



Volume V, Issue 4/2019  
ISSN: 2406-274X

Analysis of the print media in Serbia  
October - December

# QUARTERLY MEDIAMETER

04/2019



QUARTERLY MEDIAMETER

*Analysis of the print media in Serbia*

Volume V, Issue 4/2019

ISSN 2406-274X

*Published by*

Public Policy Institute Belgrade

Kneza Miloša 82

E-mail: office@ijp.rs

Web: www.ijp.rs

*For publisher*

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Instant System Belgrade

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији

Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

659.3

**QUARTERLY mediameter** : analysis of the print media in Serbia / editors in chief Vladimir Popović, Velimir Čurgus Kazimir. - Vol. 1, Issue 1 (2015). - Belgrade : Public Policy Institute (Belgrade : Instant System). - 24 cm

Tromesečno. - Ima izdanje na drugom jeziku: Kvartalni medijametar = ISSN 2406-2707  
ISSN 2406-274X = Quarterly mediameter

COBISS.SR-ID 215100940

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# Nedeljnik

11. JUL 2019.

11. JUL 2019. / BROJ 3576 / 299 RSD

ОПОЗИЦИЈА  
У СРБИЈИ  
ГДЕ ЈЕ ЗАПЕЛО

ВАСИЛ ХАЏИМАНОВ  
ОВА ЗЕМЉА ЈЕ  
ТЕМПИРАНА БОМБА

ДВЕ Г  
ДА ЈЕ  
БУТАЛ

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POKLON MAGAZIN

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# Introduction



# INTRODUCTION:

## Serbia in a knot

Already in the first chapter of the twentieth issue of the *Quarterly Mediameter*, the obsession of newspapers with Serbia was noticeable. Analysis of the headlines from the front pages of daily newspapers reveals that the printed media of the various editorial policies use the word **Serbia** the most. Media obsession with Serbia was present during whole year, in all analyzed media, regardless of their editorial policies. The most common words in the front-page titles during 2019 were *Vučić, Kosovo, Serbs, want, because, be, Serbian*. They talk about the focus of the media and the topics that were covered on the front pages.

Consistency in the way of conception front-page titles is visible during all four quarters, that is, the same practice is noticeable within different media – in daily newspaper *Alo!* the most sensationalist headlines were spotted in all four quarters of 2019; most sensationalist headlines that were not in the line with the content were published by *Informer*; *Politika* published the most headlines which fulfill standards of professional reporting that are not in the line with the content; while in *Danas* during the whole 2019 we notice the largest share of titles that meet professional standards.

In this quarter, too, the media were most concerned with *political life in Serbia*, which was the most common topic in all quarters of 2019. Second topic of interest, on yearly level, was *Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština*, and right after media attention was directed towards *regional relations*.

The trend towards reporting on the region remains the same in this quarter, and most of the articles are still in negative context. Negative texts about Kosovo, the media and especially the situation in Montenegro are in the forefront, about which most of the texts were written in a negative context. As a contrast, almost half of the texts about Russia has a positive context (48%).

Among foreign politicians on the front pages of dailies, considerable attention has been paid to Vladimir Putin – 119 texts, and Donald Trump – 104 texts. The level of representation of these actors speaks about current foreign policy focuses.

In this quarter, also, we have noticed complete dominance of the report. The participation of the report is again almost 80%.

The presence of analysts on the front pages marks a historical maximum – 722 appearances. Until now, the biggest presence of analysts we have had in fourth quarter in 2018 (601 appearances). During 2019, different analysts have been present on front pages of daily newspaper from our sample, as many as 2508 times.

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,”<sup>1</sup> and (b) a discourse analysis which enabled us to understand various, epistemologically and methodologically immeasurable,<sup>2</sup> 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 section devoted to the analysis of titles, the frequencies of previously normalized and lemmatized words from the title were measured, which were then graphically displayed using the “word cloud” package from the R programming language.

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.

2



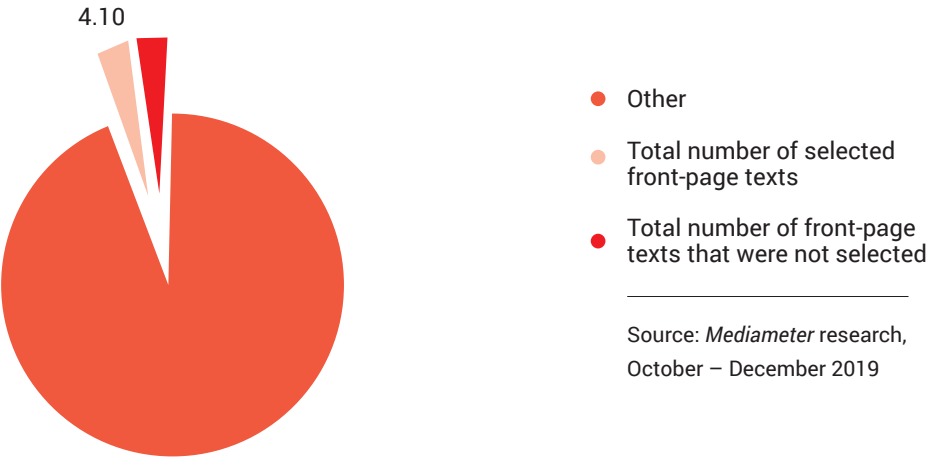
Sample

## 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 2019, 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*.

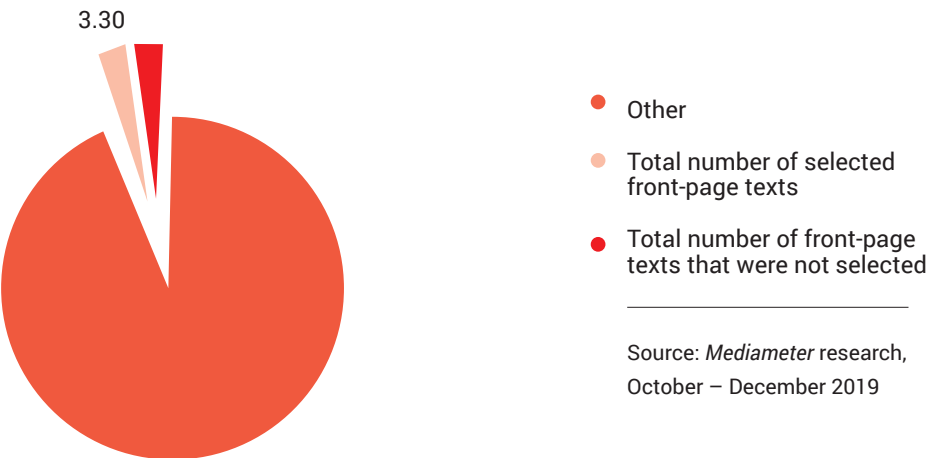
Texts from front pages reflect best the coordinates of editorial policies of daily print editions. Though this involves a small percentage of texts, editorial identity of a daily can be most easily identified through messages conveyed through front pages. The ratio of the total number of texts in each daily individually and the number of texts from the front pages that were included in the sample of our research are shown in the graphs 1-7, for the period from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019.

Graph 1. – *Alo!*



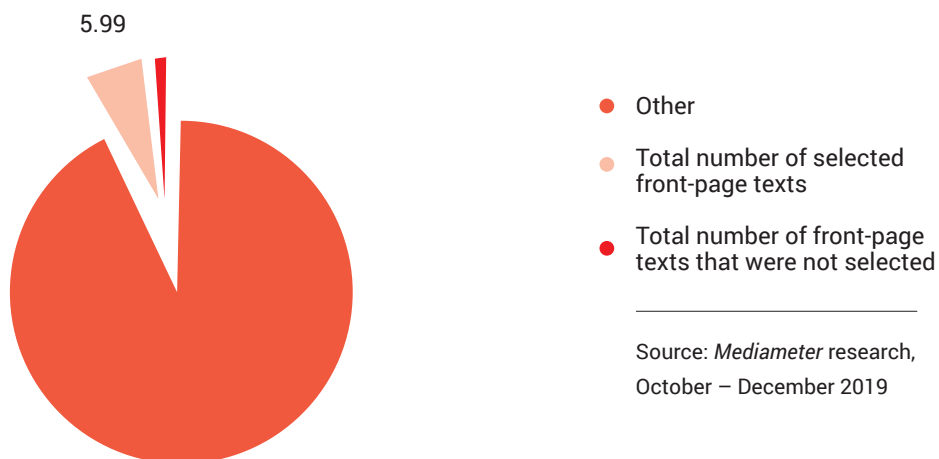
Source: *Mediameter* research,  
October – December 2019

Graph 2. – *Blic*

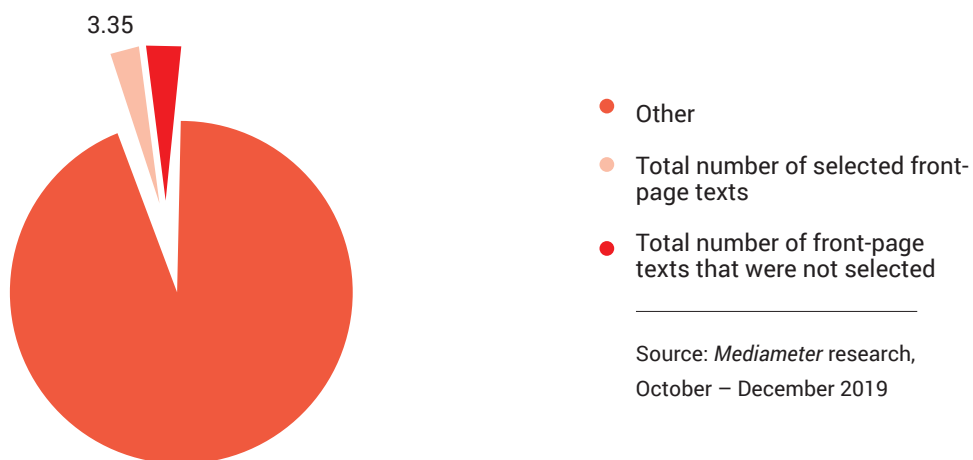


Source: *Mediameter* research,  
October – December 2019

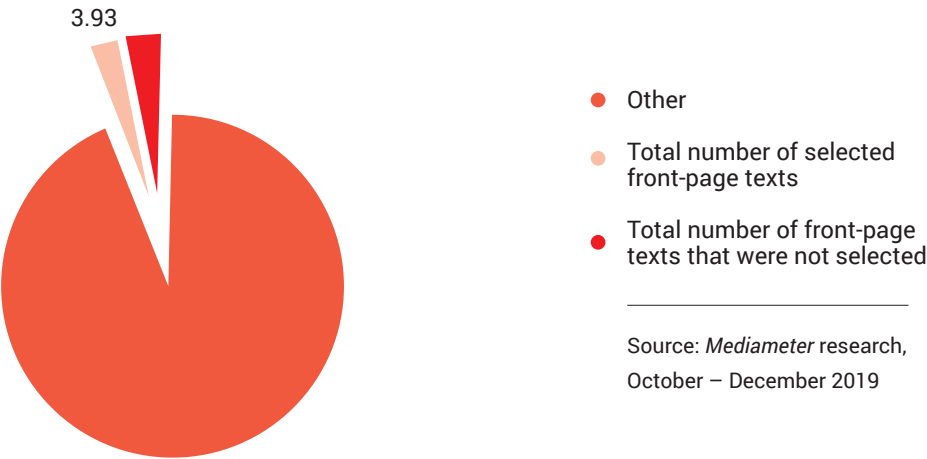
**Graph 3. – Danas**



**Graph 4. – Informer**

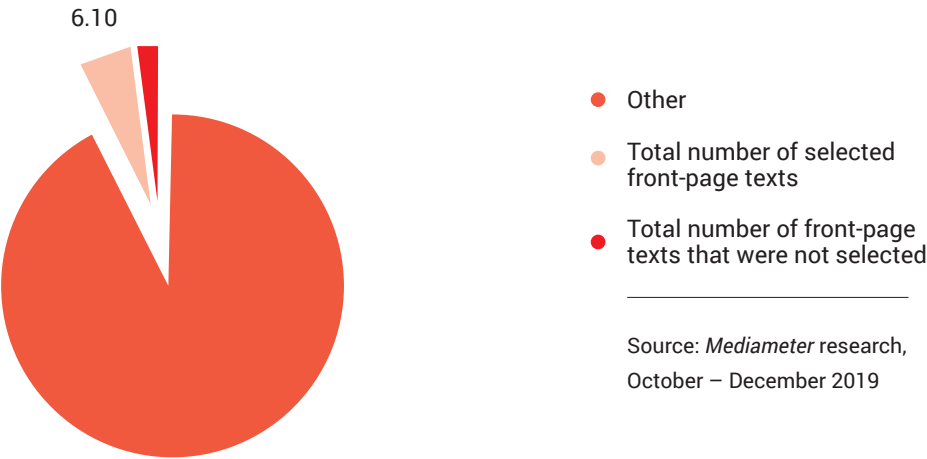


Graph 5. – Kurir



Source: Mediameter research,  
October – December 2019

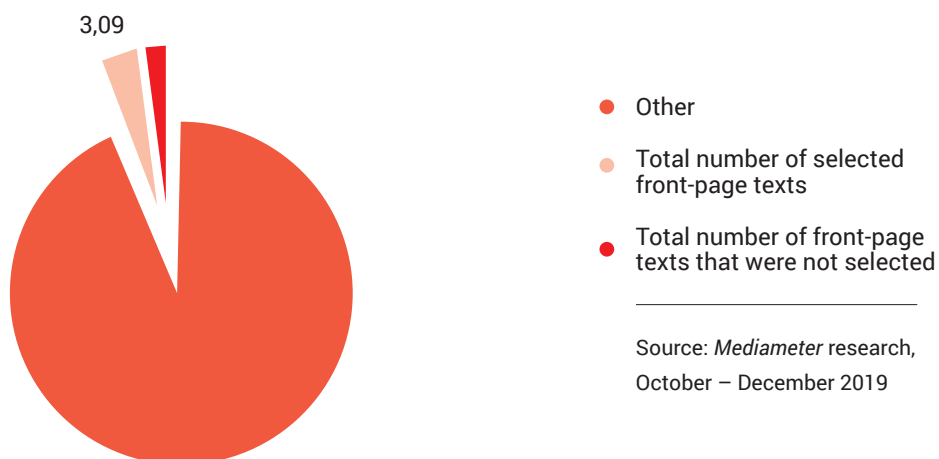
Graph 6. – Politika



Source: Mediameter research,  
October – December 2019



**Graph 7.** – *Večernje novosti*



The total number of analyzed texts in all seven media included in the sample of our research is 2280, and that number makes up on average 56.97% of cover texts and 4.31% of the total number of texts.

**Table 1. – Alo!**

<i>Alo!</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
current affairs	107	103	4
news	17	16	1
politics	60	58	2
society	99	32	67
cronicle	83	22	61
v.i.p.	92	3	89
sport	52	11	41
world	7	4	3
interview/interview of the week	7	7	0
Belgrade	7	2	5
reportage	1	0	1
supplement	27	1	26
<b>total</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>300</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019**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	74	74	0
current affairs/ interview	8	8	0
topic of the day/ issue	70	55	15
society	93	42	51
chronicle	55	14	41
economy	7	6	1
culture	4	1	3
sport	72	4	68
destinies	5	1	4
people	1	0	1
world/planet	3	1	2

research/dossier	8	2	6
guest/guest of Blic	6	6	0
entertainment	61	0	61
Belgrade	3	2	1
scene	11	0	11
pop & culture	2	1	1
tv magazine	1	0	1
<b>total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>267</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**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
<i>Danas</i> business	3	3	0
<i>Danas</i> special supplement	25	12	13
<i>Danas</i> weekend	37	24	13
event/ topic of the day	8	8	0
society	150	149	1
economy	61	58	3
Globe/ region	23	19	4
culture	29	12	17
interview	2	1	1
front page	13	13	0
politics	136	136	0
Belgrade	3	3	0
sport	33	6	27
dialogue	21	21	0
pomodoro	6	3	3
rule of law	3	3	0
<b>total</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>82</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**Table 4. – Informer**

<i>Informer/ 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
breaking news	143	143	0
news	111	52	59
showtime	92	9	83
sport	58	5	53
supplement	49	4	45
<b>total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>240</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019**Table 5. – Kurir**

<i>Kurir/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
news	376	240	136
stars	84	7	77
culture	33	8	25
sport	46	3	43
topic of the day	11	4	7
supplement	14	0	14
<b>total</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>302</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**Table 6. – Politika**

<i>Politika</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
world	78	58	20
society	106	32	74
economy	46	35	11
politics	35	35	0
events of the day	30	30	0
culture	26	4	22
chronicle	42	26	16
daily supplement	40	0	40
Serbia	26	12	14
sport	19	1	18
topic of the week/ day	11	3	8
region	24	20	4
front page	327	270	57
views	6	5	1
consumer	29	8	21
Belgrade/Belgrade chronicle	20	8	12
feuilleton	6	0	6
<b>total</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>324</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**Table 7.** – *Večernje novosti*

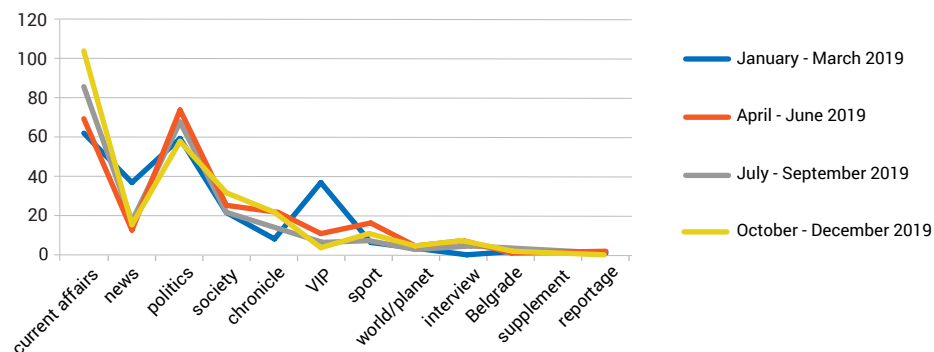
<i>Večernje novosti</i> / section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
chronicle	58	20	38
society	95	74	21
politics	74	74	0
economy	40	36	4
current affairs	53	32	21
reportage	7	4	3
culture	29	18	11
interview	37	17	20
world	9	8	1
sport	32	1	31
Belgrade	6	4	2
topic of the day	4	3	1
reflector	6	1	5
events	12	10	2
second page	9	9	0
supplement	47	0	47
<b>total</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>207</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Looking at Tables 1-7, it is still evident that the structure of the analyzed daily papers follows two different logics. *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, *Danas*, *Blic* and *Alo!*<sup>1</sup> follow the classic daily newspaper structure. On the other hand, the daily newspapers *Informer* and *Kurir*, with their reduced column structure, deviate significantly from this matrix. **Graphs 11** and **12**, which represent the layout of selected texts according to the headings in these two media, show a significant emphasis on the presence of texts in the *breaking news* / *news* sections, where completely different areas are combined, such as society, economy, chronicle or news of the world, with clearly separated information only in the field of *sports* and *entertainment* / *show business*. The editorial strategies identified in the analyzed media during the previous nineteen editions of *Mediameter* were also fully visible in the fourth quarter of 2019, which can be clearly seen in **Graphs 8-14**.

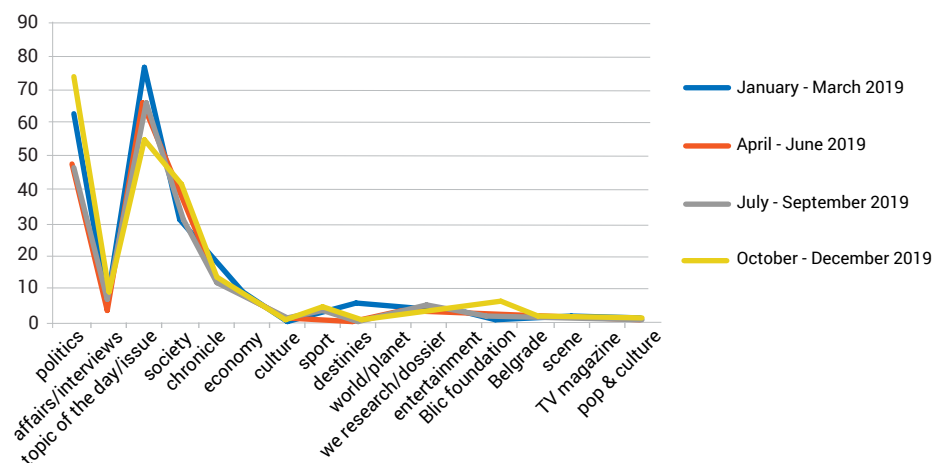
<sup>1</sup> Daily newspaper *Alo!* has completely branched out the structure of columns in previous quarters, so that now the columns politics, society, chronicle or the world are clearly visible.

**Graph 8. – Alo!**



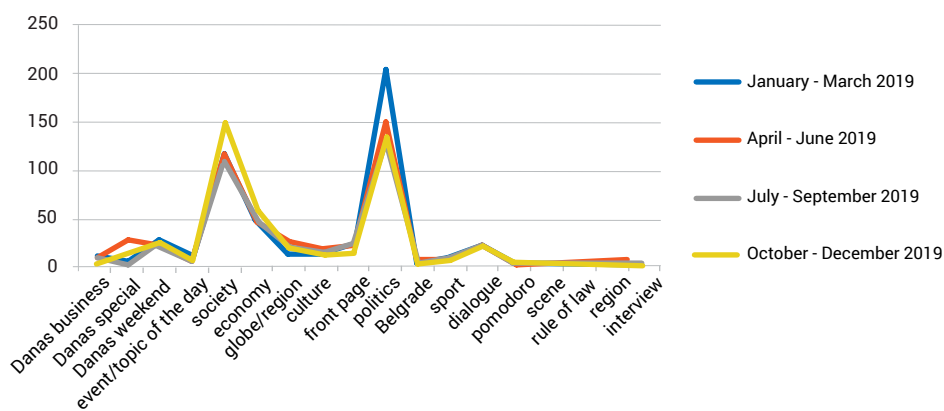
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

**Graph 9. – Blic**



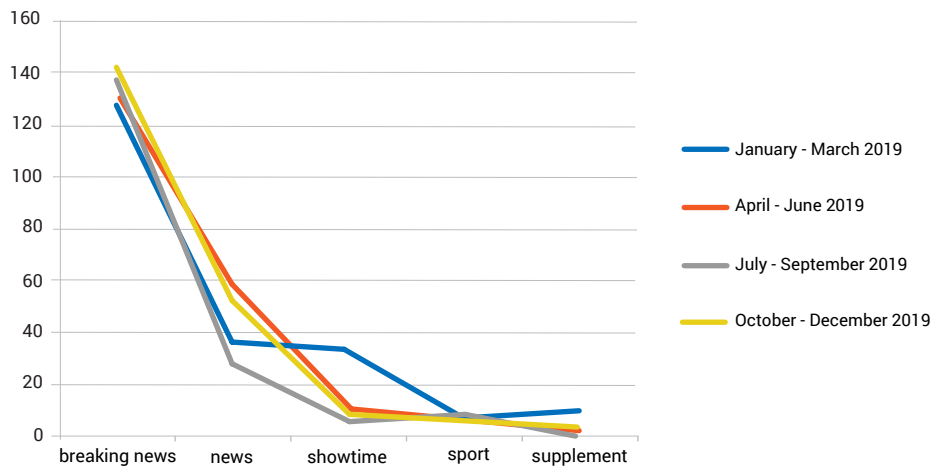
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

Graph 10. – *Danas*



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

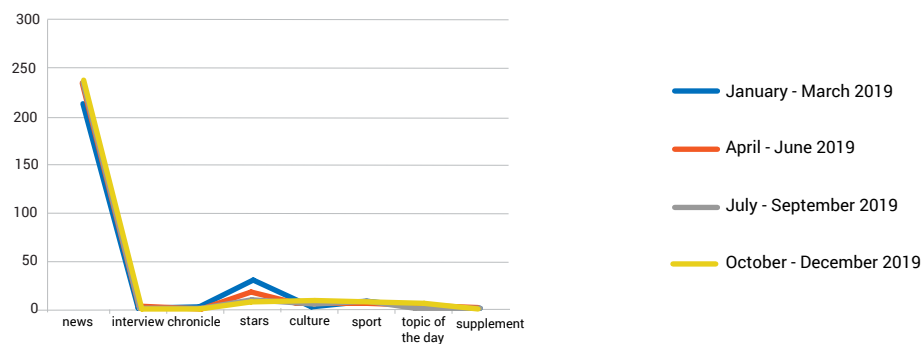
Graph 11. – *Informer*



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

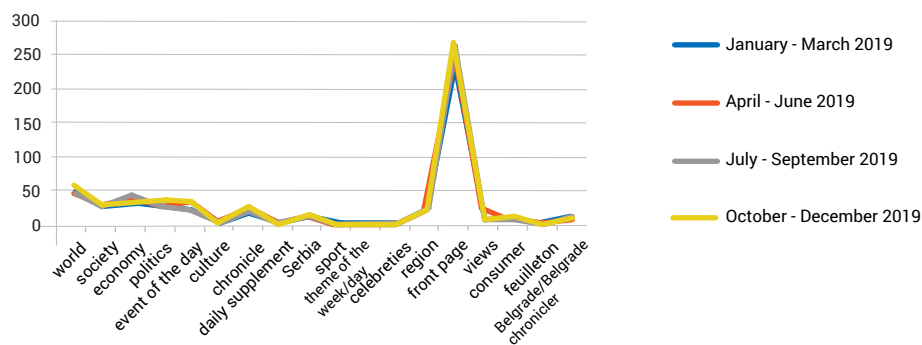


**Graph 12. – Kurir**



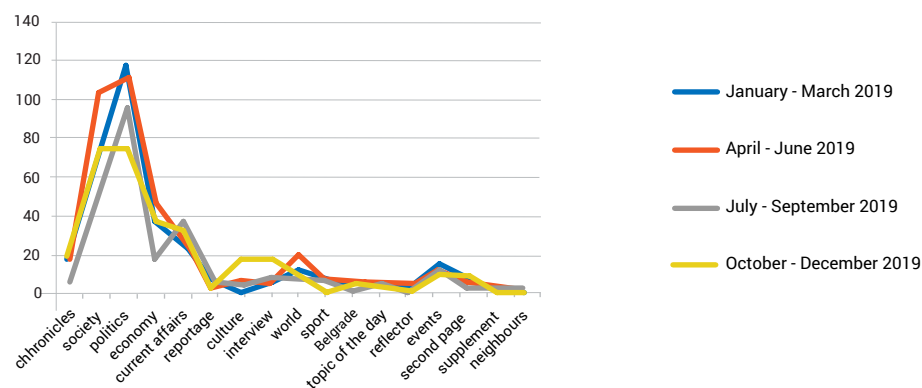
Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

**Graph 13. – Politika**



Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

**Graph 14. – Večernje novosti**



Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

**Table 8.** – Percentage share of texts included in the research sample in relation to the total number of texts in all analyzed media in all four quarters in 2019

Media	% of selected texts in 2019			
	IV quarter	III quarter	II quarter	I quarter
<i>Alo!</i>	4.10	3.65	3.62	3.42
<i>Blic</i>	3.30	2.89	2.77	2.74
<i>Danas</i>	5.99	6.49	6.16	6.27
<i>Informer</i>	3.35	2.82	3.23	3.52
<i>Kurir</i>	3.93	3.55	3.61	3.49
<i>Politika</i>	6.10	5.53	5.96	5.47
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	3.09	2.85	3.75	3.27

Source: *Mediameter* research January – March 2019, *Mediameter* April – June 2019, *Mediameter* July – September 2019 and *Mediameter* October – December 2019

In retrospect, if we compare the number of selected texts during 2015 (7382), 2016 (8293), 2017 (8652), 2018 (8744) and 2019 (8838), we notice a clear upward trend in the number of analyzed texts (see **Table 9**). Considering that the focus of *Mediameter* is primarily on socio-political events and that it is one of the key criteria for selecting texts, it is precisely in the complexity of socio-political reality, of which the media are a significant part, that a noticeable increase in the number of articles in the sample can be found, especially in relation to 2015.

