journalists. Although quite bleak, almost hopeless, the situation still serves to prove that justice is not completely out of reach; it is only slower than we expected."²⁴

An assumption that the "justice undone" to Vučić has caused the current condition in freedom of the press in Serbia gets a thunderous confirmation from the journalist of weekly *NIN*, Dragana Pejović. Despite the European orientation of the Serbian government, as well as Vučić himself, she claims that Serbia significantly deviates from the standards accepted by the EU, because the government keeps breaking European media laws systematically and deliberately, and causes the current condition in the Serbian media, fundamentally unacceptable by the serious journalists: "Celebration of anniversary of Vučić's information law is publicly unspoken of; nevertheless, it is held under a slogan 'how to destroy the disobedient media' and hosts all the requisite institutions - Serbian Security Intelligence Agency (BIA), the Parliament, and the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM). The current government has decided to mark the twentieth anniversary of the most disgraceful media law in Serbian history, and celebrate the early works of the former minister of information Aleksandar Vučić. However, not even in his honour was it able to reestablish the legal decisions issued on 21st October 1998, as it declaratively continues to strive for the European and not the Turkish values and conceptions of freedom. But it was able to show us what can be done in the scope of current applicable laws. First of all, to infringe them."²⁵

23 Dragoljub Žarković, „Špijuni na vetrometini – mračne sile ometaju zlatno doba u kome ćemo izvoziti svinjske papke, kokoške nožice i muda od labuda [Windswept spies – the dark forces disturb the golden age which exports pork hoofs, chicken feet, and bollocks]", *Vreme*, no. 1449, p. 4

24 Tamara Skrozza, „Račun koji neće nikada zastariti [The bill that will never expire]", *Vreme*, no. 1450, p. 25

25 Sandra Petrušić, „Postupi po naređenju [Do as you are told]", *NIN*, no. 3539, p. 30

In addition to the alleged control over all the major media, the current government is thought to have prepared a political group of the extreme right wing; one who will, in the event of greater political polarization and social tensions, defend the current political nomenclature in power by any means necessary. More precisely, the extreme right wing is being developed with an aim to brutalise the political scene to the point of using physical violence. This role, according to the sociologist Jovo Bakić, has been given to Vojislav Šešelj, leader of the Serbian Radical Party: "In case of further right-wing radicalization of the entire continent - Serbia will certainly follow, because Vučić will do his best to participate - Šešelj and his political party will possibly be expected to carry out political or even physical executions, as this is what they did during the 1990s. We can only hope this does not happen and fight against it."²⁶

Visions and predictions of violence, spoken of by the critical intellectual Jovo Bakić, almost perfectly fit into the narrative of the writer and member of opposition People's Party, Marko Vidojković. According to Vidojković, as well as Bakić, SNS is a party of political bullies, unsympathetic of the liberal and democratic values and practice. Political life, dominated by the party of the current president Vučić, is the state of constant government campaign manifested through a high level of public verbal aggression. This political pattern towards the media is a phase in preparation for the political and physical violence among politicians and citizens.

In a characteristically fierce style, tactless and devoid of consideration of the facts or the fundamental moral and political values, the mentioned public officer writes the following: "Since we live under dictatorship, the never-ending campaign allows room only for his highness - the president. If one criticizes, one gets accused of lynching, rape, violence, or threatening. It is a paradox that the accused are those under threat and terror. There is no freedom. Moreover, the repression is inversely proportional to how much the regime feels safe."²⁷

In addition to the discourse about moral and political accusations, Vidojković's statement also exhibits a prophetic element. Based on pure personal intuition without any factual background to support his argument, Vidojković speaks about the prospect of an imminent end of Vučić's government, deeming it possible in only a short time ahead: "I think he will become more dangerous as he continues to lose control, although not as much as Milošević. The devotion to Milošević did not stop his supporters from physical assaults or murder in the 1990s, whereas in SNS everything revolves around money. And when the money is gone, or someone is not satisfied enough, SNS will collapse, too. The end of dictatorship might even be closer than we think."²⁸

"Brutal" and authoritarian populist policy is certainly not the creation of one man. It is a product of joint efforts of the leader and his party. In the scope of demystification of Vučić's political project, the question about the organisation structure and functioning of the Serbian Progressive Party remains. The dominant political party in Serbia has been presented as an organisation comprising the functional and organisational principles of the mafia, army, and the last century communist parties. Therefore, it is a perfectly organized group characterized by political fanaticism, communist dedication, military loyalty and discipline, and mafia unscrupulousness. Using a comprehensive and constant membership control, thanks to the reward-punishment system, a strong and efficient political party has developed and now it dominates the Serbian political scene. This is how the Serbian Progressive Party, member of the European People's Party (EPP), has been depicted by the journalist Vera Didanović, according to her interviews with numerous public persons: "Whether the influence comes from the military, mafia, or communists from 1946 is less relevant; the point is that progressive party mem-

26 Radmilo Marković and Filip Švarm, „Bomba u septičkoj jami [A bomb in the sewer]", *Vreme*, no. 1453, p. 6

27 Marko Vidojković in Stefan Slavković article, „Vučić menja dlaku, ali ne i čud [Vučić never changes his spots]", *NIN*, no. 3548, p. 46

28 Ibid, p. 46

bers have created a headquarter-command organisation structure, where all initiatives and decisions are made at the top, while the ‘bottom screws’ only execute orders. The machine has not broken, the informed claim. Quite the contrary, constant control with occasional lubrication is a part of the project based on which this gigantic apparatus has been built and put to work. Even if Tomislav Nikolić attempts to found a new political party, the ‘lubrication’ is the reason why a significant outflow of the current progressive party membership is not expected. A chain is formed in which the normative rules for the number of the recruited members and secure voters have been established and serve as the basis for cash rewards or political advancement. As a result, we now have one of the most crafty governments ever, composed of waiters, bus ticket controllers, chauffeurs, and so on. Another example of expressing gratitude is redirecting a portion of the salary to the party, while new recruits do not complain against performing the same work, regardless of their official job title - the continuous election campaign.”²⁹

Loyalty and providing any type of required benefit which the individual provides for the party, as well as the undisputed obedience of its members are the key criteria for functioning of SNS. These criteria are also valid for promotion, in party, as well as state and business hierarchy in the society and the country.

Based on ideological principle of unifying different ideological principles, flexible regarding spiritual orientation of the political activism, SNS is a party that has the potential to absorb different social layers and the power to respond to numerous objections of the opposition from different perspectives.

