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Analysis of the print media in Serbia  
January - March

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84 ГОДИНЕ  
ТРАДИЦИЈЕ

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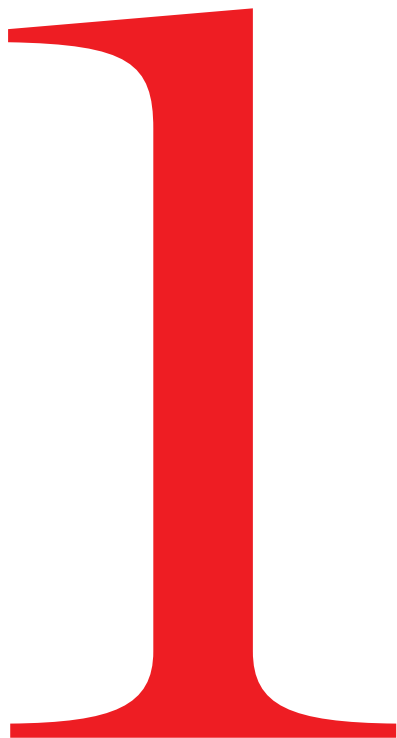
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# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION:

## Serbia in focus

The seventeenth issue of Mediameter appears in one new, refreshed, edition. The existing chapters have been amended to some extent, and a new chapter dedicated to title analysis has been introduced.

An analysis of the headlines of the front pages, which represent the “face” of each newspaper, reveals that the word most used is *Serbia*. The word *Serbia* is represented in 168 appearances in the titles of selected texts. The second most frequent occurrence is the word *Vučić*, which appears 129 times, while the words *because* and *Kosovo* are recorded 73 times each. Among the 10 most represented words in the titles are the words: *Putin* (67), *Serbs* (62), *protest* (58), *elections* (51), *Đilas* (50) and *the state* (40). Even from this brief look at the frequency of occurrence of certain words in the titles of selected texts, one can gain insight into their content.

In regard to topics, the media are returning to former patterns. The texts are again largely political. *Political life in Serbia* is three times more prevalent (701 texts) than the first next most discussed topic – *Kosovo* (205 texts), which has dominated the previous two quarters. The reduction in the number of texts on Kosovo has also significantly reduced the number of actors involved. The arrival of Putin has introduced a kind of euphoria into Serbia’s media discourse. This heightened affect has been materialized through as many as 31 positive articles about Putin on the front pages of the analyzed media.

In the first quarter of 2019, we again note the complete dominance of the report. Report participation approaches 80%. The reduction in the participation of articles in favor of reports and interviews is precisely indicative of current trends in journalism, which is characterized by a lack of analytical approach and research capacity.

The intense trend of lowering professional standards continues in this quarter as well. One litmus is the data that shows that only 14.84% of texts are balanced, which is the lowest value since we follow that category within *Mediameter*. Also, as many as 40% of headlines do not conform to the standards of the journalistic profession.



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.

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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.





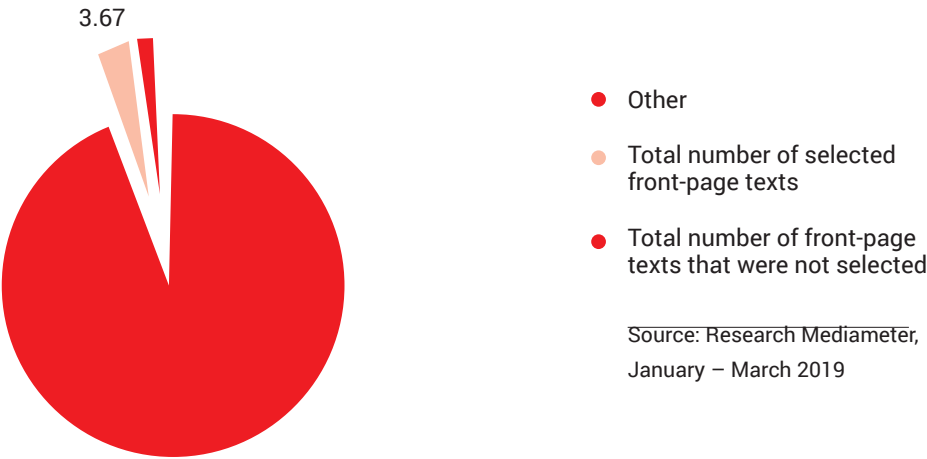
Sample

## 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*.

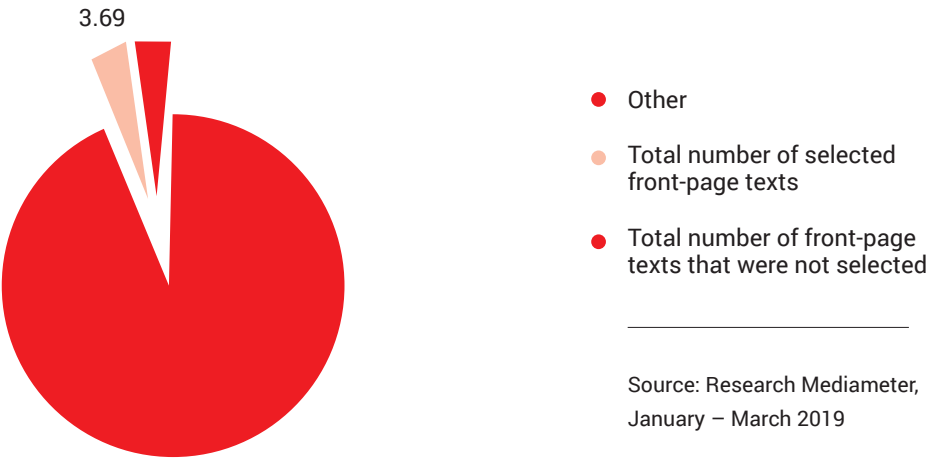
Texts from front pages reflect best the coordinates of editorial policies of daily print editions. Though this involves a small percentage of texts, editorial identity of a daily can be most easily identified through messages conveyed through front pages. The ratio of the total number of texts in each 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 January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2019.

Graph 1. – *Alo!*



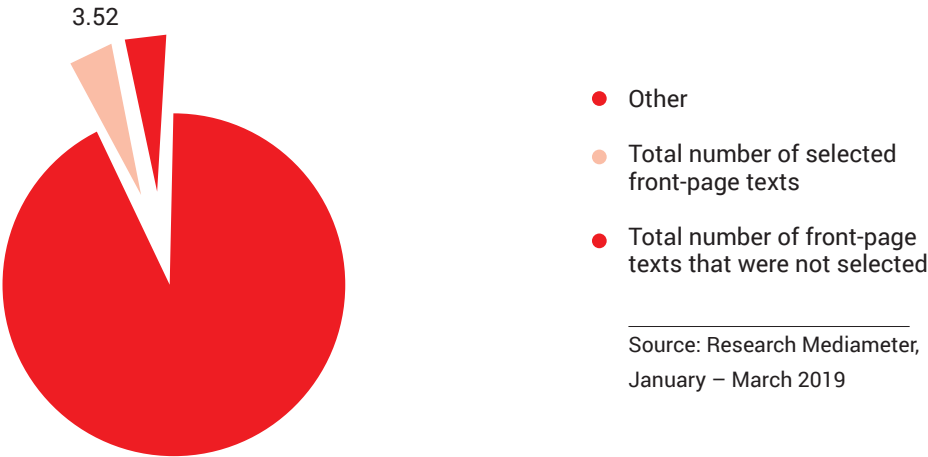
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 2. – *Blic*



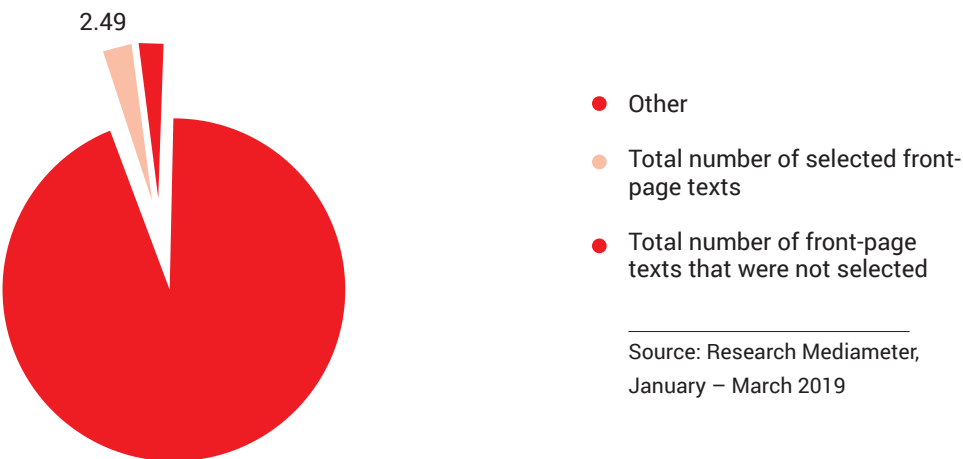
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 3. – *Danas*



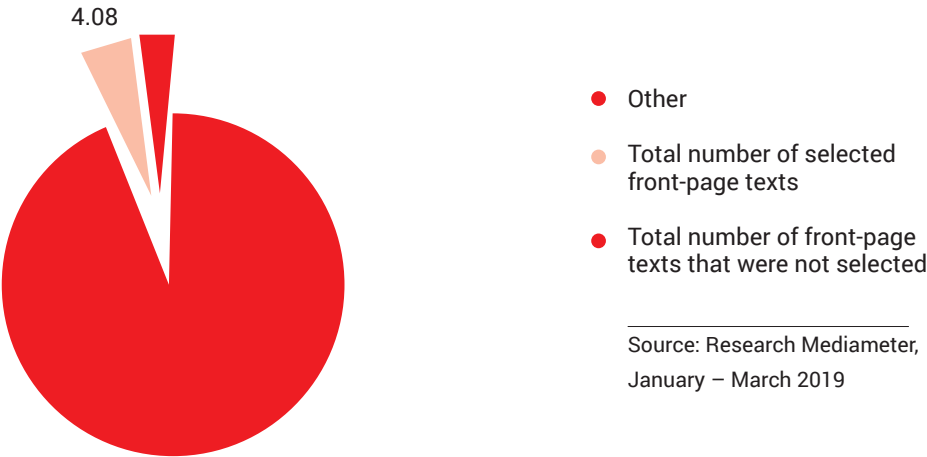
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 4. – *Informer*



Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

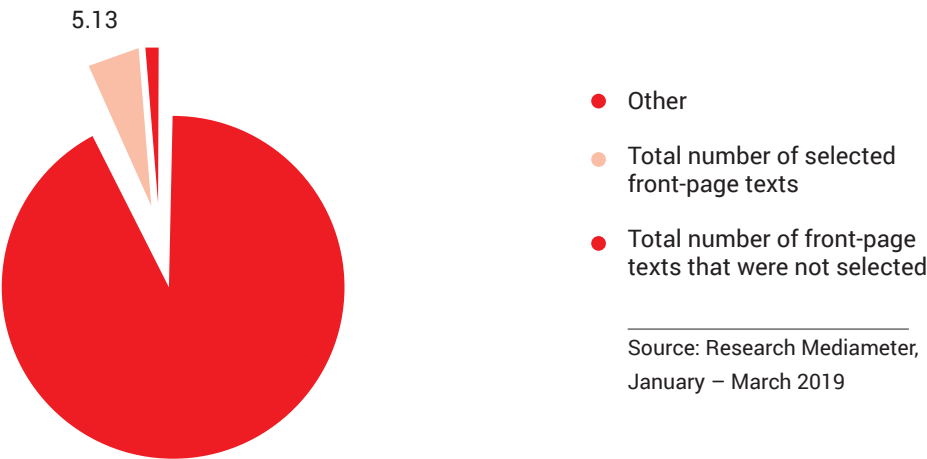
Graph 5. – Kurir



Source: Research Mediameter,  
January – March 2019

Source: Research Mediameter, January – March 2019

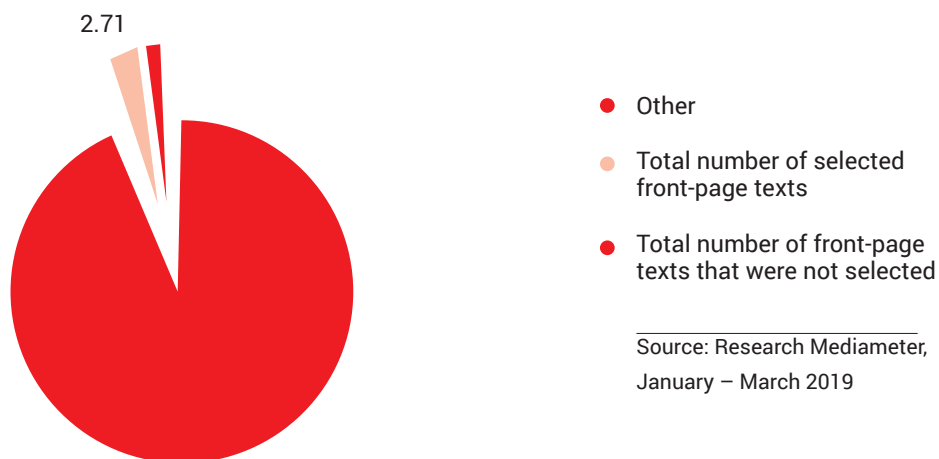
Graph 6. – Politika



Source: Research Mediameter,  
January – March 2019

Source: Research Mediameter, January – March 2019



**Graph 7. – Večernje novosti**

Source: Research Mediameter,  
January – March 2019

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

The total number of analyzed texts in all seven media that entered the sample of our research is 2251, and this number makes on average 61,67% of headlines and 4,04% 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	69	62	7
news	37	37	0
politics	59	59	0
society	68	23	45
chronicle	59	8	51
v.i.p.	105	37	68
sport	52	6	46
world	7	2	5
interview/interview of the week	1	1	0
Belgrade	8	3	5
supplement	22	0	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>249</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 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	63	63	0
current affairs / interview	10	10	0
topic of the day / issue	85	77	8
society	77	30	47
chronicle	44	16	28
economy	8	6	2
culture	12	0	12
sport	60	2	58
destinies	17	5	12
world/planet	9	5	4
research/dossier	4	4	0
entertainment	30	3	27
Blic Foundation	1	0	1
Belgrade	4	1	3
scene	13	2	11
TV Magazine	2	0	2
pop & culture	8	0	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>223</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

**Table 3. – Danas**

Danas/section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
Danas business	9	9	0
Danas special supplement	8	4	4
Danas weekend	36	25	11
event / topic of the day	7	7	0
society	122	118	4
economy	49	49	0
Globe	15	13	2
culture	19	10	9
front page	23	23	0
politics	206	206	0
Belgrade	1	1	0
sport	28	9	19
dialogue	22	22	0
Pomodoro	7	3	4
confrontation	3	3	0
Periscope	2	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>55</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

**Table 4. – Informer**

<i>Informer/</i> section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
breaking news	129	128	1
news	103	37	66
showtime	86	34	52
sport	50	7	43
supplement	50	10	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>202</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