**Table 9.** – Number of selected texts by quarter for period 2015 – 2019

Year/quarter	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
I quarter	1360	1924	2403	2173	2251
II quarter	1673	2106	2091	2009	2274
III quarter	2172	2012	1991	2248	2033
IV quarter	2177	2251	2167	2314	2280
<b>total</b>	<b>7382</b>	<b>8293</b>	<b>8652</b>	<b>8744</b>	<b>8838</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019





# Research results

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Content and character of the titles of the articles from the sample

Newspaper headlines, as well as the front pages, form the identity of each daily newspaper, and readers are often informed about events only on the basis of the headlines due to lack of time or the desire for more detailed insight into media content. It is this fact that has contributed to the establishment of a new practice in print media - the use of headlines/heading blocks (headline, title, subtitle) that can be compared to *clickbait* headlines in online media. Namely, in order for readers to choose their news and/or visit the site, online media post provocative/sensationalist headlines (clickbaits), which very often are not even related to the text<sup>1</sup>. Their purpose is primarily to attract the attention and “deceive” readers to click on the text and thus generate income for the media, which is certainly a form of unprofessional media practice and is in the spirit of the growing trend of tabloidization. Most print media have portals of the same name on which they could test the effectiveness of such heading for a long period of time, and that is why, through this research, we examined the extent to which print media take on this type of headline design. Sensational headline text in printed editions is a practice that provokes a reader’s response, that is, desired attention, that indirectly leads to greater readership.

For the above reasons, the research within the Mediameter project was aimed at assessing the character of the title, that is, to establish whether the titles are sensationalist and whether the title itself corresponds to the content of the text or not. The words that were present in the titles are graphically represented in the form of a “word cloud”<sup>2</sup> in which the dimensions of the words represent the frequency of their appearance.

---

1 Example: the title of a text announcing the arrival of spring, on the portal *www.alo.rs*: <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/drustvo/srbija-prolece-beograd-gradani-promena-Vremena-prognoza/218195/vest>

2 English: *word cloud*

### “Word cloud” – the content of the title

The language corpus that makes up the “word cloud” includes the titles of 2280 texts, which were selected for the sample in the fourth quarter of 2019. The process of creating a “word cloud”<sup>3</sup> involved refining that language corpus, that is, reducing words to lowercase, removing punctuation and words that are not relevant to the research<sup>4</sup>. After that, a list of terms<sup>5</sup> was made using the package “tm” from the programming language R<sup>6</sup>. Selected terms are lemmatized, that is, they are converted into words - for example, all case changes of one word are reduced to the nominative in the case of nouns, while verbs are grouped according to their temporal form. In this way, the frequency of words was determined, that is, words that appear more than five times are graphically displayed using the “word cloud” package from the programming language R.<sup>7</sup>

The word that is, as in the previous quarter, most often mentioned in seven media from the sample is *Serbia* - represented in 210 appearances. The word *want to* follows, which appears 134 times, while the word *Vučić* is recorded 113 times. Among the 10 most common words in the titles are also the words *to be* (112), *Serbian* (72), *due to* (61), *Kosovo* (60), *new* (58), *year* (57) and *Serbs* (54 times used in the titles).

3 The application of the Text Mining (tm) method enables the extraction of necessary and important information from the text (in this case the title) that is being processed. Text is treated as a set of words through the “Bag of Words” approach.

4 Invariable words such as: like, what, without (so-called *stop-words*) were generally not taken into account. However, some immutable words are left in the corpus and displayed in the “word cloud” due to their relevance for research. For example, the word *due to* indicates the cause-and-effect character of the title from that reason is left in the graphic representation.

5 The term *term* is different from the term *word* - for example, the word *Serbia* and *Serbian* is the same, but it is a different term.

6 Ingo Feinerer, Kurt Hornik, tm: Text Mining Package, R package version 0.7-6, <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=tm>, 2018; Ingo Feinerer, Kurt Hornik, David Meyer, “Text Mining Infrastructure in R,” *Journal of Statistical Software* 25/5 (2008): 1-54. doi: 10.18637/jss.v025.i05

7 Ian Fellows, wordcloud: Word Clouds, R package version 2.6,



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

During the whole of 2019, all daily newspapers from the sample most often used a very similar corpus of words in their headlines, and the word *Serbia* was used the most (736). It is followed by *Vučić* (438), *Kosovo* (322), *Serbs* (291), *want to* (253), *because of* (243), *be* (221), *Serbian* (206), *million* (179) and *Đilas* (164).

8 Words that are repeated in the titles at least five times are displayed.





**Graph 17** – “Cloud of words” – *Alo!*



**Graph 18** – “Cloud of words” – *Blic*



**Graph 19 – “Cloud of words” – *Danas***



**Graph 20 – Word cloud – Kurir**



**Graph 21** – “Cloud of words” – *Kurir*



**Graph 22** – “Cloud of words” – *Politika*



**Graph 23.** - "Cloud of words" – *Večernje novosti*



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

### Character of titles

As already noted, sensationalist reporting and tabloidization are increasingly present trends in the print media in Serbia. This practice is also visible in the headlines, which in about 29% of texts do not meet the standards of professional reporting. This is, among other things, visible in the use of formulations that are not in line with the content of the text, unacceptable words and insults and similar practices. The way the headlines are conceived is a true reflection of the editorial policy of each of the selected media and provides insight into the intentions of journalists and editors – informing the public about topics of public importance or attracting readers in ways that are clearly not in line with journalism standards.

In order to determine how the media approaches the heading of texts, the titles of the articles in the sample were classified into four categories. The first group consists of headlines that fully meet the standards of the journalistic profession and are in line with the text that follows.<sup>10</sup> The next group of titles are those that meet the standards of the profession, but are not in accordance with the content of the text, that is, the facts stated in the title are in no way related to the statements in the text, but are often contradictory.<sup>11</sup> The third group consists of sensationalist titles that go beyond professional standards, but are in line with the content of the text. These are headlines that try to provoke a more or less violent reaction from readers and certainly attract attention.<sup>12</sup> The last group of titles are sensationalist, which go beyond professional standards and do not correspond to the text. This type of headline, which provokes the most intense reactions from the audience, speaks the most about the disrespect of the basic ethical principles of reporting and indicates bad media practices.<sup>13</sup> The aim of this research was not to determine the truth of the allegations stated in the headlines and texts (the phenomenon of *fake news*), but the way in which the media acted in relation to the presented facts. More precisely, the idea was to compare the consistency of the stated claims with the argumentation presented in the text.

Sensationalist headlines have been noticed in all media, but the vocabulary and the way in which it attracts the attention of readers are very different in each of the media. Most sensationalist headlines that were in line with the published content were recorded in the daily *Alo!* – 158, that is, 61% of the texts selected for the sample from this medium had a title that was not in accordance with professional standards. About 51% (134) of the titles in *Kurir* were written in the same manner. Sensationalist headlines that cannot be related to the content of the text are most common in *Informer* – 20 or 9.39%, while the daily newspaper *Politika* records the most headlines that, in isolated observation, meet the reporting standards, but do not state the facts that are confirmed in the text – 37 or 6.76%. Most headlines that meet professional standards were published by the daily *Danas* (around 92% or 433). Consistency in the way the title is conceived is visible during all four quarters, that is, the same practice is noticeable - in the daily *Alo!* in all four quarters, the most sensationalist titles were noticed, as much as 72% (704 of the 973 texts that make up the sample), about 10% of sensationalist titles

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10 Example: *Politika*, 03.01.2019, *A new icebreaker will be built*, p. A1.

11 Example: *Alo!*, 17.01.2019, *Putin i Vučić are building a temple!*, p. 2.

12 Example: *Alo!*, 05.01.2019, *A bloody scenario for overthrowing Dodik!*, p. 2.

13 Example: *Informer*, 04.01.2019, *Djilas supporter who works for Shiptars is a protest leader*, p. 5.

that did not comply with the content were published by *Informer* (84 or about 10%), *Politika* published the most titles (144), which meet the standards of professional reporting that are not in line with the content, while in *Danas* throughout 2019 we see the largest share of titles that meet the professional standard (about 88%).

#### Character of the title by media

Media/ title	meets standards		meets standards / inconsistent with content		sensationalist / consistent with content		sensationalist / inconsistent with content		total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	78	30.12	3	1.16	158	61.00	20	7.72	259	100.00
<i>Blic</i>	179	82.49	1	0.46	33	15.21	4	1.84	217	100.00
<i>Danas</i>	433	91.93	2	0.42	35	7.43	1	0.21	471	100.00
<i>Informer</i>	86	40.38	6	2.82	101	47.42	20	9.39	213	100.00
<i>Kurir</i>	114	43.51	1	0.38	134	51.15	13	4	262	100.00
<i>Politika</i>	483	88.30	37	6.76	23	4.20	4	0.73	547	100.00
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	247	79.42	2	0.64	36	11.58	26	8.36	311	100.00
<b>total</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>71.05</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2.28</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>22.81</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

The character of the headline according to the media in all four quarters in 2019

Media/ title	meets standards		meets standards / inconsistent with content		sensationalist / consistent with content		sensationalist / inconsistent with content		total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	218	22.40	4	0.41	704	72.35	47	4.83	973	100.00
<i>Blic</i>	524	64.45	2	0.25	281	34.65	6	0.74	813	100.00
<i>Danas</i>	1640	87.65	4	0.21	226	12.08	1	0.05	1871	100.00
<i>Informer</i>	281	34.44	31	3.80	420	51.47	84	10.29	816	100.00
<i>Kurir</i>	406	39.00	9	0.86	596	57.25	30	2.88	1041	100.00
<i>Politika</i>	1770	86.68	144	7.05	122	5.97	6	0.29	2042	100.00
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	960	74.88	7	0.55	267	20.83	48	3.74	1282	100.00
<b>total</b>	<b>5799</b>	<b>65.61</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>2616</b>	<b>29.60</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>8838</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019, *Mediameter*, April – June 2019, *Mediameter*, July – September 2019, and *Mediameter*, October – December 2019.

## Representation of newspaper genres

In the fourth quarter of 2019, the share of reports in the total number of texts that make up the sample is almost 79% or 1801 texts, which is about 1.5% less than in the previous quarter. The largest share of the report was noticed in the daily *Alo!* – 91.12%, while the lowest representation of texts written in this genre are in *Politika* – about 67%. Almost 61% of texts written in this genre in all media are neutrally connoted,<sup>14</sup> with the share of value-intoned texts differing in relation to the media. The largest share of value-connoted texts was recorded in *Informer* (about 79%), and the smallest in *Blic*, about 16%. The reports are mostly unbalanced,<sup>15</sup> that is, even about 80% are not complete. The least balanced reports were recorded in *Informer* (1.55%), while the most complete texts in the form of reports were published by the daily *Blic* (around 41%).<sup>16</sup>

The next newspaper form according to participation is the interview - 8.16% of texts were written in this form (the largest participation was recorded in *Blic* - about 13% of articles). The article and commentary follow, which make up 6.45% and 4.78% of all texts from the sample, respectively. A significant number of articles were published by *Politika* (77 or about 14%), and articles in this form were not recorded in *Večernje novosti*. The largest share of comments is recorded in *Danas* (48 or about 10%), while the largest number of articles in this form was published by *Politika* (52). The fourth quarter of 2019 again brings a very small share of news - 0.39%. Reports and other forms (such as hybrid genres or feuilletons) are present in 1.23% or 28 articles.

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

Genre	Total number	%
Report	1801	78.99
Interview	186	8.16
Article	147	6.45
Comment	109	4.78
Other	15	0.66
Reportage	13	0.57
News	9	0.39
<b>total</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

14 In the following analysis, we coded the ways of presenting certain topics or actors in individual texts from our sample in three different ways, taking into account both the text and its equipment (headline, title and subtitle). By neutral presentation of certain topics or actors, we have marked those texts in which the journalists do not take a value attitude, but try to present certain facts in a relatively neutral, measured way, respecting professional standards. We marked as positive those interpretations in which journalists express clear sympathies and a positive attitude in presenting certain topics or actors. As negative, we marked those interpretations in which journalists express a clear antipathy and a negative attitude towards certain topics or actors.

15 Balance represents the way a journalist approaches a topic. Balanced text implies a balanced and objective approach to the topic and interlocutors and the integrity of information.

16 Participation of balanced reports in other media: *Alo!* - 6.36%, *Kurir* - 8.82%, *Politika* - 18.80%, *Večernje novosti* - 26.28% and *Danas* - 35.4%.

Distribution of newspaper forms in the texts from the sample, according to the media expressed 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	236	171	322	193	238	367	274	1801
Interview	17	29	49	4	17	41	29	186
Article	3	14	40	12	1	77	0	147
Comment	2	1	48	2	4	52	0	109
Other	1	2	8	0	0	0	4	15
Reportage	0	0	1	0	2	7	3	13
News	0	0	3	2	0	3	1	9
<b>total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>2280</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Distribution of newspaper forms in the texts from the sample, according to the media, expressed as a percentage

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	91.12	78.80	68.37	90.61	90.84	67.09	88.10	78.99
interview	6.56	13.36	10.62	1.88	6.49	7.50	9.32	8.16
article	1.16	6.45	8.49	5.63	0.38	14.08	0.00	6.45
comment	0.77	0.46	9.98	0.94	1.53	9.51	0.00	4.78
other	0.39	0.92	1.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.29	0.66
reportage	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.76	1.28	0.96	0.57
news	0.00	0.00	0.64	0.94	0.00	0.55	0.32	0.39
<b>total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019



Report structure in terms of value context in seven media from the sample

Report/media	Value context in relation to the topic					
	positive		neutral		negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Informer</i>	36	18.65	40	20.73	117	60.62
<i>Kurir</i>	27	11.34	83	34.87	128	53.78
<i>Blic</i>	9	5.26	144	84.21	18	10.53
<i>Alo!</i>	29	12.29	164	69.49	43	18.22
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	26	9.49	174	63.50	74	27.01
<i>Danas</i>	1	0.31	228	70.81	93	28.88
<i>Politika</i>	37	10.08	260	70.84	70	19.07
<b>total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>9.16</b>	<b>1093</b>	<b>60.69</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>30.15</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

If we look at the representation of genres during all four quarters of 2019, we can see that almost 80% of the selected texts were written in the form of reports (7058 out of 8838 analyzed), which is, compared to 2018, an increase of less than 3% (77.21%). During 2019, the analyzed media published more interviews (8.11%) than comments (4.71%) and articles (4.57%). The lack of news is again noticeable on the front pages. The share of this genre was further reduced in 2019 and amounted to 1.36%.

Individual participation of genres in the reporting of seven media from the sample in all four quarters of 2019

Genre	Total number	%
Report	7058	79.86
Interview	717	8.11
Comment	416	4.71
Article	404	4.57
News	120	1.36
Other	72	0.81
Reportage	51	0.58
<b>total</b>	<b>8838</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019, *Mediameter*, April – June 2019, *Mediameter*, July – September 2019, and *Mediameter*, October – December 2019

## Topics

In order for each text to be as clearly defined as possible, the selected articles that make up the sample are classified within only one topic, but other elements present in the text are always recorded. This provided us with a clearer insight into the ways of reporting and media access to certain topics in previous editions of *Mediameter*. Texts from the field chronicle, which have a socio-political character, as well as articles related to the murder of singer Jelena Marjanović have been re-included in the sample, as a kind of paradigm of the situation in Serbian journalism, characterized by various types of disrespect for reporting.

## Representation of topics

Political topics within the twentieth issue of *Mediameter* are divided into domestic political (*political life in Serbia, activities of the President of Serbia, activities of the Government of Serbia and activities of the Prime Minister of Serbia*) and foreign policy, which primarily relate to various diplomatic activities of domestic political actors. Intensified activities in the field of foreign policy needed to be separated from other political topics, in order to clearly see this component of political action.

This time, it was especially observed how the media covered the events related to the “Krušik”<sup>17</sup> and “Jovanjica”<sup>18</sup> cases and the review of the doctorate of the Minister of Finance, Siniša Mali.<sup>19</sup> These three cases, to which the media generally paid significant attention, were also represented on the front pages of the sample newspapers. Within this analysis, all three cases were viewed as elements within broader topics, such as *Serbian political life, corruption or education*, in order to see from which angle the media reported on them. The “Krušik” case was written about in the fourth quarter in 125 texts, and it was mostly talked about from the domestic political perspective (65 texts), and then from the angle of media freedoms (15) and corruption (11). The case of “Jovanjica” was reported in a similar way (a total of 36 texts were published) - from the point of view of political life (15), followed by crime (8) and media freedoms (4 texts). The same number of texts contains information on the process of

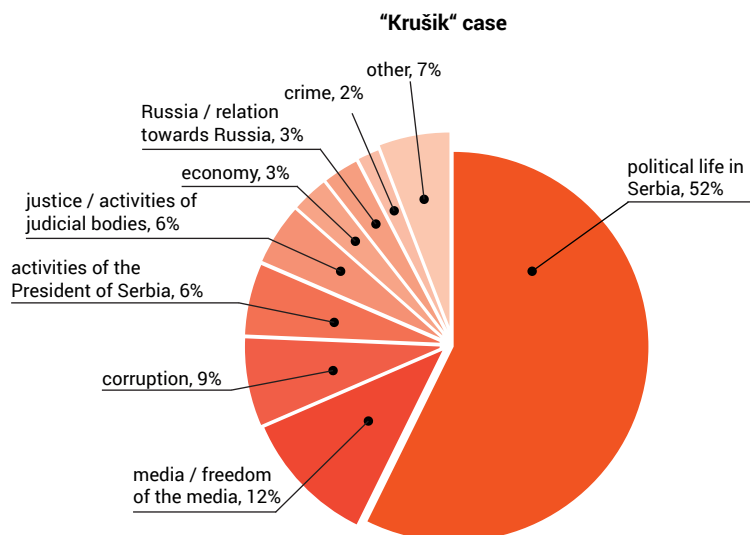
17 The Krushik case was opened in November 2018, when BIRN said in a statement that the father of the Minister of Police, as a representative of GIM from Belgrade, mediated between Krushik and arms buyers from Saudi Arabia, followed by a specialized portal. “Arms Watch” published the information that GIM bought weapons at preferential prices in relation to the state company SDPR. The management of “Krušik” denied these allegations, and in September 2019 (September 18), Aleksandar Obradović was arrested at his workplace, after addressing the media, alleging “suspicious actions in the Krušik factory”, and he was placed under house arrest on October 14. His detention was lifted at the end of December 2019.

18 The “Jovanjica” case was presented to the media in November 2019, when RTV published unofficial information about the arrest in Stara Pazova due to the found marijuana plantation. Seven days later, the prosecution confirmed that an order had been issued to conduct an investigation against nine people on suspicion that from January to November 2019, they had grown the narcotic drug cannabis in the greenhouses of the company “Jovanjica”. On the same day, opposition representatives claimed that the state was protecting the owner of the farm, arguing that the owner of Jovanjica had contacted close authorities after his arrest, and that the state of Jovanjica was an example of good practice for companies receiving from the state at least three loans in the amount of 3.9 million euros. The affair itself has opened up a number of issues related to the procedures for obtaining licenses for the production, cultivation and export of industrial hemp, as well as the institutional mechanisms and competencies for controlling these processes.

19 Minister of Finance Siniša Mali defended his doctoral thesis in 2013 at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences (FOS) in Belgrade on “Creating value through the process of restructuring and privatization - theoretical concepts and achieved results in Serbia”, but the examination of his doctorate lasted five years. The whole process ended with the decision of the Committee for Professional Ethics of the University of Belgrade on November 21, 2019, which determined the existence of non-academic behavior of Siniša Mali during the preparation of his doctoral dissertation, and based on the decision of the Committee, the Senate of the University of Belgrade annulled his doctorate.

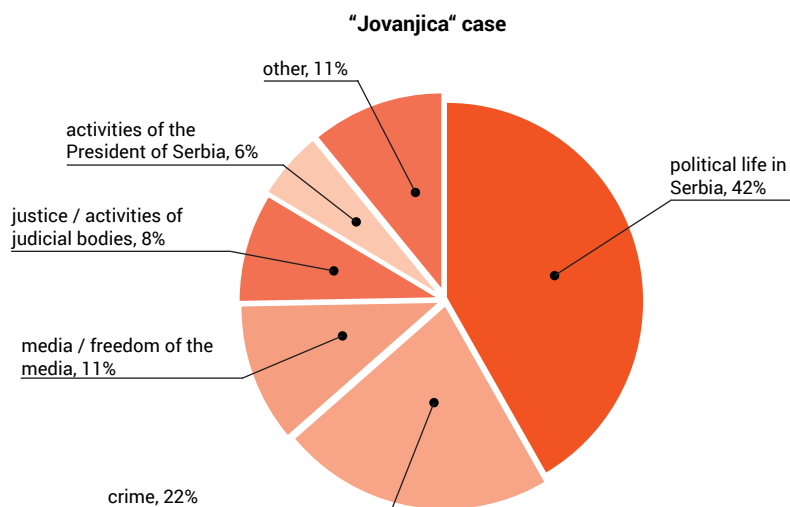
reviewing Siniša Mali's doctorate (36), and this topic was written from the angle of political life (18), education (10) and media freedoms (5 texts)

**Graph 24** – Participation of the “Krušik” case element according to the topics - all media from the sample



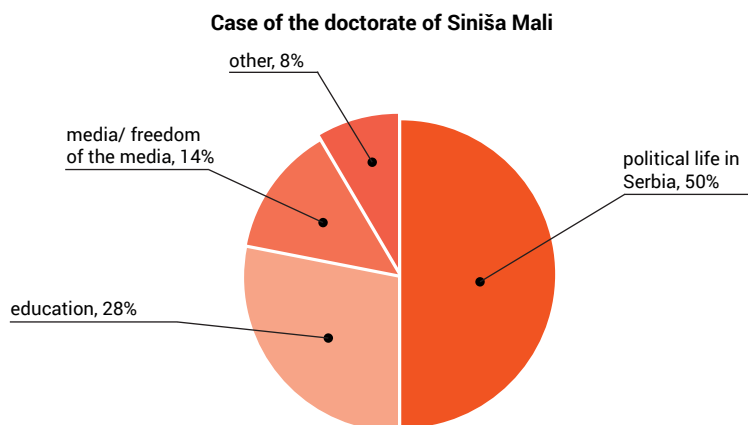
Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**Graph 25.** - Participation of the “Jovanjica” case element according to the topics - all media from the sample



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

**Graph 26.** - Participation of the element The case of Siniša Mali's doctorate according to topics - all media from the sample



Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

In the period October-December 2019, all political topics were present in a total of 648 or about 28.4% of texts from the sample: political life in Serbia in 541 or about 24% of texts (the first topic according to representation in the texts that made up the sample), activities of the president Serbia in 2.11% (48) of texts, Serbian foreign policy - 38 or 1.67% and the activities of the Prime Minister and the Government of the Republic of Serbia - 11 and 10 texts, respectively.

The next topic according to the participation in the fourth quarter of 2019 is *Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština* (188 or 8.25% of texts), whose presence decreased compared to the previous quarter by about 4% in relation to the total number of articles.<sup>20</sup> The third topic according to representation was *regional cooperation / relations in the region* (108 or 4.74% of texts), on which slightly fewer texts were published compared to the previous quarter (150). Topics related to Russia are represented in 86 articles, followed by *media / media freedom* (78), *political life in Montenegro* (76) and *judicial activities of judicial bodies* (75 texts). The eighth topic of interest is the *economic system*, about which the media published 70 or 3.07% of articles. Slightly less than 3% of articles are devoted to topics related to *religion and education*.