Principal flexibility in the ideological sense opens the possibility to make the stability of the society and the state the key political ideal, and, at the same time, to modernize the society in the conditions of authoritarian populist and right-wing media mobilization. Columnist of the *Danas* paper, Zoran Panović, writes about this in an open fashion: “Ten years from the establishment of SNS the only true ideology of Vučić is stability. Vučić learned very well on the example of Asian tigers that strong economy does not have to depend on strong democracy. Just as Tito did not exactly look like a dictator in the company of Honecker, Brezhnev, Ceausescu, Papadopoulos, Franco, Salazar, perhaps even De Gaulle a bit, but Milošević did, because there were only Mečiar and Lukashenko, current ‘stabilocracy’ trends of ‘non-liberal democracies’, populism and renaissance of the Right, support the fact that Vučić, with its personal power and authority will not be so above the average. On contrary, there is a chance someone will actually like him more. One of the main methodological contradictions of Vučić is the fact that he wants to enlighten and digitalize Serbia in parallel to the indoctrination and propaganda of ‘radical waves’ style.”³⁰

In addition to strict discipline and clientelist structure, SNS presents itself as the party that relies on the personality of its leader. Cult of personality is built around the political leader. On the other hand, the party itself is based on the principle of “party political usefulness”, which leads to the consequence that the advancement in the party or state hierarchy does not depend on personal knowledge, skills, talent and competence, but of the usefulness of the individual or group of individuals for the party. SNS is a “party machine”, ideal for partisanship, with the cult of personality of its leader and its functions as an anti-meritocratic political organization. This interpretation of the organization and relations within the central party of the ruling coalition is aimed not only at moral and political defamation of the mentioned party, but to serve as basis for political stigmatization of people the said party delegates to the key positions in the civil service.

29 Vera Didanović, „Kako vođa kaže [As the leader says],“ *NIN*, no. 3538, p. 10

30 Zoran Panović, “Stabilnost, digitalizacija i radikalski talas [Stability, Digitalization and the Radical Wave]”, *Nedeljnik*, no. 351, p. 18

“Un-enlightened”, “violent”, “blindly obedient party” based on the “Führerprinzip” principle will create the same structure and manner of functioning of the state and society it controls. In the context of this kind of characterization of any leader, whether it is a ruling party or not, the critical narrative is complemented by sharp remarks referring to the execution of government that were specified in the media and political and symbolic sense. The principal objection that the man in power is a dictator and usurper has been detected several times in the quoted articles, and it is complemented with the position on the practice of rule that reminds of totalitarian societies in which the power was exercised using almighty “secret police” that controlled the entire society and citizens. Rada Trajković, Serbian pro-western politician from Kosovo, claims that Vučić rules as if Serbia was Eastern Germany where the decisive political role was given to the all-powerful secret police Stasi: “Vučić rules as if Serbia is Eastern Germany. He brought back old State security structures; the merciless Stasi system has been installed. This is what I fear the most. All that think differently are the enemy, and the State security has a specific relation to these people, their families. Horrible intellectual genocide has befallen over Serbia. Here, you can buy a vote for 20 euro, a couple of bags of humanitarian aid, a sandwich. Pathological power develops the energy and the mechanism that destroys all values, thus, destroying the people. It will surely fall. But it is clear that it is not ready to fall through the democratic process. This is why the media is not free, there is no intellectual debate, no other side, the possibility for people to choose. Vučić functions by imposing solutions.”³¹

To prove that the reference to the time of communism is not only related to the DDR, but is extended to the almighty Stalin’s NKVD, serves the statement of the actor Sergej Trifunović, leader of the Movement of Free Citizens, who literary says that this government is the combination of “thievery” and abuse of security services: “Each government has its own combinations, but the thing is that at one point this government starts impacting reason. This is the rule of terror. Absolute control. I do not want to live in a country where they interrogate my neighbors, in which my neighbors are scared because of me. I don’t want certain characters coming up to the door, asking is this the man. When did we form the NKVD? If you have the absolute majority, why don’t you let the people speak? What’s up with the fear? You control all the media, now you want to control all the people?”³²

Despite the control over the entire society and the aspiration to control each individual, the government of Aleksandar Vučić failed in reaching any of its goals. Being a failure, the government is also violent with the tendency to turn the domination into a totalitarian order, which is clearly pointed out by the already quoted former Chief of Staff of the Army of Serbia Zdravko Ponoš, Vice-president of the People’s Party of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Jeremić:

“The regime did not reach any of its proclaimed goals – social, economic, or foreign policy, they all lack results. Someone has to be responsible for that. Since they cannot blame foreign policy factors, they have to find the scapegoats in the country. Instead of fulfilling campaign promises to the citizens of Serbia, Vučić fulfils promises he gave to the foreigners, adulating the more powerful, just like he did with Šešelj, a long time ago. In parallel, he polarizes the public, he does not act as the president of all citizens, but as the governor of the enslaved Serbia that kisses the hem of an emperor’s dress. This is his way of rule and this leads towards the radicalization of relations within the society with unforeseeable consequences.”³³

31 Rada Trajković, “I oni su patrioti a ja sam izdajnik [So, they are the patriots and I am the traitor],” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, no. 3548, p. 18

32 Sergej Trifunović, “Kad smo to uveli NKVD [When did we form the NKVD],” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, no. 3548, p. 12

33 Zdravko Ponoš, „Vučić je guverner porobljene Srbije [Vučić is the governor of enslaved Serbia],” interview with Filip Švarm, *Vreme*, no. 1449, p. 11

In addition to the disputes style of rule, almost monstrously depicted party machinery and unscrupulous propaganda, the secret of Vučić's success lies within the social and economic dependency of certain, very wide layers of society he keeps under control and politically loyal due to deliberate avoidance of certain systemic regulatory solutions (especially the law on pay grades). In this sense, the editor in chief of the magazine *Vreme*, Dragoljub Žarković writes: "The poor, such as we are, are more patient and mostly aware that we depend on the state's mercy. There are a lot of cities in Serbia where the only people with stable income are employed by the state and it is highly unlikely, they will put on the yellow vests. Vučić and his crew control the public opinion and they will continue to do so, to a greater and more brutal extent, but the basis of it all is the control over income and distribution that stimulates voting in line with the wishes of the current power. Tightening of the iron noose around the neck of the average, majority voter in Serbia was visible a month ago. Here, we must note that the state avoided adopting the law that would make the pension rights and competences a form of contract between the state and the citizens, nevertheless, it was prescribed that these relations and amounts shall be set by the Government. Something similar to Palma in Jagodina: 'Three thousand for the lady.' The same happened with the new delay of application of pay grades in the public sector. Here also, the Government will act the arbiter instead of determining strict rules that would secure equal pay for the same or similar work including certain level of expertise. If the pensions and salaries would be determined by law in the public sector, the government would lose its main maneuver field in the battle for voters."³⁴