**Table 5. – Kurir**

<i>Kurir</i> /section	Total number of front-page texts	Total number of selected front-page texts	Total number of front-page texts that were not selected
news	296	214	82
interview	1	1	0
chronicle	4	1	3
stars	78	30	48
culture	12	2	10
sport	26	5	21
topic of the day	2	0	2
supplement	17	0	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>183</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 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	61	48	13
society	69	26	43
economy	42	32	10
politics	28	28	0
event of the day	21	21	0
culture	34	5	29
chronicle	31	17	14
daily supplement	35	1	34
Serbia	25	12	13
sport	21	0	21
topic of the week / day	4	2	2
personalities	1	1	0
region	25	18	7
front page	288	237	51
views	11	11	0
consumer	23	10	13
feuilleton	4	4	0

Belgrade / Belgrade chronicle	18	12	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>256</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

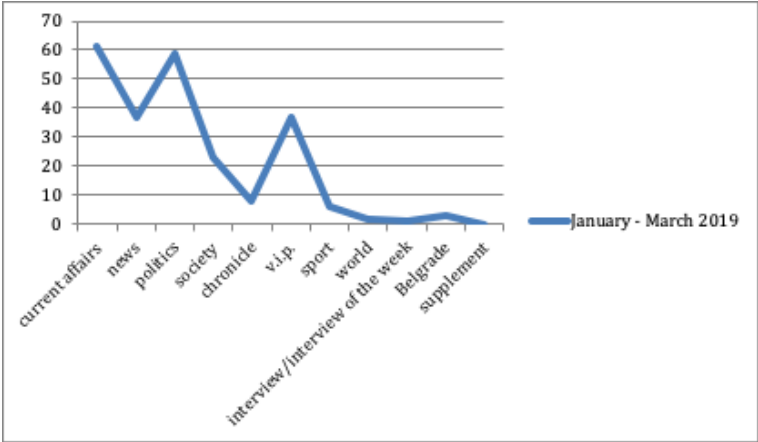
**Table 7. – Večernje novosti**

<i>Večernje novosti/</i> section	Total number of front- page texts	Total number of select- ed front-page texts	Total number of front- page texts that were not selected
chronicle	71	19	52
society	107	77	30
politics	117	117	0
economy	40	35	5
current affairs	47	24	23
reportage	14	6	8
culture	16	1	15
interview	10	4	6
world	16	12	4
sport	32	6	26
Belgrade	14	6	8
topic of the day	6	3	3
reflector	8	2	6
events	15	14	1
second page	6	6	0
supplement	45	1	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>231</b>

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

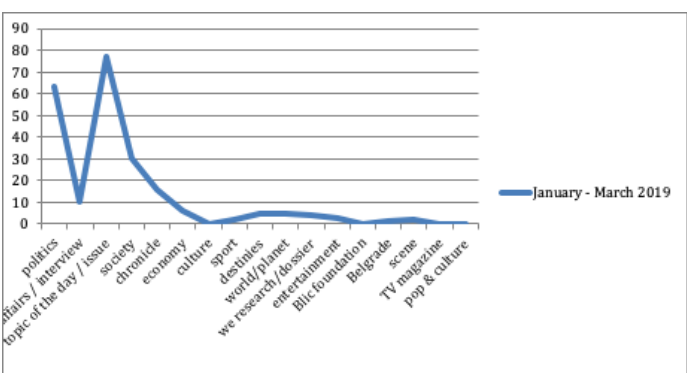
By looking at the **Tables 1-7**, it is still evident that the structure of the analyzed daily newspapers follows two different logics. *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, *Danas* and *Blic* follow the classic structure of daily newspapers, while only *Informer*, with its reduced rubric structure, deviates significantly from this matrix. Although in the previous quarter *Kurir* began to approach the classic structure of the newspapers in a certain way, in the last quarter of 2018 we recorded the rapprochement of the *Kurir* editorial strategy to the one present in the daily *Informer*. This is also evident in **Chart 12**, in the form of a significant accent on the presence of texts in the re-unified *news* section. And in *Informer* the news is a dominant rubric, which unites various areas, and special attention is given to entertainment content, such as information about famous people, then show business and sports, which increasingly receive a socio-political character. On the other hand, the daily *Alo!* in the previous three months has expanded the structure of the rubrics in a certain way, but still remains dominantly focused on the contents of a sensational and entertaining character. The editorial strategies identified in the previous sixteen editions of the Mediamater are fully visible in the first quarter of 2019, as can be clearly seen in **Charts 8-14**.

Graph 8. – Alo!



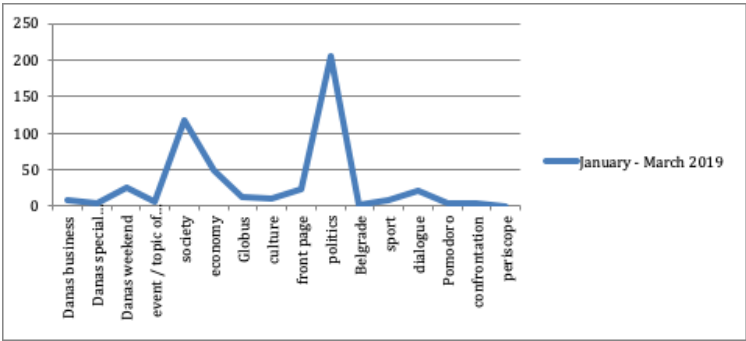
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 9. – Blic



Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

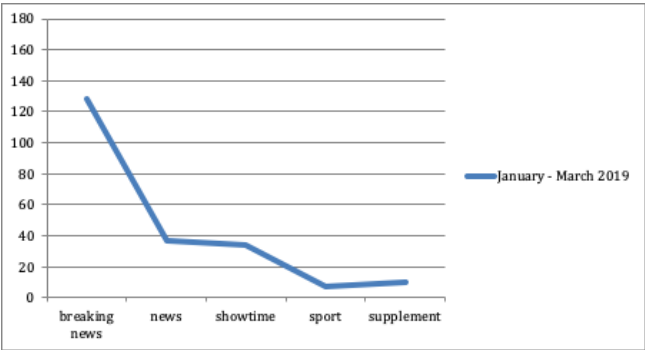
Graph 10. – Danas



Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

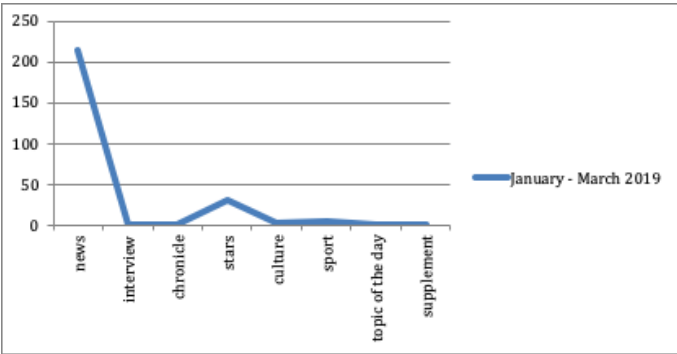


Graph 11. – *Informer*



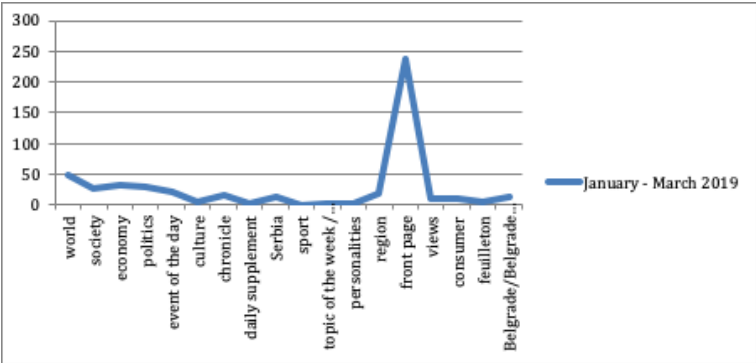
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 12. – *Kurir*



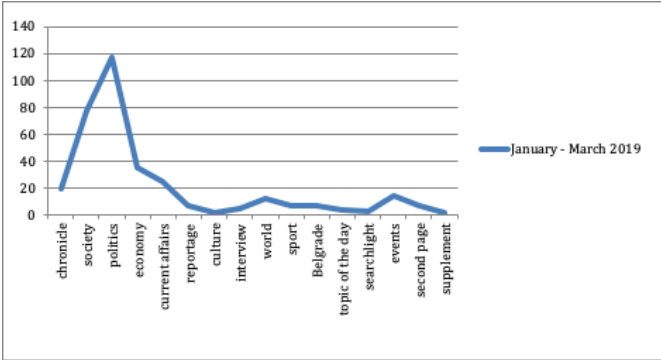
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 13. – *Politika*



Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

Graph 14. – Večernje novosti



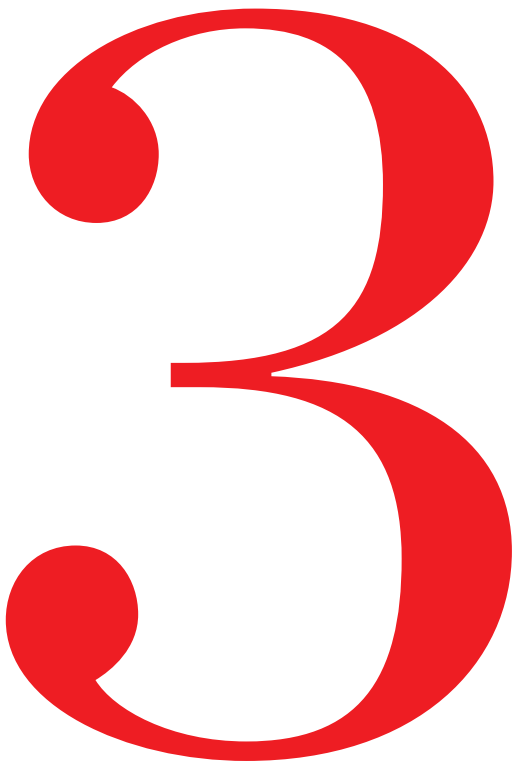
Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019

In retrospect, if we compare the number of selected texts during 2015 (7382), 2016 (8293), 2017 (8652) and 2018 (8744), we can see a clear upward trend in the number of analyzed texts (see Table 8). Considering that Mediameter's focus is primarily on socio-political events and that this is one of the key criteria for selecting texts, it is precisely a reason for a significant increase in the number of articles in the sample, especially in comparison to 2015. It is interesting that, if we compare the number of selected texts in the first quarter of 2019 with the average number of selected texts per quarter and by years (in 2015 - 1845 texts, in 2016 - 2073 texts, in 2017 - 2163 texts and 2018 - 2186 articles) we see a constant increase, which heralds a renewed focus of the media on socio-political developments in 2019.

**Table 8.** – Number of selected texts by quarter for period 2015 – 2018

	2015.	2016.	2017.	2018.	2019.
I quarter	1360	1924	2403	2173	2251
II quarter	1673	2106	2091	2009	
III quarter	2172	2012	1991	2248	
IV quarter	2177	2251	2167	2314	
TOTAL	7382	8293	8652	8744	

Source: Research *Mediameter*, January – March 2019





# Research results

## RESEARCH RESULTS

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

Newspaper titles, as well as the front pages themselves, make up the identity of all dailies, and readers are often informed about events only on the basis of the headlines of the text, due to lack of time or a desire for more detailed insight into media content. This fact contributed to the establishment of a new practice in print media - the use of titles / title blocks (headline, title, subtitle) that can be compared with *clickbait* titles in online media. Specifically, in order for readers to choose their news and / or visit the site, online media post interesting / sensationalist titles (*clickbaits*), which very often are not even related to the text.<sup>1</sup> Their purpose is primarily to attract the attention and “trick” readers to click on the text and thus generate revenue for the media, which is certainly a form of unprofessional media practice and follows the spirit of the growing trend of tabloidization. Most print media have portals of the same name where they have been able to test the effectiveness of such headlines for a long period of time, and therefore, through this research, we have examined the extent to which print media take on this form of headline design. Sensationalist headline text in print is a practice that provokes a reader’s response, that is, desired attention, that indirectly leads to greater readership.

The research within the Mediametar project was aimed at assessing the character of the title, that is, to determine whether the titles were sensational and whether the title itself corresponded to the content of the text. The words that were present in the titles are graphically presented in the form of a “word cloud”, in which the dimensions of the words represent the frequencies of their appearance.

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<sup>1</sup> Example: the title which announces the arrival of spring, posted on *www.alo.rs*: <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/drustvo/srbija-prolece-beograd-gradani-promena-vremena-prognoza/218195/ves>

### “Word cloud” – content of titles

The language corpus constituting the word cloud comprises titles of the 2251 texts selected for the sample in the first quarter of 2019. The process of creating the word cloud<sup>2</sup> meant refining that language corpus, that is, reducing words to lowercase, removing punctuation and words that are not relevant for research.<sup>3</sup> After that, a list of terms was made using the package “tm” from the programming language R.<sup>4</sup> The selected terms are lemmatized, that is, converted into words - for example, all case changes of one word are reduced to a nominative in the case of nouns, while the verbs are grouped according to their temporal form. In this way, the frequency of words is determined, that is, words that appear more than five times are graphically displayed using the word cloud package from the programming language R.<sup>5</sup>

The word most often mentioned in the seven media in the sample is *Serbia* - represented in 168 appearances. The following is the word *Vučić*, which appears 129 times, while the words *because* and *Kosovo* are recorded 73 times each. *Putin* (67), *Serbs* (62), *protest* (58), *elections* (51), *Đilas* (50) and *the state* (40) are among the 10 most represented words in the titles.

2 Method Text Mining (tm) enables extraction of needed and significant information from a text (in this case headlines). A text is treated as a set of words through the “Bag of words” approach.

3 Words such as “if”, “as” and “without” (so-called *stop-words*), for the most part, are not taken into account. However, some of them are included due to relevance for the research, such as “*zbog*” (*because*), which indicates cause-and-effect character of the title. Therefore, it is included in the graphical representation.

4 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

5 Ian Fellows, wordcloud: Word Clouds, R package version 2.6, <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=wordcloud>, 2018.





Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

When looking at the newspapers individually, the most common word in the daily *Alo!* is *Vučić* (16 appearances), followed by *Serbia* (13), *Đilas* (12), *because* (10), followed by *Kosovo* and *Duško*, represented in 9 titles each. In the titles, *Blic* most often emphasizes the words *Serbia* and *elections* (12 appearances each), followed by *Vučić* and *Kosovo* with 10 each, while the fifth in terms of representation is *because* (9). The most frequently repeated word in the headlines that went into the *Danas* is *Vučić* (51 titles). The word *Serbia* is represented 39 times, and the *protest* 30 times. *The authorities* and *the state* are mentioned on another 25 and 18 occasions respectively. *Informer* prioritizes the words *Serbia* (23), while the second and third words by representation are *Putin* (17) and *Đilas* (15). *Serbs* and *Kosovo* are the fourth and fifth words by presence, mentioned 13 and 12 times in the titles, respectively. *Serbia* (18), *Putin* (17), *Vučić* (16), *because* (14), *Serbs* and *Đilas* (12 appearances each) are the most represented words in the titles of selected texts from *Kurir*. *Serbia* is also the most common word in the headlines of *Politika* (38), followed by *Vučić* (19), *Priština* (15), *because* (14) and *Kosovo* (12). *Večernje novosti* also uses the word *Serbia* the most (25 texts), followed by *Serbs* (16), *Kosovo* (11), *Vučić* (10), war and *elections* (9 appearances each). The representation of words in titles, according to the media, can be seen in **Graphs 16 - 22**.