If we look at the value context of 2280 selected texts in the fourth quarter of 2019, 40.61% of articles were colored – 8.64% positive and 31.97% negative. Most negative texts were written about political life in Montenegro (85.53% of articles). The negative context was mostly noted when reporting on media-related topics – about 59%, while about 52% of texts related to Kosovo and about 51% of texts reporting on regional topics were negatively intoned. *Political life in Serbia* and *education* are topics presented by the media in a negative light in about 40% and 35% of articles, respectively. In the fourth quarter of 2019, the most positively intoned texts were published when it comes to topics related to Russia – as many as 41 texts (about 48%).

<sup>20</sup> 248 in the third versus 188 texts in the fourth quarter of 2019

In the fourth quarter of 2019, the media, as mentioned, showed somewhat greater interest in topics related to Russia – a total of 86 articles were published. Half of the texts were neutral, with 41 positive and 2 negative.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, 59 articles on the EU were published - 43 neutral, 15 negative and one positive article.<sup>22</sup>

Distribution of topics and their value context in seven media from the sample<sup>23</sup>

All media	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.
political life in Serbia	541	23.73	4	0.74	321	59.33	216	39.93
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	188	8.25	1	0.53	89	47.34	98	52.13
regional cooperation / relations in the region	108	4.74	7	6.48	46	42.59	55	50.93
Russia / relation towards Russia	86	3.77	41	47.67	43	50.00	2	2.33
media / media freedom	78	3.42	0	0.00	32	41.03	46	58.97
political life in Montenegro	76	3.33	0	0.00	11	14.47	65	85.53
justice, activities of judicial bodies	75	3.29	0	0.00	60	80.00	15	20.00
economic system	70	3.07	10	14.29	47	67.14	13	18.57
education	63	2.76	1	1.59	40	63.49	22	34.92
issues of belief, church and religion	62	2.72	6	9.68	43	69.35	13	20.97

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

21 Positively connoted texts were published in the daily newspaper *Alo!* (11), *Informer* (10), then 10 articles in *Kurir*, 7 in *Politika* and 3 in *Večernje novosti*. *Danas* and *Politika* published one negative article each.

22 Negative articles were recorded in *Informer* (6), *Politika* (4), *Kurir* (3), *Alo!* and *Blic* (one each). One positive text was written by *Politika*.

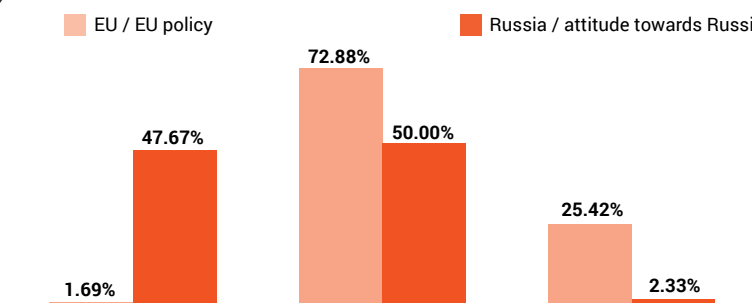
23 In all tables relating to the third quarter of 2019, the ten most represented topics are shown.

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

Total	No.	%
positive	197	8.64
neutral	1354	59.39
negative	729	31.97
<b>total</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Mediameter research, , October – December 2019

**Graph 27.** – Value context in all media in relation to the topic *Russia / attitude towards Russia* and *EU / EU policy*



Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

When it comes to the treatment of topics throughout 2019, the media paid the most attention to political life in Serbia (2289 or 25.9% of all texts that made up the sample), and another topic of interest was Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Pristina (975 - 11.03%). This is followed by regional issues (437 - about 5%), followed by the economic system (353 - about 4%) and the justice, the activities of judicial bodies (220 - 2.49%).

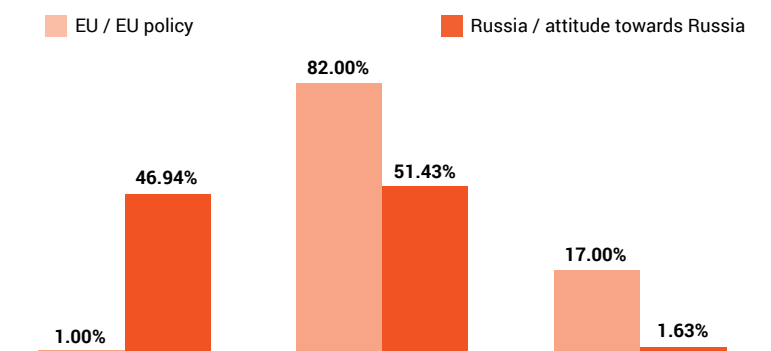
Distribution of topics and their value context in seven media from the sample for all four quarters of 2019<sup>24</sup>

Alo!	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	2289	25.90	21	0.92	1518	66.32	750	32.77
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	975	11.03	7	0.72	548	56.21	420	43.08
regional cooperation / relations in the region	437	4.94	8	1.83	215	49.20	214	48.97
economic system	353	3.99	28	7.93	226	64.02	99	28.05
justice, activities of judicial bodies	220	2.49	1	0.45	173	78.64	46	20.91

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019, *Mediameter*, April – June 2019, *Mediameter*, July – September 2019, and *Mediameter*, October – December 2019

The attitude of the media towards Russia and the EU remained unchanged in 2019. Topics related to Russia were presented in about 47% of texts in a positive context, while there were very few negative texts - only 1.63%. The EU was mostly written in a neutral tone (around 82%), while 1% of the texts were positive and 17% were negatively connoted.

**Graph 28.** - Value context in all media from the sample according to the topics Russia / attitude towards Russia and the EU / European Union policy for all four quarters of 2019.



Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019, *Mediameter*, April – June 2019, *Mediameter*, July – September 2019, and *Mediameter*, October – December 2019.

<sup>24</sup> The table presents the five most common topics.

## Distribution of topics by media

### *Alo!*

The most common topic in the daily *Alo!* is the *political life* in Serbia, to which the editorial board of this media dedicates 77 texts (about 30%), most of which are neutral. Another topic according to the representation in the daily newspaper *Alo!* is *Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština* (24 or 9.27%), about which most neutral texts have also been written. As already mentioned, in the *Alo!* about 73% of positively connoted texts on the topic of *Russia / attitude towards Russia* were written (out of 15 or 5.79% of published ones). Half of the texts on regional issues are negative (7 out of 14 articles), as well as all texts related to the internal affairs of Montenegro (12 negative).

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

<i>Alo!</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	77	29.73	1	1.30	62	80.52	14	18.18
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	24	9.27	1	4.17	21	87.50	2	8.33
Russia / relation towards Russia	15	5.79	11	73.33	4	26.67	0	0.00
regional cooperation / relations in the region	14	5.41	1	7.14	6	42.86	7	50.00
political life in Montenegro	12	4.63	0	0.00	0	0.00	12	100.00
crime	11	4.25	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
murder of a singer Jelena Marjanović	11	4.25	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
issues of belief, church and religion	10	3.86	1	10.00	8	80.00	1	10.00
justice, activities of judicial bodies	6	2.32	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
social questions/ social politics	5	1.93	2	40.00	3	60.00	0	0.00
activities of the President of Serbia	5	1.93	2	40.00	3	60.00	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019



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

<i>Alo!</i>	No.	%
positive	32	12.36
neutral	176	67.95
negative	51	19.69
<b>total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

### ***Blic***

The most common topic in the daily *Blic* is *political life in Serbia*, with a share of about 35% (76 articles). When it comes to this topic, the largest share is of neutral articles - about 88%, while the remaining texts are negative. Another topic according to representation is *Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština*, about which about 8% or 17 mostly neutral texts have been written. In the fourth quarter of 2019, *Blic* paid more attention to topics in the field of justice, which were represented in 12 texts, while 9 articles were published about crime. Journalists of this paper treated the topics in a neutral manner when it comes to most topics, except for reporting on the internal situation in Montenegro, which in 80% of articles was written in a negative context.

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

<i>Blic</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	76	35.02	0	0.00	67	88.16	9	11.84
Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština	17	7.83	0	0.00	15	88.24	2	11.76
justice, activities of judicial bodies	12	5.53	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
crime	9	4.15	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
USA/relation towards USA	8	3.69	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
education	7	3.23	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
EU/European Union politics	6	2.76	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
economic system	6	2.76	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
murder of a singer Jelena Marjanović	5	2.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00

corruption	5	2.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
foreign policy of Serbia	5	2.30	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	0.00
Russia / relation towards Russia	5	2.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
political life in Montenegro	5	2.30	0	0.00	1	20.00	4	80.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

<i>Blic</i>	No.	%
Positive	11	5.07
Neutral	179	82.49
Negative	27	12.44
<b>total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

#### *Danas*

The daily *Danas* represented domestic politics the most (172 articles - about 36.5%), to which this paper paid almost the same attention as in the previous quarter, and *Danas* situates this topic in a negative context in a third of its articles. *Media / media freedom* is another topic according to representation - 40 (8.49%), about which 52.5% of texts were written in a negative value context. The next topic reported by the journalists of this paper is the *economic system* (22 or 4.67% of articles - about 23% in a negative context). The next topics according to participation are the *judiciary*, *activities of judicial bodies* and *economies* (18 texts each, 33.33% negative), followed by education and texts related to religion (15 or 3.18% of articles each). This daily also covered culture, human rights, Kosovo and regional issues. Most negatively connoted texts were written about corruption (83.33%).

Value context in relation to the topic in the daily *Danas*

	Value context with reference to the topic							
<i>Danas</i>	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	172	36.52	0	0.00	115	66.86	57	33.14
media/ media freedom	40	8.49	0	0.00	19	47.50	21	52.50
economic system	22	4.67	0	0.00	17	77.27	5	22.73

justice, activities of judicial bodies	18	3.82	0	0.00	12	66.67	6	33.33
economy	18	3.82	0	0.00	12	66.67	6	33.33
issues of belief, church and religion	15	3.18	0	0.00	8	53.33	7	46.67
education	15	3.18	0	0.00	10	66.67	5	33.33
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Pristina	13	2.76	0	0.00	11	84.62	2	15.38
culture	13	2.76	0	0.00	10	76.92	3	23.08
corruption	12	2.55	0	0.00	2	16.67	10	83.33
regional cooperation / relations in the region	12	2.55	0	0.00	6	50.00	6	50.00
human rights	12	2.55	0	0.00	5	41.67	7	58.33

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

<i>Danas</i>	No.	%
Positive	2	0.42
Neutral	301	63.91
Negative	168	35.67
<b>total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

### *Informer*

In the daily newspaper *Informer*, most articles were published about *political life in Serbia* - 42 or about 20%. This topic was treated in as many as 95% of articles in a negative context. Another topic according to the representation in this media was *Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština* (28 or about 13%), about which *Informer* writes negatively in about 89% of published texts. Media-related topics were treated in a negative context in 87.5% (14 out of 16 published texts), while the treatment of texts related to Russia (14 or 6.57% of published articles) was extremely positive (71.43%). About regional relations publish about 85% of negatively connoted texts (11 out of 13 published), and topics related to Montenegro have a similar treatment (all 10 published texts are in a negative context). 7 articles each were published on topics related to the USA, the murder of Jelena Marjanović, the army, crime, infrastructure and the European Union. All texts on infrastructure projects and the army were written in a positive context. In relation to all media from the sample, the daily newspaper *Informer* recorded the largest share of value-connoted texts – about 77.5%. Also, this medium is represented in the sample with the smallest number of selected texts – 213.

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

<i>Informer</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	42	19.72	0	0.00	2	4.76	40	95.24
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	28	13.15	0	0.00	3	10.71	25	89.29
media/ media free- dom	16	7.51	0	0.00	2	12.50	14	87.50
Russia / relation towards Russia	14	6.57	10	71.43	4	28.57	0	0.00
regional cooperation / relations in the region	13	6.10	0	0.00	2	15.38	11	84.62
political life in Montenegro	10	4.69	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	100.00
USA/relation towards USA	7	3.29	2	28.57	1	14.29	4	57.14
army	7	3.29	7	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
murder of a singer Jelena Marjanović	7	3.29	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
crime	7	3.29	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
infrastructure	7	3.29	7	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
EU/European Union politics	7	3.29	0	0.00	1	14.29	6	85.71

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019Value context in relation to all topics in daily *Informer*

<i>Informer</i>	No.	%
Positive	37	17.37
Neutral	48	22.54
Negative	128	60.09
<b>total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

*Kurir*

*Political life in Serbia* is the topic on which the largest number of texts were written in *Kurir* in the fourth quarter - 91 or about 35%, mostly in a negative context (about 77%). Another topic according to representation was *Russia / attitude towards Russia* (13 or about 5% of articles), most of which - almost 77% are positive. Although three years have passed since the murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović, *Kurir* still writes about this unfortunate event on the front pages - as many as 11 texts are dedicated to that topic. The same number of texts (11 - 4.2%) is dedicated to *media rights and freedoms* (about 82% of negative connotations) and *education* (about 73% of negative texts). *Regional cooperation / relations in the region* and *activities of the President of Serbia* are represented in 10 more articles, followed by *Kosovo / relations between Belgrade and Priština* (17 or 6.46%), *political life in Montenegro* (all texts are written in a negative context) and crime.

Distribution of topics and their value context in the newspaper *Kurir*

<i>Kurir</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	91	34.73	3	3.30	18	19.78	70	76.92
Russia / relation towards Russia	13	4.96	10	76.92	3	23.08	0	0.00
murder of a singer Jelena Marjanović	11	4.20	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
media/ media freedom	11	4.20	0	0.00	2	18.18	9	81.82
education	11	4.20	1	9.09	2	18.18	8	72.73
activities of the President of Serbia	10	3.82	1	10.00	9	90.00	0	0.00
regional cooperation / relations in the region	10	3.82	2	20.00	3	30.00	5	50.00
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	9	3.44	0	0.00	6	66.67	3	33.33
political life in Montenegro	9	3.44	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	100.00
crime	8	3.05	0	0.00	2	25.00	6	75.00
Russia/Relations towards Russia	6	2.28	3	50.00	3	50.00	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

<i>Kurir</i>	No.	%
Positive	32	12.21
Neutral	96	36.64
Negative	134	51.15
<b>total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

### ***Politika***

In the fourth quarter of 2019, the daily *Politika* mostly dealt with topics related to Kosovo - 62 or 11.33% of articles, of which as many as 66.13% were negatively connoted. *Political life in Serbia* is the second topic in terms of representation (48 or 8.78% of articles), about which a third of negative texts have been written. 36 (6.58% of articles) were dedicated to regional issues, and about 30% of texts were negative. Judicial topics were the focus of 30, mostly neutral articles, while 28 texts (about 5%) were written on EU-related topics, which were also mostly neutral. *International relations* and the *economic system* were the subject of 27 articles, with the economic system being reported mostly in a neutral manner, while slightly more than a third of the texts on international relations were negative. The topic on which most positive texts were written was *Russia / attitude towards Russia* - a total of 19 articles, of which 7 or about 37% were situated in a positive context, while more than half of the negative texts were written about the political situation in Montenegro (10 out of 18 or about 56%).

In the fourth quarter of 2019, *Politika* published the largest number of texts selected for the sample - 547.

Distribution of topics and their value context in *Politika*

<i>Politika</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	62	11.33	0	0.00	21	33.87	41	66.13
political life in Serbia	48	8.78	0	0.00	33	68.75	15	31.25
regional cooperation / relations in the region	36	6.58	4	11.11	21	58.33	11	30.56
justice, activities of judicial bodies	30	5.48	0	0.00	24	80.00	6	20.00

EU/European Union politics	28	5.12	1	3.57	23	82.14	4	14.29
economic system	27	4.94	4	14.81	19	70.37	4	14.81
international relations	27	4.94	1	3.70	16	59.26	10	37.04
Russia / relation towards Russia	19	3.47	7	36.84	11	57.89	1	5.26
political life in Montenegro	18	3.29	0	0.00	8	44.44	10	55.56
education	17	3.11	0	0.00	15	88.24	2	11.76
issues of belief, church and religion	17	3.11	3	17.65	13	76.47	1	5.88

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

<i>Politika</i>	No.	%
positive	54	9.87
neutral	354	64.72
negative	139	25.41
<b>total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

***Večernje novosti***

Večernje novosti covered the topics related to *political life in Serbia* and *Kosovo* on the front pages equally (35 or 11.25% of articles each). One third of the texts on domestic political issues are negative, while about 66% of articles about Kosovo are negatively connoted. The next topic according to the representation in this paper is *culture* (21 or 6.75% of texts, of which 9 or about 43% are positive). The next topic of interest to this paper was *regional relations*, represented in 19 or about 6% of texts, of which about 63% are negative. Večernje novosti reported on the *USA* in 16 articles (about 56% negative), while all articles related to *Montenegro* were negative (15). A positive value context was noted in the texts relating to *Russia* (3) and *infrastructure* (5 positive articles).

The daily newspaper Večernje novosti records a share of value-connoted texts of 35.65%.

Value context in relation to all topics in the newspaper *Večernje novosti*

<i>Večernje novosti</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
political life in Serbia	35	11.25	0	0.00	24	68.57	11	31.43
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	35	11.25	0	0.00	12	34.29	23	65.71
culture	21	6.75	9	42.86	8	38.10	4	19.05
regional cooperation / relations in the region	19	6.11	0	0.00	7	36.84	12	63.16
USA/relation towards USA	16	5.14	0	0.00	7	43.75	9	56.25
political life in Montenegro	15	4.82	0	0.00	0	0.00	15	100.00
Russia / relation towards Russia	13	4.18	3	23.08	10	76.92	0	0.00
crime	12	3.86	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
legislative activity	10	3.22	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
infrastructure	10	3.22	5	50.00	5	50.00	0	0.00
Political life in Montenegro	7	2.68	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019



Value context in relation to all topics in *Večernje novosti*

<i>Večernje novosti</i>	No.	%
positive	29	9.32
neutral	200	64.31
negative	82	26.37
<b>total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

### Balance

In the fourth quarter of 2019, it can be noticed again that most of the represented topics were not treated in a complete way, which is evidenced by the fact that the balance is present in only 18.51% of all articles. The least balanced texts were recorded in the newspaper *Informer* 1.41% (only 3 out of 213 texts), and the most in *Blic* - about 38%.

Although the value context is not expressed in about 59.39% of all texts, in considering the real picture of the media from the sample, one should certainly take into account the fact that the vast majority of texts from the covers we analyzed are not complete and that such a one-sided approach reflects the general situation in Serbian media. Balancing texts, finally, necessarily show a certain degree of restraint, which obviously does not represent a particularly widespread phenomenon in Serbian journalism. Commitment, which is sometimes very passionate, attracts the audience, but reduces the seriousness. It is about the speed of reaction, and not about the detailed and rational information that research requires, a larger number of interlocutors and reliable and verifiable data, with available sources of information. In that way, circulation and popularity are gained in a short period of time, but not professional reputation.

Balance in relation to all topics and all seven media from the sample

All media	Yes		No	
media	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Informer</i>	1.41	3	98.59	210
<i>Alo!</i>	6.95	18	93.05	241
<i>Kurir</i>	8.40	22	91.60	240
<i>Politika</i>	13.71	75	86.29	472
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	27.01	84	72.99	227
<i>Danas</i>	29.30	138	70.70	333
<i>Blic</i>	37.79	82	62.21	135
<b>total</b>	<b>18.51</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>81.49</b>	<b>1858</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Throughout 2019, the lowest share of balanced texts was recorded in the daily *Informer* (1.84%) or in only 15 of the 801 analyzed articles. The daily *Blic* published about 31%, that is, the most complete articles in relation to all other media in the sample.

Balance in relation to all topics and all seven media from the sample for all four quarters of 2019

All media	Yes		No	
media	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Informer</i>	1.84	15	98.16	801
<i>Kurir</i>	5.48	57	94.52	984
<i>Alo!</i>	7.91	77	92.09	896
<i>Politika</i>	16.94	346	83.06	1696
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	18.25	234	81.75	1048
<i>Danas</i>	23.84	446	76.16	1425
<i>Blic</i>	31.12	253	68.88	560
<b>total</b>	<b>16.16</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>83.84</b>	<b>7410</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019, *Mediameter*, April – June 2019, *Mediameter*, July – September 2019, and *Mediameter*, October – December 2019

## Actors

The media in Serbia, at least judging by the analysis of the empirical material collected from the front pages, mostly deal with political events within Serbia. Individual and collective political actors, who occupy different positions within the political life of Serbia, make up 42.03% of the total number of actors mentioned in the selected texts from the front pages. If we add to this number the texts that speak about foreign political actors, the percentage of participation of political actors in the total number of actors on the front pages grows to 68.83%. The second group in terms of frequency of occurrence are various social actors who make up 20.46% of our sample. Economic actors are the protagonists of front-page texts only in 8.25% of cases.

Total distribution of actors appearing in the texts included in the research sample (expressed in absolute numbers)

Actors					
Political actors	9572	Domestic	5845	Individual	4635
				Collective	1210
		Foreign	3727	Individual	3069
				Collective	658
Economic actors	1148	Domestic	1115	Individual	523
				Collective	592
		Foreign	33	Individual	0
				Collective	33
Other social actors	2846	Domestic	2793	Individual	1971
				Collective	822
		Foreign	53	Individual	25
				Collective	28
Unnamed sources					339
Total					13905

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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	814	44.29	12	1.47	773	94.96	29	3.56
Ana Brnabić	172	9.36	1	0.58	170	98.84	1	0.58
Ivica Dačić	156	8.49	0	0.00	150	96.15	6	3.85
Nebojša Stefanović	146	7.94	1	0.68	132	90.41	13	8.90
Aleksandar Vulin	104	5.66	0	0.00	102	98.08	2	1.92
Siniša Mali	100	5.44	1	1.00	93	93.00	6	6.00
Zorana Mihajlović	91	4.95	0	0.00	88	96.70	3	3.30
Aleksandar Antić	33	1.80	0	0.00	33	100.00	0	0.00
Mladen Šarčević	32	1.74	0	0.00	32	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Đorđević	24	1.31	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Rasim Ljajić	22	1.20	0	0.00	21	95.45	1	4.55
Nela Kuburović	20	1.09	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Ružić	20	1.09	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Zlatibor Lončar	20	1.09	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Nenad Popović	18	0.98	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	5.56
Jadranka Joksimović	16	0.87	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Branislav Nedimović	14	0.76	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Trivan	12	0.65	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Vladan Vukosavljević	11	0.60	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Slavica Đukić Dejanović	5	0.27	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Krkobabić	4	0.22	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Knežević	2	0.11	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
Vanja Udovičić	2	0.11	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>1838</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>95.76</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>3.43</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

As in the previous quarter, the most represented actor on the front pages of daily newspapers in Serbia was the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, about whom the media from our sample report mostly neutrally (in 94.96% of cases). Another 1.47% (12) of positive<sup>25</sup> and 3.56% (29) texts with a negative<sup>26</sup> connotation were written about him. The President of Serbia appears as the protagonist of texts on the covers 814 times, which is significantly more than the first next ranked actor, the Prime Minister of Serbia Ana Brnabić, who is present in 172 texts and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić, who is represented in 156 articles. The highest frequency of appearances of Aleksandar Vučić, expressed in absolute numbers, is recorded in the dailies *Danas* (228), *Politika* (154) and *Večernje novosti* (105). Expressed in relative numbers of percentage share of texts in which he appears as an actor, and in relation to the total number of selected texts from the same individual newspapers, we see that he is the most represented actor in *Danas* (48.41%) and *Informer* (37.36%). The lowest share of articles in which the actor is the President of Serbia is recorded in the daily *Politika* (28.15%).

When it comes to the value context, the largest share, as well as the number of negative texts are again present in *Danas* (12.28% or 28 articles) and *Blic* (1.39% or 1 article). Positively connoted texts were published in the newspapers *Alo!* (5 or 5.81%), *Blic*, *Informer* and *Politika* (2 each) and *Kurir* (1 or 1.12%).

#### Aleksandar Vučić: Value context with reference to the media

Aleksandar Vučić	Positive		Neutral		Negative		total	
Media	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	5	5.81	81	94.19	0	0.00	86	100
<i>Blic</i>	2	2.78	69	95.83	1	1.39	72	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	200	87.72	28	12.28	228	100
<i>Informer</i>	2	2.50	78	97.50	0	0.00	80	100
<i>Kurir</i>	1	1.12	88	98.88	0	0.00	89	100
<i>Politika</i>	2	1.30	152	98.70	0	0.00	154	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	0	0.00	105	100.00	0	0.00	105	100
<b>total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>94.96</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

25 Slightly less than in previous quarters when there were: 17 (in the third quarter of 2019), 16 (in the second), 22 (in the first), 25 (in the fourth) and 28 (in the third), 21 (in the second) and 22 (in the first quarter of 2018).

26 More than in the previous quarter in which there were 27.

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>	228	471	48.41
<i>Informer</i>	80	213	37.56
<i>Kurir</i>	89	262	33.97
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	105	311	33.76
<i>Alo!</i>	86	259	33.20
<i>Blic</i>	72	217	33.18
<i>Politika</i>	154	547	28.15
<b>total</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>35.70</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Prime Minister Ana Brnabić is the protagonist in 172 (9.36%) of the analyzed texts and is second in terms of the frequency of appearances among individual political actors from the Serbian political scene. In the fourth quarter of 2019, one negatively connoted text about Ana Brnabić was written, which was published in the daily *Danas*, as well as one positively connoted text published in the daily *Politika*.

The largest number of articles in which the actress is the Prime Minister of Serbia was published by the dailies *Politika* (51), *Danas* (35) and *Večernje novosti* (23). The largest share of articles in relation to the total number of articles in the media was recorded in *Politika* (9.32%), *Danas* (7.43%) and *Večernje novosti* (7.40%).