According to Ponoš, the government has no results, Žarković points out that it remains in power as a sort of socio-economic blackmail and media manipulation, while the only production that is intensive and provides results is the production of enemies. This is the topic for the editor of *NIN* Milan Čulibrk, with the accent put on the fact that the real enemy of the government, when considering its actions and results of them, are the citizens of Serbia: "The government in Serbia has, at the expiration of this year, really become a regional, European, even world champion. It broke every record in production of – enemies. There are no precise official records (at least I hope there isn't), but I would not be surprised if, this year, the number of enemies grew by 700-800 percent. Because, you can get on that list very easily – the only thing you need to do is use your brain. However, the issue is that, the biggest enemies of this government are not the people that are usually taking this role – Đilas, Jeremić, Janković, Obradović, Tadić, Stefanović (Borko, who said Nebojša). It's not the tycoons, public figures, actors, directors, known and unknown... Not even the foreign ambassadors, suspected of forming former Governments by the current one. Not the leaders from the region, foreign officials... No, for the current government, the biggest enemies are the citizens of Serbia that are still fighting for their right to their own opinion, may it be the wrong one. That do not consent to lies, blackmail. That have not bought the story that the alchemists are in power in Serbia that can turn stone to gold. That doubt that, as Milan Knežević would put it, the water is hard, and the stone is soft. That will never agree that anybody's individual interest may be above the mutual interest of all citizens and the society as a whole. That will never agree that party membership card is more important than the students index to do da job."³⁵

In addition to being depicted as inefficient and manipulative, brutal in the media, the government is also described as incompetent. In a series of headlines related to this topic, one should clearly single out the ones from the period of the celebration of World War I Centennial. At the gathering in Paris, Serbia was, by the sitting arrangement on the ceremony and by displaying the flag of Kosovo, literally diplomatically and politically humiliated.

³⁴ Dragoljub Žarković, "Do izbora dva putica – Zlatni lav, narogusen i ljut sav tvrdi da izbori nikoga ne interesuju a sprema se da pojede tramvaj ceo i oblaka jedan deo [Two paths to elections – Golden Lion 'all bristle and angry' claims that elections are of no interest to anyone, but is getting ready to swallow 'the whole tram and part of a cloud']" [verses from a Serbian children's poem in the title], *Vreme*, no. 1457, p. 4

³⁵ Milan Čulibrk, "Stvarni neprijatelji Srbije [Real Enemies of Serbia]", *NIN*, no. 3548, p. 4

Certain reporters used the presence of the President of Serbia to develop a position on the foreign policy incompetence of the first man of the Serbian politics. This form of political malice, wrapped in the form of critique may be interpreted not only as the chaotic expression of the passion of the opposition, but also as the intellectual "abolition" for the omissions of the organizer and commendation to the activities of the hostile Albanian lobby in France.

The motive of foreign policy incompetence and primitive nationalism as the defining characteristic of the current government in Serbia was especially stipulated by Veljko Lalić, the columnist of the *Nedeljnik* weekly. In his editorial, he noted the highest political incompetence of the current government on the global level that was seen, as a symbol and in reality, at the Centennial of the World War I in Paris. The reason for this incompetence is embedded in the addiction to national myths and rejection of the elite: "Out of three national myths that we have, the Battle of Kosovo, 1804 – when we started the first civil revolution in Europe, and 1914-1918, we gave up the last two. We live in a country of primitive nationalism where we brag how we are the only ones that can gather a football team, while the 'wannabe' westerners must play tennis, not realizing that the people spinning this story actually do not talk to their best friends, cities. They don't talk to themselves. Serbia crushed its elite, which resulted in us not having diplomacy that would be able to, at least, find out, who will sit where on a ceremony like that, so, when the going gets tough, we can play dead. All of these starlets and screwing around will lead us to the wall eventually. Vučić doesn't realize, what interests him the most, that Tadić lost elections when an advisor-amateur, known for hanging out in *Dijagonala* [restaurant in Belgrade], prepared him for his last meeting with Merkel. There are no improves in the big world! This is why a Serbian President, 100 years after the French generals proposed the division of Germany into occupation zones, where Serbia would get one, got a seat next to the Austrian President, sitting across the winners. Vučić was treated like Gavrilo Princip in Paris, just like Serbia was ISIS before ISIS in the nineties."³⁶

Fixing the image of the Serbian government and its first man as incompetent to understand the current historical process initiated from one of the reporters of *Nedeljnik* from the manifestation in Paris by the end of 2018, that openly confirmed that all political statements of the official Belgrade regarding the Centennial of the World War I were "mute" compared to the powerful lobby activity of the Kosovo Albanians. Insisting on the negative stereotype given to the government was stronger than the awareness of the diplomatic scandal of the official France and hostility of Kosovo Albanians, expressed numerous times. In this context, Ana Otašević writes: "What Vučić, Vulin and Lazanski can't seem to understand is that in the current war waged between Belgrade and Priština, the book 'Birth of Democracy: Hashim Thaci and the road to Kosovo's independence', written by the former advisor of Bernard Kouchner, is more powerful weapon than the tanks and airplanes on the military parade in Serbia. Vučić's strategy of wearing Đinđić's coat will not pass. It doesn't matter that the ten-year long engagement of the European Union on Kosovo turned out to be a fiasco. It doesn't matter that nobody believes in the 'Brussels Dialog' mediated by Mogherini. Media strategy is the important thing. As Vučić, Thaci also needs the alibi outside the country. He saw the meeting in Paris, where all the world leaders gathered, as an opportunity to affirm his statesman legitimacy. He used this opportunity in spectacular way, while Serbia showed, once more, that it has no diplomacy. This is why Vučić looks like a person fighting for a lost cause."³⁷

The government, Vučić more accurately, is presented in a negative light. Participation in the Brussels process dedicated to the resolution of the Kosovo issue looks like a "lost cause". The government is making no progress, is

³⁶ Veljko Lalić, "Homeland", *Nedeljnik*, no. 357, p. 4

³⁷ Ana Otašević, "Diplomatska ofanziva: Hašim Tači i Pasuljanske livade [Diplomatic offensive: Hashim Thaci and the Pasuljanske field]", *Nedeljnik*, no. 357, p. 8

not aware of the reality, does not see the necessities of the global and European politics, hesitates, has no lobby channels in France or elsewhere. It has rejected the elite since it is populist and historically wrong. This is how the *Nedeljnik* reporters saw the plot of the events surrounding the ceremony dedicated to the World War I in Paris. One should always point out that, whenever something bad happens to Vučić in the world, he got what he deserved. This political underline is visible in all headlines after the Paris scandal. The treatment of Aleksandar Vučić is no better than the treatment he got on the disgracefully organized ceremony by the French government. Humiliation inflicted upon a country, its people and the bloody history are irrelevant compared to the feeling of malevolent satisfaction due to unpleasantness suffered by the President.