6 Words that are repeated in the titles at least five times are shown.

Graph 16. – Word cloud – *Alo!*



Graph 17. – Word cloud – *Blic*





A word cloud featuring names and terms related to the Kosovo conflict. The most prominent word is 'srbija' in large blue letters. Other significant words include 'putin' in blue, 'kosovo' in purple, 'vešala' in orange, 'država' in orange, 'nato' in purple, 'sad' in orange, 'karleuša' in orange, 'žena' in orange, 'jeremić' in orange, 'duško' in purple, 'još' in orange, 'sergej' in purple, 'haradinaj' in orange, 'vučić' in purple, 'đilas' in purple, 'jelena' in orange, 'srbi' in purple, 'vranješ' in purple, 'deca' in orange, 'zbog' in orange, 'dilaso' in orange, 'svi' in orange, and 'sve' in orange. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'srbija' at the top center.

Graph 20. – Word cloud – *Kurir*



Graph 21. – Word cloud – *Politika*



**Graph 22.** – Word cloud – *Večernje novosti*



Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

## Character of titles

As already noted, sensationalist reporting and tabloidization are increasingly present trends in print media in Serbia. This practice is also evident in the titles, which in almost 40% of texts do not meet the standards of professional reporting. This is, among other things, exemplified by the use of formulations that are inconsistent with the content of the text, unacceptable words, insults and similar practices. The way the headlines are conceived is a true reflection of the editorial policy of each media outlet and provides insight into the intent of journalists and editors – informing the public about topics of public concern or attracting the readership in ways that are clearly not in line with the standards of the journalistic profession.

In order to determine how the media approach the headlines, the titles of the sample are classified into four categories. The first group consists of headlines that are in full compliance with the standards of the journalistic profession and are in line with the text that follows.<sup>7</sup> The next group of titles are those that conform to 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 contents of the text, but are often contradictory.<sup>8</sup> The third group consists of sensationalist headlines that go beyond professional standards but are consistent with the content of the text. These are headlines that seek to elicit a more or less tumultuous reaction from readers and certainly attract attention.<sup>9</sup> The last group of titles are sensationalist, which fall outside the scope of professional standards and do not fit the text. This type of headline, which provokes the most intense reactions of the audience, is mostly about disrespecting basic ethical reporting principles and pointing to bad media practices.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of this research was not to determine the truth of the claims made in the headlines and texts (or the phenomenon of *fake news*), but rather how the media handled the facts presented. More specifically, the idea was to compare the consistency of the claims made with the argumentation outlined in the text.

Sensationalist headlines have been noted in all media, while the vocabulary and the way in which it attracts the attention of readers differs significantly in each of the media. The most sensationalist headlines were recorded in the daily *Kurir* - 194, that is, more than three quarters of the texts selected for the sample from this newspaper had a headline that did not conform to professional standards. A similar share of such titles was noted in *Alo!* - about 75%. Sensationalist headlines that cannot be linked to the content of the text are the most prevalent in *Informer* – 18, while the daily *Politika* has the most headlines that, at first glance, meet reporting standards, but do not state the facts confirmed in the text – 36 or about 7%.

<sup>7</sup> "Gradiće se novi ledolomac [A new icebreaker will be built]," *Politika*, 03.01.2019, p. A1

<sup>8</sup> "Putin i Vučić grade hram! [Putin and Vučić are building a temple]" *Alo!*, 17.01.2019, p. 2

<sup>9</sup> "Krvavi scenario za rušenje Dodika! [A bloody scenario for toppling Dodik]" *Alo!*, 05.01.2019, p. 2

<sup>10</sup> "Đilasovka koja radi za Šiptare je vođa protesta [Đilas supporter who works for Šiptars is a protest leader]," *Informer*, 04.01.2019, p. 5

### Character of the title by media

Media/ title	meets stan- dards		meets stan- dards / incon- sistent with content		sensationalist / consistent with content		sensationalist / inconsistent with content		total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	53	22.27	1	0.42	179	75.21	5	2.10	238	100.00
<i>Blic</i>	131	58.48	1	0.45	92	41.07	0	0.00	224	100.00
<i>Danas</i>	456	90.84	0	0.00	46	9.16	0	0.00	502	100.00
<i>Informer</i>	81	37.50	5	2.31	112	51.85	18	8.33	216	100.00
<i>Kurir</i>	57	22.53	1	0.40	194	76.68	1	0.40	253	100.00
<i>Politika</i>	383	78.97	36	7.42	64	13.20	2	0.41	485	100.00
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	225	67.57	0	0.00	108	32.43	0	0.00	333	100.00
<b>total</b>	<b>1386</b>	<b>61.57</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>35.32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

### Share of journalistic genres

In the first quarter of 2019, the share of reports in the total number of texts that make up the sample is 79.16% or 1782 texts, which is an increase by 1% compared to the previous quarter. The largest share of reports was again noted in *Informer* – almost 97%, while the lowest representation of texts written in this genre is recorded in *Danas* – about 65% (Table 11). About 61% of the texts written in this genre in all media are neutral in connotation,<sup>11</sup> but the share of value-intoned texts differs in relation to the media. The largest share of the value context was recorded in *Informer* (71.29%) and the least in *Danas*, 11.31%. The reports are mostly unbalanced,<sup>12</sup> i.e. even 83% are not complete. The least balanced reports were recorded in *Informer* (1.91%), while the most complete reports were published by the daily *Blic* (33.85%).<sup>13</sup>

11 In the analysis we present, 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 the text equipment (subtitle, title and subtitle). By the *neutral* presentation of particular topics or actors, we have identified those texts in which the authors of the text / journalist do not take a value attitude towards a specific actor or topic, but seek to present in a relatively neutral, measured manner, in accordance with professional standards, certain facts which are the subject of the text. We have interpreted as *positive* those interpretations in which journalists express clear sympathies and positive attitudes towards them by presenting particular topics or actors. As *negative*, we have labeled those interpretations in which journalists express clear antipathy and negative attitude towards them by presenting particular topics or actors.

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

13 Participation of balanced reports in other media: *Kurir* (3.11%), *Alo!* (5.61%), *Večernje novosti* (18.49%), *Politika* (24.46%) and *Danas* (25.38%).

The next newspaper form according to participation is an interview – 8.71% of texts were written in this form (the highest participation was recorded in *Večernje novosti* - about 11% of texts). The following are *comments* and *articles*, which make up 4.53% and 3.95% of all texts in the sample. The highest number and share of comments was recorded in *Danas* (63 or 12.55%), while the daily newspapers *Kurir*, *Alo!* and *Informer* have not published any texts in this newspaper genre. Texts in article form were published only in the newspaper *Danas* and *Politika*. The first quarter of 2019 brings slightly more *news* than in previous periods - about 2%, however, this is almost exclusively the result of writing the daily *Danas*, which has published as many as 34 out of 47 news texts in all media outlets. *Reportage* and other forms (such as *hybrid genres* or *feuilletons*) are present in about 1.5% or 35 texts. Compared to the previous quarter, an almost identical distribution of genres is noted.

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

Genre	Total number	%
Report	1782	79.16%
Interview	196	8.71%
Commentary	102	4.53%
Article	89	3.95%
News story	47	2.09%
Other	23	1.02%
Reportage	12	0.53%
<b>total</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Genre	<i>Alo!</i>	<i>Blic</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Informer</i>	<i>Kurir</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	total
report	214	192	327	209	225	323	292	1782
interview	18	21	51	4	27	38	37	196
commentary	0	5	63	0	0	32	2	102
article	0	0	11	0	0	78	0	89
news	4	4	34	2	0	3	0	47
other	0	2	13	1	1	4	2	23
reportage	2	0	3	0	0	7	0	12
<b>total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>2251</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019



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

Genre	<i>Alo!</i>	<i>Blic</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Informer</i>	<i>Kurir</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	total
report	89.92	85.71	65.14	96.76	88.93	66.60	87.69	79.16
interview	7.56	9.38	10.16	1.85	10.67	7.84	11.11	8.71
commentary	0.00	2.23	12.55	0.00	0.00	6.60	0.60	4.53
article	0.00	0.00	2.19	0.00	0.00	16.08	0.00	3.95
news	1.68	1.79	6.77	0.93	0.00	0.62	0.00	2.09
other	0.00	0.89	2.59	0.46	0.40	0.82	0.60	1.02
reportage	0.84	0.00	0.60	0.00	0.00	1.44	0.00	0.53
<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, January – March 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>	14	6.70	60	28.71	135	64.59
<i>Kurir</i>	24	10.67	80	35.56	121	53.78
<i>Alo!</i>	7	3.27	97	45.33	110	51.40
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	38	13.01	175	59.93	79	27.05
<i>Blic</i>	1	0.52	123	64.06	68	35.42
<i>Politika</i>	9	2.79	263	81.42	51	15.79
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	290	88.69	37	11.31
<b>total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>5.22</b>	<b>1088</b>	<b>61.05</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>33.73</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

## Topics

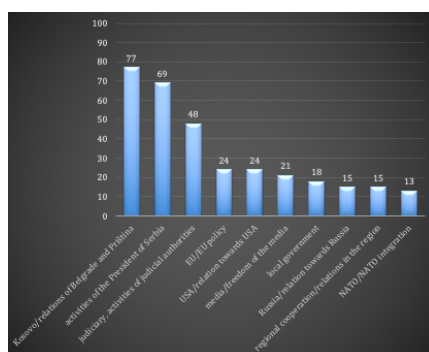
In order for each article to be defined as clearly as possible, the selected texts that make up the sample are classified under a single topic, but nevertheless, all relevant elements present in these articles have been accounted for. This gave us a clearer insight into the manner of reporting and also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

## Topic prominence

The first topic in terms of representation in the texts that made up the sample is *political life in Serbia*. Unlike in the previous quarter, when the media focus was more on Kosovo, i.e. on Belgrade-Priština relations, this time as many as 31% of articles were devoted to political life. In the period January – March 2019, all political topics were present in a total of 778 or 34.56% of the texts from the sample: *political life in Serbia* in 701 or 31.14% of texts, *activities of the President of Serbia* in 2.4% or 54 articles, *activities of the Government of Serbia* 0.98% - 22 and the *activities of the Prime Minister of Serbia* 0.04% - 1 text. The representation of the topic *political life in Serbia* increased by about 12% compared to the total number of articles that made up the sample, or expressed in absolute numbers, as much as 267 texts more than in the previous quarter.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, in the texts, apart from the dominant theme, elements are also recorded, indicating the angle from which the topic is viewed. Each selected text could contain only the basic theme or, with the basic theme, one or more elements. Given that almost a third of all analyzed texts are devoted to *political life in Serbia*, it was necessary to consider what are the most common elements in these texts. This topic was mostly discussed from the perspective of the *Kosovo* challenges (77 texts), then *political life in Serbia* was discussed from the perspective of media rights and freedoms<sup>14</sup> (69), *activities of the President of Serbia* (48), *local self-government* and the *judiciary* (24 captions each).

Participation of elements by topic political life in Serbia - all media from the sample



Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

<sup>14</sup> Media rights and freedoms, specifically the incursion of “One of the five million” protesters into the RTS building, was the element most commonly seen in political discourse.

The next topic in terms of participation in the first quarter of 2019 is *Kosovo / Belgrade and Priština relations* (205 or 9.11% of texts), which is double reduced in comparison to the previous quarter (434 or 18.76% of articles).

The third theme in terms of representation was the media-driven affair, whose main protagonist was Jelena Karleuša. The immediate occasion for reporting on this “case” was speculation about the alleged emotional affair of singer Jelena Karleuša and footballer Ognjen Vranješ. The media wrote about her personal life almost daily, and texts in some media received even an unexpected, political connotation. Although Karleuša, as a public figure, in accordance with the *Serbian Journalist Code*, is subject to different criteria<sup>15</sup> when assessing the impact of published information on her personal life,<sup>16</sup> the campaign conducted went beyond professional reporting and was certainly not in the public interest, nor it contributed to better informing of readers about topics of social importance. The competent Ministry of Culture and Information also intervened in the entire case and filed misdemeanor charges against four tabloids, which published inappropriate content on the front pages in connection with this affair. A total of 109 texts were published, or 4.84% of selected articles from the sample, mostly in the daily *Informer* - 39, followed by *Alo!* with 34, *Kurir* - 28, *Blic* - 5, *Večernje novosti* - 2 and daily newspaper *Danas*, with one published text.<sup>17</sup>

*Regional cooperation / relations in the region* was the fourth topic of interest, of which the media published 102 or 4.53% of articles, while the media dealt with the *economy* in 100 or 4.44% of articles. 86 or 3.82% were devoted to topics related to Russia, while in 70 articles (3.11%) the media reported on *international relations*. Other topics that caught the attention of the media were the *judiciary*, *activities of the judicial authorities* (64 - 2.84%), *activities of the President of Serbia* and topics related to The Hague Tribunal and war crimes (54 texts or 2.4% each).

If one considers the value context of 2251 selected text in the first quarter of 2019, 37.89% of the captions have value connotations - 5.15% positive and 32.74% negative. The most negative texts were written about the Karleuša-Vranješ media-constructed affair (88%). More than half of the articles covering regional topics and the Hague Tribunal<sup>18</sup> were also negative (about 52% and 54% respectively), and negative context was observed when reporting on topics related to Kosovo - about 45%. A negative attitude to the topics related to *Kosovo / Belgrade-Priština relations* was also constructed in this quarter through a narrative in which Albanians settled in Kosovo are referred to as Šiptars, in a pejorative context. A third of the texts related to political life in Serbia and international relations were also negative, as well as nearly 30% of the articles that wrote about the *economy*. In the first quarter of 2019, the most positively related texts on topics related to Russia were recorded, as much as 46.51%.<sup>19</sup>

15 In terms of protection, which is less than for the people who are not considered public figures (see next footnote).

16 *Serbian Journalist Code*, VII Respect of privacy: „Public figures are aware in advance of their right to privacy is somewhat limited, but at the same time, it does not mean that the media can violate it without any reason and explanation.“

17 The daily *Politika* alone has not published any text on this topic.

18 The topic of most of these texts was the passing of a second instance verdict to Radovan Karadžić, who is sentenced to life in prison.