Ana Brnabić: Value context with reference to the media

Ana Brnabić Media	positive		neutral		negative		total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00	15	100
<i>Blic</i>	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00	16	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	34	97.14	1	2.86	35	100
<i>Informer</i>	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00	14	100
<i>Kurir</i>	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00	18	100
<i>Politika</i>	1	1.96	50	98.04	0	0.00	51	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00	23	100
<b>total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>98.84</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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>Politika</i>	51	547	9.32
<i>Danas</i>	35	471	7.43
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	23	311	7.40
<i>Blic</i>	16	217	7.37
<i>Kurir</i>	18	262	6.87
<i>Informer</i>	14	213	6.57
<i>Alo!</i>	15	259	5.79
<b>total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>7.54</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Other actors from the group consisting of the Government and the President of the Republic of Serbia are presented in a neutral value context in 95.76% of the texts. The largest number of negatively connoted texts, except for President Aleksandar Vučić, were written about Nebojša Stefanović (13) and 6 each about Ivica Dačić and Siniša Mali. It is interesting that, apart from President Aleksandar Vučić, only one positive text each was written about Ana Brnabić, Nebojša Stefanović and Siniša Mali.

The most represented actors of the members of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for all four quarters of 2019 are displayed in the table below. By far the most represented actor on the front pages of our daily newspapers is the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, with a total of 2921 appearances,<sup>27</sup> about which the most positive (65) and negative (110)<sup>28</sup> connoted texts have been written. The highest percentage share of negatively connoted texts during 2019 among the most represented actors is recorded in the case of the Minister of the Interior Nebojša Stefanović (4.56%).

The most represented actors in the group of **Government and the President of the Republic of Serbia** in the four quarters of 2019

Government and the President of the Republic of Serbia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Aleksandar Vučić	2921	45.04	65	2.23	2746	94.01	110	3.77
Ana Brnabić	662	10.21	2	0.30	648	97.89	12	1.81
Ivica Dačić	643	9.91	2	0.31	628	97.67	13	2.02

<sup>27</sup> Slightly less than in 2018, when a total of 3,042 appearances of President Aleksandar Vučić on the front pages of daily newspapers were recorded.

<sup>28</sup> More in relation to the previous 2018, when 72 negatively connoted texts were registered, and less in relation to 2017, when 151 negatively connoted texts were recorded.

Nebojša Stefanović	439	6.77	2	0.46	417	94.99	20	4.56
Aleksandar Vulin	386	5.95	2	0.52	374	96.89	10	2.59

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

In the fourth quarter of 2019, we recorded a renewed increase in the number of appearances of opposition actors - 1352 compared to the previous quarter when there were 1287. In this quarter, the most present opposition leader was Dragan Đilas with 220 appearances, slightly more than in the previous quarter (200), but still less than in the penultimate quarter (275).

Boško Obradović (121) and Vuk Jeremić (83) follow. Most negative texts, expressed in absolute numbers, were written about Dragan Đilas (103),<sup>29</sup> followed by Boško Obradović (43)<sup>30</sup> and Vuk Jeremić (26).<sup>31</sup>

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual political actors from **the opposition**

Opposition- individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Đilas	220	16.27	0	0.00	117	53.18	103	46.82
Boško Obradović	121	8.95	0	0.00	78	64.46	43	35.54
Vuk Jeremić	83	6.14	0	0.00	57	68.67	26	31.33
Marko Bastać	55	4.07	0	0.00	30	54.55	25	45.45
Marinika Tepić	55	4.07	0	0.00	40	72.73	15	27.27
Sergej Trifunović	53	3.92	0	0.00	39	73.58	14	26.42
Vojislav Šešelj	49	3.62	0	0.00	45	91.84	4	8.16
Boris Tadić	46	3.40	0	0.00	43	93.48	3	6.52
Zoran Lutovac	46	3.40	0	0.00	32	69.57	14	30.43
Nebojša Zelenović	41	3.03	0	0.00	34	82.93	7	17.07
Borko Stefanović	23	1.70	0	0.00	20	86.96	3	13.04
Vladimir Gajić	22	1.63	1	4.55	20	90.91	1	4.55
Miša Vacić	21	1.55	0	0.00	12	57.14	9	42.86
Aleksandar Šapić	20	1.48	0	0.00	19	95.00	1	5.00
Miroslav Aleksić	19	1.41	0	0.00	17	89.47	2	10.53

<sup>29</sup> More in relation to the previous quarter when there were 75 negatively connoted texts, and less in relation to the quarter before the last one, when there were 111 of them.

<sup>30</sup> Less in relation to the two previous quarters (63 and 50), and significantly more in relation to the last two quarters in 2018 - the fourth (25) and especially the third (only 15).

<sup>31</sup> Less than in the previous two quarters (48 and 55).



Miloš Jovanović	19	1.41	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Živković	19	1.41	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Balša Božović	19	1.41	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Čedomir Jovanović	18	1.33	0	0.00	16	88.89	2	11.11
Radoslav Milojičić Kena	16	1.18	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandra Jerkov	14	1.04	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Pajtić	12	0.89	0	0.00	10	83.33	2	16.67
Branislav Lečić	12	0.89	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Tatjana Macura	11	0.81	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Nenad Čanak	11	0.81	1	9.09	10	90.91	0	0.00
Dragan Šutanovac	10	0.74	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Janko Veselinović	10	0.74	0	0.00	8	80.00	2	20.00
Đorđe Vukadinović	9	0.67	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoljub Mićunović	9	0.67	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Saša Paunović	8	0.59	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Jovanović	8	0.59	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Sanda Rašković Ivić	7	0.52	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Veselinović	7	0.52	0	0.00	3	42.86	4	57.14
Miroslav Parović	6	0.44	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Sulejman Ugljanin	6	0.44	0	0.00	3	50.00	3	50.00
Velimir Ilić	6	0.44	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Stamatović	6	0.44	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Radomir Lazović	6	0.44	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Stefan Stamenkovski	6	0.44	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Saša Radulović	5	0.37	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Goran Ješić	5	0.37	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Kostreš	5	0.37	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Vladan Glišić	4	0.30	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Olenik	4	0.30	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Gordana Čomić	4	0.30	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Rade Veljanovski	4	0.30	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski	4	0.30	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Petrović	4	0.30	0	0.00	1	25.00	3	75.00

Nemanja Šarović	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Kostić	3	0.22	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
Milorad Mirčić	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ljubiša Preletačević Beli	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Đurišić	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Žarko Korać	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Momir Stojanović	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Vjerica Radeta	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Veroljub Stevanović	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Čedomir Antić	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Konstantin Samofalov	3	0.22	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	151	11.17	0	0.00	132	87.42	19	12.58
<b>total</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>76.85</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>23.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Table below provides an overview of the most represented actors from the opposition in all four quarters of 2019. The most represented actors from the opposition on the front pages of our daily newspapers were Dragan Đilas with 913 appearances (40.74% in a negative context), Boško Obradović with 557 appearances (33.21% in a negative context) and Vuk Jeremić with 486 appearances (33.13% of negatively connoted articles).

The most represented actors among the members of the opposition in the four quarters of 2019

Opposition - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Đilas	913	22.72	0	0.00	541	59.26	372	40.74
Boško Obradović	557	13.86	0	0.00	372	66.79	185	33.21
Vuk Jeremić	486	12.10	0	0.00	325	66.87	161	33.13
Boris Tadić	217	5.40	0	0.00	190	87.56	27	12.44
Vojislav Šešelj	210	5.23	0	0.00	186	88.57	24	11.43

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual political actors in **the position**

Position - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Vladimir Đukanović	34	8.25	1	2.94	32	94.12	1	2.94
Andrej Vučić	24	5.83	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
Milutin Jeličić Jutka	22	5.34	0	0.00	11	50.00	11	50.00
Đorđe Milićević	20	4.85	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Marija Obradović	18	4.37	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Martinović	18	4.37	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoljub Simonović	14	3.40	0	0.00	10	71.43	4	28.57
Dragan Marković Palma	14	3.40	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Milenko Jovanov	13	3.16	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Darko Glišić	13	3.16	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Orlić	13	3.16	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Bečić	12	2.91	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Muamer Zukorlić	11	2.67	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Vuk Drašković	9	2.18	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Dragan Šormaz	9	2.18	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Vladimir Zagrađanin	8	1.94	0	0.00	1	12.50	7	87.50
Marijan Ristićević	8	1.94	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Milovan Drecun	6	1.46	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Bakarec	5	1.21	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milutin Mrkonjić	5	1.21	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Linta	5	1.21	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Novica Tončev	5	1.21	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Marinković	4	0.97	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Atlagić	3	0.73	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Radomir Nikolić	3	0.73	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	116	28.16	1	0.86	107	92.24	8	6.90
<b>total</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>90.78</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8.74</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual political actors representing  
**State bodies, institutions and agencies**

State bodies, institutions and agencies – individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Goran Vesić	76	15.97	0	0.00	70	92.11	6	7.89
Maja Gojković	48	10.08	0	0.00	47	97.92	1	2.08
Marko Đurić	47	9.87	0	0.00	47	100.00	0	0.00
Miloš Vučević	28	5.88	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Suzana Vasiljević	24	5.04	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Tomislav Nikolić	22	4.62	0	0.00	21	95.45	1	4.55
Biljana Popović Ivković	17	3.57	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Selaković	13	2.73	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Igor Mirović	9	1.89	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Jorgovanka Tabaković	9	1.89	0	0.00	7	77.78	2	22.22
Zoran Radojičić	8	1.68	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Milovan Drecun	7	1.47	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Miroslav Lazanski	6	1.26	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Veljko Odalović	6	1.26	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Kozarev	4	0.84	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Marković	4	0.84	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Gajović	4	0.84	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Darko Tanasković	3	0.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Mrkić	3	0.63	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Nikola Nikodijević	3	0.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Božović	3	0.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	132	27.73	0	0.00	116	87.88	16	12.12
<b>total</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>93.91</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6.09</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual political actors: **representatives of military and police**

Military and police - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Vladimir Rebić	14	9.33	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Bratislav Gašić	13	8.67	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Mojsilović	10	6.67	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
others	113	75.33	1	0.88	105	92.92	7	6.19
<b>total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>94.67</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.67</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

Other political and social actors	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Slobodan Milošević	92	22.60	0	0.00	87	94.57	5	5.43
Branko Stefanović	62	15.23	0	0.00	50	80.65	12	19.35
Zoran Đinđić	35	8.60	0	0.00	34	97.14	1	2.86
Megatrend University	23	5.65	0	0.00	16	69.57	7	30.43
Mića Jovanović	20	4.91	0	0.00	14	70.00	6	30.00
Marija Lukić	17	4.18	3	17.65	14	82.35	0	0.00
Matija Bečković	17	4.18	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Teodorović	14	3.44	0	0.00	9	64.29	5	35.71
Emir Kusturica	11	2.70	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Vojislav Koštunica	11	2.70	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Mirjana Marković	10	2.46	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Rodoljub Šabić	8	1.97	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Vesna Pešić	7	1.72	1	14.29	6	85.71	0	0.00
Ivan Tasovac	7	1.72	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Jelena Milić	7	1.72	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Kokan Mladenović	6	1.47	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Ivan Stambolić	6	1.47	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Jurić	6	1.47	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Beba Popović	5	1.23	0	0.00	3	60.00	2	40.00

Veran Matić	5	1.23	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Karađorđević	5	1.23	0	0.00	3	60.00	2	40.00
Biljana Srbljanović	5	1.23	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Saša Janković	5	1.23	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Slavko Ćuruvija	4	0.98	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Marina Abramović	4	0.98	0	0.00	2	50.00	2	50.00
Srđa Popović	3	0.74	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Latinka Perović	3	0.74	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
Anđelko Vučić	3	0.74	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Mihajlović	3	0.74	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Mlađan Dinkić	3	0.74	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>ttt</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>87.22</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>11.55</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Within the category of others, actors who have a certain social influence or are represented in public space for other reasons are presented, but their social role is not institutionalized or is outside the categories that are specifically observed in this research. Also, this category includes people who had a great influence or significant political roles during their lives, such as Zoran Đinđić or Slobodan Milošević, whose political roles are still being discussed in public. Also, in the fourth quarter of 2019, Slobodan Milošević was an actor of importance in as many as 92 texts published on the front pages of the sample media.

There are noticeably fewer texts dealing with significant collective political actors, which are represented among domestic political actors with 20.70.

Frequency distribution and value context of appearances of domestic collective political actors:  
**state bodies and institutions**

State bodies, agencies and institutions - collective	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Government of Serbia	84	20.05	0	0.00	80	95.24	4	4.76
Ministry of Interior	68	16.23	0	0.00	66	97.06	2	2.94
National Bank of Serbia	24	5.73	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
Ministry of Defence	24	5.73	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Finance	20	4.77	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	19	4.53	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Ministry of Justice	18	4.30	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Education, Science and technological Development	15	3.58	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	15	3.58	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Ministry of Construction, Traffic and Infrastructure	14	3.34	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	12	2.86	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy	9	2.15	1	11.11	8	88.89	0	0.00
Tax Administration	8	1.91	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	7	1.67	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian Government Office for Kosovo and Metohija	6	1.43	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00

Ministry of Culture and Information	6	1.43	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Health	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Energy Agency	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Property Directorate	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of youth and sports	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Mining and Energy	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Environmental Protection	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Republic fund PIO	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
National Employment Service	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	37	8.83	0	0.00	36	97.30	1	2.70
<b>total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>97.14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2.63</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearances of domestic collective political actors:  
**army and police**

Military and police – collective	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Security Intelligence Agency	58	43.61	1	1.72	57	98.28	0	0.00
Army of Serbia	39	29.32	11	28.21	28	71.79	0	0.00
Military Security Agency	19	14.29	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Service for Combating Organized Crime	3	2.26	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	14	10.53	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9.02</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>90.98</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019



Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of domestic collective political actors:  
**position**

Position - parties	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
SNS	166	69.17	1	0.60	144	86.75	21	12.65
SPS	47	19.58	0	0.00	45	95.74	2	4.26
SPO	7	2.92	1	14.29	5	71.43	1	14.29
SDPS	4	1.67	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
PUPS	4	1.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
United Serbia	4	1.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Socialists' Movement	4	1.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	4	1.67	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
<b>total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>88.33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10.83</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of domestic collective political actors:  
**opposition**

Opposition - parties	No.	%	posi- tive	%	neutral	%	nega- tive	%
Alliance for Serbia	123	29.43	0	0.00	93	75.61	30	24.39
DS	62	14.83	0	0.00	55	88.71	7	11.29
Dveri	26	6.22	0	0.00	24	92.31	2	7.69
PSG	25	5.98	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
DSS	23	5.50	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
SRS	17	4.07	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
SDS	14	3.35	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Initiative: Let's not drown Belgrade	13	3.11	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
SPAS	12	2.87	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Together for Serbia	11	2.63	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
People's party	11	2.63	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Freedom and Justice party	10	2.39	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
LSV	9	2.15	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Enough is enough	8	1.91	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00

New party	8	1.91	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
PokS	7	1.67	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian Right	6	1.44	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
LDP	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
New Serbia	3	0.72	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	27	6.46	0	0.00	27	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>90.43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9.57</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

A significantly lower percentage of texts on the front pages speak of foreign (individual and collective) political actors (only 26.80% of the total number of actors). The protagonists of these texts are more often individual actors (in 82.34% of cases) than collective ones (17.65%).

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective actors:

#### Kosovo

Kosovo	broj	%	poziti- van	%	neu- tralan	%	nega- tivan	%
Albin Kurti	93	10.22	0	0.00	66	70.97	27	29.03
Serbian list	77	8.46	5	6.49	72	93.51	0	0.00
Ramush Haradinaj	67	7.36	0	0.00	58	86.57	9	13.43
Hashim Thaçi	67	7.36	0	0.00	62	92.54	5	7.46
KLA	38	4.18	0	0.00	18	47.37	20	52.63
Nenad Rašić	38	4.18	0	0.00	22	57.89	16	42.11
Rada Trajković	35	3.85	0	0.00	27	77.14	8	22.86
Kadri Veseli	33	3.63	0	0.00	26	78.79	7	21.21
Behgjet Pacolli	28	3.08	0	0.00	25	89.29	3	10.71
Oliver Ivanović	24	2.64	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Isa Mustafa	23	2.53	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Rakić	23	2.53	0	0.00	22	95.65	1	4.35
KFOR	18	1.98	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Special court for KLA crimes	16	1.76	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
The Self-Determina- tion Movement	13	1.43	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Vlora Çitaku	13	1.43	0	0.00	9	69.23	4	30.77
Milan Radojičić	11	1.21	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Fatmir Limaj	11	1.21	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00

Igor Simić	10	1.10	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Unmik	9	0.99	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Milena Ivanović	8	0.88	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Euleks	8	0.88	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Filip Kosnet	8	0.88	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
RSCU	8	0.88	0	0.00	3	37.50	5	62.50
Dalibor Jeftić	8	0.88	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Kosovo Government	7	0.77	0	0.00	3	42.86	4	57.14
Kosovo police	6	0.66	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
others	210	23.08	1	0.48	185	88.10	24	11.43
<b>total</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>84.62</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>14.73</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Croatia**

Croatia	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Kolinda Grabar Kitarović	28	13.66	0	0.00	21	75.00	7	25.00
Zoran Milanović	17	8.29	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Andrej Plenković	13	6.34	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Franjo Tuđman	10	4.88	0	0.00	8	80.00	2	20.00
Milorad Pupovac	10	4.88	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
HDZ	8	3.90	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Ivo Josipović	4	1.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Hrvatska policija	4	1.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ante Pavelić	3	1.46	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Branimir Glavaš	3	1.46	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	105	51.22	1	0.95	85	80.95	19	18.10
<b>total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>84.39</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15.12</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Montenegro**

Montenegro	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milo Đukanović	88	24.58	0	0.00	47	53.41	41	46.59
Duško Marković	32	8.94	0	0.00	28	87.50	4	12.50
Andrija Mandić	26	7.26	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
Democratic front	21	5.87	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Knežević	16	4.47	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Montenegro Government	13	3.63	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
"Montenegro police"	9	2.51	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
DPS	9	2.51	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Medojević	6	1.68	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milun Zogović	5	1.40	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Momir Bulatović	4	1.12	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	129	36.03	5	3.88	117	90.70	7	5.43
<b>total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>83.80</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>14.80</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution 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	50	31.45	0	0.00	49	98.00	1	2.00
Željko Komšić	16	10.06	0	0.00	15	93.75	1	6.25
Bakir Izetbegović	13	8.18	0	0.00	10	76.92	3	23.08
SDA	12	7.55	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Šefik Džaferović	7	4.40	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Denis Zvizdić	3	1.89	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	58	36.48	0	0.00	55	94.83	3	5.17
<b>total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>94.97</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5.03</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors from the region: **Macedonia**

Macedonia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Zoran Zaev	33	48.53	0	0.00	31	93.94	2	6.06
Stevo Pendarovski	13	19.12	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
VMRO–DPMNE	5	7.35	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
others	17	25.00	0	0.00	14	82.35	3	17.65
<b>total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>92.65</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7.35</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors

Foreign political actors	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Emmanuel Macron	75	12.73	0	0.00	75	100.00	0	0.00
Edi Rama	49	8.32	0	0.00	49	100.00	0	0.00
Angela Merkel	44	7.47	0	0.00	44	100.00	0	0.00
Recep Tayyip Erdogan	35	5.94	0	0.00	35	100.00	0	0.00
Xi Jinping	18	3.06	2	11.11	16	88.89	0	0.00
Boris Johnson	17	2.89	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Viktor Orban	14	2.38	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Boyko Borisov	11	1.87	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Chen Bo	10	1.70	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Alexander Lukashenko	10	1.70	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Bashar al Assad	8	1.36	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Jeremy Corbyn	7	1.19	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Volodymyr Zelensky	6	1.02	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Kyriakos Mitsotakis	6	1.02	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Miloš Zeman	5	0.85	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
AfD	5	0.85	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Sian MacLeod	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Sebastian Kurz	4	0.68	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00

Petro Poroshenko	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Heiko Maas	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Christian Democratic Union	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Theresa May	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ilir Meta	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	241	40.92	1	0.41	238	98.76	2	0.83
<b>total</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>98.64</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.85</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region: **Russia**

Russia	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Vladimir Putin	119	32.96	9	7.56	110	92.44	0	0.00
Dmitry Medvedev	41	11.36	0	0.00	41	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko	19	5.26	1	5.26	18	94.74	0	0.00
Dmitry Peskov	16	4.43	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Maria Zakharova	13	3.60	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Sergey Lavrov	13	3.60	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Russian security services	12	3.32	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Sergey Shoygu	12	3.32	2	16.67	10	83.33	0	0.00
Yevgeny Primakov	3	0.83	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Russian army	3	0.83	3	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
others	110	30.47	6	5.45	104	94.55	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.82</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>94.18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region **USA**

USA	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Donald Trump	104	23.27	1	0.96	102	98.08	1	0.96
Matthew Palmer	54	12.08	0	0.00	50	92.59	4	7.41
Richard Grenell	47	10.51	0	0.00	47	100.00	0	0.00
US Congress	20	4.47	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Anthony F. Godfrey	20	4.47	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
CIA	16	3.58	0	0.00	13	81.25	3	18.75
Mike Pompeo	16	3.58	0	0.00	15	93.75	1	6.25
State Department	10	2.24	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
American administration	9	2.01	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
William Walker	7	1.57	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
Richard Holbrooke	5	1.12	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Democratic party	5	1.12	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Nancy Pelosi	5	1.12	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
US Embassy	5	1.12	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Pentagon	5	1.12	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Barack Obama	4	0.89	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
USAID	4	0.89	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Bill Clinton	4	0.89	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
John Bolton	4	0.89	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Republican party	3	0.67	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
CNN	3	0.67	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Melania Trump	3	0.67	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
FBI	3	0.67	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
George Soros	3	0.67	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	88	19.69	0	0.00	83	94.32	5	5.68
<b>total</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>96.20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3.58</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution 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	42	12.92	0	0.00	39	92.86	3	7.14
European Parliament	38	11.69	0	0.00	37	97.37	1	2.63
Tanja Fajon	25	7.69	0	0.00	24	96.00	1	4.00
European Commission	23	7.08	1	4.35	22	95.65	0	0.00
David McAlister	21	6.46	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimír Bilčík	16	4.92	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
European Council	13	4.00	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Maja Kocijančič	10	3.08	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Ursula von der Leyen	10	3.08	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Sem Fabrizi	10	3.08	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Federica Mogherini	10	3.08	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Jean Claude Juncker	9	2.77	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Josep Borrell	9	2.77	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Donald Tusk	7	2.15	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Johannes Han	5	1.54	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
European Investment Bank	4	1.23	1	25.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
others	73	22.46	0	0.00	72	98.63	1	1.37
<b>total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>97.23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.15</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019



Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors: **representatives of international organizations and institutions**

International organizations and institutions	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
OSCE	26	20.80	0	0.00	25	96.15	1	3.85
IMF	17	13.60	0	0.00	16	94.12	1	5.88
World Bank	16	12.80	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
United Nations	12	9.60	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
European court for human rights	4	3.20	0	0.00	4	100.0	0	0.00
Council of Europe	4	3.20	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
UNESCO	3	2.40	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	43	34.40	0	0.00	43	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>98.40</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.60</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors: **NATO**

NATO	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
NATO	125	85.62	0	0.00	91	72.80	34	27.20
Jens Stoltenberg	12	8.22	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
others	9	6.16	0	0.00	7	77.78	2	22.22
<b>total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>75.34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24.66</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors: **actors related to The Hague Tribunal**

The Hague Tribunal	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Ratko Mladić	13	19.40	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Radovan Karadžić	12	17.91	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Lazarević	8	11.94	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Jovica Stanišić	5	7.46	0	0.00	2	40.00	3	60.00
Hague tribunal	5	7.46	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Veselin Šljivančanin	3	4.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Neboša Pavković	3	4.48	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
others	18	26.87	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>91.04</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.96</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Even from this brief overview of the frequencies of appearance of certain actors on the front pages of selected printed daily newspapers from our sample, it is clear that the media treat issues from the domain of domestic and foreign policy with unequal interest. In the fourth quarter of 2019, foreign political actors accounted for 38.93% of all political actors, compared to 61.06% of the frequency of occurrence of domestic political actors.

Business actors in the fourth quarter of 2019 accounted for 8.25% of the total sample of actors, which compared to the previous quarter represents a significant increase of about 3.82% or, expressed in absolute numbers, 606 appearances.