Still, it's not only the incompetence of the government in foreign affairs the only problem in global relations. Vučić's rule is often, especially in right-wing media, suspected for the acute lack of patriotism. Doubts of the patriotic charge of the foreign policy, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, is most frequently expressed by the pro-Russian weekly *Pečat*. At the same time, any type of symbolic gesture that gets Serbia closer to Putin's Russia is considered a political gesture worthy of praises: "At the beginning of the meeting in Kremlin, Aleksandar Vučić presented Vladimir Putin with an appropriate gift, a book 'My Beautiful Serbia'. The books have always been gifts with multiple meanings. When Boris Tadić gave Ivo Josipović the 'Vocabulary of Ex-Yu Mythology' in such a condescending manner, we had plenty of reasons to feel ashamed. If the symbolism we hope for was present in the book Aleksandar Vučić gave Vladimir Putin, the shame and fear we have been experiencing all of this time may be replaced by the hope our beautiful Serbia reached safe hands. This is, naturally, provided that Ana Brnabić and the ones whispering in her ear, doesn't change her mind, again..."³⁸

In parallel to the affirmation of the Serbian and Russian cooperation and the creation of the cult of Vladimir Putin, *Pečat* undermines the belief in the European future of Serbia. This dimension of reporting should be seen as the process of establishment of the critical standard valuating each step of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President in the process of Euro-integrations. If the European integrations are something that cannot be recalled and something very wrong in its essence, everything the government does related to European tasks of Serbia is interpreted as hopelessly wrong, historically and politically immature and undeniably unnecessary. In the context of journalistic undeniable undermining of Euro-integrations, *Pečat* gave room to an interview of the advisor of the President of the Republic of Srpska, prof. dr Srđan Perišić, promoter of the pro-Russian policy and anti-European public official: "Serbia is in a difficult situation, but it is much better than the one ten, twenty or thirty years ago. European forces and the USA that were joined in crushing Yugoslavia from the outside, still see Serbia and the Serbs as the geopolitical enemy. The symbol of this was the event in Paris, the treatment of the Serbian delegation at the World War I Centennial. Now these forces are focused on the completion of the independence of Kosovo and separating Serbia from cooperation with Russia, because this cooperation was renewed lately. The second dimension of the difficult position of Serbia is the responsibility of the Serbian elite. Unfortunately, the majority of the elite is still blinded by the West, and this prevents them from understanding the western geopolitics. However, there is still a chance, regardless of the difficult position. This is the change of the world order. We have to understand this change. If Serbia failed to understand what happened with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, that the world order changed at that time, I hope it will understand current global and European changes. Correction of Washington's position cannot be outside the basic western geopolitics towards Serbia, which is to keep the Serbs on the Balkans divided and put pressure on them to give up the Russia ties... the elite under Putin started to understand. They realized the key issue, which is that the Russia is a separate civilization that needs to

38 Nikola Vrzic, "Prelepa Srbija u rukama Vladimira Putina [Beautiful Serbia in the hands of Vladimir Putin]," *Pečat*, no. 539, p. 4



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build its own separate geopolitics. Serbia should learn from that example. Serbia should realize that the fact that it is trying to become part of the West for the last one hundred years, including the period of socialism, brought only suffering to Serbia and the Serbs.”³⁹

If the EU is an extremely bad idea in the current Serbian historical context, joining NATO is probably the worst. The visit of Jens Stoltenberg, General Secretary of NATO, to Belgrade at the end of last year, opened space for the renewal of anti-NATO feelings in Serbia, as well as suspecting Aleksandar Vučić for, allegedly, being politically naïve, for establishing trust with NATO and, thereafter, getting nearer the Northern-Atlantic Alliance. Reporter from *Pečat* Nikola Vrzić criticizes the attitude of the President related to NATO, while implicitly, yet again, very clearly, castigates the naivety and lack of rigor in contacts with the Western military alliance: “All those that think that this deepening of the cooperating with NATO will contribute to, for example, safety of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija are wrong, let alone in its northern part. Another quick reminder, just to provide some context. The value of these guarantees was recently show very clearly in the form of armed escort of Hashim Tachi when the visited the Gazivode lake. Stoltenberg’s visit to Belgrade was an ideal chance to clarify this event. To explain the Serbs why the NATO guarantees remained on paper only. To make a promise that something like this will never happen again, perhaps they will believe it again. But we did not get that, we got Stoltenberg’s promise, as Vučić said, that he will pick up the phone if (when?) a similar situation occurs again... And there was not a single word, the tiniest word, of mentioning any NATO guarantees that the Albanians with heavy arms will not invade the north of Kosovo when they feel like it.”⁴⁰ Vrzić uses an interesting rhetorical trick to paint an image of Vučić’s naivety and lack of political skills complete. He presents the regional aspirations of NATO towards the area of Western Balkans: “When we observe the efforts of NATO to suck in all the little states such as Montenegro or Albania, the efforts to do the same in Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, not to mention the stolen Kosovo, can anyone actually think they will leave Serbia alone, in the epicenter of the Western Balkans that cannot be complete without Serbia, to be neutral?!”⁴¹

Vrzić’s explication of NATO intentions is actually a message related to alleged reasons of Vučić’s lacking a stricter position towards the Alliance. Covered under the layer of facts and series of sound and reasonable questions, strategy Vrzić uses is to prove the correlation between NATO’s intentions to include the entire region and the tolerance of NATO intentions by Vučić related to the status and protection of the Serbs in Kosovo, which is the obligation of NATO. In an indirect, but not so hidden way, the suspicion of lack of patriotism and care of the state interest of Serbia displayed by Vučić grows as a political message coming from one of the most influential, if not the most influential, columnist of the pro-Russian *Pečat*.

In general, the image of the government in weekly papers is extremely negative. Except in very rare cases, members of the government will not be able to read anything positive about themselves in this genre of journalism. Positive evaluation of the activities of the government is possible only when their representatives speak of themselves. The range of negative attributes is very wide, it even inclines towards infinity since it is contextual, as a rule, that is, related to the sum of specific circumstances the define a political decision or direct a political, economic or some other process. Authoritative nature, media control, brutalization of the public, whether verbal or physical, while the clientelist system of the main party is copied to the state.

39 Srđan Perišić, “Srpska elita se ne razume u geopolitiku [Serbian elite does not understand geopolitics],” interview with Kolja Bešarević, *Pečat*, no. 548

40 Nikola Vrzić, “Uvek drag gost [Always a dear guest], *Pečat*, no. 540

41 Ibid

Examples of negative descriptions of the government are much more abundant than the stated most frequently used attributes and syntagma. The government seems like a marker determined by almost an endless variation of negative attributes.

Image of the Opposition – Between the Deficit of Political Credibility and Challenges of Endless Fight Against the Evil Personified in the Government

Image of the opposition in weeklies and editor’s columns of daily newspapers is far more complex and presented from a number of positions. In daily newspapers and weeklies that are critical towards the so-called, winners of the 5th October, such as *Informer* and *Pečat*, the description of the opposition is extremely negative. Also, this media lacks interviews with the representatives of the so-called Euro-reformistic opposition, and very small, almost non-existent, space is given to the representatives of the so-called anti-European opposition, including DSS and Dveri. Additionally, it is clear that Šešelj and the SRS do not have the same status as the other opposition parties, in the sense of omission of direct criticism, although they are certainly not the favorites of the media. Actually, unlike winners of the 5th October, the Radicals are not stigmatized in these media. Likewise, the articles on the opposition bear a very negative connotation, on almost all political issues, including the issue of political and every other credibility of opposition leaders. This is achieved by reminding of a period when certain current opposition leaders were in power, and most often in the form of open discussion related to their positions, opinions, direct or hidden agenda, or political practice. On the other hand, weeklies such as *Vreme*, *NIN*, *Novi magazin* and *Nedeljnik* provide an unequivocal support to the representatives of the opposition, with different intensity, but, in essence, the same. In this sense, in radically critical weeklies, the intensity of support for the opposition is higher and visible not only through the expression of attitude and opinions of the leaders of the opposition, but also through the power and radical character of the campaign against Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party. Unlike *Informer* and *Pečat*, the opposition leaders have significant space to present and explain their positions in these magazines, enabling explication of positions and opinions contrary to the argumentation and rhetoric of the government. This impact is undoubtedly extended to the readers of the given weekly and the capillary public. This current media and political constellation is partially “responsible” for the smoldering conflict between Vučić and the “elite”.