19 The texts largely related to the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Serbia on January 17th, 2019.

The media in the first quarter of 2019 did not show much interest in EU-related topics - only 28 or 1.24% of articles were published. Mostly neutral text were written - 24 or 85.71%, with 4 (14.29%) negative and no positive connotations.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, about twice as many articles were published on *Russia* compared to the previous quarter - 86 or 3.82%. In addition to the 46.51% positives,<sup>21</sup> two negatively connotated articles were published.<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.
Political life in Serbia	701	31.14	9	1.28	462	65.91	230	32.81
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	205	9.11	3	1.46	110	53.66	92	44.88
Media affair Karleuša – Vranješ	109	4.84	0	0.00	13	11.93	96	88.07
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	102	4.53	0	0.00	49	48.04	53	51.96
Economy	100	4.44	5	5.00	66	66.00	29	29.00
Russia / attitude towards Russia	86	3.82	40	46.51	44	51.16	2	2.33
International relations	70	3.11	2	2.86	45	64.29	23	32.86
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	64	2.84	0	0.00	49	76.56	15	23.44
Activities of the president of Serbia	54	2.40	8	14.81	43	79.63	3	5.56
Hague/war crimes	54	2.40	0	0.00	25	46.30	29	53.70

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Total	No.	%
Positive	116	5.15
Neutral	1398	62.11
Negative	737	32.74
<b>total</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

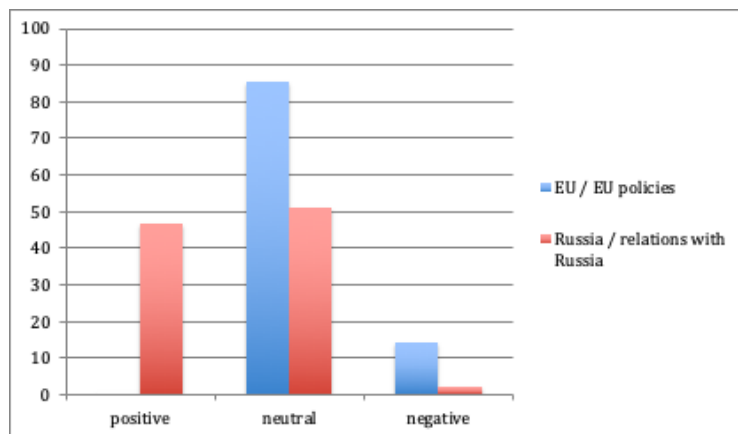
20 All four negatively connotated texts were published in the daily *Politika*.

21 *Kurir* has published 12, *Večernje novosti* - 9, *Informer* - 7, *Alo!* - 6, *Politika* - 5 i *Danas* one positive text..

22 One text each in *Danas* and *Kurir*.

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

**Graph 24.** – Value context in all media in relation to the topic *Russia / attitude towards Russia* and *EU / EU policy*



Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

#### Distribution of topics according to media

##### *Alo!*

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

<i>Alo!</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	87	36.55	0	0.00	49	56.32	38	43.68
Media affair Karleuša – Vranješ	34	14.29	0	0.00	1	2.94	33	97.06
Economy	15	6.30	0	0.00	7	46.67	8	53.33
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	14	5.88	0	0.00	3	21.43	11	78.57
Russia / attitude towards Russia	14	5.88	6	42.86	8	57.14	0	0.00
Kosovo / Relations of Belgrade and Priština	14	5.88	0	0.00	7	50.00	7	50.00
Entertainment / show business	7	2.94	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
NATO / NATO integration	6	2.52	0	0.00	2	33.33	4	66.67
Crime	5	2.10	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Activities of the President of Serbia	5	2.10	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

<b>Alo!</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Positive	7	2.94
Neutral	119	50.00
Negative	112	47.06
<b>total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

**Blic**

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

<b>Blic</b>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	97	43.30	0	0.00	65	67.01	32	32.99
Kosovo/Relations of Belgrade and Priština	32	14.29	0	0.00	17	53.13	15	46.88
Economy	12	5.36	0	0.00	6	50.00	6	50.00
legislative activity	8	3.57	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Trade	8	3.57	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Russia / attitude towards Russia	8	3.57	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	6	2.68	0	0.00	1	16.67	5	83.33
Terrorism	6	2.68	0	0.00	2	33.33	4	66.67
Entertainment / show business	5	2.23	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Karleuša affair	5	2.23	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00
USA/ attitude towards USA	5	2.23	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	5	2.23	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

<i>Blic</i>	No.	%
Positive	1	0.45
Neutral	150	66.96
Negative	73	32.59
<b>total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

### *Danas*

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

<i>Danas</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	270	53.78	0	0.00	245	90.74	25	9.26
Media / freedom of the media	32	6.37	0	0.00	22	68.75	10	31.25
Economy	30	5.98	1	3.33	20	66.67	9	30.00
Kosovo / relations of Belgrade and Priština	29	5.78	0	0.00	25	86.21	4	13.79
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	16	3.19	0	0.00	11	68.75	5	31.25
Social issues / social policy	12	2.39	1	8.33	8	66.67	3	25.00
Russia / attitude towards Russia	11	2.19	1	9.09	9	81.82	1	9.09
International relations	10	1.99	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Culture	9	1.79	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Activities of the Government of Serbia	9	1.79	0	0.00	6	66.67	3	33.33

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

<i>Danas</i>	No.	%
Positive	4	0.80
Neutral	416	82.87
Negative	82	16.33
<b>total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

<i>Informer</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	65	30.09	0	0.00	11	16.92	54	83.08
Media affair Karleuša – Vranješ	39	18.06	0	0.00	4	10.26	35	89.74
Kosovo / relations of Belgrade and Priština	26	12.04	1	3.85	7	26.92	18	69.23
Russia / attitude towards Russia	10	4.63	7	70.00	3	30.00	0	0.00
NATO / NATO integration	9	4.17	0	0.00	3	33.33	6	66.67
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	8	3.70	0	0.00	2	25.00	6	75.00
International relations	7	3.24	0	0.00	4	57.14	3	42.86
Army	5	2.31	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	0.00
Economy	5	2.31	3	60.00	1	20.00	1	20.00
Entertainment / show business	5	2.31	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Informer*

<i>Informer</i>	No.	%
Positive	14	6.48
Neutral	66	30.56
Negative	136	62.96
<b>total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019



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

<i>Kurir</i>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	82	32.41	2	2.44	30	36.59	50	60.98
Media affair Karleuša – Vranješ	28	11.07	0	0.00	6	21.43	22	78.57
Kosovo / relations of Belgrade and Priština	17	6.72	0	0.00	10	58.82	7	41.18
Russia / attitude towards Russia	14	5.53	12	85.71	1	7.14	1	7.14
Hag Hague / war crimes	10	3.95	0	0.00	2	20.00	8	80.00
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	9	3.56	0	0.00	2	22.22	7	77.78
Entertainment / show business	8	3.16	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Corruption	8	3.16	0	0.00	1	12.50	7	87.50
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	8	3.16	0	0.00	5	62.50	3	37.50
Crime	8	3.16	0	0.00	4	50.00	4	50.00
Activities of the Government of Serbia	8	3.16	3	37.50	5	62.50	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Kurir*

<i>Kurir</i>	No.	%
Positive	28	11.07
Neutral	99	39.13
Negative	126	49.80
<b>total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

<b>Politika</b>	Value context with reference to the topic							
	total		Positive		Neutral		Negative	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Political life in Serbia	51	10.52	2	3.92	29	56.86	20	39.22
Kosovo / relations of Belgrade and Priština	45	9.28	1	2.22	16	35.56	28	62.22
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	38	7.84	0	0.00	28	73.68	10	26.32
International relations	36	7.42	0	0.00	23	63.89	13	36.11
Economy	34	7.01	1	2.94	28	82.35	5	14.71
Activities of the President of Serbia	22	4.54	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
EU / EU policy	21	4.33	0	0.00	17	80.95	4	19.05
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	19	3.92	0	0.00	17	89.47	2	10.53
Russia / attitude towards Russia	18	3.71	5	27.78	13	72.22	0	0.00
Issues of faith, church and religion	17	3.51	2	11.76	14	82.35	1	5.88

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Politika*

<b>Politika</b>	no.	%
Positive	17	3.51
Neutral	349	71.96
Negative	119	24.54
<b>total</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

***Večernje novosti***Distribution of topics and their value context in the paper *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	49	14.71	5	10.20	33	67.35	11	22.45
Kosovo / relations of Belgrade and Priština	42	12.61	1	2.38	28	66.67	13	30.95
Hague / war crimes	24	7.21	0	0.00	9	37.50	15	62.50
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	19	5.71	0	0.00	7	36.84	12	63.16
Russia / attitude towards Russia	11	3.30	9	81.82	2	18.18	0	0.00
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	11	3.30	0	0.00	8	72.73	3	27.27
Army	11	3.30	8	72.73	3	27.27	0	0.00
Economy	11	3.30	1	9.09	10	90.91	0	0.00
NATO / NATO integration	11	3.30	0	0.00	1	9.09	10	90.91
Activities of the President of Serbia	11	3.30	5	45.45	6	54.55	0	0.00

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019Value context in relation to all topics in the paper *Večernje novosti*

<i>Večernje novosti</i>	No.	%
Positive	45	13.51
Neutral	199	59.76
Negative	89	26.73
<b>total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

### Balance

When we take into consideration all the texts from the sample for the first quarter of 2019, it can be noticed that most of the topics presented are not treated in a comprehensive way, as evidenced by the fact that the balance is present in only 14.84% of all texts. The smallest number of balanced texts was recorded in *Informer* 1.85%, and the most in *Blic* - 29.46%.

Although the value context is not expressed in 62.11% of all texts, consideration must be given to the fact that the vast majority of texts from the cover pages we have analyzed are not comprehensive, and that one-sided approach reflects the general situation in the Serbian media. Balanced texts, of course, necessarily show some degree of restraint, which, obviously, does not represent a particularly widespread phenomenon in Serbian journalism. Taking sides, which is sometimes very passionate, attracts the audience but reduces seriousness. It's about the speed of the reaction, not the detailed and rational information required by the research, a larger number of interlocutors and reliable and verifiable data, along with available information sources. In this way, circulation and popularity are gained in a short time, but not a reputation.

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

All media	Yes		No	
media	%	No.	%	No.
<i>Informer</i>	1.85	4	98.15	212
<i>Kurir</i>	3.16	8	96.84	245
<i>Alo!</i>	5.46	13	94.54	225
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	16.22	54	83.78	279
<i>Danas</i>	19.12	96	80.88	406
<i>Politika</i>	19.18	93	80.82	392
<i>Blic</i>	29.46	66	70.54	158
<b>total</b>	<b>14.84</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>85.16</b>	<b>1917</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

### Actors

Media in Serbia, at least according to the analysis of the empirical material collected from the front pages, mainly deal with political events within Serbia. Individual and collective political actors, who occupy different positions within the political life of Serbia, account for 46.73% of the total number of actors spoken by selected texts from the cover. If we include this number and the texts that speak of foreign political actors, the percentage of the participation of political actors in the total number of actors on the headlines rises to 73.87%. The second group by frequency of occurrence is different social actors that make up 17.01% of our sample. Economic and economic actors are the protagonists of the texts from the cover only in 5.72% of cases.

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

Actors					
Political actors	8606	Domestic	5444	Individual	4151
				Collective	1293
		Foreign	3162	Individual	2360
				Collective	802
Economic actors	667	Domestic	654	Individual	234
				Collective	420
		Foreign	13	Individual	0
				Collective	13
Other social actors	1982	Domestic	1938	Individual	1562
				Collective	376
		Foreign	44	Individual	29
				Collective	15
Unnamed sources					394
Total					11649

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 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	705	44.88	22	3.12	662	93.90	21	2.98
Ivica Dačić	166	10.57	2	1.20	160	96.39	4	2.41
Ana Brnabić	164	10.44	1	0.61	161	98.17	2	1.22
Nebojša Stefanović	118	7.51	1	0.85	117	99.15	0	0.00
Aleksandar Vulin	88	5.60	2	2.27	84	95.45	2	2.27
Zorana Mihajlović	66	4.20	0	0.00	63	95.45	3	4.55
Rasim Ljajić	32	2.04	0	0.00	32	100.00	0	0.00
Siniša Mali	27	1.72	0	0.00	26	96.30	1	3.70
Nela Kuburović	25	1.59	0	0.00	25	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Antić	21	1.34	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Nenad Popović	21	1.34	0	0.00	19	90.48	2	9.52
Jadranka Joksimović	18	1.15	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Vladan Vukosavljević	17	1.08	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Ružić	17	1.08	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Slavica Đukić Dejanović	17	1.08	1	5.88	16	94.12	0	0.00
Zoran Đorđević	16	1.02	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Mladen Šarčević	15	0.95	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Zlatibor Lončar	15	0.95	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Branislav Nedimović	11	0.70	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Krkobabić	4	0.25	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Vanja Udovičić	4	0.25	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Trivan	2	0.13	0	0.00	1	50.00	1	50.00
Goran Knežević	2	0.13	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>1504</b>	<b>95.74</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2.42</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

As in the previous quarter, the most frequent actor on the front pages of daily newspapers in Serbia was Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, about which the media from our sample report predominantly neutral (in 93.90% of cases). About 3.12% (22) positive<sup>24</sup> and 2.98% (21) texts with negative connotation<sup>25</sup> were written about him. The President of Serbia, as the protagonist of the texts on the front pages, appears 705 times, which is significantly higher than the first ranked actor, Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, who is present in 166 articles and Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, who is present in 164 texts. The highest frequency of the appearance of Aleksandar Vučić, expressed in absolute numbers, is recorded in daily newspapers *Danas* (218), *Politika* (107) and *Večernje novosti* (97). Expressed in the relative numbers of the percentage participation of the texts in which he appears as an actor, and in relation to the total number of selected texts from the same individual newspapers, we can see that he is the most frequent in *Danas* (43.43%), *Blic* (37.05%) and *Alo!* (31.09%). The lowest participation of the texts in which the actor is the president of Serbia is recorded in the daily *Politika* (22.06%).

When it comes to the value context, the biggest share, as well as the number of negative texts, are again present in *Danas* (9.63% or 21 entries). The most positive connotations were published in *Večernje novosti* - 9 or 9.28%, followed by *Alo!* - 8 or 10.81%, *Kurir* - 4 (5.71%), and *Informer* - 1 (1.79%)

Aleksandar Vučić: Value context with reference to the media

Aleksandar Vučić	Positive		Neutral		Negative		total	
Media	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Alo!</i>	8	10.81	66	89.19	0	0.00	74	100
<i>Blic</i>	0	0.00	83	100.00	0	0.00	83	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	197	90.37	21	9.63	218	100
<i>Informer</i>	1	1.79	55	98.21	0	0.00	56	100
<i>Kurir</i>	4	5.71	66	94.29	0	0.00	70	100
<i>Politika</i>	0	0.00	107	100.00	0	0.00	107	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	9	9.28	88	90.72	0	0.00	97	100
<b>total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>93.90</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

24 Slightly less than in the previous (fourth and third) quarters of 2018, when there were 25 (in the fourth) and 28 (in the third), and approximately as in the first two quarters of 2018 - in the second 21, and in the first 22.

25 Less than in the previous quarter, in which there were 28, but significantly more than in the second (14 negatively connotated texts) and third (13 negatively connotated texts) quarter of 2018.