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of **individual domestic economy/economic actors**

Economic actors - individually	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Aleksandar Obradović	79	15.11	7	8.86	64	81.01	8	10.13
Aleksandar Bjelić	24	4.59	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Koluvija	20	3.82	0	0.00	19	95.00	1	5.00
Zoran Babić	14	2.68	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Drobnjak	14	2.68	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Šolak	12	2.29	0	0.00	9	75.00	3	25.00
Dušan Bajatović	8	1.53	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Čadež	8	1.53	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Miroslav Mišković	7	1.34	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Nebojša Atanacković	6	1.15	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Beko	6	1.15	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Đurić	4	0.76	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Vuk Guberinić	4	0.76	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dejan Šoškić	4	0.76	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Marko Mišković	3	0.57	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Aleksej Miler	3	0.57	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Kostić	3	0.57	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
ostali	304	58.13	1	0.33	273	89.80	30	9.87
<b>total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>89.67</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>8.80</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of **collective domestic economy/economic actors**

Economic actors - collective	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Krušik Valjevo	53	8.95	0	0.00	52	98.11	1	1.89
GIM	42	7.09	0	0.00	31	73.81	11	26.19
Milan Blagojević	28	4.73	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
CarGo	23	3.89	0	0.00	22	95.65	1	4.35
Electric Power Industry of Serbia	20	3.38	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00

Gazprom	12	2.03	1	8.33	11	91.67	0	0.00
Smederevo Iron-works	12	2.03	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
Corridors of Serbia	11	1.86	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
RTB Bor	11	1.86	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Commercial bank	11	1.86	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Roads of Serbia	10	1.69	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Prvi partizan	9	1.52	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Volkswagen	9	1.52	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
NIS	9	1.52	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Huawei	8	1.35	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
NLB bank	7	1.18	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Post of Serbia	7	1.18	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Zastava	6	1.01	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Railways of Serbia	6	1.01	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Telecom Serbia	6	1.01	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Jovanjica	6	1.01	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
AIK bank	6	1.01	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Belgrade waterfront	5	0.84	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Jugoimport SDPR	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Gazprom neft	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Raiffeisen Bank	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Electric networks of Serbia	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Agrobank	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Fiat	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Air Serbia	5	0.84	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Srbijagas	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
EBRD	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Chamber of Commerce of Serbia	4	0.68	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Tesla Airport	3	0.51	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Energoprojekt	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Zastava weapons	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Institute of Transportation CIP	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

PKB	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Petrochemistry	3	0.51	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	210	35.47	5	2.38	196	93.33	9	4.29
<b>total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>94.26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4.73</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

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

(a) representatives of autonomous and independent government bodies and institutions, (b) analysts of political, social, economic, security and other circumstances, (c) representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations, (d) media actors, (e) representatives of the judiciary, (f) lawyers and protagonists of various court proceedings, and (g) protagonists of current media and entertainment scandals, (h) the protagonists of various scandals related to sports, and (i) the protagonists of civil initiatives.

Frequency distribution and value context of the emergence of individual and collective domestic social actors: **representatives of independent bodies and institutions of national importance**

Independent bodies and institutions of national importance	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
University of Belgrade	31	18.67	0	0.00	29	93.55	2	6.45
REM	22	13.25	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
Ivanka Popović	20	12.05	0	0.00	19	95.00	1	5.00
Anti-Corruption Agency	12	7.23	0	0.00	8	66.67	4	33.33
SANU	11	6.63	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Fiscal council	9	5.42	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Pašalić	8	4.82	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Brankica Janković	7	4.22	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Olivera Zekić	6	3.61	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
State Audit Institution	5	3.01	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Pavle Petrović	4	2.41	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Kostić	3	1.81	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
KoNUS	3	1.81	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Dragan Sikimić	3	1.81	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	22	13.25	0	0.00	21	95.45	1	4.55
<b>total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>94.58</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5.42</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Analysts (experts) have a special role in the texts on the front pages of the media from the sample, and the media treat them in a neutral context in as many as 99.03% of the texts. Throughout the fourth quarter of 2019, the analyzed daily newspapers significantly promoted the views of these experts, so that their opinion was represented 722 times<sup>32</sup>. The largest participation and number of represented analysts was recorded in the dailies *Danas* (164 appearances) and *Informer* (159 appearances).

Analysts	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neutral	%	Nega- tive	%
Dejan Vuk Stanković	24	3.79	0	0.00	24	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Milivojević	23	3.63	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Antonijević	22	3.48	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
Jelena Vukoičić	19	3.00	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Klačar	18	2.84	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Radun	15	2.37	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Dragomir Anđelković	15	2.37	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Spasić	12	1.90	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Boban Stojanović	11	1.74	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Toma Fila	11	1.74	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Mario Spasić	11	1.74	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Nicović	11	1.74	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Ljubodrag Savić	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Stevica Deđanski	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Kovačević	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Vladislav Jovanović	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Pejić	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Orhan Dragaš	10	1.58	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Ljuban Karan	9	1.42	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Živadin Jovanović	9	1.42	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Milisav Paić	9	1.42	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Vlade Radulović	8	1.26	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Milojko Arsić	7	1.11	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00

<sup>32</sup> In this quarter, the representation of analysts on the front pages is growing again compared to the previous two quarters, when 590 and 563 appearances of analysts were recorded. This is also the largest recorded presence of analysts so far.

Nemanja Nenadić	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Krstić	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Janjić	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Radić	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Popov	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dževad Galijašević	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Dragišić	6	0.95	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Delić	5	0.79	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ljubomir Madžar	5	0.79	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Matić	5	0.79	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Ninić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragovan Milićević	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Prostran	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Svetozar Vujačić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Dobrašinović	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Stojiljković	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Nikolić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Srećko Đukić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Rodić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Petrić	4	0.63	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Darko Trifunović	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Đukanović	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Boško Jakšić	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Mahmud Bušatlija	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ratko Božović	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Uljarević	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Stefan Surlić	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Damir Okanović	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Prelević	3	0.47	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	215	33.97	0	0.00	215	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: Mediameter research, October – December 2019

During 2019, the daily *Informer* most consistently promoted the opinions and attitudes of analysts on the front pages. Almost a quarter of the texts from our sample published in the *Informer* contained the views and opinions of analysts (24.64%).

Distribution of the frequency of appearances of analysts on the front pages in various media from the sample of research in the four quarters of 2019

Media / Analyst	No.	%
<i>Informer</i>	618	24.64
<i>Danas</i>	494	19.70
<i>Politika</i>	428	17.07
<i>Kurir</i>	403	16.07
<i>Blic</i>	264	10.53
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	162	6.46
<i>Alo!</i>	139	5.54
<b>total</b>	<b>2508</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

In relation to the previous quarter, there is a special increase in the number of representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations,<sup>33</sup> which appeared on the front pages as many as 600 times.

Distribution of the frequency of appearances of representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious communities on the front pages in various media from the research sample

Media/religion	No.	%
<i>Politika</i>	181	30.17
<i>Danas</i>	144	24.00
<i>Alo!</i>	68	11.33
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	64	10.67
<i>Informer</i>	53	8.83
<i>Blic</i>	48	8.00
<i>Kurir</i>	42	7.00
<b>total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

<sup>33</sup> In the previous quarter, we recorded a significant increase in the number of actors from this group of 518. In this quarter, we recorded an additional increase in the participation of these actors.



Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective domestic social actors: **representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations**

Religion	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
SOC	93	15.50	1	1.08	88	94.62	4	4.30
Patriarch Irinej	65	10.83	0	0.00	65	100.00	0	0.00
Amfilohije, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral	55	9.17	0	0.00	54	98.18	1	1.82
Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral	39	6.50	1	2.56	38	97.44	0	0.00
Maxim, Bishop of Western America	20	3.33	0	0.00	17	85.00	3	15.00
Irinej, Bishop of Bačka	19	3.17	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople	19	3.17	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Gregory, Bishop of Dusseldorf and Germany	13	2.17	0	0.00	10	76.92	3	23.08
Pope Francis	13	2.17	1	7.69	12	92.31	0	0.00
Russian Orthodox Church	13	2.17	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Porphyry, Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana	12	2.00	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
Patriarch Pavle	12	2.00	6	50.00	6	50.00	0	0.00
Montenegrin Orthodox Church	8	1.33	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Alojzije Stepinac	7	1.17	0	0.00	4	57.14	3	42.86
Roman Catholic Church	7	1.17	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Teodosije, Bishop	6	1.00	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Irinej, Bishop of East America	6	1.00	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Miraš Dedeić	5	0.83	0	0.00	3	60.00	2	40.00
Atanasije, Bishop of Mileševo	5	0.83	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00

Jovan, Bishop of Slavonia	4	0.67	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Pahomije, Bishop of Vranje	3	0.50	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
others	176	29.33	2	1.14	173	98.30	1	0.57
<b>total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>94.00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.17</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective domestic social actors from the **the media**<sup>34</sup>

Media	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
TV N1	50	8.00	1	2.00	33	66.00	16	32.00
RTS	48	7.68	0	0.00	42	87.50	6	12.50
<i>Danas</i>	44	7.04	3	6.82	32	72.73	9	20.45
<i>NIN</i>	36	5.76	0	0.00	21	58.33	15	41.67
Jugoslav Ćosić	20	3.20	0	0.00	7	35.00	13	65.00
UNS	19	3.04	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Jovanović	15	2.40	1	6.67	14	93.33	0	0.00
BIRN	14	2.24	0	0.00	12	85.71	2	14.29
<i>Informer</i>	14	2.24	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
NUNS	14	2.24	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Olja Bećković	12	1.92	0	0.00	7	58.33	5	41.67
Dragan Bujošević	12	1.92	0	0.00	11	91.67	1	8.33
Milan Ćulibrk	11	1.76	0	0.00	9	81.82	2	18.18
TV Pink	11	1.76	2	18.18	8	72.73	1	9.09
<i>Vreme</i>	11	1.76	0	0.00	8	72.73	3	27.27
Željko Mitrović	10	1.60	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Dragan J. Vučićević	10	1.60	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Ra- domirović	9	1.44	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Milomir Marić	9	1.44	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Tanjug	7	1.12	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00

34 Actors who were the subject of writing by other media, that is, the media houses whose work was reported by other media, were presented.

Željko Bodrožić	7	1.12	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Blic	7	1.12	1	14.29	4	57.14	2	28.57
Dušan Petričić	7	1.12	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Politika	6	0.96	2	33.33	4	66.67	0	0.00
Slobodan Georgiev	6	0.96	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
KRIK	6	0.96	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Insajder	5	0.80	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
<i>Kurir</i>	4	0.64	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Branko Čečen	3	0.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Stevan Dojčinović	3	0.48	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
Večernje novosti	3	0.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Kesić	3	0.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Ljiljana Smajlović	3	0.48	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Sarapa	3	0.48	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	183	29.28	5	2.73	165	90.16	13	7.10
<b>total</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>81.92</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>15.68</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

During the collection of empirical material, a significant presence of actors related to the activities of judicial and investigative bodies was again noticed on the front pages. Actors from this group are shown as representatives of judicial bodies (193), lawyers (112) and other protagonists of current or completed court / investigative proceedings (153).

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual and collective domestic social actors: **representatives of judicial bodies**

Judicial system	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Higher Court in Belgrade	18	9.33	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Zagorka Dolovac	13	6.74	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Higher Public Prosecutor in Belgrade	12	6.22	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Prosecution for Organized Crime	8	4.15	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Supreme Court of Cassation	7	3.63	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00

Court of Appeals in Belgrade	7	3.63	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Majić	6	3.11	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
The High Judicial Council	5	2.59	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Society of Judges	3	1.55	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Nata Mesarović	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragana Boljević	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Ilić	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
State Prosecutors' Council	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	102	52.85	0	0.00	97	95.10	5	4.90
<b>total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>96.37</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.63</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual domestic social actors:  
**lawyers**<sup>35</sup>

Lawyers	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Predrag Savić	10	8.93	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Borivoje Borović	6	5.36	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Zora Dobričanin Nikodinović	4	3.57	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Vlajić	3	2.68	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	89	79.46	0	0.00	86	96.63	3	3.37
total	112	100.00	0	0.00	109	97.32	3	2.68
<b>total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

<sup>35</sup> Some lawyers had the role of analysts in the media texts from the sample, and were therefore portrayed in that group of actors.

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual domestic social actors:  
**actors of court proceedings and investigations**

Actors of court proceedings and investigations	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milorad Ulemek Legija	16	10.46	0	0.00	14	87.50	2	12.50
Ninoslav Jovanović	15	9.80	0	0.00	6	40.00	9	60.00
Darko Šarić	11	7.19	0	0.00	9	81.82	2	18.18
Luka Bojović	7	4.58	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Radomir Marković	6	3.92	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
Sretko Kalinić	5	3.27	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Lazarević	5	3.27	0	0.00	1	20.00	4	80.00
Maja Adrovac	4	2.61	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Rodoljub Radulović Miša Banana	4	2.61	0	0.00	1	25.00	3	75.00
Željko Ražnatović Arkan	4	2.61	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Zvezdan Jovanović	4	2.61	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Zdravković	4	2.61	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Spasojević Šiptar	3	1.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Dedović	3	1.96	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	62	40.52	0	0.00	59	95.16	3	4.84
<b>total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>83.01</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16.99</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

The following table shows all the protagonists connected to the show business. These are primarily actors in connection with the media-constructed affair related to the murder of singer *Jelena Marjanović*.

Frequency distribution and value context of the appearance of individual domestic social actors: **others**

Other social actors	No.	%	posi- tive	%	neutral	%	nega- tive	%
Jelena Marjanović	40	48.78	0	0.00	40	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Marjanović	39	47.56	0	0.00	37	94.87	2	5.13
Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović	3	3.66	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>97.56</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.44</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the emergence of individual domestic social actors: **sport**

Sport	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
FC Red Star	24	20.17	0	0.00	22	91.67	2	8.33
FC Partizan	14	11.76	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Zvezdan Terzić	11	9.24	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Nebojša Čović	7	5.88	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Novak Đoković	5	4.20	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Football Association of Serbia	4	3.36	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
BC Partizan	3	2.52	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Slaviša Kokeza	3	2.52	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	48	40.34	3	6.25	42	87.50	3	6.25
<b>total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>90.76</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6.72</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

Frequency distribution and value context of the emergence of individual domestic social actors: **“One in five million” civil protests**

“One in five million” civil protests	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
„One in five million” association	15	20.27	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Branislav Trifunović	10	13.51	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Jovo Bakić	8	10.81	0	0.00	6	75.00	2	25.00
Srđan Marković	7	9.46	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00

Jelena Anasonović	7	9.46	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Vidojković	4	5.41	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Siniša Kovačević	4	5.41	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
others	19	25.68	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
<b>total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>91.89</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.11</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

## UNNAMED SOURCES

In selected texts from the front pages of the sample media, unnamed sources are, as in all previous quarters, the second actor by participation. This time, there were 339 appearances of anonymous sources, or rather 14.87% of articles, which represents almost identical participation as in the previous quarter.

The widespread use of unnamed sources has been precisely established thanks to the method of quantifying anonymous sources, which we have been applying since the second *Mediameter* issue, so that not only sources defined by the media as unnamed are classified, but also all those that provide unverifiable information, regardless of the way they are introduced into the text. Of course, this prevalence of information obtained from anonymous sources speaks more to the manner in which the seven media outlets in the sample report, rather than to the real need to protect the identities of the persons providing certain knowledge.

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 certain type of imagining of relations between these three sides.”<sup>36</sup>

The vast majority of information obtained from unnamed sources is cited in texts written in the newspaper form of the report. Of the 1801 texts written in this form, 306 or about 17% contain anonymous sources.

<sup>36</sup> M. Carlson, *On the condition of anonymity*, Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2011, 7

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

Genre	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
Report	1801	306	16.99%
Article	147	26	17.69%
Commentary	109	4	3.67%
News	9	3	33.33%
Reportage	13	0	0.00%
other	15	0	0.00%
Interview	186	0	0.00%
<b>total</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>14.87%</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

The largest share of articles containing information obtained from unnamed sources, in relation to the total number of published texts, is recorded in *Blic*, *Informer* and *Kurir* (about 21%), while the least examples of this practice were recorded in the daily *Večernje novosti* (8.36% - 14 texts).

Participation of unnamed sources according to the analyzed media

Media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
<i>Blic</i>	217	47	21.66
<i>Informer</i>	213	45	21.13
<i>Kurir</i>	262	54	20.61
<i>Alo!</i>	259	48	18.53
<i>Politika</i>	547	68	12.43
<i>Danas</i>	471	51	10.83
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	311	26	8.36
<b>total</b>	<b>2280</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>14.87</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

The majority of texts containing information from anonymous sources (93) were recorded 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 noted when it came to articles that talk about the media-constructed Karleuša-Vranješ affair - around 67%



Number of texts containing information obtained from unnamed sources according to topic, in seven media from the sample<sup>37</sup>

Topic/All media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
political life in Serbia	541	105	19.41
Kosovo/relations between Belgrade and Priština	188	30	15.96
crime	59	24	40.68
issues of belief, church and religion	62	19	30.65
Russia / relation towards Russia	86	14	16.28
economic system	70	13	18.57
education	63	10	15.87
EU/European Union politics	59	9	15.25
USA/ relation towards USA	57	9	15.79
energetics	27	9	33.33
media/ media freedom	78	9	11.54

Source: *Mediameter* research, October – December 2019

## Conclusion

The topics covered by the print media on their front pages during 2019 were marked by a focus on issues of Serbia's domestic policy and relations in the region. The events related to Kosovo have been in the center of media attention for most of the year, but dealing with this topic is increasingly shifting to the field of foreign policy activities of Serbia. The indicator related to the balance of texts is still very low, and the sensationalist approach in equipping texts and interpreting the topic is an approach that finds more and more fans within the media space of Serbia. The media are becoming increasingly clear in their political and value choices, while media practices are recording new forms of distortion and/or deviation from the professional standards of the journalistic profession.

<sup>37</sup> The ten topics with the largest number of unnamed sources are presented



4



# Discourse Analysis

# DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

## **Continuation of ruthless and endless high-voltage media-political struggle**

Fierce rhetorical conflict, highly charged political and every other sort of bias, constant lack of balance, ease of labeling pluralism of opinions, disagreement at, or below the level of decency, inability to establish rational agreement on any social or political issue, continuity of fierce battle and conflict of values, in short: a deeply trenched society as a decisive, and as some might say, universal feature of weekly and daily newspapers reporting in Serbia between October and December 2019.

Similarly to the previous analysis, we can commence with a series of standard print media evaluations, especially of editorial columns and weekly newspapers. In the field of print journalism, especially among the weekly newspapers, there were no “forbidden” and “untouchable” topics and points of view. All major topics were written about, in many different, often sharply conflicting ways and entirely opposed points of view. The outcome of this form and content of journalistic writing is a lively presence of many different opinions on one identical topic, whether it directly references actors, events or political, economic and wider social events.

Visible presence of political and personal values’ pluralism of is a testament to the existence of freedom of thought and speech as well as the freedom of expression in this particular, professionally and socio-politically relevant, form of journalism. More specifically, it is possible to publish or draw a caricature of whichever phenomena, and thus send a variety of different messages. In addition, various political orientations are represented, ranging from the radical right to the left. In short, in the relevant analyzed weekly newspapers, neither censorship nor self-censorship was present. This circumstance is important primarily for two reasons that, strictly speaking, are not from the sphere of politics. Firstly, in Serbia it is possible to legitimately express any kind of opinion on the events, actors and socio-historical processes. Interpretative codes, on the other hand, tend to have the power of continuous multiplication on the Internet, and as a consequence, are often the basis and significant inspiration for numerous television broadcasts and interviews.

The outcome of this pluralism of journalistic genres is a predominantly negative portrayal of actors. Reporting on the topic is deeply determined by the viewpoint of the author, or generally speaking, the political orientation of the author or the editorial board he or she belongs to. Most weekly newspapers are dominated by a negative obsession with the personality of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, while the other group of weeklies continuously challenges the opposition’s activity, its moral credibility and political legitimacy. The formation of a negative image of actors and diametrical opposition of interpretations when it comes to political and economic events or wider socio-historical processes occurs as an outcome of journalistic writing or as a conclusion of abundant number of interviews with relevant or less relevant interviewees in numerous Serbian weekly newspapers.

Thematically speaking, the focus is on reviewing current political topics with an emphasis on a number of affairs, such as the Krušik affair. It is worked up to the smallest detail. There is no affair tied to the current government that has received media attention, most notably the opposition press like this one. Even the “Savamala” narrative is slowly but surely becoming less suggestive and politically (evil) in comparison to the story of the Valjevo arms trading company and the alleged state’s involvement in the arms trade in the form of illicit acquisition of money at top of the current government through abuse of office. Along with the Krušik affair, the print media re-positioned the story of the plagiarized PhD of Finance Minister Sinisa Mali. This event was used at the university level for a sharp political campaign to challenge the moral credibility and political authority of the Minister of Finance himself, as well as SNS leader and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić.

Along with the “Krušik” and “Plagiarism” affair, the opposition press reproduced a number of already known and repeatedly mentioned views on the nature of government, deficiencies in foreign and economic policy, poor personnel policy, and pressures and media control.

In parallel with the actual attempt to criminalize the authorities, the narrative of the essential undemocratic nature of the government continues, with the accompanying apology of the thesis about the necessity of a boycott of the upcoming parliamentary and local elections. Critical discourse is a conglomeration of contestations that not only come from the political and legal spheres, but are complemented by elements of pseudo-psychological, economic, and cultural analyzes. At the epicenter of challenging the anti-government weekly press is Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, as a key political figure in the country.

On the other hand, the media inclined to the current government justify its actions and mercilessly criticize the opposition parties. It is almost certain that the opposition’s activities are more disputed than the government’s. The image of the opposition in the pro-government media is extremely negative. The portrayal is so negative that it is that hard to imagine a worse media image of a political actor. Of course, this goes both ways. It is almost inconceivable to have a more negative image of the government than the one that can be found on the pages of the Serbian weeklies.

The composition of the negative image of the authorities is simple and obviously very effective in the opinion polls. However, there are a number of elements that make up the negative image of the opposition in the media inclined to support the government.

Lack of popular support, weak or no political potential, burden of poor management of the society, personal wealth-gain of the opposition leaders while in power, rejection of elections and affirmation of the street rallies as a crucial tool for exercising politics, along with the proverbial lack of patriotism among the opposition leaders – are main features of opposition leaders in the media which support the government.

Anti-opposition discourse is characterized by a strong negative charge, reflected in a personalized form and described by idioms that are, as a rule, beyond the rhetorical rules of decency in public sphere. Thematically speaking, the anti-opposition discourse has largely “fed on” the story of en-

demic moral imperfection of opposition leaders, their violent and intolerant nature, their tendency to betray national and state interests, and their lack of competencies manifested during time when they were in power.

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 distinct tendency of repetition of interviewees with the aim of intensifying the effect of the message, both in value and political sense. By repeating the media message, one tends to impose a certain opinion on the readers. This is another important feature of the weekly press.

The interview message has a significant effect – it results with the creation of environment filled with sharp divisions. The repetition frequency of one and the same message, communicated by different interviewees, continuously repeated, creates a certain pattern of opinions and reactions in the readers, forming a relatively firm, almost unquestioned, belief system.

“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 conflict of events, processes and actors is so vivid, that rationality, which is supposed to characterize democratically constituted public, cannot exist neither as a useful illusion nor a regulatory mechanism in the process of opening up the space for rational social debate. Thus, anyone can be against anyone, motivated by „their own” reasons which are seldom 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.

At the same time, 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 about 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 condemnatory mode of depicting

actors, processes or events.

The front page especially holds an important place for weeklies, for its message is constructed both visually and verbally in the form of an election poster (most often: an image of the actor with a concise and direct headline from the interview or the image of an actor with a message which should form the reader's 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.

here are two ways to classify the weeklies. 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. There is a visible difference also in the intonation of the criticism. Weekly newspapers such as *Novi magazin* and *Nedeljnik* are characterized by a more moderate tone in expressing critical views. These weeklies also engage less in the rhetoric of accusation and labeling, unlike the very influential Serbian weeklies *Vreme* and *NIN*.

Another classification that can be applied to the weeklies is 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.

A special place in the classification and profiling of the weeklies holds the weekly *Ekspres*. It is a weekly newspaper that often rationalizes, clarifies, and ultimately establishes the views of the government structures in a journalistic manner. Unlike the rest of the opposition papers, *Ekspres* does not incline to over-expression of passion nor political exclusivity, which is a strong characteristic of other opposition papers. In terms of foreign policy, *Ekspres* is not strictly anti-European, but it is also not uncritical about Serbia's European path. *Ekspres* also focuses on some important social topics, foreign policy events and political-historical processes from the recent past.



**The image of the Government – autocratic, undemocratic, illiberal, immoral, prone to affairs and scandals, violent towards journalists, nepotistic, corrupt, without clear foreign policy, with modest economic results, culturally and socially decadent.**

The image of Aleksandar Vučić in the vast majority of weekly newspapers is extremely negative. The first man of the Serbian Progressive Party is portrayed with a series of negative labels that are repeated week after week, either reconfirming or adding to the original narrative. The premise for challenging Vučić is the liberal-democratic discourse or, more rarely, the nationalist discourse that dominated the public and political scene in its full capacity over the last decade of the previous century.

The motivation for critical writing about Aleksandar Vučić is dual – personal and political. Politically speaking, all journalists of the opposition media are his angry political opponents, but their political orientation is based on a negative personal obsession with his figure, as a first person of Serbian politics.

The following scheme is present in the creation of the negative image of Aleksandar Vučić: 1) a negative, almost miserable characterization of the current historical moment, 2) a distinctly negative assessment of the way in which the state is organized and governed, 3) specified criticism directed at a series of negative social phenomena, most often the affairs which surround the current government representatives.

The critical narrative, as always in weekly newspapers, begins with a negative assessment of overall social and political circumstances. The current political moment is a symbol of the highest possible historical regression bordering the radical decadence in every sense. Responsibility for a catastrophic socio-historical and political-economic situation has been attributed to the current government in Serbia. In order to translate its responsibility into the sphere of political decadence, it is necessary to identify the authorities with the worst possible traits in Serbian history. The idea of the current political moment as “living in the worst of all possible worlds” is most simply achieved by identifying the current government with being worse than the “occupying power” that governed Serbia from 1941 to 1945. Playwright Nebojša Romčević explicitly states in the following: “I don’t think that Serbia had a worse government ever before in its history, including the period under the occupation. However, what these two have in common, and I have no doubt about this, is the bankruptcy of Serbia: in demographic, spiritual, economic, political, environmental and educational sense. I would say that Serbs in Kosovo will survive more easily than Serbs in Serbia.”<sup>1</sup>

Vučić’s rule is a significant, or rather definite, departure from the ideals of a democratically and legally regulated state. There is no rule of law in Serbia, only the will of one man. This general thesis of democratic-liberal theory is a cornerstone of criticism when it comes to the current government in Serbia and a kind of stereotype in the statement of all opposition politicians, NGO activists, opposed journalists and public intellectuals. The following quote from an interview with the playwright and FDU professor, Nebojša Romčević, confirms the lively presence of this motive in creating a critical

<sup>1</sup> Nebojša Romčević, „Srbija neće preživeti ovu vlast,” [Serbia will not survive this Government], interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3599, p. 23

discourse directed against SNS and Vučić. The assumed generalization of liberal-democratic theory and practice is seen as a critical standard for reviewing the current state of affairs in Serbia. A radical deviation of the current government is also assumed, whereby the deviation is not proven, but implied. The process of critical review is like a conclusion from a default, but not factually and specifically proven assumption. An example of this approach is contained in the following quote. Strong words such as “occupation”, “usurpation of liberty as such” are a substitute for concrete evidence: “One of the most important attributes of the state is the rule of law. It provides at least an intention for the rule of justice. If in one state the person with the absolute greatest power violates the Constitution and laws, we must conclude that a coup has taken place and that one’s will was put above the law. At that moment we are talking about occupation, usurpation, lack of liberty as such, that is, formal power is currently the only thing keeping this government legitimate.”<sup>2</sup>

From this evaluation which was not founded on any facts, we conclude that Vučić’s power is defined as an autocratic, more precisely unlimited, deprived of a stronghold in the Constitution and Law. As Romčević sees it, it is anti-liberal and anti-democratic.