The complexity of the image of the opposition is seen in different approaches to the problem of its activity and potential. Pro-governmental print media, primarily the daily newspapers *Informer* and *Pečat*, to some extent, observe their activities as well as potential as disputable. At the same time, opposition weeklies, especially the ones severely critical towards the government, such as *Vreme* and *NIN*, usually state the public, that is, political infirmity, with a discourse that points to the democratic deficits of the order, with the deliberate heroization of opposition’s endeavors. In the weekly newspapers mentioned, despite the detailed and extensive analysis, the omission of or fragments of the critical review of the results of the Euro-Reform opposition from the period of power is obvious. This type of oblivion is no accident, it is deliberate, considering the fact that critical weeklies are an active participant in the inter-party debates, that is, they aspire to become a sort of an “intellectual supplement” in a hard and exhausting struggle between the political actors in Serbia.

A special role in attaching a connotation of negative value to the parties of the opposition is given to *Informer*, with its articles in their daily editions and editorial columns of Dragan J. Vučićević. Vučićević’s columns color the actors of the

opposition scene as problematic in moral and political sense and criticize opposition media and NGOs, with almost unavoidable reflection on the period of power of the Winners of the 5th October. The basic thesis could be summarized in the following statements: 1) current opposition has no moral credibility (due to highly corrupted political class comprising it) and political capacity to lead the country because of the failure of transition in Serbia, 2) in the media favoring the opposition, being the majority of print media, the current Government is under attack with no serious rational explanation and with only one goal, to remove it as soon as possible, 3) in the media supporting current opposition there is a doubtless discrimination of all those not directly confronted with Vučić's rule.

Vučićević's criticism of the Serbian opposition is equally targeted towards the opposition as the factor of the political life, and the media that are extremely critical towards the government. His criticism is always *ad hominem*, strictly personalized with the goal of attaining higher persuasiveness. This is why a certain individual is stigmatized, its moral and psychological profile is underlined so that such person is often described as non-worthy of any public function.

For understanding the political and media scene in Serbia, writing of the editor in chief of *Informer* is relevant for at least three mutually connected reasons. First, the style of writing and the content of messages from the articles of the *Informer's* editor maintain interest for politics with socially lower levels of society, for which it is presumed they read tabloids, and at the same time, they are considered loyal voters in the election process. Further, *Informer* is very important for this Government, because, day in day out, week in week out, it questions negative attitude and media and political images created and continuously reproduced by media critical towards the Government. Finally, *Informer* is the leader among daily newspapers in creating a negative value image of the current opposition as the political actor in Serbia.

The starting presumptions of Vučićević's writing include the understanding of the political opposition that is not limited to the political parties voting against the Government's political decisions, laws and other initiatives and proposals. The notion is wider, representing a network of mutually different organizations and public figures, in line with this perspective. We are, therefore, talking about the parties, and the representatives of the NGO sector, media, and intellectuals known to public, as well. Vučićević often attributes specific understanding of politics to the opposition leaders and their political and media allies. For leaders of the opposition politics represents an instrument for enrichment of the former political elite. This kind of understanding of the opposition represents the fuel for the campaign of the current government and media close to it in the conditions of high poverty and objectively scarce opportunities. It is exactly these campaigns that produce rage, that is, disappointment or even indifference with the opposition voters, with a clearly visible power to influence the citizens supporting current government to prevent restoration of the so-called corrupt political elite comprised of the Winners of the 5th October.

The following presumption of Vučićević's interpretation of the opposition as a political actor is the deficit of its patriotism, anti-Russian position and unquestionable loyalty to Western powers. For the purpose of winning the elections and showing loyalty to Western countries, in the opinion of the editor in chief of *Informer*, the opposition parties are ready to do all that is necessary in a given political moment, from starting different media campaigns to adopting certain acts that are the presumption of further destabilization of Serbia as a country.

Within the narrative on the loyalty to the West two mutually connected claims are used: on the alleged absence of coherent nationally responsible policy and distance towards Russia, that is considered permanent and constant ally of Serbia. The opposition declared as pro-democratic is turned into anti-democratic, corrupt and servants of the West, especially Washington, by the rigorous rhetoric used by Dragan J. Vučićević. Greed and hunger for power of the opposition leaders leads them towards perfidious and malicious political intentions and wishing for the

worst possible scenario for the society, that would result in their personal benefit. In this context, the editor in chief of *Informer* claims that the politics of the opposition should be observed in the context of the following moments that are relevant for its understanding.

The first motive is coming into power by non-democratic violent means with the pact with the West, primarily USA as well as the change of focus of Serbia in the geopolitical sense. The second motive, Serbia, instead of a free country, becomes a servant, gives up its good relations with Russia and blindly listens to the orders from the EU and the USA. The third motive that varies from article to article of this columnist is the return of the 5th October, that is, governing in the spirit of the post-5th-October Serbia. The focus of the narrative of the post-5th-October Serbia is the confrontation of the elite and the people, personal enrichment of the politicians and impoverishment of the common man, high corruption and crime, lack of care for the general good. Distinguished example of the critique of opposition leaders and their politics can be seen from the following quotation: "What do these people representing themselves as the leaders of the opposition today in Serbia actually want? What is the idea of all these aggressive media and political haters that are now openly calling for a lynch of the President Aleksandar Vučić and all of those that dare to say at least one positive thing about him and his administration? Say what? This so-called opposition wants power. Ok, that is legit. Every opposition all around the world wants to take power. But the problem is that the Serbian opposition has no intention to win this power is a legitimate, democratic way. They want to win by force. Their threatening messages, their politics of chaos, violence and bloody conflicts are supported by a small, almost minor number of Serbs. It is a sort of a paradox that this is where this story gets very dangerous. Because, if they cannot win over the people for their diabolic plan – and they can't – they will have to play on a foreigner's card. Those from Washington and London that would like to make Serbia, in line with the 5th-October recipe, the smallest possible servant country, for a slave's bowl of porridge, that would obediently content to everything. In case the interests match, domestic – interest of thieves and tycoons, and foreign – geo-strategic and anti-Russian, in Serbia, I am afraid that all evil is certainly possible, the Macedonian kind or, God forbid, the Ukrainian kind of evil."⁴²