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>	218	502	43.43
<i>Blic</i>	83	224	37.05
<i>Alo!</i>	74	238	31.09
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	97	333	29.13
<i>Kurir</i>	70	253	27.67
<i>Informer</i>	56	216	25.93
<i>Politika</i>	107	485	22.06
<b>total</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>31.32</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Prime Minister Ana Brnabić is the protagonist in 164 (10.44%) analyzed texts and the second is according to the frequency of appearances among individual political actors from the Serbian political scene. In the first quarter of 2019, two texts with negative connotation were written about Ana Brnabić, both in the daily newspaper *Danas*. The only positive text about the current prime minister was published in *Informer*.

The highest number of articles in which the Serbian prime minister was actor was published in *Večernje novosti* (38), *Politika* (35) and *Danas* (26). The largest share of texts in relation to the total number of texts in the media was recorded in *Večernje novosti* (11.41%) and *Blic* (9.38%).

Ana Brnabić: Value context with reference to the media

Ana Brnabić	positive		neutral		negative		total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Media								
<i>Alo!</i>	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00	19	100
<i>Blic</i>	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00	21	100
<i>Danas</i>	0	0.00	24	92.31	2	7.69	26	100
<i>Informer</i>	1	14.29	6	85.71	0	0.00	7	100
<i>Kurir</i>	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00	18	100
<i>Politika</i>	0	0.00	35	100.00	0	0.00	35	100
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	0	0.00	38	100.00	0	0.00	38	100
<b>total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>98.17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 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>Večernje novosti</i>	38	333	11.41
<i>Blic</i>	21	224	9.38
<i>Alo!</i>	19	238	7.98
<i>Politika</i>	35	485	7.22
<i>Kurir</i>	18	253	7.11
<i>Danas</i>	26	502	5.18
<i>Informer</i>	7	216	3.24
<b>total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>7.29</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 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 95.74% of the texts. Most of the negative connotations, except for President Aleksandar Vucčić, were written about Ivica Dačić (4) and Zorana Mihajlovic (3). In the first quarter of 2019, we see a significant increase in the number of appearances of opposition actors - 1511, compared to 1030 in the previous (fourth) and 932 (third) quarter of 2018. However, this is still less than the increase in the number of opposition actors in the first quarter of 2018 (1781), which was fueled by activities related to the Belgrade elections. Again, the most represented opposition leader in this quarter was Dragan Đilas with 275 appearances, almost double the number of the previous quarter, when 162 appearances were recorded. Next are Vuk Jeremić (168) and Boško Obradović (163). The highest number of negative texts, expressed in absolute numbers, were written about Dragan Đilas (111),<sup>26</sup> then about Vuk Jeremić (55)<sup>27</sup> and Boško Obradović (50).<sup>28</sup>

26 More than in the previous quarter when there were 56 of them, and especially in relation to the penultimate quarter when there were 29.

27 More than in the previous quarter when there were 40, and especially in relation to the penultimate quarter when there were 23.

28 More than the previous quarter when there were 25, and especially compared to the penultimate quarter when there were 15.

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

Opposition- individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Dragan Đilas	275	18.20	0	0.00	164	59.64	111	40.36
Vuk Jeremić	168	11.12	0	0.00	113	67.26	55	32.74
Boško Obradović	163	10.79	0	0.00	113	69.33	50	30.67
Sergej Trifunović	123	8.14	0	0.00	75	60.98	48	39.02
Boris Tadić	69	4.57	0	0.00	59	85.51	10	14.49
Vojislav Šešelj	56	3.71	0	0.00	51	91.07	5	8.93
Borko Stefanović	39	2.58	0	0.00	35	89.74	4	10.26
Zoran Lutovac	34	2.25	0	0.00	30	88.24	4	11.76
Čedomir Jovanović	24	1.59	0	0.00	21	87.50	3	12.50
Srđan Nogo	24	1.59	0	0.00	20	83.33	4	16.67
Zoran Živković	24	1.59	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
Sanda Rašković Ivić	23	1.52	0	0.00	22	95.65	1	4.35
Nenad Čanak	22	1.46	0	0.00	19	86.36	3	13.64
Saša Janković	19	1.26	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Veselinović	17	1.13	0	0.00	10	58.82	7	41.18
Nebojša Zelenović	17	1.13	0	0.00	15	88.24	2	11.76
Marinika Tepić	16	1.06	0	0.00	14	87.50	2	12.50
Aleksandar Šapić	15	0.99	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Olenik	13	0.86	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Janko Veselinović	13	0.86	0	0.00	11	84.62	2	15.38
Aleksandra Jerkov	12	0.79	0	0.00	10	83.33	2	16.67
Velimir Ilić	11	0.73	0	0.00	10	90.91	1	9.09
Dragan Šutanovac	11	0.73	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Tatjana Macura	11	0.73	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Stamatović	10	0.66	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Ksenija Radovanović	10	0.66	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
Sulejman Ugljanin	10	0.66	0	0.00	5	50.00	5	50.00
Gordana Čomić	9	0.60	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Miloš Jovanović	9	0.60	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Balša Božović	9	0.60	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Gajić	8	0.53	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00

Branislav Lečić	8	0.53	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Rade Veljanovski	8	0.53	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Saša Radulović	7	0.46	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Dušan Teodorović	7	0.46	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Siniša Kovačević	7	0.46	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Vjerica Radeta	7	0.46	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Bastać	7	0.46	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Miroslav Aleksić	7	0.46	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
Vladan Glišić	6	0.40	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Jovanović	5	0.33	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Miladin Ševarlić	5	0.33	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Đorđe Vukadinović	5	0.33	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Bojan Pajtić	5	0.33	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Nikola Sandulović	5	0.33	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Konstantin Samofalov	4	0.26	0	0.00	2	50.00	2	50.00
Branka Stamenković	4	0.26	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Ješić	4	0.26	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Petrović	3	0.20	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoljub Mićunović	3	0.20	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Radoslav Milojičić Kena	3	0.20	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Radomir Lazović	3	0.20	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	134	8.87	0	0.00	118	88.06	16	11.94
<b>total</b>	<b>1511</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1162</b>	<b>76.90</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>23.10</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Position-individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milutin Jeličić	46	13.57	0	0.00	15	32.61	31	67.39
Dragoljub Simonović	30	8.85	0	0.00	26	86.67	4	13.33
Vladimir Đukanović	22	6.49	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
Darko Glišić	20	5.90	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Milovan Drecun	18	5.31	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Milenko Jovanov	17	5.01	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Vuk Drašković	13	3.83	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Marković Palma	11	3.24	1	9.09	10	90.91	0	0.00
Aleksandar Martinović	9	2.65	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Linta	8	2.36	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Muamer Zukorlić	8	2.36	1	12.50	7	87.50	0	0.00
Igor Bečić	7	2.06	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Miroslav Lazanski	7	2.06	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Milutin Mrkonjić	7	2.06	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marija Obradović	6	1.77	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Radomir Nikolić	6	1.77	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Bogoljub Karić	5	1.47	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ivica Tončev	5	1.47	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Irena Vujović	5	1.47	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Marijan Rističević	4	1.18	0	0.00	2	50.00	2	50.00
Nikola Šainović	3	0.88	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Đorđe Milićević	3	0.88	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Predrag Marković	3	0.88	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dubravka Filipovski	3	0.88	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	73	21.53	0	0.00	65	89.04	8	10.96
<b>total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>85.55</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13.86</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

State bodies, agencies and institutions - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Marko Đurić	54	16.93	0	0.00	54	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Vesić	54	16.93	0	0.00	53	98.15	1	1.85
Maja Gojković	37	11.60	0	0.00	37	100.00	0	0.00
Tomislav Nikolić	26	8.15	0	0.00	25	96.15	1	3.85
Miloš Vučević	18	5.64	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	5.56
Nikola Selaković	15	4.70	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Biljana Popović Ivković	14	4.39	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Radojčić	13	4.08	1	7.69	10	76.92	2	15.38
Veljko Odalović	7	2.19	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Jorgovanka Tabaković	5	1.57	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Suzana Vasiljević	5	1.57	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Milovan Drecun	4	1.25	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Mirović	4	1.25	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Nikodijević	3	0.94	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	60	18.81	0	0.00	57	95.00	3	5.00
<b>total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>96.87</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.82</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Military and police - individual	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Bratislav Gašić	9	8.49	1	11.11	7	77.78	1	11.11
Vladimir Rebić	8	7.55	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Novica Antić	4	3.77	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Mojsilović	4	3.77	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milorad Veljović	4	3.77	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	77	72.64	24	31.17	50	64.94	3	3.90
<b>total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23.58</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72.64</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.77</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Others	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Slobodan Milošević	79	27.05	0	0.00	76	96.20	3	3.80
Marija Lukić	38	13.01	1	2.63	37	97.37	0	0.00
Zoran Đinđić	33	11.30	0	0.00	33	100.00	0	0.00
Šaban Šaulić	18	6.16	6	33.33	12	66.67	0	0.00
Jelena Marjanović	16	5.48	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Marjanović	15	5.14	0	0.00	11	73.33	4	26.67
Vojislav Koštunica	14	4.79	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Biljana Srbljanović	14	4.79	0	0.00	13	92.86	1	7.14
Emir Kusturica	13	4.45	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Igor Jurić	10	3.42	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Mirjana Marković	7	2.40	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Rodoljub Šabić	7	2.40	0	0.00	4	57.14	3	42.86
Mlađan Dinkić	6	2.05	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović	6	2.05	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Slavko Ćuruvija	5	1.71	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Vesna Pešić	5	1.71	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Jelena Milić	3	1.03	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
Nataša Jeremić	3	1.03	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
<b>total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>92.47</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5.14</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

State bodies, agencies and institutions	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Government of Serbia	68	19.48	0	0.00	64	94.12	4	5.88
Ministry of Interior	46	13.18	0	0.00	46	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Defence	28	8.02	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Justice	26	7.45	0	0.00	26	100.00	0	0.00
National Bank of Serbia	21	6.02	0	0.00	20	95.24	1	4.76
National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	15	4.30	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	12	3.44	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Culture and Information	9	2.58	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	9	2.58	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Construction, Traffic and Infrastructure	9	2.58	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Education, Science and technological Development	8	2.29	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication	8	2.29	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Finance	7	2.01	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy	7	2.01	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	6	1.72	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of Health	5	1.43	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ministry of economy	5	1.43	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	5	1.43	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
City of Belgrade	4	1.15	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Republic fund PIO	4	1.15	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Tax Administration	4	1.15	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Energy Agency	3	0.86	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

others	40	11.46	0	0.00	37	92.50	3	7.50
<b>total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>97.42</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.58</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Military and police	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Serbian Armed Forces	23	46.94	7	30.43	16	69.57	0	0.00
Security Intelligence Agency	13	26.53	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian Army Union	3	6.12	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	10	20.41	0	0.00	9	90.00	1	10.00
<b>total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14.29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>83.67</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.04</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Position - parties	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
SNS	212	79.10	1	0.47	198	93.40	13	6.13
SPS	29	10.82	0	0.00	29	100.00	0	0.00
SDPS	6	2.24	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Socialists' Movement	5	1.87	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
PUPS	5	1.87	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
SPO	4	1.49	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
United Serbia	4	1.49	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
SNP	2	0.75	0	0.00	2	100.00	0	0.00
others	1	0.37	0	0.00	1	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>94.40</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5.22</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019



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

Opposition - parties	No.	%	positive	%	neutral	%	negative	%
Alliance for Serbia	186	29.67	0	0.00	152	81.72	34	18.28
Dveri	91	14.51	0	0.00	76	83.52	15	16.48
DS	71	11.32	0	0.00	67	94.37	4	5.63
PSG	53	8.45	0	0.00	52	98.11	1	1.89
People's party	42	6.70	0	0.00	39	92.86	3	7.14
SRS	33	5.26	0	0.00	33	100.00	0	0.00
SDS	22	3.51	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
LDP	21	3.35	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
DSS	21	3.35	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Initiative: Let's not drown Belgrade	18	2.87	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
LSV	16	2.55	0	0.00	15	93.75	1	6.25
Enough is enough	9	1.44	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
SPAS	8	1.28	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian Left	6	0.96	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
New party	6	0.96	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
New Serbia	6	0.96	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
SDA Sandžak	5	0.80	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
others	13	2.07	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>90.59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>9.41</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Kosovo	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Ramush Haradinaj	117	16.16	0	0.00	62	52.99	55	47.01
Hashim Thaçi	106	14.64	0	0.00	69	65.09	37	34.91
Oliver Ivanović	66	9.12	2	3.03	64	96.97	0	0.00
Kadri Veseli	42	5.80	0	0.00	27	64.29	15	35.71
KLA	31	4.28	0	0.00	21	67.74	10	32.26
KFOR	26	3.59	0	0.00	25	96.15	1	3.85
Milena Ivanović	20	2.76	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Serbian list	20	2.76	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00

Trepča	18	2.49	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Special court for KLA crimes	15	2.07	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Behgjet Pacolli	13	1.80	0	0.00	10	76.92	3	23.08
Milan Radojičić	12	1.66	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Fatmir Limaj	9	1.24	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Kosovo Army	9	1.24	0	0.00	7	77.78	2	22.22
Kosovo police	8	1.10	0	0.00	5	62.50	3	37.50
Rada Trajković	7	0.97	0	0.00	5	71.43	2	28.57
Unmik	7	0.97	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Euleks	6	0.83	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Filip Kosnet	5	0.69	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Kosovo Government	5	0.69	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Citizen initiative SDP	5	0.69	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Kosovo security forces	5	0.69	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Rakić	5	0.69	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Dalibor Jeftić	4	0.55	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Jovan Dimkić	4	0.55	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
ROSU	4	0.55	0	0.00	2	50.00	2	50.00
Slavko Simić	3	0.41	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Shpend Ahmeti	3	0.41	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Albin Kurti	3	0.41	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Enver Hoxhaj	3	0.41	0	0.00	2	66.67	1	33.33
others	143	19.75	0	0.00	132	92.31	11	7.69
<b>total</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>79.83</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>19.89</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Croatia	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Kolinda Grabar Kitarović	25	18.66	0	0.00	18	72.00	7	28.00
Milorad Pupovac	16	11.94	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
Andrej Plenković	9	6.72	0	0.00	7	77.78	2	22.22
Franjo Tuđman	9	6.72	0	0.00	6	66.67	3	33.33

Ante Pavelić	8	5.97	0	0.00	3	37.50	5	62.50
Ante Gotovina	5	3.73	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
HDZ	5	3.73	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Stjepan Mesić	3	2.24	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	54	40.30	0	0.00	44	81.48	10	18.52
<b>total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>79.10</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20.90</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Montenegro	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Milo Đukanović	22	25.88	0	0.00	18	81.82	4	18.18
Duško Knežević	8	9.41	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Andrija Mandić	7	8.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
DPS	6	7.06	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Knežević	6	7.06	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milun Zogović	3	3.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Democratic front	3	3.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	30	35.29	0	0.00	27	90.00	3	10.00
<b>total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>91.76</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8.24</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

BiH	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Milorad Dodik	71	36.60	0	0.00	71	100.00	0	0.00
Naser Orić	11	5.67	0	0.00	9	81.82	2	18.18
Bakir Izetbegović	10	5.15	0	0.00	5	50.00	5	50.00
Željka Cvijanović	10	5.15	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Alija Izetbegović	6	3.09	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
SDA	5	2.58	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Valentin Incko	4	2.06	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
David Dragičević	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Constitutional court of BiH	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Government of RS	3	1.55	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	68	35.05	1	1.47	66	97.06	1	1.47
<b>total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>94.85</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.64</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Macedonia	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Zoran Zaev	16	30.19	0	0.00	12	75.00	4	25.00
Nikola Gruevski	6	11.32	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
VMRO –DPMNE	6	11.32	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Stojković	4	7.55	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
SDSM	3	5.66	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	18	33.96	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	5.56
<b>total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>90.57</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9.43</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Foreign political actors	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Angela Merkel	53	13.73	0	0.00	53	100.00	0	0.00
Emmanuel Macron	22	5.70	0	0.00	22	100.00	0	0.00
Edi Rama	18	4.66	0	0.00	9	50.00	9	50.00
Theresa May	15	3.89	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
Xi Jinping	15	3.89	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Recep Tayyip Erdogan	10	2.59	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Alexis Tsipras	7	1.81	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Heiko Maas	5	1.30	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Tonny Blair	5	1.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Kim Jong-un	5	1.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Viktor Orban	5	1.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
“Chinese authorities”	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00

Sebastian Kurz	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Bashar al Assad	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Miro Cerar	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Alexander Lukashenko	3	0.78	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
Petro Poroshenko	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Gerhard Schröder	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
other	202	52.33	1	0.50	199	98.51	2	0.99
<b>total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>96.11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3.37</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region: **Russia**<sup>29</sup>

Russia	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Vladimir Putin	179	57.37	31	17.32	148	82.68	0	0.00
Sergey Lavrov	20	6.41	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Alexander Chepurin	13	4.17	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
Dmitry Peskov	10	3.21	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
“Russian authorities”	4	1.28	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Yevgeny Primakov	3	0.96	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
Sergey Shoygu	3	0.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Russian Ministry of Foreign affairs	3	0.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Maria Zakharova	3	0.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dmitry Rogozin	3	0.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Russian security ser- vices	3	0.96	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	0.00
others	68	21.79	4	5.88	64	94.12	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>12.18</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>87.82</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

<sup>29</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin is the most represented individual foreign actor in the first quarter of 2019.