Director Kokan Mladenović made a similar statement. He sees Serbia as a non-democratic state with strong elements of criminal doing carried out or enabled by the government: “There is no freedom of the media in Serbia, the parliament is destroyed and reduced to the place for the most banal falsification of democracy and the criminals organized into one criminal-political group rob their own country from everything they can. What is certain is that this time, is that the power will be changed in the streets and the people who cherish their history of revolutions, coups and upheavals will have to seriously think about their own miserable knowledge of the definitions and mechanisms of democracy.”<sup>3</sup>

Vučić’s misunderstanding of democracy as a concept transforms existing political practices into the order of suspended democracy: “All these situations show that democracy is suspended in the country, that there is no independence of police, judiciary and intelligence services. We laughed and made jokes at the expense of the police, military and security forces being led by a falsifier of a doctoral title or a man of questionable mental health without a day of military service, and a ceramist from Kruševac who “loves when female journalists kneel”, and then it became clear that it is precisely by installing such low-life’s at the highest functions that the final state criminalization began.”<sup>4</sup>

The order of suspended democracy in itself implies fierce antagonization between the citizens and the government. A high-level social life is necessary, as well as the ability to create a civic movement that will question, intellectually, organizationally and action-wise and dismantle the current endemic unfair political order: “Suspended democracy and seized mechanisms of good governance mean that the people have no reason to believe in the fairness of legal treatment and that it is a matter of time when people will self-organize and move to defend their own country, led by the both the ethical and

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>3</sup> Kokan Mladenović, „Balon besa mora kad-tad da pukne [The anger balloon has to burst at some point],“ interview with Radmilo Marković, *Vreme*, No. 1504, p. 21

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 22

written norms within the law.”<sup>5</sup>

The personification of political criticism emerges as a synthesis of the ideological-value repulsion and personal degradation of the political opponent, in this case, of President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić. Not only is Vučić politically chaotic, corrupt and ideologically “hollow”, he is also a person without verified intellectual qualifications and professional competences. In short, he is a man with no political convictions, professional or personal qualities, prone to being manipulative and abusive in various ways. At the same time, due to the nature of his authoritarian rule, Vučić took over the entire state and political life to himself, installing even more “insignificant people”.

Romčević makes it clear that this is the rule of an “unfit bad politician and his associates” in the following excerpt from an interview with weekly *NIN*. Because of Vučić and SNS, Serbia is not a state according to his opinion: “It is impossible to have a functioning state if we have professional politicians without any biography, significance, knowledge... nothing but the skill to manipulate others and to stab each other in the back. We cannot allow one completely insignificant person to declare himself a standard of all things and for the whole system to be made up of even more insignificant persons who live solely through the emanation of that phantasmagoria. All you have to do is read Vučić’s biography and you will understand that this person is a paradigmatic opportunist without conviction, ideology, solidarity and loyalty, without a day of work unconnected to politics in his career. This is a person who has undergone all the demagogic transformations, whose discourse is one gigantic contradiction and his knowledge about any subject equals the chit-chat knowledge from a bar. Well, this whole system rests upon this man’s judgement.”<sup>6</sup>

The culmination of Romčević’s “enlightenment” critique of Vučić’s rule rests on two interrelated positions. According to one, Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party degraded Serbia back to the pre-enlightenment period, meaning that their rule is a symbol of historical-political regression and moral decadence. On the other hand, the SNS rule is identified as the rule of the “uneducated and shallow”: “In real terms, SNS degraded the country into the pre-enlightenment period, mid-18th century, both politically and spiritually ... ‘we’ will be shaped by cosmic stupidity and incapacity to govern. ... A government indifferent to the Rule of Law, a government that has caused damage of epic proportions, cannot allow for either justice nor freedom. And without justice and freedom one cannot live... Anomie is a way to disaster. Idiocracy, the rule of the shallow, can cost us a lot. But Serbia has not remembered a destruction of this size since April 6th 1941.”<sup>7</sup>

This quoted playwright and university professor points to the concrete consequences and the magnitude of the catastrophe caused by SNS and Aleksandar Vučić. In short, the current government is doing enormous damage in all fields of political, economic and social life: “If the sources of drinking water (!!!) and agricultural land are sold, if Belgrade is the most polluted city in the world, if the health-care system is broken, if colonialist practices are nurtured, rivers destroyed, if the only trace of law

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5 Ibid

6 Nebojša Romčević, „Srbija neće preživeti ovu vlast [Serbia will not survive this Government],“ interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3599, p. 23

7 Ibid, p. 24

resides in the sick make-believe illusion of one man who has turned it into a political program, then we are talking about the loss of independence and the president who enforces colonialism. This way, in twenty years Serbia will cease to exist. This is the only certain consequence of SNS rule.”<sup>8</sup>

Similar to Romčević, Bishop Grigorije perceives Serbia under the rule of Aleksandar Vučić as a country without “dignity, freedom, state and perspective”: “I believe that freedom is very important, especially the freedom to think and speak while not being punished for it. If someone else has a different opinion and solid arguments for it, well then this freedom entails his rights to have a different opinion as well. Therefore, the way I see it, the current situation in Serbia represents a major crisis in which the state is constantly collapsing, at various levels, even at the economic level, although the economy is persistently claimed to be booming. Despite such bombastic statements, I do not notice that the life Serbian people is getting any better. What worries me most is that so many citizens are leaving the country, both hardworking and capable people, and often true patriots... Recently, I heard one thought that seemed very telling to me. Specifically, one man from Hanover told me that ‘once people used to leave to escape poverty, now they leave to keep their dignity.’ This sentence hits right into the center of the matter and encourages us to think. In particular it should worry the government and its opposition and lead them to think about the reasons for migration and how it can be stopped.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these critical observations, a specific ironic-sarcastic review of Vučić’s personal habitus and political profile is given by Dragoljub Žarković, the former Editor-in-Chief of *Vreme*. He sees the President of Serbia as a politician who not only violates his constitutional authority, but also a person who aggressively deals with all kinds of topics, not only political, but also social and every other: “There is no point in talking about Aleksandar Vučić’s nature of dictatorship because he himself reduced his power to mere arbitration in irrelevant disputes such as: whose is bigger. He became something like a village elder who resolves more and more disputes between peasants every day – whether over rust, water or quarries – the disputes that are usually resolved through custom law. From the day he started to stick his nose in things that are sometimes poorly regulated by the law, as a dictator he’s more often funny than dangerous.”<sup>10</sup>

Another crucial point in the criticism of Aleksandar Vučić are the allegations of his failure to authenticate his own political beliefs. Critics emphasize that the President of Serbia is, among other things, a political flyer, a passionate power addict, a simple demagogue and a political manipulator who incites aggression and leads the society and the state recklessly: while flying from one political pole to another. That’s why he surrounded himself with others, to make it easier. Similis simili gaudet. From the Arctic to the Antarctic. From Euro-hater to Euro-fanatic. He did not sail to Greenland or northern Norway. No, among the Euro-fanatics, peace-makers, compromisers and the understanding ones, Weberians and Popperians, from the butchers among the vegans ... If he is allowed, everyone is.

8 Ibid, p. 23

9 Bishop Grigorije, „Sva laž koju živimo kad-tad će se urušiti [All the lies that we live in will have to crumble at some point],“ interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 404, p. 44

10 Dragoljub Žarković, „Halo, taksi – slabljenje Predsednikove moći najbolje se ogleda u tome što svaki dan mora odgovara na pitanja koja se njega sve manje tiču [Taxi! – diminishing of President’s power is mirrored in the fact that every day he has to answer the questions that concern him less and less],“ *Vreme*, No. 1502, p. 4

With this amount of media poisoning, carefully cultivated and nurtured hatred, do not expect anything good. The brothers have been in dispute for some time now, the media sisters-in-law have done their share, and now the twins are looking at each other over the fence, with their eyebrows locked... We, the believers, can only pray this will not happen, the atheists can rely on the good in human soul.”<sup>11</sup>

Political transformation of Vučić, as seen by the writer Siniša Kovačević, is a moral license for anybody to become a convert, while his way of ruling is reduced to instigating conflict in all areas of the society, is a historic fact Serbia needs to survive. To put it in plain words, Vučić is a political chameleon for Kovačević, with dangerous intentions and even more dangerous political practice.

In addition to depicting the President of Serbia as a non-democratic, anti-liberal politician with confusing character, and a man who promotes and maintains the rule of incompetent and amoral people, the focus of criticism in the oppositional weekly press has moved towards the criminalization of the President of Serbia. Media strategy of criminalization of government as a form of critique towards it have been applied, in their public addresses, by the actor Nikola Đuričko, academician Ljubomir Simonović and sociologist Jovo Bakić.

Actor Nikola Đuričko, joining the previously mentioned public intellectuals, in an elaborate discussion for the *NIN* weekly openly criminalizes the current government stating a series of “concrete examples” confirming the thesis on “abnormal” political and social life: “The Government acts like a criminal would. They have their own schemes. There is no ideology there. Feudal approach, captains, everybody is connected. My dad is buying mines and the job that was once a state job is now our thing. These are the signals that the law and justice do not live here anymore.”<sup>12</sup>

Sociologist Jovo Bakić, the unofficial leader of the Serbian left, has accused the current government for links with the mafia even more energetically: “The mafia has taken, kidnapped our republic and I have an obligation to say that, as a citizen, sociologist, university professor or a politician. The agony of the doctorate of Siniša Mali has been going on for five years now. You can establish a forgery, after it has been documented, as Professor Karapandža did, in less than 24 hours. This is a disgrace for the University. When they are praising the Rector today, this is not normal, she was part of the Rectorate before, and Siniša Mali was known as the forger since 2014. Members of the commission for the defense of the doctoral dissertation and the mentor do not deserve to be university lecturers anymore. We must set up a principle of liability and act on such a principle. When this is settled, we can say: Look, man, you are a Minister of Finance, yet you lie and steal, and you handle the taxpayers’ money. This will not do. If you stole someone’s intellectual property, two scientific papers, copied entire pages, you are a thief, and as a thief you were set to be a Minister of Finance that has direct control over income taken as tax from all citizens. You will then surely steal our money since you are used to it. It is in your blood. If we do not see this clear logical link, we have a serious problem.”<sup>13</sup>

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11 Siniša Kovačević, „Vučić je zaslužan za orden koliko i Jevrejin koji je u sinagogi ubio rabina kremenadlom [Vučić has earned the medal as did the Jew who killed the Rabi with a pork chop in a synagogue],” interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 412, p. 31

12 Nikola Đuričko, „Njihova pravda je njihov kazan [Their justice is their pot],” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3594, p. 18

13 Jovo Bakić, „Mafija dobrovoljno neće otići sa vlasti [The mafia will not leave power on its own],” interview with

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**ЗОРАН БАБИЋ**  
ТОТАЛНО  
НЕОПОЗИВ

**НЕБОЈША КАТИЋ**  
ТРАЖИЛИ СТЕ  
ГЛЕДАЈТЕ

**ПЛАГИЈАТ**  
НЕЧАСНА ОДБРАНА  
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NIN, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019



In addition to intellectual discrediting and criminalization of the Minister of Finance Siniša Mali, the aforementioned sociologist “points his finger” to the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, naturally, in the context of proving the thesis on the mafia character of the current government. For the purpose of strengthening the “power of evidence” in his argument, Bakić underlines alleged personal and business and political friendship of President Vučić with certain individuals from the world of football fans and the criminal underground. “Rational” basis of his claims is based on the sum of speculations and city gossip: “Sale the Mute wasn’t friends with me, he was friends with the son of the President. His closest associates were with Vučić’s son at the World Cup in Russia, and there is over 25 years of jail time between them. If this were to come out in a civilized country, the President would resign on his own, since he would be in the conflict of interest – by protecting his own son, he could never protect the general interest. So, Vučić knew very well the company his son keeps, and he knows very well that Marko Vučković receives very profitable jobs from Electric Power Industry of Serbia. His company was incorporated in 2015 at the stadium of Red Star football club. Vučić does not know this? Well, he has been friends with all of them for decades.”<sup>14</sup>

Academician Ljubomir Simović, renowned writer and poet, member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, claims, in a more simple and open manner, that the principle of the current administration is – pure heist: “Pure heist is made legal. For one’s personal benefit, rivers and streams are taken from mountain villages, they are enclosed into pipes by constructing small private hydro power plants. We will have rivers and fish in pipes. The survival of remaining villages is jeopardized for one’s personal profit.”<sup>15</sup>

The party implementing the principle of pure heist, as stated by the academician Ljubomir Simović, is a clientelist party. It has no ideology, that is, a certain political program affirming the sum of social values for which it fights in the political arena with other political competitive parties or movements. The party is a hierarchy of interest in which the leader sets the place and the role of his colleagues.

An exchange system is established between the leader, the management and the membership of the party. Loyalty, preparedness for a political engagement is rewarded with benefits for the party members. The opinion of these public intellectuals is that the Serbian Progressive Party is an example of the “ideologically faceless” political group based on plain exchange of benefits between the leader, management and the members of the party.

This aspect of operations of the key political party in Serbia is elaborated by sociologist Jovo Bakić, who clearly states: “Bounty hunters are members of the political parties in Serbia, all of them are of the patronage-client type. You join a party, vote for your patron, and in return, you receive benefits. If you are high on the hierarchy level of the political party, you enter certain bodies, managing boards of public institutions and companies, you get sinecures and lucrative jobs, and on the lower level, you get employment that is paid off with, so-called, sure votes from friends and family. This is an elabo-

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Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3597, p. 8

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>15</sup> Ljubomir Simović, „Ovde je ozakonjen opšti grabež [Pure heist is made legal here]“ interview with Jelena Jorčević, *Vreme*, No. 1504, p. 12



Vreme, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019



rated and functioning system that was not envisaged, but upgraded by the SNS.”<sup>16</sup>

Clientelist party will create a model of rule that is of the oligarch type. A group of politicians and businessmen is at the top of the country and the society. Political and economic life is reduced to mutual exchange of benefits between the ruling and capitalist elite. The outcome of this “exchange” between the politics and capital is a system of deep social and economic inequality. Current social economic and political system headed by Aleksandar Vučić is an example, in the opinion of Jovo Bakić, of an extremely negative historical and political phenomenon: “Inequalities have grown. With all the social demagoguery, this regime works for the benefit of the wealthiest, the oligarchy that rules. It ruled before 2012, only, now it is disciplined, tamed. Before, the oligarchy was running the show, now it must listen to the authoritarian leader. If, until 2012, it was oligarchy in its original meaning of the term, that is, the rule of the minority of the richest for their own selfish interest, this is now the authoritarian oligarchy that must listen to one man and give money to his party only. Previously, they gave money to all parties, buying laws for their own interest.”<sup>17</sup>

Clientelist party also implements clear criminal practice, in the opinion of the opposition politicians, primarily related to the control and business and cash flows. The control, in the words of Borislav Novaković, the official of the People’s Party of Vuk Jeremić, has been entrusted to brother of President Vučić and a controversial businessman from Kosovo, Zvonko Veselinović. The union of a criminal organization and collection of capillary votes is supposed to cast a shadow on a clear supremacy of the Serbian Progressive Party compared to competition in Novi Sad. At the same time, the criminalization of political life in Novi Sad is established through the control of financial flows in the functioning of the city that is completely executed by Andrej Vučić, brother of the President of Serbia and aforementioned Veselinović. Novaković draws attention to this link of politics and crime in the following interview: “Andrej Vučić and Zvonko Veselinović manage key cash flows. There is no significant public procurement or amendment of regulatory plans in favor of the investor without the final word from the two of them. *Capo di tutti capi*. It is utterly humiliating that the brother of the President of the state goes all over Vojvodina, racketeering people and collecting envelopes that end up with Aleksandar Vučić. In addition to corruption, the role of Zvonko Veselinović is to discipline the criminal scene of Novi Sad and to utilize this scene for collecting and securing capillary votes. These roles of Andrej Vučić and Zvonko Veselinović have transformed Novi Sad completely.”<sup>18</sup>

Focus moved from the principle plain of pointing out to the endemic corruption contained and acting within the political and economic system, to the specific scandals brought to light during the past couple of months. These scandals are still current. Namely, they are a mandatory part of the critical discourse on the current government. Their publication and permanent exploitation in public speech lead to top propaganda effect. Political verdict related to the “Krušik” scandal is specific and personal. Names and events are clearly stated, epilogue is presumed, values of this administrations are criticized. The criticism is a symbiosis of political judgement and moralistic-para-intelligence discourse

<sup>16</sup> Jovo Bakić, „Mafija dobrovoljno neće otići sa vlasti [The mafia will not leave power on its own]” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3597, p. 9

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>18</sup> Borislav Novaković, „Andrej Vučić je stvarni gradonačelnik Novog Sada [Andrej Vučić is the real mayor of Novi Sad],” interview with Nedim Sejdinović, *Vreme*, No. 1510, p. 8

appalled with corruption and nepotism and the way of rule of Aleksandar Vučić. There is a positive side to the matter. Real or alleged whistleblower is glorified, tension is rising in public and necessary conspiracy in business such as arms trade is completely ignored. Often, disputable foreign policy dimensions of the entire "Krušik" scandal is underlined and positive expectations related to internal SNS conflict is forecasted.

"Krušik" scandal narrative starts with assigning roles to certain persons from the world of politics and business: "There is the Stefanović family, and then there is the Petković family, they are first cousins. Yugoslav is the Director of SDPR, and Mladen was the Director of Krušik. Then, the two of them, working together, destroy the natural link that exists here since the times of Tito's Yugoslavia, between the manufacturers and SDPR and the arm's dealer. All of a sudden, SDPR is ignored in this deal."<sup>19</sup> In the first step, the narrative is clearly trying to prove that a state matter, such as arms trade, is moving to private hands. This 'business and political transformation' is attributed to the morally worst and least educated part of the ruling party: "Since SNS came to power, all of a sudden, companies appeared that became the leaders in arms export, but they did not deal with weapons before. Then, SDPR, from a self-financing company, is now receiving subsidies from the state, which was never the case. Now, Mladen Petković moved from 'Krušik' to 'Zastava oružje' to be a director there. Well, it certainly is a red flag for employees of 'Zastava oružje'. Where Petković shows up, the shop closes. These men are incompetent. No education. Illiterate. This is the 'Zemun Clan' of the Serbian Radical Party that moved to SNS, that is handling all these companies."<sup>20</sup>

"Krušik" scandal was carefully designed. Its goal was to show that the administration is deeply corrupt, that it is founded on the abuse of state function that may be identified with the combination of nepotism and trade with influence. At the same time, greed and lack of liability, legal, political or moral, of the leading people caused damage to the arms industry and foreign political reputation of Serbia, globally. Absence of liability and abuse of function have enabled the father of the Minister of Interior Nebojša Stefanović to participate, through his business contacts, that is, companies, in lucrative procurements and arms trade on the global market, more specifically, in the Muslim part of the world.

"Private company of Goran Todorović, GIM, for which Branko Stefanović was consulting, father of the Minister of Interior, did not only receive the privilege to buy, at reduced prices, significantly lower than market prices, weapons from the state owned company Krušik, it also bought guns and rifles from the Ministry of Interior, headed by Nebojša Stefanović. Also, photos received by *NIN* show that GIM company keeps their stock of small caliber guns in the warehouse of MI."<sup>21</sup>

Reporters from different opposition media conclude that after the initial allegations of the press, Stefanović and his partners, started removing relevant evidence in such disputable operations: "If all is clear, why are the traces of partnership between Branko Stefanović and Goran Todorović are erased since the Krušik scandal? Why did the owner of GIM take the father of the Minister of Police at

19 Radoslav Čebić „Kako da laž postane tajna [How to turn a lie into a trade secret]", *Vreme*, No. 1503, p. 4

20 Ibid, p. 5

21 Milan Čulibrk and Vuk Cvijić, „Tatin GIMnastičar [Daddy's GIMnast]", *NIN*, No. 3595, p. 8

negotiations in Krušik if there is no link between them? Under the presumption of crediting own related companies, GIM actually borrowed 27 million dinars to companies of Stefanović senior."<sup>22</sup>

In parallel, exponential growth of profit is presented of the company that is under the direct control of the father of Minister of Police in the period in which these companies were exporting weapons. Large sums of money acquired for a very short period of time: "Private company, represented by Branko Stefanović, father of the Minister of Police, earned 4.5 million dollars from 2 contracts only in 2016. Contracted grenades, bombs and mortars were paid to state companies from Valjevo and Trstenik a little less than 7.2 million dollars, while almost 12.5 million dollars were collected from buyers in Saudi Arabia."<sup>23</sup>

In light of figures stated, undoubtable epilogue of the "Krušik" case emerges. Enrichment is reserved for private companies close to the top of the government, state company mediator in arms trade is recording drop in its operations. "All those that received privileges in buying and trading arms became richer. State companies allowed this at their own expense, for individuals that are known financiers of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), and the state issued the licenses for arms trade and production to the father of the Minister of Interior and the Head of the Intelligence Coordination Bureau, who has the key role in the procedure of issuing such licenses."<sup>24</sup>

Due to political orientation of end users (radical Islamic terrorists in Yemen) reputation of Serbia in international relations is damaged: "It is not a problem for this country that Serbian weapons ended up in the hands of terrorists; it is not a problem that the international position of Serbia is well shook, to the extent that the policy of sitting on two seats, the East and West, may lead to the removal of both such seats; the fact that privileged arms dealer, currently on the American black list, is the financiers of the party is also not a problem, as well as the father of the Minister of Police."<sup>25</sup>

The whole "Krušik" case is deeply impacting the SNS. In the opinion of Dušan Telesković from *Nedeljnik* weekly, who always has unnamed and well-informed sources, the "Krušik" scandal significantly complicates the tension between the leader of the party Aleksandar Vučić and his close associate and president of the Belgrade Board of SNS and the current Minister of Police, Nebojša Stefanović.

This dimension is depicted with so much detail by the *Nedeljnik* reporter Dušan Telesković: "The story of arms trade surfaced previous unofficial gossip on the internal conflicts within the Serbian Progressive Party. First of all, a previous story opened on the conflict between President Vučić and Minister Stefanović. This story, only in whispers though, started coming alive after the Stefanović's visit to America this spring. After this visit, State Secretary until then, Dijana Hrkalović left the MI, and the city gossip that was never actually confirmed found the link between these two events. To this, one should add previous stories on Stefanović's stronghold in the Belgrade part of the party and their

22 Ibid, p. 8

23 Vuk Cvijić, „GIM-u milioni evra, oružarima dugovi [Millions of Euros for GIM, debt for gun producers]" *NIN*, No. 3600, p. 16

24 Dušan Telesković, „Tri velika sukoba i mnogo pitanja od milijardu dolara [Three large conflicts and a lot of billion dollar questions]" *Nedeljnik*, No. 410, p. 21

25 Ibid, p. 21

discontent towards the members that were not considered 'first callers'. This is primarily related to the strong position of Goran Vesić, who is supported by Vučić, regardless of the evident issues in daily functioning of Belgrade. The issue of the conflict between Vučić and Stefanović accelerated when Vojislav Šešelj, President of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), joined in by attacking Stefanović and business of his father."<sup>26</sup>

Form of culmination of the "Krušik" scandal is the glorification of Aleksandar Obradović, "Krušik" employee who discovered the affair on the alleged problematic arms sales benefiting high ranking officials and their family members. Obradović is the hero of the resistance, moral person whose personal courage gains political significance in an apathic society accustomed to scandals. Characteristic example of glorification of Obradović is clearly visible in an interview of the sociologist Jovo Bakić: "The case of Aleksandar Obradović is even more distressing; he is jailed illegally. This is a horrible violation of his rights. He did a very important thing; he disclosed a horrible robbery of state companies for the benefit of private arms dealers. By the way, there should be no private arms dealers in Serbia. They will go to court for this one day. Only the state can do this. When you let in the private arms dealers, they connect with politicians. It is no accident that Slobodan Tešić used to be the main funder of SNS, he probably still is."<sup>27</sup>

Increasing the significance of the whistleblower Aleksandar Obradović is also visible in selecting him as the Person of the Year. At the same time, the "Krušik" scandal is seen as first-rate event, more important than the GDP growth or building highways. The case of glorification of Obradović is an example of propagandistic praise of a common man appearing as a civil hero.