Aforementioned critical motifs are continuously repeated by Vučićević, in an effort to create a fixed image of the opposition leaders as politicians without the authentic support from the people and desperate men without moral that only want the power, at any price, including the use of violence. What the editor of *Informer* finds very problematic is the open tendency to annul democratic procedure and practices in Serbia. Political positions we mentioned above are interpreted by him as the moral degeneracy of the opposition leaders and the accompanying lack of political credibility: "I would really like to know what are tycoon Đilas and his companions thinking? Three, four, five thousand of them gather, they walk around the center of the city, and then someone, I am guessing Vučić, gets really scarred and lets them govern the country? On a plate, with tea and biscuits. Ok, I know, they say there are 30-35,000 of them on the protests. So? Even if it were so, and it isn't, even if there were 50 or 100,000 of them, so what? And how? Let's get one thing straight right now, everywhere in the world, you come to power in two ways, only two – either democratic elections or violence – some sort of revolution, or coup d'état. What is it that tycoon Đilas, Vuk Ho Jeremić and Boško Ljotić Obradović actually want?! They said themselves they will not go to elections. Because, they say, elections are not fair, they steal and cheat at the elections. Well, if that is so, why don't they at least try to prove it? If elections, for example, the last ones in Lucani, were stolen, how come the local leader of the Alliance for Serbia signed the record confirming everything was fair and in line with the law. Therefore, it is clear that the plan of the Đilas-tycoon-thievery coalition comes down to abduction. Abduction of power. They now

42 Dragan J. Vučićević, "Otimanje vlasti po cenu krvavog rata [Taking power at a price of bloody war]", *Informer*, 01st December 2018, p. 4

they don't stand a chance in the elections. They know very well that, them being as they are, they will not have the majority of Serbs on their side in ten, not even in twenty years."⁴³

Within the general strategy of negative valuation of opposition leaders, primarily from the perspective of the broader population, Vučićević presents them as unscrupulous businessmen that see politics as the means of further advancement of their personal wealth and development of their business empires: "Đilas and Šolak are the true image of the damaging, criminal, DOS politics. The politics that uses the power only as a tool for personal enrichment of the higher "yellow race" (the term "race", for the avoidance of any doubt, was taken here from the criminal charges filed by Đilas against *Informer*). These two tycoons are the textbook example of the clientelist, patocratic, corrupt quasi elite. They made their huge fortune by abusing the state... corrupt millionaires. Arrogant tycoons that can buy almost everything and almost everyone here, right now. Untouchable "holy cows" whose name is not allowed to be mentioned in the 90 percent of Serbian media, because they control just as many media and marketing budgets. Đilas and Šolak, without any doubt, are the proof, the most precise diagnosis of the serious autoimmune disease of Serbian politics, but, above all, Serbian media."⁴⁴

One of the main objections to the Serbian opposition is the lack of any rationally based argumentation disputing the politics of Vučić and the SNS. Lack of rationality reduces the politics to a vulgar cry of discontent and insult, while the protagonists of such politics are seen as lacking political authority and credibility. The said motive in the critic of the critics of the government, Dragan J. Vučićević presents in the following sentences of his article dedicated to the political life in Serbia.

According to Dragan Vučićević, the opposition in Serbia is the promoter of the constant negative campaign that is obsessively linked to the democratically elected President Aleksandar Vučić. In the campaign that offers nothing else but radical, comprehensive and detailed disapproval, Vučićević does not see strictly political interest, but negative emotions also, hatred being the most prominent. Since the hatred is the initiator of the political opinion and media campaign, Vučićević concludes that it is the campaign of hate, while the protagonists of such a campaign are marked as haters: "I really love talking to haters. The passionate ones, blind ones, foaming at the mouth, poisoned by propaganda poison gas that is being released in the media and social network on daily basis. Lately, this is my favorite social activity. I use every chance I get – family gatherings, birthdays, christenings, weddings, on the street also, in lines in shops, bakeries, petrol stations – to exchange arguments with haters. And you know what? They don't have them. The arguments. They don't have facts. Their only 'evidence' is the worn and torn parole: 'Vučić, you faggot!'"⁴⁵

Just a quick reminder, as we have stated so many times, the lack of freedom in the media is one of the key claims of the Serbian opposition and the objection to the status of democracy in the country. As a counter-argument to the position of the opposition, Dragan J. Vučićević offers a direct review of the editorial policy of a number of daily and weekly newspapers, as well as his opinion on certain news and political and satiric shows that are openly supporting opposition. Editor of *Informer* especially underlines the fact that there were no changes in the editorial staff of the information program of the Public Media Service since Aleksandar Vučić came to power. In

43 Dragan J. Vučićević, "Šta ustvari hoće Đilas i njegovi [What do Đilas and his crew actually want]", *Informer*, 29th December 2018, p. 4

44 Dragan J. Vučićević, "Dva Dragana – dva tajkuna [Two Dragans – Two tycoons]", *Informer*, 28th October 2018, p. 5

45 Dragan J. Vučićević, "Hejterska politika [Hater's politics]", *Informer*, 08th December 2018, p. 5

light of such circumstances and facts, Vučićević tries to finalize the position on the lack of rational and believable argumentation of the opposition and part of the public. His argumentation includes a combination of factual insights and reduction to absurdity of objections of the opposition related to the government. Argumentative tactics of this reporter is given in the spirit and in form of harsh, a bit aggressive, but basically suggestive rhetoric. Its focus in the given case was the opinion of the opposition related to the freedom of media in the country: "What else is wrong? Is it the media? You don't say, censorship is horrible, everything is under control?! Yeah, that's right, it is a truly horrible censorship implemented by this government that has not changed a single editor for all these years on the Public Media Service – and the previous ones have, just a little reminder, immediately upon coming to power, fired a bunch of people on the RTS and lynched reporters they did not like on the streets. Yes, it is a horrible censorship in the country in which the horrific, vulgar spitting all over the President is the only editorial policy of all weeklies (except maybe one and a half) and more than a half of daily papers?! And this media control is also so horrible where on all major commercial networks, except for one, all "comedy" and all talk shows are used only for one thing, sharing the "Vučić, you faggot!" policy. But these are the facts. Just a small portion of facts that demolish the hater's setting of the politics and the society. This is why these facts must be ignored. Until this endless media and political campaign washes the brains of most of the Serbs so much that they, again, start acting directly contrary to their own benefit."⁴⁶

Unlike Dragan J. Vučićević, that is constant in his negative portrayal of the Serbian opposition, the dominant tone of writing about the opposition is positive and significant room for expressing criticism towards the government is given to the leaders themselves. Naturally, the print media, especially weeklies, provide their significant contribution to the "opposition cause" by continuous, detailed and underlyingly negative writing about Aleksandar Vučić and his close associates. In addition to such critical approach, the approach for elaboration of the sense and significance of the opposition struggle is open too, as well as different forms of rational justification and almost passionate support for it.