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign actors outside the region: **USA**<sup>30</sup>

USA	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Donald Trump	101	26.17	2	1.98	98	97.03	1	0.99
Mike Pompeo	20	5.18	0	0.00	20	100.00	0	0.00
Kyle Scott	19	4.92	0	0.00	13	68.42	6	31.58
State Department	18	4.66	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
John Bolton	10	2.59	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Bill Clinton	9	2.33	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Madeleine Albright	9	2.33	0	0.00	6	66.67	3	33.33
Matthew Palmer	8	2.07	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
US Embassy	8	2.07	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Philip Reeker	7	1.81	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Hillary Clinton	7	1.81	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Mike Pence	7	1.81	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Democratic Party	7	1.81	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
CIA	6	1.55	0	0.00	4	66.67	2	33.33
American Administra- tion	6	1.55	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
US Congress	6	1.55	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Barack Obama	5	1.30	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Richard Holbrooke	5	1.30	0	0.00	3	60.00	2	40.00
Wess Mitchell	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Pentagon	4	1.04	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Melania Trump	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
George Soros	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Republican Party	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
FBI	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
US Embassy in Priština	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Stephen Bannon	3	0.78	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	102	26.42	1	0.98	98	96.08	3	2.94
<b>total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>94.56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4.66</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

30 Actors from the United States are most common in relation to individual countries.

Distribution of frequency and value context of the appearance of individual and collective foreign political actors: **representatives of EU institutions and EU institutions**

EU	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
EU	97	29.31	0	0.00	93	95.88	4	4.12
European Commission	38	11.48	0	0.00	38	100.00	0	0.00
Federica Mogherini	34	10.27	0	0.00	34	100.00	0	0.00
European Parliament	28	8.46	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Johannes Han	23	6.95	0	0.00	23	100.00	0	0.00
Maja Kocijančič	17	5.14	0	0.00	17	100.00	0	0.00
Jean Claude Juncker	15	4.53	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
David McAlister	14	4.23	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Sem Fabrizi	12	3.63	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Donald Tusk	7	2.11	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Ivo Vajgl	4	1.21	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Franc Bogović	1	0.30	0	0.00	1	100.00	0	0.00
others	41	12.39	0	0.00	40	97.56	1	2.44
<b>total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>97.89</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.11</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Distribution of frequency 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	%
UN Security Council	18	18.37	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
United Nations	16	16.33	0	0.00	16	100.00	0	0.00
OSCE	9	9.18	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
IMF	9	9.18	0	0.00	8	88.89	1	11.11
Council of Europe	7	7.14	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
António Guterres	5	5.10	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
European court for human rights	4	4.08	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
UNESCO	4	4.08	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
World Bank	4	4.08	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	22	22.45	0	0.00	18	81.82	4	18.18
<b>total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>94.90</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.10</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

NATO	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
NATO	138	88.46	0	0.00	78	56.52	60	43.48
Jens Stoltenberg	10	6.41	0	0.00	8	80.00	2	20.00
others	8	5.13	1	12.50	5	62.50	2	25.00
<b>total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>58.33</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>41.03</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019



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

The Hague Tribunal	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Radovan Karadžić	48	32.88	1	2.08	47	97.92	0	0.00
Ratko Mladić	18	12.33	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Hague tribunal	13	8.90	0	0.00	9	69.23	4	30.77
Theodor Meron	6	4.11	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Serge Brammertz	5	3.42	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Veselin Šljivančanin	5	3.42	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Geoffrey Nice	4	2.74	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Neboša Pavković	4	2.74	2	50.00	2	50.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Lazarević	4	2.74	1	25.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
Momčilo Krajišnik	3	2.05	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	36	24.66	0	0.00	36	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>93.84</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.42</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Already from this cursory review of the frequencies of the appearance of certain actors on the front pages of selected printed daily newspapers in our sample, it is clear that media with unequal interest treat issues in the field of domestic and foreign policy. In the first quarter of 2019, foreign political actors accounted for 36.74% of all political actors (almost 10% less than the previous quarter when there were 46.43%), compared to 63.25% of the incidence of domestic political actors.

In the first quarter of 2019, economic actors accounted for 5.72% of the total sample, which, compared to the previous quarter, represents a decrease of about 0.20% or, in absolute numbers, 96 occurrences.

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

Economic actors - individually	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Zoran Babić	28	11.97	0	0.00	28	100.00	0	0.00
Miroslav Mišković	13	5.56	0	0.00	11	84.62	2	15.38
Dragan Šolak	12	5.13	0	0.00	7	58.33	5	41.67
Marko Mišković	7	2.99	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Bajatović	6	2.56	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milo Đurašković	6	2.56	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Mira Petrović	5	2.14	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	100.00
Zoran Drobnjak	5	2.14	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Srđan Milovanović	4	1.71	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Jelena Trivan	4	1.71	1	25.00	3	75.00	0	0.00
Aleksej Miler	4	1.71	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Čadež	3	1.28	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Andrej Jovanović	3	1.28	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Miodrag Kostić	3	1.28	1	33.33	2	66.67	0	0.00
others	131	55.98	1	0.76	122	93.13	8	6.11
<b>total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>90.17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8.55</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Economic actors	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Corridors of Serbia	21	5.00	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Gazprom	18	4.29	0	0.00	18	100.00	0	0.00
Electric Power Industry of Serbia	13	3.10	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Srbijagas	12	2.86	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
RTB Bor	11	2.62	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Tesla Airport	9	2.14	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Smederevo Ironworks	9	2.14	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Telecom Serbia	7	1.67	0	0.00	6	85.71	1	14.29
Coca Cola	7	1.67	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
VINCI airports	7	1.67	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Air Serbia	6	1.43	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Fiat	6	1.43	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Commercial bank	6	1.43	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
SBB	5	1.19	0	0.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Shandong company	5	1.19	1	20.00	4	80.00	0	0.00
Railways of Serbia	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Post of Serbia	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
NIS	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
EBRD	5	1.19	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
GSP	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Bambi	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Nitrogen plant Pančevo	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Delta holding	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Roads of Serbia	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Hesteel	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Huawei	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Lasta	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Gazprom neft	4	0.95	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Jugoimport SDPR	3	0.71	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Lidl	3	0.71	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Knjaz Miloš	3	0.71	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00

Volkswagen	3	0.71	2	66.67	1	33.33	0	0.00
Delhaize	3	0.71	0	0.00	1	33.33	2	66.67
PKB	3	0.71	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Petrochemistry	3	0.71	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	201	47.86	1	0.50	192	95.52	8	3.98
<b>total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>95.95</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3.10</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

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

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances 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	%
Fiscal council	13	21.31	0	0.00	13	100.00	0	0.00
SANU	8	13.11	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
REM	8	13.11	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Brankica Janković	7	11.48	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Anti-Corruption Agency	6	9.84	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Pavle Petrović	4	6.56	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
others	15	24.59	0	0.00	14	93.33	1	6.67
<b>total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>96.72</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.28</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Analysts (experts) have special role in the texts on the front pages of the media from the sample, and the media treat them in a neutral context in all of the texts. During the entire first quarter of 2018, the analyzed daily newspapers significantly promoted the views of these experts, so their opinion was represented 563 times.<sup>31</sup> The largest share and the number of analysts represented was recorded in *Informer* (156).

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

Media / Analyst	No.	%
<i>Informer</i>	156	27.71
<i>Danas</i>	101	17.94
<i>Kurir</i>	91	16.16
<i>Politika</i>	83	14.74
<i>Blic</i>	61	10.83
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	43	7.64
<i>Alo!</i>	28	4.97
<b>total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Analysts	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Dragomir Anđelković	45	7.99	0	0.00	45	100.00	0	0.00
Bojan Klačar	21	3.73	0	0.00	21	100.00	0	0.00
Nebojša Krstić	19	3.37	0	0.00	19	100.00	0	0.00
Dejan Vuk Stanković	15	2.66	0	0.00	15	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Radun	14	2.49	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Milivojević	14	2.49	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Spasić	12	2.13	0	0.00	12	100.00	0	0.00
Božidar Prelević	11	1.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Toma Fila	11	1.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Boban Stojanović	11	1.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00

<sup>31</sup> In this quarter, analyst coverage on headlines drops slightly (compared to fourth quarter of 2018 when 601 appearances were recorded) and returns to third quarter of 2018 levels (268 captions). Still, this is still a significant increase over the second quarter of 2018 when analyst attendance was recorded in 390 posts.

Ljubodrag Savić	11	1.95	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Vladislav Jovanović	10	1.78	0	0.00	10	100.00	0	0.00
Mladen Kovačević	9	1.60	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Kovačević	8	1.42	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Goati	8	1.42	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Aleksandar Popov	8	1.42	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Đukanović	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Pejić	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Jelena Vukoičić	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Matić	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Nicović	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Stojiljković	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Živadin Jovanović	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Vlade Radulović	7	1.24	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Janjić	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Orhan Dragaš	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ljubomir Madžar	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Ljuban Karan	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Jovo Bakić	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Dževad Galijašević	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Dragišić	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Milojko Arsić	6	1.07	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Mario Spasić	5	0.89	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ratko Božović	5	0.89	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan Dobrašinović	5	0.89	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Ninić	5	0.89	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Petar Vojinović	4	0.71	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Nikolić	4	0.71	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Grubišić	3	0.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dušan Proroković	3	0.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Milan Petrić	3	0.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Daniilo Šuković	3	0.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Saša Borojević	3	0.53	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	189	33.57	0	0.00	189	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Media/religion	No.	%
<i>Politika</i>	87	43.28
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	47	23.38
<i>Danas</i>	19	9.45
<i>Kurir</i>	17	8.46
<i>Alo!</i>	15	7.46
<i>Informer</i>	11	5.47
<i>Blic</i>	5	2.49
<b>total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Religion	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
Patriarch Irinej	46	22.89	1	2.17	45	97.83	0	0.00
SOC	37	18.41	0	0.00	36	97.30	1	2.70
Pope Francis	13	6.47	1	7.69	12	92.31	0	0.00
Alojzije Stepinac	10	4.98	0	0.00	4	40.00	6	60.00
Roman Catholic Church	7	3.48	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Amfilohije, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral	7	3.48	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople	6	2.99	0	0.00	5	83.33	1	16.67
Russian Orthodox Church	5	2.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Irinej, bishop of Bačka	5	2.49	0	0.00	5	100.00	0	0.00
Teodosije, bishop	4	1.99	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Montenegrin Orthodox Church	3	1.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Patriarch Pavle	3	1.49	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
other	55	27.36	1	1.82	53	96.36	1	1.82
<b>total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>94.03</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.48</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual and collective social domestic actors from **the media**<sup>32</sup>

Media	No.	%	Posi- tive	%	Neu- tral	%	Nega- tive	%
RTS	75	19.63	0	0.00	74	98.67	1	1.33
Milan Jovanović	42	10.99	0	0.00	42	100.00	0	0.00
Željko Mitrović	19	4.97	1	5.26	18	94.74	0	0.00
Dragan Bujošević	18	4.71	0	0.00	17	94.44	1	5.56
TV N1	14	3.66	0	0.00	14	100.00	0	0.00
TV Pink	13	3.40	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
UNS	11	2.88	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
NUNS	9	2.36	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Danas	8	2.09	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Kesić	7	1.83	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Politika	7	1.83	2	28.57	5	71.43	0	0.00
Olja Bečković	6	1.57	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Jugoslav Ćosić	6	1.57	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Radomirović	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Milomir Marić	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Ivan Ivanović	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Informer	4	1.05	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Slaviša Lekić	4	1.05	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Milorad Vučelić	4	1.05	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
TV Prva	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoljub Draža Petrović	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
NIN	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragan J. Vučićević	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dinko Gruhonjić	3	0.79	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	108	28.27	0	0.00	101	93.52	7	6.48
<b>total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>96.07</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.14</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

<sup>32</sup> Actors who were the subject of writing by other media, i.e. media outlets which work other media reported on, were presented.



During the collection of empirical material, a significant presence of actors in connection with the activities of the judicial and investigative bodies was noted on the cover pages. The actors from this group are shown as representatives of judicial authorities (153), lawyers (112) and other protagonists of current or completed court / investigative proceedings (114).