"'Krušik' file is one of the most important events in the past year, and the consequences of this scandal surpass the borders of Serbia. It includes destruction of state companies through party employment and the arrogance of elected officials of the ruling party, as well as enormous enrichment of those who are, supposedly, capable of resolving the issues of problematic Serbian arms industry, nepotism, and the struggle of foreign powers for influence over this territory. This is quite enough for the editorial staff of *Nedeljnik*, in traditional selection for the Person of the Year, to proclaim a person who started all this, Aleksandar Obradović (40), production closer in Krušik company from Valjevo. Aleksandar Obradović is the man who shook the world."<sup>28</sup>

Aleksandar Obradović himself failed to resist the general media and political euphoria surrounding the "Krušik" case, performing the act of (self)glorification in the political and media sphere: "My arrest is my biggest victory, I gave them the USB with evidence. Knowing they will indict me; I saved every last e-mail. I didn't work against my country. I didn't steal anything, forged anything, I sleep peacefully. I know the consequences I must bear, but I also know that the documents I photographed or copied were not regular. My goal was to prevent the factory from closing."<sup>29</sup>

26 Ibid, p. 21

27 Jovo Bakić, „Mafija dobrovoljno neće otići sa vlasti [The mafia will not leave power on its own],“ interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3597, p. 8

28 Aleksandar Obradović, „Moje hapšenje je moja najveća pobeda [My arrest is my biggest victory],“ interview with Dušan Telesković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 414, p. 18

29 Ibid, p. 19

Political consequences of the “Krušik” scandal were clearly underlined by the Vice-President of the Party of Liberty and Justice, Marinika Tepić: “They cannot explain this situation. Vučić, Stefanović, Aleksandar Vulin, Ivica Dačić, Bratislav Gašić and all those giving consent, all the way to the Minister Rasim Ljajić, whose Ministry is issuing licenses, who manages to fly under the radar once more, when he is the one issuing licenses to all these companies we are talking about, for arms export, that is, provides licenses based on the consent of all aforementioned, this actually is the top level around Aleksandar Vučić.”<sup>30</sup>

Response of the administration to a series of headlines related to “Krušik” was used by some reporters, that is, editorial elite, to make heroes out of themselves, attributing reporters with a series of activities that are characteristic to opposition parties, state agencies, and, finally, the public. Reporters from *NIN*, for example, are moral, political and legal judges in the “Krušik” scandal. This unique position of reporters is clearly explained by Milan Ćulibrk in the following quote from his editorial column: “As it turns out, *NIN* will be guilty for the demise of Krušik and other factories of weapons and ammunition in Serbia. This will not be the fault of state officials closing suspicious deals – profitable for privileged private companies and damaging for the state companies. The biggest culprits will be the ones who dared to point out possible corruption, trying to prevent further pillage of state companies. Someone clearly set up a different role for the arms industry in Serbia.”<sup>31</sup>

Simultaneously, Ćulibrk, without any reserve, accepts the political viewpoint of the aforementioned Marinika Tepić, blaming the government for “Krušik”. The quote details that the engaged journalism took over the role not only of political parties, but also the relevant state institutions: “The verdict is already here. It was proclaimed numerous times by the President of Serbia, who finds nothing strange in the fact that one of his closest associates, Minister Nebojša Stefanović, categorically claimed his father had absolutely nothing to do with the company GIM, even though, in the meantime, owing to the documentation published by BIRN, it was proven that papa Branko visited Krušik as the official representative of GIM, that he traveled to Saudi Arabia as the legal representative of GIM and to the Italian gun factory Beretta as the special council of GIM and the member of the official delegation of MI. None of this matters to the President. There is no single piece of evidence on disputed participation of someone from his team – whether this is arms trade, state subsidies for the production of ‘organic’ marijuana, false doctorates or illegal demolition in Savalama – to which Vučić will not respond with: ‘So what?’”<sup>32</sup>

Similar setting was used on the “Jovanjica” scandal. The strategy, as well as the roles of journalists and opposition politicians were the same. Weeklies that are critical towards the government took on a role of political, moral and judicial arbiter. Their judgement is categorical and unequivocal, the judgement is always at the expense of the government. Competent institutions are evaluated from the standpoint of accepting the narrative imposed as final by different research portals and weeklies. Newspaper articles represent investigation, indictment and verdict. There are, at the same time, a “moral and political purgatory” for the government.

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30 Marinika Tepić, „Štetočine iz Vučićeve kutije [Pests from Vučić's box],” *Vreme*, No. 1507

31 Milan Ćulibrk, „Na livadi ćuprija [Bridge on a field],” *NIN*, No. 3600, p. 3

32 Ibid, p. 3

Developments in the scandal in which the government promotes and enables marijuana trade at the “Jovanjica” plantation reached a point in which the SNS official and the Mayor of Novi Sad, Miloš Vučević, filed a request to the competent public prosecutor’s office to investigate allegations that brothers Aleksandar and Andrej Vučić were in any way connected or had any impact over the accused for growing marijuana at the “Jovanjica” plantation, Predrag Koluvića.

This moment, in the entire case of “Jovanjica”, is seen by the editor of BIRN and the reporter of the anti-government weekly *Vreme* Slobodan Georgijev as the media maneuver of the government fighting allegations and gaining the media control over the case: “This moment should be remembered since the case is unique: the government is suing itself and seeks from the prosecutors’ office to start the investigation on itself! A couple of years ago Vučić insisted to go on a polygraph, and this is, I guess, the sign of change of the approach in investigation on the potential involvement in drug trafficking. As with the polygraph, we can be pretty sure no one is taking this seriously as well... Meanwhile, part of the public sees this decision as the pressure on judiciary. Knowing this regime, this probably a radical attempt to gain control over a large scandal related to growing hundreds of kilograms of marijuana on plantations near Belgrade. In this sense, the biggest questions is whether the prosecutors’ office will play dead and understand Vučević’s initiative as showing respect to Vučić brothers or it will initiate proceedings during which all related persons will be questioned, including Vučić brothers, and the representatives of the opposition, and figure out the entire mechanism of growing marijuana, as well as distributing and the sales of this drug.”<sup>33</sup>

Vučić is not only an authoritarian, populist, anti-liberal politician, demagogue, he is a fanatic Machiavellist prepared to do anything to retain power. In this context, in the opinion of Sergej Trifunović, leader of the oppositional Movement of Free Citizens, it can be expected from the President of Serbia to start a civil war: “This man will start a civil war to retain power. When the rating drops, he resets to Radical settings and fights imaginary Albanians, Croatians, Muslims... Dangerous man, with huge potential for destruction and annihilation. When they saw it too, and when they figured out that in 2012 they were a bit naïve to believe he is just Šešelji’s kid, they realized that they must react in a way to prevent another Orban or Erdogan in the Balkans.”<sup>34</sup>

Summarizing fully in the spirit of the opposition political thinking the current situation in the country, actor, director and film producer Dragan Bjelogrić claims that Serbia under Aleksandar Vučić is so similar to Serbia under Slobodan Milošević. Serbia of the second decade of the new millennium is the same as Serbia of the last decade of the previous. Political actors are the same, political and cultural forms are more or less identical.

Moreover, current state resulted from all socially negative that came from the most difficult decade in the last fifty years for the Serbian people: “We succeeded in one thing, as far as I can see, to return to the nineties. All the actors on the current political scene are mostly actors from this period; all the media editors also. Maybe this is a natural path since we failed in reforming and doing what we want-

33 Slobodan Georgijev, “Svi predsednikovi ljudi [All the President’s men]” *Vreme*, No. 1510, p. 5

34 Sergej Trifunović, „Sad mi je jasno kako se opozicione stranke raspadaju: ili lider sam uzme pare ili novac podeli deset njih iznutra [Now I get why opposition parties fall apart: either the leader takes the money or they split the money between themselves]” interview with Dušan Telesković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 405, p. 16





Nedeljnik, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

ed. I think that we underestimated the nineties, and everything that went on then: all the blood spilled, the brain drain, legitimization of primitivism, criminals with badges..."<sup>35</sup>

Still, it was not only the nineties that represented the soil for the occurrence and establishment of the current political, economic, media and broader social system. Failure of the winners of the 5th October significantly contributed to the establishment of the order that is personified and run by the current President of Serbia: "After October 5th, Serbia tried to catch the civilized Europe train, not the geographical one, not the EU, the train of civilization values. It failed. The same way of thinking, packed in the experience of the world as it is today – now we have a formal democracy and private media, but in the hands of the ruling clique. Slobodan Milosevic controlled everything through the state, these guys bought it all. This form of satisfying democratic rules is implemented in a Balkan, twisted manner. Honestly, I do not know how to call it – formally, it is all in line with the rules, but yet again, we know where we are living."<sup>36</sup>

Bjelogrić, as many of the colloquists of the oppositional weeklies, embarks on a political typology of the nature of the political order lead by Aleksandar Vučić. The epilogue of his rational path is the repetition of general terms of populist, authoritarian and hostile regime that is fighting anyone with a different opinion unscrupulously in the media. The order is not violent, or repressive, it endemically cannot bear different opinions and is prone to explosive rhetoric that is diffused through the media: "Essentially, it is a populist and authoritarian regime where everything is controlled, and then some. We have this cruel fight with the different opinion – people will not end up in jails as they did during communism, but they are victims of tabloid lies and berating as well as other new models, very well thought through in these media centers."<sup>37</sup>

Anti-intellectualism is one of the characteristics of the authoritarian and populist rule of the SNS. This social and cultural phenomenon appears in the domain of energetic media discussions between the representatives of the government and the radical critical public. Initiation of anti-intellectualism as an important motive of the critical discourse is related to the case of open toying with the ethnical and national background of Professor Danijel Sinani, who was active in the case of determining the forgery of the doctoral thesis of the Minister of Finance Siniša Mali. "One of the results of Marić's and Vučić's night wake over Serbia could be the nightmare for the 'disobedient' professors. To call someone out regarding their nationality, determining his or her ethnicity and to conclude that such person has no right to be a Vice-Dean, negotiator or moral judge, announces the hunting season for all those that are not 'clean'. And we all know how that ends."<sup>38</sup>

Anti-intellectualism is not the only feature of current administration. The practices, to the largest extent, as well as the general atmosphere in the society, in the opinion of the novelist Filip David, remind us of fascism. Admittedly, not the fascism in its historic and original form, but in the contours that are

35 Dragan Bjelogrić, „Senke su i dalje tu, ali bar maske padaju [Shadows are still here, but at least the masks are dropping]" interview with Filip Švarn, *Vreme*, No. 1512/13, p. 8

36 Ibid, p. 9

37 Ibid, p. 11

38 Sandra Petrušić, „Opasni noćni razgovori [Dangerous night talks]" *NIN*, No. 3589, p. 18



allegedly similar, that could become a seed of fascism in its full practical sense. Still, authoritarian and populist order that is dominant in the current political moment can easily be transformed into fascism, in the presumption of this public figure: "Populism is one of the modern forms of potential fascism. Human life loses its value, individual retreats in front of the collective, patriotism is transformed into 'sacrificing' for the 'higher cause', violence towards the people with different opinion is institutionalized, racism and primitivism become everyday speech and behavior... We see this every day, it becomes the dominant form of behavior, and we can see this in what is happening to the whistleblower Obradović, in burning of the house of the local journalist, racist slurs directed to the Brazilian football player for the penalty, on social networks, and in the support for the ex-basketball player for beating up his wife. If you follow what is written and how it is written in anonymous comments in other cases you will be appalled with the amount of insults, verbal mud, glorification of violence and xenophobia. One might think these are marginal events, but it such events that imply or express the spirit of the new fascism hanging in the air. This creates the feeling of internal insecurity and tension in the country where the institutions do not exist, where all the power is within the ruling political party and the leader who decides who is right or wrong, and who is guilty. These are the elements of the 'crawling fascism' that can easily transform into real one, historical one, only in new clothes."<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the authoritarian and populist manner of ruling with a scent of fascism, the entire political order is created to fit one man who made the public sphere specific and unique "order of lies attacking the ones not thinking the same". The uniqueness of the current political, media and broader social and historical moment is emphasized by the radical opposition TV host Olja Bećković: "The life continues in the system built on the past constructed in line with the desires of the President, the system maintained through the media that are trying to educate anyone who dares to criticize the government, lies are published on daily basis without any consequences, and the enemy is anyone who points to the discrepancy in facts. In the public sphere, the discussion is brought down to its opposite – endless monologue, dominated by the President of Serbia. I took it upon myself, and I think this is my constructive role, to look at it all and to offer, once a week, a digest version to the viewers, for them to see what they missed, to see the darkness they chose to close their eyes in front of. Because, when you don't know what's going on, you react to nothing, you think it's no big deal and you have the luxury to say: 'they are all the same', 'it was like this before'. And when I present how it really looks, they see that it wasn't like that before, ever."<sup>40</sup>

Olja Bećković is especially bothered with the fact that the radical and personalized critical discourse directed against the government is identified with the hatred felt by the promoters of critical discourse. Such constellation and identification of the public and political space is the sole responsibility of Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia: "Aleksandar Vučić is the first man to introduce the word hate. Vučić says 'you hate me', 'they hate me' to anyone who is critical or has an objection. This is so pathetic and tacky to explain that you don't hate anyone by criticizing something."<sup>41</sup>

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39 Filip David, „Jesmo li smo čudovišta [Are we monsters]“ interview with Ivana Milanović Hrašovec, *Vreme*, No. 1511, p. 12-13

40 Olja Bećković, „Ovako nije bilo nikad [It was never like this]“ interview with Jelena Jorgačević, *Vreme*, No. 1500, p. 12

41 Ibid, p. 13

The same rhetoric and semantic message is sent by the novelist and the member of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, Ljubomir Simović. He claims that the government is maintained by hatred, constant attacks on the opposition and complete deletion of borders between normal and abnormal. Simović's, it would seem to be, 'overwhelming' political wording, that is, assessment and evaluation is contained in the part of the interview evoking the memory of World War II: "At that meeting, as the student of the third class of elementary school, I was reciting a satirical poem on occupied Belgrade. Long time ago I forgot this poem and who wrote it. But, looking at Belgrade in the last couple of years and what is going on there – from Slavija to Savamala, Belgrade Waterfront, termination of the Main Railway Station, excavated boulevards, Republic Square, moving the vibrant Old Sava Bridge from the river to the field, the pole, cable car and gondola at the Kalemegdan fortress, after so many years, I remembered the starting verses of this satire: "Belgrade, glorious old town / What are they doing to you, in their madness!" Hate speech is blossoming in our current political life, and ignorance was never so present on the public scene as it is today... Listening to our colloquists, I cannot resist remembering a sentence from Gunter Grass: "He speaks of nothing without hesitation..."<sup>42</sup>

Authoritarian, that is, anti-liberal and anti-democratic character of the government is recognized in another important element of the political and media life. This aspect of publicity is explained with the thesis of enemy hyperproduction which is the key dominant principle in the public. The thesis on constant production of enemies is a simplified thesis on the essence of politics. It is a paraphrase of the position of the German legalist and philosopher Carl Smith: the essence of politics is seen in the division on friends and enemies, it is transferred to the plane of relentless media war "all against all", which is the exclusive responsibility of the ruling clique.

Effective presence of the stated division to friends and foes is the pretext for a media and political practice of enemy hyperproduction in the media by which the government renews itself all over again negating the option of dialogue and criticism as constructive moment of liberal and democratic understanding of the public.

Enemy hyperproduction thesis in the media plane is presented by Milan Ćulibrk, *NIN* weekly editor in chief, claiming the following: "Serbia holds the world record in producing 'enemies of the state'. Almost every day, someone is picked to be one, simply for having a different opinion. The worst thing is, the gloves are off. Bottom level of decency was crossed a long time ago. At the moment the government claims these are the best conditions for elections we ever had. Well, if this is the treatment for those that criticize but never had any political agenda, what should the political opponents expect in the finish of the election campaign, in spring next year? I do not understand so much aggression when all the polls show that the ruling SNS, with its coalition partners, without Ivica Dačić, has the support of over 50 percent of citizens of Serbia. What will happen when, one day, regardless of whether it is in two, five, ten or 15 years, the support drops? Or they think they will rule for another 100 years?"<sup>43</sup>

42 Ljubomir Simović, "Ovde je ozakonjen opšti grabež [Pure heist is made legal here]," interview with Jelena Jorčević, *Vreme*, No. 1504, p. 14

43 Milan Ćulibrk, "Rekorderi po proizvodnji neprijatelja [Record in enemy production]" *NIN*, No. 3589, p. 3

Similar assessment of the relationship between the government and the opposition came from the Slovenian politician, MP of the European Parliament, Ivo Vajgl. In an interview with the radical opposition weekly *NIN*, Vajgl thinks that the political approach of the government towards the opposition and the media is the reason for issues Serbia has with the political order and liberal values: "I think that the Government of Serbia, the Prime Minister and her associates, should see that democracy means openness, talking to the ones with a different opinion. When we are talking about the parliament, it means to respect the opposition. Parliament is not a war field, it is a place of democratic, open, decision making. I think this is the main deficit for the situation in Serbia. Talking to some people from the opposition, I am actually astonished to what extent they are resigned regarding any possibility of dialogue. When you look at the media, most of them are in the Crusades against the political opposition."<sup>44</sup>

Vučić and the nation are coexisting in a mutual lie, that is, self-deception. This process lasts so long, that the system is gradually collapsing. Social atmosphere in the ruling circles feels like applying for a new job. "Serbs have lied to themselves that Vučić will get things done they could not dare to touch. Just like Vučić lied that he was ready to do it. What now? When will the self-deception stop? Does the Vučić see that his own people started lying to him, that the only look at the taximeter running? It's like a company where everybody is looking for the better job offer. It is so clear that the Prime Minister has lost her edge. Or the minister they defended over Savamala. He would not give up 'one paper'..."<sup>45</sup>

Lalić's expectations and skepticism regarding the potential for self-preservation of Vučić and SNS's government is one of the features of the journalist interpretation of the political reality. Impression on the beginning of the end of the government is visible with Dragoljub Žarković, also, former editor in chief of *Vreme*. Observing the need of the President of Serbia to express and opinion on almost every political and daily social issue, Žarković sees the start of an implosion of the political order and signs of somewhat decadent insecurity of Vučić himself: "From the day he started, as a dictator candidate, to pry into things that are sometimes poorly regulated by law, he is more often ridiculous than dangerous. Weakening of his power is best seen in the fact that, every day, he must respond to a growing number of questions that are not his concern, not his competence, he pushes himself in, takes the microphone and maintains the implication of control, although, I am sure that, when he goes to bed at night, if he does, it is clear to him that he deals with nonsense and that he replaced the speech of a statesman – or, not to get ahead of myself, a politician – with the saying of King Ubu: 'My people!' As with all people accomplishing their highest ambition in life, there is a thin line between dignity and vanity, self-confidence and self-deception and glory and self-destruction.

Unaware of the warning that it is not wise to 'bite off more than you can chew', Vučić walks with a stagger the fine line of separation, without swaying right or left, supported by his associates who show contempt for institutions and place suspicious trust in 'Aca the Serb'; it will last until his downfall begins, along with his promise to pull them down like pins in a bowling alley in case he falls."<sup>46</sup>

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44 Ivo Vajgl, „U Srbiju me nisu zvali, previše sam kritičan prema vlastima [They did not call me to Serbia, I am too critical towards the government]" interview with Nikola Burazer, *NIN*, No. 3592, p. 18

45 Veljko Lalić, „Demokratija 2.0.2.0 [Democracy 2.0.2.0]" *Nedeljnik*, No. 415/6, p. 6

46 Dragoljub Žarković, "Halo, taksi – slabljenje Predsednikove moći najbolje se ogleda u tome što svaki dan mora odgovara na pitanja koja se njega sve manje tiču [Taxi! – diminishing of President's power is mirrored in the fact that

Žarković's depiction is toxic in a political sense of the word, saturated with moralistic resentment, vapid sarcasm, fierce but pointless irony and, above all, profound, nihilistic disdain for the regime. To separate the meaning of this long paragraph from the remaining part of the text is almost impossible. Vučić is „an aspiring dictator“, completely devoid of focus and of elementary control of his actions and words during his public appearances, because he is constantly engaged “everything and anything”; this man goes beyond the role society entrusted to him; he is a leader surrounded by the lickspittles who seem to think they will last forever, despite of being ready to “abandon” him politically when his career begins an inexorable descent. Vučić is currently in the midst of a deep political crisis, yet manages to remain the leading figure of Serbian political life.

The combination of deep internal crisis of the main political figure on one hand and his unrestrained governance of the state and society on the other, leads some figures of the political and public life to view the political situation in the country as a departure from normality or, more precisely, as a political and wider socio-historical abnormality. This is how Vučić is viewed by the leader of the opposition party The Movement of Free Citizens, Sergej Trifunović, who states: “This is not a normal political situation we are dealing with. We have been occupied by a well-organized, though (luckily) a ragged criminal group; ragged, because they have nothing in common but interest, because of their innate incapability, negativity, and their character so rotten that their flaws started working against them and so they began collapsing inside.”<sup>47</sup>

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every day he has to answer the questions that concern him less and less]”, *Vreme*, No. 1502

47 Sergej Trifunović, “Nemam problem sa nacionalistima, nego sa kriminalcima [I have nothing against nationalists, but I do against criminals]”, interview with Jovana Gligorijević, *Vreme*, No. 1506, p. 15

**Image of the opposition: between the lack of moral and political credibility, original democratic legitimacy, ideologically confused, action-ineffective group, unrealistic in their political judgment, disoriented, prone to corruption and subordinated to the West, and the necessary evil in dethroning Vučić's "poor government" as well as Serbian Progressive Party.**

The image of the opposition in the articles and editorial columns of the Serbian dailies is far more complex, as it has been portrayed on a number of different levels. In the dailies and weeklies critical of the so-called 5th October winners, like *Informer* or *Pečat*, the depictions of the opposition are extremely negative. Also, these dailies do not include interviews with members of the so-called Euro-reformist opposition, and very little, almost no space has been left for the representatives of the so-called Anti-European opposition, like DSS or Dveri.

Moreover, it has been observed that Šešelj and the Serbian Radical Party have a different status in the media than the other opposition political parties; this has been observed by the lack of direct criticism, although they are certainly far from being "favoured" by these same media. Unlike the 5th October winners, to be precise, the radicals have not been politically stigmatized. Newspaper articles about the opposition have had negative connotations concerning almost all political issues, including the issue of political or any other credibility of the opposition leaders. This is done by reminiscence of a period when some of the current opposition leaders were in power, often in the form of open polemics with their attitudes, views, direct or covert intentions, or political practices.

On the other hand, weeklies like *Vreme*, *NIN*, *Novi magazin*, and *Nedeljnik*, have given unequivocal support to the opposition representatives, with varying intensity but the same in substance. In this sense, in the newspapers radically critical of the government, the intensity of support to the opposition is greater and it is visible, not only through plenty of space for expressing views and opinions of the opposition leaders, but also for the sake of a radically negative campaign against Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party.

Unlike *Informer* and *Pečat*, opposition leaders were provided with significant space to elaborate and explain their views, with explicit statements about their attitude against government argumentation and rhetoric. No doubt that the influence has spanned across the readers of the weeklies, as well as capillary public, so current media and political constellation is partly "responsible" for the lingering conflict between Vučić and the "elite". The complexity of the opposition's image is reflected in a different approach to the issue of its activity and potential.

Pro-regime printed media, the daily *Informer* above all and *Pečat* to some extent, regard its activity as controversial, as well as its potential. At the same time, opposition-supportive weeklies, especially those radically critical of the government, such as *Vreme* or *NIN*, usually confirm the public and political powerlessness, using discourse that indicates democratic deficits of the order and deliberate heroization of the opposition's endeavours. Despite the detailed and minutious analyses, the weeklies in question show a clear absence, or fragmented presence, of critical reviews of the euro-reformative opposition's actions taken at the time of their government.

This kind of “oblivion” is not coincidental, but chosen on purpose, because the critical weeklies are an active contributor to political party polemics, or pretend to be a distinct “intellectual supplement” in a difficult and exhausting conflict between the political figures in Serbia. Daily *Informer* has a special role in depicting the opposition parties with a negative connotation in both their daily and editorial columns of Dragana J. Vučićević. Vučićević’s columns depict the political figures of the opposition in a negative moral and political sense, critically reflecting on the opposition media and the non-government organisations with an unavoidable retrospect of the government led by the 5th October winners.

The principal theses could be summarized in the following statements: 1) the current political opposition has no moral credibility (being composed of a highly-corrupted political group), or political capacity to lead the country, having failed to execute Serbian transition process successfully; 2) in the media favouring the opposition, which is the majority of the printed media, the current government is criticized without a rational explanation, for one purpose only - to be taken down swiftly; 3) The media supportive of the current political opposition exercise obvious discrimination of those not directly confronted with Vučić’s government. Vučićević’s criticism of the Serbian opposition aims at the opposition as the political factor as well as the media critical of the regime. His criticism always follows the ad hominem principle; it is strictly personalized in order to be more effective. For this reason an individual is stigmatized, his moral and psychological profile highlighted, and the individual ever so often deemed unworthy of any public position.

Articles written by the editor-in-chief of *Informer* are relevant for comprehension of the media and political establishment in Serbia, for three mutually connected reasons. Firstly, the style of writing and the content of messages spread by the editor-in-chief of *Informer* preserve the interest in politics in lower class of Serbian society, presumed to read the tabloids and represent the loyal voters in the elections.

Furthermore, *Informer* is important for the current regime because it examines negative attitudes and political images, created and continually reproduced in the media by the government, and it does so week by week and day by day. Finally, *Informer* is the leader among the daily newspapers in the development of a negative image of the current opposition in the Serbian political scene.

The principal assumption of Vučićević’s journalistic work includes an understanding of the political opposition. The range of his understanding is not only limited to the political parties that vote against the government’s political decisions, laws and other initiatives and proposals in the Parliament, but a wider one which, according to this perspective, is a network of different organizations and public personalities: parties, NGO representatives, media and public intellectuals. Vučićević often attributes specific understanding of politics to opposition leaders, and their political and media allies. According to Vučićević, politics is for the opposition leaders, aka the former political elite, an instrument for gaining wealth. In the state of high poverty and scarce chances, this view of the opposition fuels the campaign conducted by the current regime and its media.