The oppositional political struggle has a deeper sense from the struggle for certain ideas, programs, specific solutions and distribution of power on the elections. The struggle of the opposition is morally exquisite, its sense is deeply moral. This struggle is the struggle against the moral evil. This is the context in which we should observe the working title of the article written by Dragan Đilas, leader of the opposition Alliance for Serbia, published on 20th December 2018 in *Vreme* weekly, headed "Either you are against this ruling evil or you support it."⁴⁷

Manichaeistic image of the political world, roles of the good and evil given, represent the spiritual basis for the polarization of the media space, but even more so, for the establishment of the deep divide which can result in conflict of any given scale, from the verbal argument to the use of violence in the political struggle. Đilas's moral basis of the opposition struggle is complemented by the existential aspect attributable to it. Namely, it is not just that, as an opposition leader, you are always and at all times on the side of the moral, historically just and politically correct, but also, you oppositional struggle is the matter of survival, whether it is your personal survival, your country's or the nation you belong to. Entering the notion of survival into the rational context of activities of the opposition is a rhetoric invention of Sergej Trifunović, the new leader of the Movement of Free Citizens. He says the following in the *NIN* weekly, about his struggle: "Struggle for vital organs. Struggle for the heart. This now is moving the nation from the bottom. These are the last resources, the last moment in which we can look ourselves in the mirror and

46 Dragan J. Vučićević, "Otimanje vlasti po cenu krvavog rata [Taking power at a price of bloody war]", *Informer*, 01st December 2018, p. 4

47 Dragan Đilas, "Ili ste protiv zla na vlasti ili ga podržavate [Either you are against this ruling evil or you support it]", *Vreme*, No. 1459

say, we are a brave, truth loving, righteous nation that will, as Njegoš would put it, put an end to tyranny, because it is the highest human duty. And we are fighting for the fulfilment of our highest human duty.”⁴⁸

“Fulfilment of the human duty” through opposition struggle has its direct cause and focus. If the democratic values, practices and institutions are the reasons for the engagement of the opposition, the struggle for the change of election conditions, that is, the struggle for fair elections represents its direction, the main, substantive intention. Benevolent, encouraging conducting of the opposition discourse and the accompanying political practice is included in the observations of the legend of the critical journalism Dragoljub Žarković, editor in chief of the weekly *Vreme*, that writes the following on the democracy in Serbia: “The struggle of the opposition must, as it was in the nineties, focus on fair elections and this is the political demand they must always put out, in case they are planning to organize protests. These protests must have a clear political idea, and there is no higher priority in Serbia, if we are talking about politics, than clear and substantiated demands to destroy one, perhaps the only, heritage of the 5th October revolution – fair and free elections. After all, the chairman of the Alliance for Serbia, Nebojša Zelenović stated that there will be no elections without the substantial changes of electoral terms and free media and announced that the united opposition will come out with common demands for fair elections.”⁴⁹

Demands for fair elections formulated after three severe losses of the opposition in the 2016-2018 period are founded on an idea that Serbia, during the rule of Aleksandar Vučić experienced a historic regression in the area of democratic values, institutions and practices. Despite the facts of the political and media pluralism, the identical electoral law in the last almost two decades, acceptance of results by all the major players of the international community, as well as the citizens of Serbia, the opposition leader Dragan Đilas complements the advocacy for the struggle for fair elections by Žarković.

Synergy in semantics and wording between Đilas and Žarković is visible in the quote from Đilas’s already mentioned article written for Žarković’s *Vreme* which states: “It is actually a tragedy that after 30 years we are, again, fighting for our basic human rights, for the right to think and say it out loud. We are fighting stealing votes, threatening people, to prevent a woman dressed in a jogger suit, connected to the most feared criminals, from crashing into a police stations and ordering around policeman. Aleksandar Vučić brought us back to the one-party system. People are angry, their voices are not heard, except on social media, in weeklies, in two daily papers and on a few cable networks. Basic democratic rights and liberties for which we fought and won back in the nineties have been cancelled. It is a do-over. Through protests, walks, Saturday to Saturday, with clear demands and messages to authorities that these are the citizens that are protesting, and the opposition supports them. Only all of us together – youth, seniors, public figures, unions, opposition – can make a change.”⁵⁰

Unity in civil protests, evoked by Dragan Đilas, is supported by another practice known from the political struggle in the nineties. This is the division to “real” and “false” opposition and creating dialogue among “authentic” opposition members. It is understood that in conditions of strict political polarization the dialogue with the government is considered impossible and morally and politically unjustifiable. In the given political and media key,

48 Sergej Trifunović, “Kad smo to uveli NKVD [When did we form the NKVD],” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, no. 3548

49 Dragoljub Žarković, “Doletela dva vrana gavrana – o guslarskoj tradiciji, najavi izbora i najavi bojkota, i pravim razlozima za navlačenje ‘žutih prsluka’ [Two black ravens flew in – on gusle tradition, announcement of elections, announcement of boycott and the real reasons for putting yellow vests],” *Vreme*, no. 1458

50 Dragan Đilas, “Ili ste protiv zla na vlasti ili ga podržavate [Either you are against this ruling evil or you support it],” *Vreme*, no. 1459

the opposition scene and its relation towards the government is reviewed by Zdravko Ponoš, Vice-president of the People’s Party of Vuk Jeremić: “The first step the opposition took on the renewal of the culture of dialogue was the formation of the Alliance for Serbia, as well as the preparedness for talk to the ones that represent the real opposition, but did not join the Alliance. Trying to bring the government that rejects its people to the discussion table is no longer a subject. This is a waste of time – they will call after a new 6th October. The real topic was how to remove the media blockade and crush the fear and apathy with citizens. We cannot wait for the outside world to be sick of Vučić’s regime, and this will happen, sooner or later. The topics are the public services that are no longer public. They are private services, serving the same crew they served until the 5th October 1999. Then, it also seemed it could never change, but, it did.”

In a strongly affirmative tone, the reporter of the *NIN* weekly, Vera Didanović, welcomed the “real” opposition that established the internal dialogue with itself and gained confidence, energy and encouragement for the political “battle in trenches” with Aleksandar Vučić. Openly expressed opposition enthusiasm of the *NIN*’s reporter is visible in the following quote: “Despite of divisions, turmoil and focusing on mutual evaluation of power, in the seventh year of the Progressive’s rule, finally, we can say that there is an opposition in Serbia that seems to be alive. The monolog of Aleksandar Vučić that lasted for years on his heroic struggle against the invisible “them” finally, in 2018, gave results: the might President of Serbia got a live and kicking opposition.” The next step of the members of the opposition was followed with a bit too much of an affirmative tone, almost excitement. After the successful internal dialogue of the “real” opposition, certain number of citizens joined the protest walks. The formulation “people happened” is a syntagma of expectance of the decisive moment of the revolution, the change of Vučić’s regime, that is urgent, a historic necessity. Every activity of the opposition, from protest walks to the blocking of the Parliament received an affirmative connotation: “At the same time, after the beating of Borko Stefanović, “people started to happen” that might provide additional wind to the back of the opposition – if it is able to manage these difficult circumstances – and send it into a long and difficult battle for basic democracy. Usually on non-speaking terms, opposition parties managed – in majority – to agree on the demands on the establishment of minimum democratic terms without which, so they claim, they will not participate in the following elections. There was an activity in the Parliament in December, where – even though the ruling majority took away their voting right almost a year ago – they barricaded themselves during the night in order to, on several press conferences in the hall of the Parliament, present their views on the planned budget for the upcoming year.”⁵¹