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

Judicial system	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Court of Appeals in Belgrade	19	12.42	0	0.00	18	94.74	1	5.26
Higher Court in Belgrade	13	8.50	0	0.00	12	92.31	1	7.69
Supreme Court of Cassation	8	5.23	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Higher Public Prosecutor in Belgrade	7	4.58	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Prosecution for Organized Crime	7	4.58	0	0.00	7	100.00	0	0.00
Prosecution for War Crimes	6	3.92	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Constitutional Court	4	2.61	0	0.00	3	75.00	1	25.00
Second Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade	3	1.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Snežana Stanojković	3	1.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragana Boljević	3	1.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Vladimir Vukčević	3	1.96	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Administrative Court	1	0.65	0	0.00	1	100.00	0	0.00
other	76	49.67	0	0.00	73	96.05	3	3.95
<b>total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>96.08</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3.92</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **lawyers**<sup>33</sup>

Lawyers	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Borivoje Borović	9	0.08036	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Goran Petronijević	8	7.14	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Zdenko Tomanović	6	5.36	0	0.00	6	100.00	0	0.00
Branislav Tapušević	4	3.57	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Branko Lukić	3	2.68	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Dragoslav Miša Ognjanović	3	2.68	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Zora Dobričanin Nikodinić	3	2.68	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	76	67.86	0	0.00	76	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

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

Actors of court proceedings and investigations	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Milorad Ulemek Legija	11	9.65	0	0.00	11	100.00	0	0.00
Luka Bojović	8	7.02	0	0.00	7	87.50	1	12.50
Željko Ražnatović Arkan	8	7.02	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Zvezdan Jovanović	4	3.51	0	0.00	4	100.00	0	0.00
Zoran Davidović Čanda	3	2.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Slobodan Šaranović	3	2.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
Darko Šarić	3	2.63	0	0.00	3	100.00	0	0.00
others	74	64.91	0	0.00	67	90.54	7	9.46
<b>total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>92.98</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.02</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

<sup>33</sup> Some attorneys played the role of analysts in the sample media texts and were therefore featured in this group of actors.

The following table shows all the actors that the media in the sample associated with the media-constructed affair of singer Jelena Karleuša and footballer Ognjen Vranješ. These actors made headlines in the first quarter of 2019, with 292 appearances.

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **medijski konstruisana afera Karleuša – Vranješ**

Media-constructed affair Karleuša – Vranješ	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Jelena Karleuša	114	39.04	1	0.88	18	15.79	95	83.33
Ognjen Vranješ	86	29.45	0	0.00	80	93.02	6	6.98
Duško Tošić	84	28.77	0	0.00	69	82.14	15	17.86
Danijela Vranješ	8	2.74	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>59.93</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>39.73</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

Distribution of frequency and value context of appearances of individual domestic social actors: **“One in five million” civil protests**

“One in five million” civil protests	No.	%	Positive	%	Neutral	%	Negative	%
Branislav Trifunović	39	36.79	0	0.00	39	100.00	0	0.00
Nikola Kojo	24	22.64	0	0.00	23	95.83	1	4.17
Jelena Anasonović	18	16.98	0	0.00	10	55.56	8	44.44
Zoran Ivošević	9	8.49	0	0.00	9	100.00	0	0.00
Marko Vidojković	8	7.55	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
Čedomir Čupić	8	7.55	0	0.00	8	100.00	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>91.51</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8.49</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

## UNNAMED SOURCES

In the selected front page articles from the sampled media, unnamed sources have also been the second most prominent actor. This time there were 394 instances of quoting anonymous sources, or rather 17.5% of texts, which represents an increase of about 3% in comparison to the results from the previous quarter (14.39%).

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

As Matt Carlson, in his book "On the Condition of Anonymity" has said: "Journalism is woven into the fabric of our environment, and in turn is based on it, meaning that it can never be an objective observer, as it is claimed...These sorts of questions are better answered through an approach that recognizes the culture of unnamed sources as a *culture*. This view steers an inquiry into unnamed sources away from frequency and implementation, toward issues of meanings that we share and patterns of collective interpretation between journalists, sources and the public. The securing of anonymity is not just a question of technique. It is, actually, a request for a certain type of imagining of relations between these three sides."<sup>34</sup>

A news form that contains the largest number of information obtained from an unnamed source is a report. Of the 1782 texts written in this form, 383 or 21.49% contains anonymous sources.

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

Genre	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
Report	1782	383	21.49
Article	89	10	11.24
Reportage	12	1	8.33
other	23	0	0.00
Interview	196	0	0.00
Commentary	102	0	0.00
News	47	0	0.00
<b>total</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>17.50</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

<sup>34</sup> M. Carlson, *On the condition of anonymity*, Urbana, Chicago, Springfield, University of Illinois Press, 2011, 7

The largest number, as well as the participation of texts containing information obtained from unnamed sources, in relation to the total number of published articles, is recorded in *Informer* (37% or 80 texts), while the least amount of such practice is noted in *Danas* (5.38% – 27).

Share of unnamed sources per analyzed media

Media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
<i>Informer</i>	216	80	37.04
<i>Kurir</i>	253	75	29.64
<i>Blic</i>	224	63	28.13
<i>Alo!</i>	238	62	26.05
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	333	37	11.11
<i>Politika</i>	485	50	10.31
<i>Danas</i>	502	27	5.38
<b>total</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>17.50</b>

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

The largest number of texts containing information from anonymous sources (118) was noted when the topic of the text was related to *political life in Serbia*, however, the largest share of unnamed sources in relation to the total number of texts published on a topic was again noticed when the texts wrote about media constructed affair Karleuša - Vranješ - about 62%.

Number of texts containing information obtained from "unnamed sources" according to topics in seven media from the sample<sup>35</sup>

Topic/All media	Total number of texts	Unnamed sources	%
Political life in Serbia	701	118	16.83
media affair Karleuša – Vranješ	109	68	62.39
Kosovo / Belgrade and Priština relations	205	34	16.59
Economy	100	20	20.00
Russia / attitude towards Russia	86	14	16.28
System of justice, activities of judiciary bodies	64	13	20.31
Entertainment / show-business	33	11	33.33
Murder of the singer Jelena Marjanović	15	8	53.33
International relations	70	8	11.43
Regional cooperation / relations in the region	102	8	7.84

Source: *Mediameter* research, January – March 2019

## Conclusion

The topics covered by print media on their front pages during the first quarter of 2019 return to the usual matrix, that is, texts that speak about the domain of domestic politics again dominate media content. Unlike the last two quarters of 2018, when the focus was on Kosovo topics, the most represented topic in the sample texts is *political life in Serbia*. The indicator regarding the balance of texts is still very low. The sources cited by the texts are often unknown and secretive, as are the ways in which personal and intimate information about various public figures is disclosed. Also, the ways in which journalists choose to cover certain topics are secretive, while not addressing other topics even when they are in the public interest. The media is becoming increasingly clear in their political and ethical choices. The degree of journalistic skill and adherence to professional ethical standards has seen a further decline and this is disturbing.

<sup>35</sup> Ten topics with the largest number of unnamed sources are shown.

4



# Discourse Analysis



## DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

### **Predictable radicalization of rhetoric in the whirlpool of political and social instability**

Discourse of printed media in the period from January until the end of March 2019 was characterized by fierce political struggle. Intensive and direct clashes between harshly conflicted and hermetic political and value judgements are filled with insults and defamations that go in line with the dramatization of political circumstances caused by protests in the streets, boycott of the Assembly of Serbia by opposition parties and continuous tensions over Kosovo – all further polarizing the political and the media scene.

Writing of the print media, especially weekly newspapers, is a testimony to the variety of approaches, attitudes, arguments, literary figures and conclusions that are constantly appearing in a fairly dynamic media Serbian media landscape. In the dramatic and thought-provoking political-media arena in Serbia, there are no forbidden topics, attitudes and interpretations of political actors, events or processes.

If perceived from the aspect of print media, regardless of the constant complaints about the media censorship, dictatorship and attacks on media freedom, the pluralism of journalistic approaches and viewpoints is clearly detectable. The influence of print media undoubtedly exceeds its circulation, mainly due to the possibility of message expansion through social networks, while those same topics and interpretive codes are then used for the development of stories in electronic media. Therefore, taking into consideration the content in the print media, the constant criticism about the absence of media freedom is highly debatable.

In particular, just by superficial observation it is clear that one can publish, write and say anything to anyone sending completely opposing messages. Representation of all political orientations – from the radical right to the left is present as well. There is no censorship or self-censorship detectable in the weeklies.

This observation is important for two reasons which are not mainly political. First reason is that Serbian media landscape allows for legitimization of any claims or interpretation models that refer to events, actors and socio-historical processes. Interpretation codes, on the other hand, have the power to constantly expand online, and they are often a significant incentive for many television pieces and interviews. The outcome of this freedom is a powerful media polarization that overlaps with division lines present in a democratic society. The division into critical and pro-government media is convergent with the division between the political actors – those that constitute the government and those in the opposition. Viewed from the writing perspective, Serbian society is no different from traditional democratic

societies. It is free and plural on its basic level. On the other hand, rhetorical-polemical discourse is more present than the rational-argumentative one. In the light of these circumstances, it is clear that the possibility of reaching the agreement among the media and wider society is absolutely out of the question and difficult to achieve. Conversely, conflict is a reality which is becoming inevitable.

In terms of media content, the main elements of the completed campaign were directed towards the challenging of opponents and easily given promises for the "better tomorrow". The matrix of "challenging the opponent", more precisely his way of thinking and doing, is radical and wide-ranging. The model of radical criticism has been meticulously developed in order to encourage the readers to revolt against certain political actors. This assessment applies both to pro-government and opposition media. While opposition media encourage readers to participate in protests, the pro-government media apply the strategy of defamation, judging the opposition on moral and political level and discouraging citizens from actively supporting the non-institutional fight orchestrated by certain public and political figures.

In weeklies, as usual, there is a high level of criticism towards the current government, especially to its most prominent actor, President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić. The attitude towards the government, as portrayed by the weeklies and the largest number of editorial columns in daily newspapers, is intoned with a critical pattern that varies depending on the political orientation of the editorial staff. In line with the negative obsession with Vučić, a number of criticisms are being directed towards government policy at every level: international politics, economic policy ranging all the way to cultural policy.

Two characteristics of weekly press should be emphasized in the context of the already mentioned negative obsession towards the Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić. Interview is visibly dominant as a journalistic genre. The interviewees are selected according to the political-value criteria which correspond to the orientation of the members of the editorial board. There is a noticeable and distinct tendency of repetition of interviewees with the aim of intensifying the effect of the message, both in value and political sense. It should be emphasized that it is often the case that the interviewees are selected so that they portray a figure of authority be it individual or professional. This is mostly about a desire to position certain public figures (singers and actors, for example) as role models with their civic stance which is almost in all cases negatively intoned against the government. It is a skilful transfer of social recognition to the domain of politics, a precise example of the fact that propaganda goes together with advocacy journalism. This kind of public sphere modelling turns the public landscape into an endless space of constant disputes and never-ending conflict with high intensity. Content-wise, majority of messages from the interview (which is, as by rule, conceptually linked to the front page) are repeated according to the already prepared political-value matrix established by the editorial board of the weekly or daily newspapers.

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

or the changes in the political, economic, social and historical circumstances.

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

The 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 written or visual selection of reports. Thus, we live in the atmosphere where 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.

Secondly, and this is very specific for weeklies, the front page holds an important place, for its message is constructed both visually and verbally in the form of 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.

In line with the polarized public, goes the matching polarization of the protest’s portrayal. There is an emphasis on the “pro” and “against” this form of political fight. Clear indicator of media polarization is the creation of a “hero” and “antihero” in the public sphere. The “Hero” of the critical public for the period January – March is the television host Ivan Ivanović, while the status of “antihero” was assigned to the controversial Serbian businessman from Kosovo, Milan Radoičić. The effortlessness of the moral and professional rise of Ivan Ivanović in Serbian journalism coincides with the fierce campaign against Milan Radoičić. Through this prism, these two actors reflect the dynamics and dramatics of our media and

political life; all contradictions, mystifications, pauses, silent “truths,” and lightly spoken lies. A strong political charge, thirst and lack of rationality are the evidence to the lack of a stable and structured semantic order in the public discourse.

It should be emphasized that there is a noticeable semantic and rhetorical overlap between the attitudes of journalists and political actors. This overlap is evident both with pro-government print media and opposition media. Almost identical assumptions, arguments, stylistic figures and conclusions of political actors and journalists testify about the deep division of the media scene in the field of print media.

There 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.

Compared to the previous monitoring cycles, there is noticeable increase in the level of criticism and intensified rhetoric by *Nedeljnik* and *Novi Magazin*. Moreover, both are sharply profiling themselves, primarily as pro-Western-oriented critics of the current government, consciously rejecting its democratic legitimacy and its decisive pro-European orientation.

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.

Image of Vučić: a dictator, an autocrat, psychologically unsuitable for a political leader, does not have respect for democratic values, institutions and practices, guilty for creating a corrupt clientelist system, incompetent in diplomacy, with debatable results in economy.

Unlike in previous monitoring cycles when the presentation of the general state of affairs in the society was a starting point for critical narrative development, the focus of criticism was directed to the ongoing social events, primarily civil protests and organizational links between opposition parties and its leaders.

Political criticism is made up of a number of different interrelated motives that form a comprehensive, extremely negative image of the government, above all about its key player, Aleksandar Vučić. Critical discourse towards Vučić and author the government consists of psychological, pseudo political, legal, economic and cultural motives that are elaborated in texts and interviews in detail.

Topic-wise, and consequently, content-wise, critical discourse is “fed and sustained” by elements of legal and political theory and its various forms that arise from simplified media and policy theories, followed by observations related to the stream of political events and processes that take place in the country.

Of course, the impact of individual expression, either by the author of the text or the main protagonist of the interview is not negligible. Political idiosyncrasy covered in the elements of ideological dread, personal animosity towards a political opponent and moralism, is gaining legitimacy in the public space as an element of (pseudo)enlightened debate about the government.

Morally and psychologically highly negative adjectives are being used in public discourse. All of them with the aim of creating repulsiveness with the reader towards the current government. The terms “coward”, “street bully”, “dictator”, “obsessed with media” carry a negative emotional dimension and their description is in direct relation to the interest and ideological attitudes of the author. In the context of weekly press, the aforementioned set of terms relates to Aleksandar Vučić. At the same time, it is legitimate to call the president of Serbia “disgusting”, that he can be “the object of disgust”, “that he is unbearable” and similar.

The authors of this kind of “critical discourse” are opposition leaders and intellectuals who dominate the opposition public scene. The combination of psychological and moral labels shows that political criticism is taken from the level of rational assessment of the effects of political rule and is substantially grounded in the already mentioned idiosyncrasy of the participants in the critical discourse. From the standpoint of criticism, certain political imperatives and personal political aims are consequently reached.