Such campaigns exhort feelings of rage, disappointment or even indifference in the opposition voters, and have an undoubtable power to motivate the citizens supportive of the current government to stop the restauration of the so-called corrupt political elite, composed of the 5th October winners.

Another assumption of Vučićević's view of the opposition as political figures is their deficit of patriotism, anti-Russian attitude, and unquestioned loyalty to the West. According to the opinion of the editor-in-chief of *Informer*, the opposition is capable of making every political move required in a specific political moment, in order to seize government power and show their devotion to the West - from initiating various media campaigns to putting in force legislation which would further contribute to the destabilization of Serbia as a country.

The editor-in-chief of *Informer* fiercely criticizes the idea of election boycott by creating a negative image of the opposition leaders and their politics. The sabotage of the election boycott idea is rhetorically suggestive and layered; above all, the election boycott is considered an exclusive problem of those who support and promote it. It is interesting that Vučićević also nicknames his political opponents, using the names that carry a negative political and moral connotation.

Boško "Ljotić" Obradović, leader of the political movement "Dveri" has been given a nickname using the surname of a clerofascist leader Dimitrije Ljotić. During the World War II, Ljotić was an associate of the German Nazi government. Vuk Jeremić has been given an additional surname Pozderac, as a direct reference to his mother's relatives. The family Pozderac is Muslim by origin, but communist by their political choice. Important communist public figures at the time, Hakija and Hamdija Pozderac, were infamous during their government, especially among the Serbs.

Vučićević speaks to the large and firm anti-communist voting core when he emphasizes Jeremić's communist and Muslim family roots and thereby stigmatizes one of the leading members of the opposition. Finally, negative context is used to refer to the leader of the opposition Party of Freedom and Justice; nicknaming him Dragan "The Tycoon" Đilas alludes to his alleged illegal gain of wealth, which arouses negative associations in the eyes of many poor people. Repetitive pattern of this "promotional nicknaming" provokes political tensions and raises the intensity of political passion.

The topics of Vučićević's derogation are articles published in numerous critical opposition media about various government affairs. The editor-in-chief of *Informer* shows that there is a lack of factual evidence in the research of BIRN, KRIK, and other portals, weeklies, and televisions supportive of the opposition. Dragan Vučićević establishes a simple and clear thesis: without indisputable evidence, the media in question will continue to produce a false image of the current Serbian regime, with an aim to seize government power at any cost: "Seriously, what happened to the affair 'Jovanjica'? How is it possible that, only two or three weeks ago, all Đilas's supporters claimed to have had strong evidence about president Aleksandar Vučić and his brother Andrej's involvement with the narco-mafia, and now their lips are sealed? How is it possible that Đilas, his orderly Marinika, that lickspittle Aleksić, and others included in the list for some sort of relevance, are cited on a daily basis in '*Danas*', on television N1, and even on RTS, despite having been caught in such an obvious, monstrous lie?!"<sup>48</sup>

Vučićević believes there is a deal between the West and a part of Serbian opposition, aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected and nationalistically self-conscious government of Serbia. There is genuine overlap in the interests of the opposition Alliance for Serbia and the Western forces. Ac-

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48 Dragan Vučićević, "Nasilje im je jedina opcija [Violence is their only option]", *Informer*, 29.12.2019, p. 4

According to Vučićević, the predatory leaders of the Alliance view the country as a prey or at least a source of almost limitless personal gain. For this reason, they desire government at any cost. On the other hand, Western power centres, led by their geopolitical interests, including the fragmentation of the Serbian political and state-formative potential, desire a weak and marionette government apparently offered to them by the Alliance for Serbia.

Overlapped interests open up the possibility for the legitimization of every form of political combat, including overthrowing the government by force, without any legitimate legal or political procedure such as elections to support it. The editor-in-chief of *Informer* writes openly about the similarity of Western and Serbian opposition interests, and violence as their only means of combat: "Those who have already invested millions in the long-running attempts to overthrow the government of Serbia are becoming increasingly nervous. Because of this, they will push Đilas's haters into an even greater evil, as it becomes clear that their politics and campaigns, even the most despicable lies they tell, cannot be employed to overtake power."<sup>49</sup> Vučićević's reference to the opposition's unconcealed tendency for violence supported by the West is used in the following text as a critical motive in the denouncement of the opposition: "They are left with nothing but violent bloodshed, with an assistance of the Western power centres, in an attempt to carry out the Ukrainian, Romanian or, at least, Macedonian scenario of the CIA colour revolution. Harsh words? threatening announcements? Do I have any evidence for that? Well, where would one find better evidence than in all of what has been done around Serbia for the past months and years? Such is, you know, the logic of iron determination. Đilas and his clique need Serbia to freely fill up their tycoon pockets with millions of government money, while the West needs a weak, degraded Serbia, receptive of acting to its detriment without resistance - giving up Kosovo and the Republic of Srpska, and entering NATO without a lot of turmoil. These internal and external malefactors have had their interests overlap and, because of that, no doubt they will attempt to trigger a bloodbath in Serbia."<sup>50</sup>

Vučićević expresses strong aversion to the media who choose to take a critical approach to the government. These media are in the "line of fire" just as the opposition parties and their leaders are. Television N1 and its general manager Jugoslav Ćosić were the subjects of professional, moral and political derogation. Relying on supporting evidence in some specific documentation, the editor-in-chief of *Informer* categorically claims that N1 is an American media sponsored by the Kosovo Albanians. This political and media image aims to present the way of reporting and interpreting events, processes and political figures in N1 as patriotically suspicious and professionally disputable. To a large extent, reporting and interpretation of numerous government affairs is under the shadow of dubious credibility of the media involved.

Semantic and rhetorics of Vučićević's message is found in the following excerpt from his column: „The director of TV N1, Jugoslav Ćosić, the one who presents himself as the most independent and most professional journalist in Serbia, received 249,862.00 euros on his private company account from a very suspicious Shqiptar company from Tirana, in only 14 months, from January 2018 to March

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49 Ibid

50 Ibid



2019! Previously, Yugoslav received another 267,432.5 euros from the American Embassy and the American non-government organization IREDGE (aka: CIA) as 'gift and aid' (!?!), which totals a small fortune of 517,294.5 euros! And after that, Ćosić is, of course, an independent, professional, totally unbiased and honest journalist who cares about nothing else but the truth? That is, I guess, how the story goes... Shqiptar mercenary Yugoslav Ćosić is the most concrete and evident example how the story goes and proves that, unfortunately, Serbia is nowadays easily sold and resold to even its worst enemies. So you think twice before you believe any of their stage-managed affairs."<sup>51</sup>

The continuity of negative reporting about the critical, opposition-supportive journalists is found in the attitude towards the journalist of the weekly *Vreme* and the general manager of the research journalistic network BIRN, Slobodan Georgiev. An obvious journalistic oversight, made by Georgiev concerning Aleksandar Vučić's visit to Athens, spurred a shower of negative comments regarding his journalistic work and his moral credibility as a public figure. Although Georgiev is far from the media naivety or political objectivity when it comes to the government of president Vučić, the moral stigma and his personal disqualification show deliberate exaggeration of the editor-in-chief of *Informer*.

The exaggeration is not a coincidence; it was calculated to become a permanent disqualification, an attempt to remove him from the public life on moral grounds: "To tell the most downright lies, be caught and publicly exposed for doing it, and still remain a reputable and cited journalist, politician and analyst, can only happen in Serbia and nowhere else. Take Slobodan Georgiev, for example. Georgiev, who refers to himself as Sloba, claimed on Tuesday, December 10, that president Aleksandar Vučić 'arranged his visit to Greece' just to be able to attend the game between Olympiacos and Red Star!? The president and his protocol expressly officially denied it and explained that the visit to Athens had been planned long before the official schedule of games in the Champions League. Even then, Georgiev- Sloba, had not quit but went on to claim that the whole visit to Greece, the meetings with the Greek president, prime-minister and the archbishop, signing the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the two countries... all that was simply made up and arranged by Vučić so as he would be able to watch football in Pireus!? But then, the day in question dawned; it was Wednesday, December 11, and Vučić was not at the stadium because he had come back to Belgrade hours before the game had even begun. And? What happened? Did Georgiev apologize for this obvious lie? Did he publicly admit that he had been a lying fool, was he called out for it by his associates or colleagues at BIRN or NUNS? Hell, no!"<sup>52</sup>

Because of the frequent and numerous headlines referring to government affairs in opposition dailies and weeklies, television channels and portals supportive of the opposition, *Informer* and other pro-regime media lead a fierce counter-campaign aimed at rejecting or neutralizing the effects of the opposition media and political activity.

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51 Dragan Vučićević, "Ćosić, šiptarski keš i nezavisni novinari [Ćosić, Shqiptar cash, and independent journalists]", *Informer*, 16.11.2019, p. 4

52 Dragan Vučićević, "Ugledni lažovi [Reputable liars]" *Informer*, 14.12.2019, p. 4

The most direct form of open journalistic derogation concerning many government affairs, like "Krušik" and "Jovanjica" is an attempt to deem the published news a fraud, lie and fabrication: "They lie, threaten and invent affairs in an attempt to instigate chaos, despite that they are in contradiction to the facts and evidence. They are not interested in the truth; what they desire is to try the Macedonian, Ukrainian or Bolivian recipe (they don't mind which one), overtake government in Serbia by force and then seize government money just as Đilas did when he took the 619,688,269.00 euro. That is the reason for 'Krušik' and the terrible lies told about how Serbia secretly sells weapons to Ukraine, which they use to kill Russian children in Donbas (!?!); for this reason, the main journalistic story is a nebulous allegation that this or that minister is in the conflict of interests because of his father's position in the year so and so, or because he went to some place, and so on. With the same intention, the cover of 'NIN' shows a sniper pointed at Vučić, accompanied by the headline 'Who is destroying Krušik?', but the truth is that 'Krušik' employs three times more workers and its profit has risen sixfold since 2012!?!"<sup>53</sup>

Along with the rhetoric aimed at destroying moral credibility and political legitimacy of the opposition leaders, and professional reputation of journalists standing at the opposing side, Vučićević establishes an interpretative framework for understanding of the upcoming elections in Serbia. His intentions fit the scenario of the campaign led by the ruling SNS and the president Aleksandar Vučić. The upcoming elections in Serbia and the corresponding political combat are nothing else than intense fight between tycoons desiring their „political renaissance“ and return to power of the democratic, patriotic and successful government led and symbolized by Aleksandar Vučić: "During our informal conversation the other night, an esteemed colleague of mine unintentionally gave the best definition of the current political situation in Serbia: 'the upcoming elections will be the people's rebellion against the return to power of the most notorious thieves in Serbia', he said, summing it all up in one sentence. Here and now, Serbian society is not divided at all. This false thesis stirred up by the Đilas crew, the story of some great political crisis and great dissatisfaction of the people has, in fact, nothing to do with reality. The vast majority of Serbian people, and I am not exaggerating when I say 'vast', supports the politics led by their president Aleksandar Vučić."<sup>54</sup>

Headlines critical of the Serbian opposition have not only been published by their long-term opponent, the editor-in-chief of *Informer*, Dragana J. Vučićević. Criticism has also been heard from the public figures partially supportive of opposition, like Bishop Grigorije.

The priest in question, defined by his strong political sensibility, has established a correlation between the government and the opposition. According to his assumptions, poor government is made possible by the poor opposition, and vice versa. However, the share of responsibility is asymmetrical, as the government has greater responsibility than the opposition: "Poor government has always been kept at power by the poor opposition. Naturally, the share of responsibility for the poor state of the country attributed to the opposition is not the same as the one of the government, but it still is significant. We have to face that fact. Opposition cannot be of any kind; for example, we cannot have a calculating or indecisive opposition. An opposition waiting for Vučić to sign a document regarding

53 Dragan Vučićević, "Laži, laži i ništa osim laži [Lies, lies, and more lies]", *Informer*, 30.11.2019, p. 4

54 Dragan Vučićević, "Narodna pobuna protiv lopova [People's rebellion against thieves]", *Informer*, 7.12.2019, p. 4

Kosovo, so as to build their triumph upon it, cannot be a good one. An adequate opposition needs to avoid compromise and be honest, be such that the people of Serbia can conclude: 'These people will secure our freedom and dignity.'<sup>55</sup>

It is notable that the image of the opposition has been formed to a great extent from a well-known political division of the "real" and "false" opposition. The division results from their different attitudes to elections. The majority of the opposition regards itself as an "authentic", real opposition, the one rejecting any form of cooperation with the government, including participation in the election. On the other hand, opposition parties willing to participate in the future election process are morally and politically labelled as "associates of the regime". The division has been defined by the experienced political researcher Vladimir Goati in an interview for the weekly *Ekspres*: "The evolution of the current political scene in Serbia is very interesting. At one moment, we had a homogenous opposition block led by the Democratic Party, which later split. Now, we see attempts to unite some opposition political groups, while other opposition parties are on the other political side as well. According to my classification, there is the government coalition, opposition parties, and the democratic opposition."<sup>56</sup>

Professor Goati emphasizes the fact that the "non-government" parties are those willing to participate in the elections, but hold no power at the moment. The experienced political researcher does not regard these parties as the opposition: "I would not call them the opposition, but the parties currently out of government power."<sup>57</sup>

One of the main topics in the printed media centering on the opposition was their attitude to the boycott of the elections. The media presented the differences between opposition approaches and attitudes quite realistically. Siniša Kovačević, the advocate of the idea of boycott, dubbed the idea avant-garde, relevant, and able to mobilize a large number of citizens. Kovačević particularly stresses the "Promethean" character of boycott: „The rooster who crows early usually ends up in a pot. A premature idea has a low chance of being accepted. In most cases, the one against the idea eventually adopts it, firmly believing it was their own idea, and all this usually happens late. I am glad you quoted this statement, because I have forgotten about it. A wide-ranging boycott is possible even today. However, it is difficult to explain this to the ignorant, while those who sold their loyalty traded their moral standards as well. So, this tale is told to the deaf. You put your faith in the foresighted and the shrewd, regardless of their numerosity. The extent to which the regime is concerned about the election boycott is shown in harsh government attacks pointed at those who declared boycott of the elections. Similarly, participation in the elections by the so-called 'opposition' is less damaging to the regime than it is to us, which is a classic Serbian political paradox. Something is illogical in the whole picture. Vučić's opponents should be exactly those participating in the elections, while the opposition should be against Vučić. Should be..."<sup>58</sup>

55 Vladika Grigorije, "Sva laž koju živimo kad-tad će se urušiti [The lie we live will eventually collapse]", interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 404, p. 45

56 Vladimir Goati, "Bojkot izbora nosi za sobom velike političke posledice [Elections boycott bears great political consequences]", interview with Marko Petrović, *Express*, No. 181, p. 4

57 Ibid, p. 5

58 Siniša Kovačević, "Vučić je zaslužan za orden koliko i Jevrejin koji je u sinagogi ubio rabina kremenadlom [Vučić is as deserving to be credited with an Order as a Jew who killed a rabbi at the synagogue with a steak]", interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 412, p. 23

Speaking of the election boycott and the alleged readiness of the government to bribe his political party into participating in the elections, Sergej Trifunović, leader of the Movement of Free Citizens, encourages moral justification and optimism in the combat against the current regime. His moralistic indignation by the current state in the country has been supported by faith in strong opposition attitudes and arguments in the combat against the regime. Also, Trifunović openly speaks of political corruption as a pattern for conduct in the complex relations between the regime and the opposition: „I am no judge, no tabloid, but I wish to be a whistleblower and tell the prosecutors what I know, so that they can examine the origin of assets and verify whether an individual has broken any laws by making such a proposal. If they did not and the money is clean, which I doubt, but let's say so, then they should not be a victim of any public lynch. I am not interested in trading with my political combat. Functioning of every political organization requires money, but if that money equals slavery and requires change of political views, then it becomes a stultification and mockery of everyone who put their faith in us. When I entered politics, I swore to remain transparent and I intend to see it through even if it means crying out loud. These few people from the Movement have probably not broken any law by desiring to gain some money, but they have shown how easily they can be bribed and how little integrity and faith in reforms they have.”<sup>59</sup>

Open supporter of the idea of election boycott, Dragan Đilas, defends his political idea and responds to the members of the opposition willing to participate in the elections. Đilas gives his own reinterpretation of the events occurring before the downfall of Milošević's regime, but also the downfall of the communist regimes in central and eastern Europe in the late 1980s: “We cannot predict the future, but I know that the communist regime in Eastern Europe collapsed, although the entire Europe thought it would last forever just five days before. And it collapsed in two days. The same happened to Milošević. They say that election boycott in 1997 was unsuccessful, but let me remind you that Milošević lost the following elections in 2000. Because of bombing, they say, although the bombing had extended his rule for a year, as people were angry at the West. The election boycott affected the elections, the political struggle was fought outside Parliament, at every corner of Serbia. People's opinion matured enough to realize that the time had come and then the elections were held and won, and victory was defended in the streets. We will now boycott these elections, fight for different election terms, a new energy will be created and four million people will then vote in the elections. The relationship between the government and opposition is the same today; as also claimed by Srđan Bogosavljević, who I often disagree with, the potential of the opposition is one million six hundred thousand voters, while the government has a million and eight hundred thousand voters (a million and six hundred thousand under these terms)! ”<sup>60</sup>

Similar thoughts on the political processes in Serbia after the spring elections were shared by Radomir Lazović, leader of the opposition citizen initiative “Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own”, who states that new elections should be insisted on after the first election term, under different conditions, more favourable for the opposition. He elaborates his thesis, stating that both the election boycott and

59 Sergej Trifunović, “Sad mi je jasno kako se opozicione stranke raspadaju: ili lider sam uzme pare ili novac podeli deset njih iznutra [It is now clear to me how opposition parties fall apart: either the leader takes the money himself or it is split between ten people]”, interview with Dušan Telesković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 405, p. 17

60 Dragan Đilas, “Srbija za šest meseci može da se promeni [Serbia can change in six months]”, interview with Jelka Jovanović, *Novi magazin*, No. 442, p. 18



Novi magazin, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

participation produce the same politically damaging consequences under the current election conditions: "The day after the boycott, we demand that new, fair elections are announced within the period needed for their organization. We can relativize the whole story, say that election boycott ends in little change, but no change can occur by participating in such elections either, which only prolongs the state of façade democracy and gives legitimacy to the false election process."<sup>61</sup>

Unlike the mentioned party leaders and public officials, former prime minister, close associate of Zoran Đinđić and the political maverick Zoran Živković keeps insisting on participation in the elections as a prerequisite for a change in political order in Serbia. He develops his thesis about the necessity of opposition participation in the election process by contesting the main arguments against election boycott. For the leader of the opposition New Party, the key argument against the election boycott lies in the development of specific political activity after the elections, stating that the expectations from the boycott are megalomaniac and, as such, unrealistic in terms of leading a particular political combat: "Whenever I ask what is to be done after the election boycott, nobody gives any answer. One of the two scenarios is desired – gathering around half a million people in front of the Parliament and taking government over by force. I do not understand where this idea came from, because such events never happen spontaneously. October 5th did not happen spontaneously. The second scenario, in case half a million people fail to gather and banish Vučić by force, is that the West interferes and denies him legitimacy. Forget about that! Finally, he might feel ashamed for cheating at the elections and call for the new, fair elections. Where did that happen? When?"<sup>62</sup>

Živković calls into question the story of non-free media as a basis for the boycott. He does not claim that the media in Serbia are unbiased and professional, but states that their importance is not crucial and that, even during the 1990s, media were under control of the regime of Slobodan Milošević. As a political veteran who actively participated in the fight against the SPS regime in 1990s, Živković advocates the idea of two opposition voting lists; election victory of the opposition at the local self-government level, as well as an increase in the number of Parliament members, would put the undisputed SNS authority into question: "We did not have free media under Milošević regime either. Therefore, if a little common sense still exists, we should unite, group the political parties - for and against the EU, one conservative right-wing, another liberal pro-European - without mutual conflicts during the campaign, and the opposition should participate in the elections, holding hands and moving forward in the same direction. It is not too late to do it, win four towns and a dozen municipalities in the upcoming elections; it would build a strong infrastructure to the opposition, considering a million and a half residents of those towns and municipalities. It would also be a slap to Vučić, the same one that was given to Erdogan in Istanbul, Orban in Budapest, and Milošević in Serbia in 1996. We can win 80 MP seats and have our MPs ready to fight is necessary. This would be a great pilot for the following elections, which we would surely win."<sup>63</sup>

The conclusion made by this political leader stands clearly and decidedly opposite to the attitudes

61 Radomir Lazović, "Dan nakon bojkota tražimo nove, fer izbore [The day after the boycott we demand new, fair elections]", interview with Vera Didanović, *NIN*, No. 3588, p. 10

62 Zoran Živković, "Da je pameti išli bi na izbore [If there were any reason left, we would participate in the elections]", interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3591, p. 14

63 Ibid, p. 15

fiercely advocated by Dragan Đilas about the necessary election boycott: "Let's get real and understand that the opposition must participate in the elections, win, and then make a change. This escapade and boycott is the same as, for example, having a lunatic who, besides being a drug addict, steals, molests, and drinks alcohol, and you send him a nun and a deacon to say him a prayer."<sup>64</sup>

The sociologist and would-be leader of the left political wing, Jovo Bakić, also speaks of the necessity to participate in the elections: "If the Turkish and Hungarian opposition succeeded in taking over government in their largest cities, Budapest, Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, under much harsher conditions than these in Serbia, I see no reason for a boycott. We need to fight on all fronts, even in the elections, despite the fact that the government will not be replaced after the elections; this is because mafia never voluntarily gives up power but must be forced to do so through elections, in the street, everywhere and every way possible. Only thus can the authoritarian and mafia regimes be forced to respect the rule of law. Elections are not about providing legitimacy to the government, but about the fight for the interests of citizens and the left political wing. I am counting on the citizens; Vučić has no legitimacy because he is an authoritarian leader, regardless of whether the citizens participate in the elections or not."<sup>65</sup>

The paradox of the current state of the opposition is best spoken of by Danica Popović, professor at the Faculty of Economy in Belgrade and a public intellectual supportive of the opposition, claiming the following: "Participation in such elections is pointless, that is true. First of all, elections are meaningless; secondly, Vučić is thus in a precarious position, because the opposition boycott and citizen boycott are two quite different matters. It seems to me that boycott would have a political meaning in case Vučić would not receive such a significant majority of votes, but that is not going to happen. The international community, for example IMF and World Bank, will continue to praise Vučić's reforms and successes, we will glare in disbelief, and the story will continue. Despite not having a lot of faith in the political success of the election boycott, common sense tells me that there is no other dignified choice."<sup>66</sup>

The opposition has been put into an inconvenient position between "common sense" and "dignity", one supporting the election boycott, and the other, politically indisputable logic, predicting its inevitable failure and advising against it.

The journalistic political narrative of the boycott should be placed in the broader context of the story about political change, more precisely in the perspective of political activity of the opposition. Regardless of whether they see the election boycott as a means of realizing their political agendas and interests, there is no doubt that they, along with a group of media and intellectuals, think political activity of the opposition makes sense if it leads to the establishment of "new principles of fairness", that is, a kind of political, legal and moral rematch with Aleksandar Vučić and SNS. Political changes are not just a mere rotation in government powers, based on the majority of the voting support, but

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64 Ibid, p. 16

65 Jovo Bakić, "Mafija dobrovoljno neće otići sa vlasti [Mafia will not willingly give up power]", interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3597, p. 10

66 Danica Popović, "Žele da me zastraše zato što sam glasna [Their wish is to intimidate me because I am loud]", interview with Radmilo Marković, *Vreme*, No. 1503, p. 11

also “Doomsday” and purgatory for the “devils” in Aleksandar Vučić’s government.

Director Kokan Mladenović speaks openly of the opposition as the subject of political change and the establishment of a “moral order”, more precisely the “restauration of justice,” and identifies the quality of future political changes with the quantum of imprisonment that members of the SNS government will receive: “I believe that the essential fairness and democracy of any future government will be measured by the time Aleksandar Vučić and his close associates, made up of counterfeiters, thieves, of people who, like him, violate constitutional and legal powers daily, will spend in prison. The manner in which every successive government tacitly abolishes every previous one, continuing to use the same mechanisms of corruption and manipulation, will once have to end. With this in mind, I wholeheartedly advocate lustration and prosecution of all those who have participated in power since the 1990s, and I think it is only fair that some of the more prominent Democrats, and their partners in crime over democracy in Serbia, are seen in prison with the Vučić’s, Dačić’s and others.”<sup>67</sup>

Nebojša Romčević, already quoted, expresses an identical opinion. His commitment to the idea of revanchism almost goes beyond the former communist passion for dealing with the class enemy: “One cannot live without justice and freedom. Justice and freedom, as principles that have no alternative, must, in the end, bring this whole system on the defendant’s bench, from the president to the last ‘bot’. Thus, an authority indifferent to the law, which has already caused damage of epic proportions, can afford neither justice nor freedom; and one cannot live without justice and freedom. This regime’s power is already in decline, but we must decide whether we want a new false prophet or a state for which we are all responsible. Disappearance of this system of authority, return of the stolen assets, punishment of the guilty ones, that is only the first step, but it is also where processes usually end. When Koštunica stated, on 5th October 2000, that there would be no revenge, he suspended law and justice, thereby allowing the continuity of those who made their fortune at the downfall of the country during the 1990s. The idea that you can escape justice is the grave of the Serbian country.”<sup>68</sup>

67 Kokan Mladenović, “Balon besa mora kad-tad da pukne [The balloon filled with anger must burst in the end]”, interview with Radmilo Marković, *Vreme*, No. 1504, p. 21

68 Nebojša Romčević, “Srbija neće preživeti ovu vlast [Serbia will not survive this government]”, interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3599, p. 25



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# ABOUT AUTHORS

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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 securitization 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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