Moral heroism alongside the existential necessity, focus towards the fair elections, confirmation of existence and affirmation of acceptance of the opposition by the citizens require numeric and psychological support. Opposition’s “Phoenix rising out of hell” needs something concrete, given in numbers and rationally persuasive, at first sight. Statistics was called for aid showing trends of growth of the support to the opposition “cause” and certain symptoms of the fall of the Progressive party machine headed by Aleksandar Vučić. In this context, weekly *Vreme* ritually provided space to the opposition member of the Parliament and the public opinion researcher to announce the “undisputed truth” on the status of the political scene in Serbia: “Every defeat leaves trace, mobilizes the winner, demoralizes the supporters of the defeated and assures them in the belief that the fight no longer makes sense. This is the reason why this mild growth of the Alliance for Serbia – as well as its formation – is potentially a big deal for the knocked out Serbian opposition, that was almost extinct this summer. The movements are relatively small, this is true, but, definitely, it is not a statistical error. For the second month in a row, SNS shows a certain drop in support in the Serbian, pretty clueless, dazzled, frightened and – primarily – confused public. Namely, in

51 Vera Didanović, “Rodilo se valja ga [It is born, we must rock it in the cradle],” *NIN*, No. 3548, p. 10

the October (unpublished) and November research, that is in front of you, done on the same sample and using the same methodology, the coalition around SNS (Vučić) marks between one and two percent lower results, and the opposition Alliance for Serbia, the same amount of growth.”⁵²

Forecasting of the imminent fall of the support for the government and the growth of credibility of the opposition, which is the topic of Đorđe Vukadinović relates to the first and clear showing of “power” of the opposition that, together with the citizens, won a small, but important victory – Aleksandar Vučić was a bit less harsh to its political opponents than usual in an interview. The magnetism of the small/large opposition victory was explained in an interview by a novelist and a political activist of the People’s Party of Vuk Jeremić, Marko Vidojković, who stated the following in an interview to the radically critical weekly: “Synergy of the opposition and the citizens until the protest ‘Stop Bloody Shirts’ did not exist to this extent. The first walk was enough for the dictator to become nervous. The second one, in show and with more participants, resulted in a softer approach on one TV station, at least he acted like that. Although, Vučić may change his clothes, but his personality will never change.”⁵³

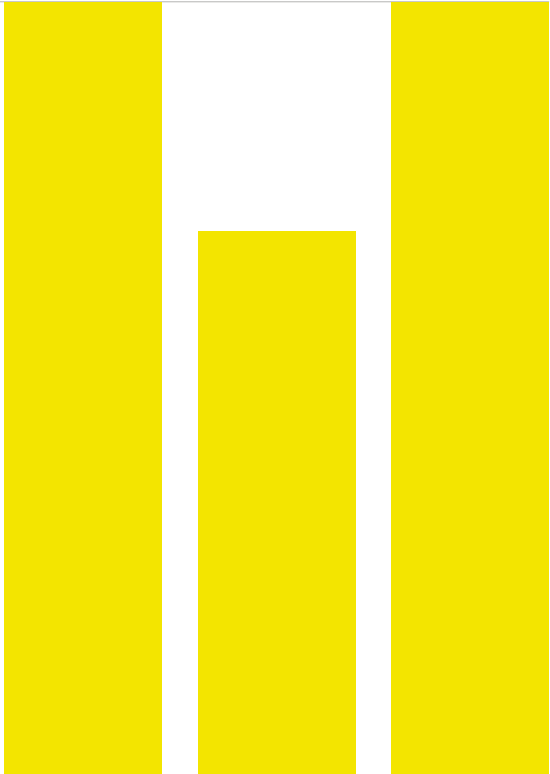
Stated quote from Vidojković’s interview shows obsessive interest in “small steps” in the political struggle that are presented like the steps of seven miles. It is certain that in the history of journalism for the last thirty years, it would be very difficult to find so much obsession with small political actions and temporary rises as one could find, primarily in weeklies and in social media, related to an activity of the opposition. Realistically large asymmetry of support for Vučić compared to the opposition parties, followed by the frustration with Vučić’s personality and political and media tactics, observes the smallest steps of the opposition as the true window of opportunity for radical political changes. Outside of this floating leitmotif passing through the articles of critical reporters, the presentation of actors is within the known realm. The government is presented extremely negatively in all the aspects of its organization and performance. The presentation of the government is simple in content and values, but very detailed and specific. Overdose of negativity embedded into critical headings is the testimony of overlapping of the criticism of the opposition and the reporter’s approach in conclusions. Reporters often complement and expand the positions of opposition politicians. On the other hand, the motives included in positions of opposition politicians are additionally clarified and made more understandable and persuasive to the common reader as much as possible. The image of the opposition in one part of the print media, primarily the daily newspaper *Informer*, is also charged with a large dose of negativity. Rejection of the opposition as a credible political actor is unconditional and total. On the other hand, print media criticizing the government provide a more nuanced image of the opposition, trying to hide their endemic defects and glorifying their positive steps. Oscillating between two extremes when depicting the opposition, the print media are transforming, slowly but certainly, into daily politics actors.

For the opposition reporters and parties, the public is the place of chaos, confusion and lack of liberty. On the other hand, pro-governmental media see public as extremely polemic, divided, loaded with conflict that is almost “eternal”, but certainly free and dynamic. Observed from the standpoint of print media, the image of political actors and processes is the testimony of existence of irreconcilable differences and almost fatal conflicts, without the anticipation of possible reconciliation at this moment.

⁵² Đorđe Vukadinović, “Formula protiv ogoljene represije [Formula against bare repression],” *Vreme*, No. 3545, p. 6

⁵³ Marko Vidojković, “Vučić dlaku menja, ali ćud nikad [Vučić may change his clothes, but his personality will never change],” *NIN*, No. 3548, p. 46

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Public Policy Institute is a regional think-tank organization that operates in the Western Balkans region through the work of its branch offices in Belgrade, Podgorica and Ljubljana. By promoting public dialogue and constructive solutions, Public Policy Institute contributes to the efforts of the Western Balkan countries to become equal, reliable and progressive partners in the process of European integrations and mutual relationships. After the initial research and analysis of social and media context in the countries of the Western Balkans, the Institute has developed and implemented a series of media related projects, including: Role of the media in the process of securitisation in the Western Balkans, Civil Response to Clientelism in the media - MEDIA CIRCLE, NATO Reach Out - media monitoring and Role of the media in monitoring of R1325 in Montenegro.

EBART Media Archive is privately owned company established in 2000. Its main activity is archiving print media data in e-format. The print media archive consists of up-to-date material dating back to 2003, and more than 3 million print media reports from sources with national coverage. EBART is also specialized for media analysis, basic quantitative and qualitative analyses, comparing media treatment of specific keywords, as well as complex content analyses according to BBC methodology. EBART Media Archive is unmatched in the region with its unique media reports database, and 12 years of media research experience. This media database allows for the overall study of long-term media presence.

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