The perfect example of this combination of the three mentioned phenomena is contained in the former Serbian President’s and SDS leader Boris Tadić interview given to the weekly NIN: “Vučić is an ordinary coward, just like any street thug is in fact a coward. He is afraid to lose one percent of support, because, like any dictator, he knows that his breakdown starts with that one percent less, and then those percentages are only inevitably multiplied ... This rule is much more evil than Milošević’s. This is organized subordination, detention, lying, looting and aggression which is yet to flourish when the seeds pathology, which Vučić traded for human souls, are firmly established in the Serbian nation ... We need debararization in every sense of the word, we need to return normality and civilization.”<sup>1</sup>

Portrayal of the rule as evil and highlighting the “debararization” that Tadić speaks of, shows not only how the opposition sees the current political situation in the country, but also how their own political goals are set. Political struggle is more than a fight for ideas and programs, competition of candidates and expansion of different knowledge, skills and levels of moral credibility, political fight symbolizes the epic battle of “good” and “evil”. Its aim is debarbarization; the politician has a broader mission, higher than the realm in which everyday politics is taking place.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Boris Tadić, “Vučić je kukavica, ne sme na duel sa mnom [Vučić is a coward, he’s afraid to face me in a duel],” interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3549, p. 12-13

2 Ibid, p. 12

Such a goal of political fight is possible only if the current state of affairs is regarded as radically negative. A step further in the negative perception of the present government politics and its first man, was taken by Boško Obradović, the leader of the opposition political movement Dveri and the representative of the opposition coalition, the Alliance for Serbia. In an extensive interview for the anti-government weekly *Vreme*, in addition to criticizing the current regime, he expresses the tendency to characterize it as abnormal. Obradović does this by equalizing the authority of Aleksandar Vučić with “abnormality”. The colloquial use of the term “abnormality” is not a slip of the tongue, but a conscious tendency to produce a profoundly negative image of the current government with Serbian citizens. Obradović’s amateur, accusatory and politically inappropriate stance is clearly visible in the following quote from his interview: “It’s a joke. The situation in Serbia is catastrophic. The regime has entered a totalitarian phase, the institutions are inexistent. The situation in Serbia is abnormal and our government is abnormal ... Vučić is simply disgusting to us, he is unbearable to us, he is the person who polluted the public space of Serbia with his constant acting, whining, threats and misleading lies. He has bored people so much with his constant appearances in the media, that people can no longer take humiliation they are exposed to. Hence, it is not hatred but disgust.”<sup>3</sup>

After a blend of political idiosyncrasy combined with psychological repulsion and moralism, together with the design of sublime goals of political action, all with a purpose to create a negative image of Aleksandar Vučić, came a question on the nature of the political order in Serbia – the constant obsession of journalists and interviewees of weekly newspapers. The reply of all participants in the “debate”, which is more precisely a process of negative political-value message spreading, is unique. The government of Aleksandar Vučić is pronounced simply and clearly as anti-democratic. Vučić himself violates and destroys all values, institutions, and practices of a democratic society. This judgement applies both to the freedoms and equalities that represent fundamental values of a liberal and democratic society. Similarly, according to him, the same applies to the democratic values of restricted rule and the principle of “balance and control”, as well as practices of self-limiting period of ruling and the rule characterized by political pluralism and tolerance.

According to Milan Podunavac, retired professor of Faculty of Political Sciences and former leader of the Democratic Party of Vojvodina, Vučić’s rule is an autocratic self-supporting creation that represents a form of restoration of an authoritarian communist order: “Serbia is the only post-communist country in which political restoration took place. The worst situation in which a political community can find itself. On the back of the impoverished, politically ruined and degraded nation, a self-sustaining autocratic rule emerged. Evilocracy. The rule of the devious and the crooked ... The regime systematically destroys political society (parties); colonizes the public arena; the pamphlets of the secret services unite the media space; politicized civil society is depoliticized by corrupting its leading figures. Authoritarian proceduralism, to which the authorities constantly rely upon, gives rise to authoritarian quasi-legitimacy. ‘People’s government’ to which the authorities hail is in fact a ‘democracy without the people’.”<sup>4</sup>

3 Boško Obradović, “Da ovi odu, deca da nam se vrate [Them to go and our children to come back],” interview with Boško Obradović, *Vreme*, No. 1468, p. 14

4 Milan Podunavac, “Rđavije vlasti Srbija nije imala [Serbia never had a worse government],” *NIN*, No. 3554, p. 16

Similar message was sent to the public sphere by the Director of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Sonja Biserko, who highlighted the high level of degeneration in democratic political culture, institutions and practices during the rule of the SNS and Aleksandar Vučić: "Since the SNS came to power In 2012, there has been a strange process in place, which, along with the popularity of Aleksandar Vučić, has led to the crushing of the opposition. In addition, a sharp division of media took place as well as the rudeness of the public space. The latter, no group has managed to avoid – the government, the opposition, the media or the public figures ... President Vučić attacked independent media, disabled them, not only in terms of free distribution, but also their advertising, taking away their funds for survival. He has destroyed all independent bodies that have previously reached a satisfactory level of respectability and visibility in society. Corruption has, of course, continued at an even stronger pace, the Savamala case is very illustrative."<sup>5</sup>

The former judge of the Serbian Supreme Court and the professor of Law at "Union" University, a distinguished member of the post-October elite in power, Zoran Ivošević, made a less abstract, and politically and legally more precise view of Vučić's authority, deprived of democratic legitimacy: "To the modest scope of power invested in him by the function of a President, Vučić also took over the Prime Minister function, expanding it to other branches of executive power as well. He acts sovereignly, and according to the Constitution, no state body or individual can assign sovereignty to himself on behalf of citizens who are its bearers. Vučić, according to the power he invested in himself, exercises all three branches of power: he announces the passing and abolishment of laws – even though this is the job of their proposers; determines and implements internal and external state policy – even though this is the job of the Government; decides who is and who is not the perpetrator of the punishable act, since he is the one first taking them to the polygraph – although this is the work of the judiciary."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, his opinion on the nature of the government's functioning does not mean that he does not have other opinions. The deficiencies in the way in which the government is organized and positions in it filled, are further elaborated by Ivošević in the weekly NIN: "The flaws of "Vučićland" do not end here. The country is burdened with: election machinations, corruption, lack of freedom, media situation, political violence, plagiarized PhDs and diplomas, brain drain, illegal construction and illegal demolitions, party employment, suppression of critical thought."<sup>7</sup>

Miodrag Zec, a retired professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, sent a similar, almost rhetorical, semantically identical message. He claims that the power lies where its most powerful factor is, which means not where it is prescribed and regulated by the Constitution and the law: "Wherever Vučić goes, the government goes after him. If that's the case, if the leader suits us, then adopt the presidential system with five ministers. Whoever climbs to power destroys the stairs, and when he comes up, he can no longer come down. That's why every election here is a struggle for life and death."<sup>8</sup>

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5 Sonja Biserko, "2019. će biti teška za Srbiju [Year 2019 will be difficult for Serbia]," interview with Mijat Lakićević, *Novi magazin*, No. 402, p. 19

6 Zoran Ivošević, "Ovučičena država [Vučićland]," *NIN*, No. 3555, p. 17

7 Ibid, p. 18

8 Miodrag Zec, "Građani protestuju, podanici kliču [Citizens are protesting, servants are hailing]," interview with Vera Didanović, *NIN*, No. 3556, p. 12



14. ФЕБРУАР 2019. / БРОЈ 3555 / 299 RSD



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**НОВА ПОЛИТИЧКО-  
ПОСЛОВНА ЕЛИТА  
ЈУРИШ НА ДЕДИЊЕ**

**СПОРТ И ПОЛИТИКА  
КАД ХЕРОЈИ  
ПОСТАЈУ ИЗДАЈНИЦИ**



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NIN, 14th February 2019



The claims against Aleksandar Vučić did not only have a strong liberal-democratic ideological charge, reconstructed from the discourses of already quoted public figures; what is problematic is the very idea of Aleksandar Vučić as a president in a constitutional democracy and a pluralistic, modern society. Boris Begović, a professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Law, a former government official, and an active supporter of current civil protests, gave this assessment of the current government, combining the political and cultural interpretation of the “presidency” of the current president of Serbia. Begović claims that President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić does not have the qualities of the politician at the highest state function and that he is maintaining a ‘peasant’ spirit of chaos and courtierism: “Political culture in Serbia today implies an unconditional obedience and support for President Vučić. Public courtierism of state officials to the ‘Big Daddy’ was introduced as a work obligation. People who have not yet managed to get positions or advancements in careers are celebrating his character and work on television shows ... The president of the state must be the president of all citizens. Regardless of whether these citizens are white, black, yellow, orange, gray-olive, whether they are nationalist-chauvinists or are ultramondialists. He should respect all the differences, and above all, different political opinions. With our President I don’t see an ounce of tolerance nor good will to do something about it. The only thing I see in him is the desire for increased polarization.”<sup>9</sup>

All that the authors and interviewees of different weekly newspapers said, in a rather complex and fairly lengthy way, a bit confusing and rhetorically rigid, such as Milan Podunavac, was repeated by the former member of the SNS and Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Rados Ljušić, who explains his support for the protests in a following way: “Both the state and the party are ruled by autocracy, corruption continues to flourish, so do murders among criminals, the whole society is disorganized.”<sup>10</sup>

The autocratic and self-serving regime is not a mere historical-political contingency; it is the product of the years-long unwillingness of Serbian society to consistently accept the complex structure and dynamics of multiparty democracy. Vučić’s rule is a logical product of historical constellation in which national-state issues precede democratic values, institutions and practices in a democracy. Under the burden of an eternally open “national and state question”, especially in the context of Kosovo, the authentic competition of political attitudes, tolerance for diversity, openness to accept the modernization of society, the creation of solid foundations for continuous social progress, the development of freedom and individual well-being, disappear. Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy Dubravka Stojanović contextualized Serbian political and historical problems: “The most accurate answer is that there is not enough political and ideological plurality in our society. Since the beginning of the multiparty system, in the early nineties, parties mostly competed on the same, nationalist, program... Here we are talking about a kind of government that doesn’t actually care what is the “issue above all issues” as Koštunica talked about Kosovo. It is a system in which the government constantly fools its people, claiming without solving this one issue, nothing else can be done, nothing can begin. So, you end up in a vicious circle, passive, hypnotized, paralyzed ... In such a system of governance, democracy, freedom, the construction of hospitals, the improvement of the education system, investments cannot be achieved – the

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9 Boris Begović, “Ovo je pobuna protiv velikog tate [This is a rebellion against Big Daddy],” interview with Olja Bećković, *NIN*, No. 3553, p. 12

10 Radoš Ljušić, “Autokratija vlada u SNS i državi, korupcija cveta, ubistva ne prestaju [Both the state and the party are ruled by autocracy, corruption continues to flourish, so do murders among criminals],” interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 368, p. 28

**EKSKLUZIVNO NENSI SPILBERG**  
**Nema garancija da neće**  
**biti novog Holokausta**

**VLADIMIR TABAŠEVIĆ**  
**SAMO JE LUDAKU**  
**SVE JASNO**

**ANARHIZAM I NARODNO BIĆE**  
**SERGEJ I BOŠKO**  
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**PROTESTE**

**„**  
POSTAJEMO  
PODRUČJE SUKOBA  
VELIKIH, NEKA  
EVROPSKA SIRIJA

**DUBRAVKA**  
**STOJANOVIĆ**  
**Nije najveći**  
**poraz Vučić, nego**  
**stanje u kome je**  
**Vučić moguć**

**„**  
ZBOG TOG  
POTPISA SMENJEN  
SAM NA PRVOJ  
SEDNICI VLADE

**RADOŠ**  
**LIJUSIĆ**  
**Autokratija vlada**  
**u SNS i u državi,**  
**korupcija cveta,**  
**ubistva ne prestaju**



Nedeljnik, 31st January 2019

government shuts everyone's mouth! This is a typical system called 'when the pigs fly!' As if, when this one issue is resolved, when the pigs fly, everything will be settled. Nor will the pigs fly, nor will anything be settled."<sup>11</sup>

The "hypnosis" with state and national issues, separated Serbia from democracy almost permanently and irrevocably, thinks Dubravka Stojanović. Therefore, as suggested by this history professor, authoritarian and non-democratic system is in power: "This is the authoritarian system without liberties, but, at the same time, it is a system in which the institutions are cancelled, judiciary is not working, the corruption is devouring everything, the system in which the strong rule. Anything is possible in such a system, everybody is looking out for themselves, find a gap in the law, skip the procedure. This is why, when we take a better look at it, this is a system that is, at the same time, very rogue, in which some have rights, and some do not."<sup>12</sup>

Autocratic-Self-preserving system, suffocating liberties, brutally demolishes any form of pluralism, creating the spirit of lack of liberty through aggressive campaign and promoting violence cannot be created, let alone maintained without full and constant control of the media. The narrative on non-democratic rule has the media image as one of its pillars, and one of the main, if not the main, topics. Reporters and politicians from the opposition both agree on the premise of the President Vučić as the almighty controller of the media scene.

Already quoted Boris Tadić, very angrily and with certain exaggeration of verbal aggression categorically concludes: "The problem is that he is more of a news editor than the President of Serbia. Instead of dealing with politics and creating development strategies, he envisages criminal and propaganda strategies on how to rule all media through state transactions using the money of citizens. The use of Telekom in acquiring TV Prva and O2 is an example of his understanding of presidency."<sup>13</sup>

Similar to Tadić, another politician is very resolute on this issue, the leader of the opposition movement Dveri, Boško Obradović. He links the topic of opposition's participation in elections directly to the media, stipulating the readiness of the opposition and part of the population to fight for a better treatment in the media out of the institutions: "There will be no elections until the media is freed, that is, there will be no elections until we reach democratic conditions for them... Until the opposition gets five minutes every day in 'Dnevnik 2', until at least one reported from RTS dares to interrupt the rude representative of SNS who does not allow anyone from the opposition to speak normally in rare occasions when they actually find themselves on the public media service, and until such time when the Kosovo and Metohija topic can actually get on the agenda of the Parliament after three years – what elections are we talking about? The media and the elections are not the Main Board of SNS where you have to applaud the great leader for 15 minutes."<sup>14</sup>

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11 Dubravka Stojanović, "Vučić je simptom, a bolest je mnogo dublja [Vučić is the symptom, the illness is much more severe]," interview with Branka Rosić, *Nedeljnik*, No. 368, p. 24

12 Ibid, page 25

13 Boris Tadić, "Vučić je kukavica, ne sme na duel sa mnom [Vučić is a coward, he's afraid to face me in a duel]," interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, no. 3549, p. 14

14 Boško Obradović, "Ako Goran Marković i ja danas ne budemo šetali zajedno, sutra ćemo posetiti odvojeno [If Goran Marković and I do not walk together, we will be hanged separately]," *Nedeljnik*, No. 365, p. 16





Vreme, 7th February 2019

The system of comprehensive control which is the focus of the opposition and critical discourse, dissolves the political and wider social reality into propaganda and aggressive representative-tabloid journalism. The whole internal political situation is presented, in sum and with significant moral judgement, by the Editor in Chief of the weekly *Vreme*, Filip Švarm, writing the following on the mechanism of Vučić's control: "Absence of ideology, endless campaign dedicated to pumping personal rating, authoritarian style of rule, systematic intimidation and defamation of the entire categories of population – are just some of the characteristics of the current regime, which, surely, does not represent a stable political foundation for anything permanent."<sup>15</sup>

Nebojša Romčević, the Professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, speaks of the "slip" or reality into the "world of propaganda", stating: "Reality does not exist, nothing happens in it, it is all PR. I am not saying the topics are the same, or that fascism is promoted, but the father of political marketing is Goebbels, and his model is literally applied, keep the population in constant hysteria, on the tips of their toes, made up affairs, wars and revolutions, until the population goes numb. We are talking about the survival of Serbia that is deep in colonization."<sup>16</sup>

Similar to Romčević, his colleague professor from the FDA and Director Goran Marković speaks of the complex constellation in relations between the media, politics and civil activism. Marković openly claims that the media situation is worse than in the period of rule of Slobodan Milošević, and that the majority of the population is deep in political apathy: "Technology of numbing the population was not used in the nineties, technology producing its best results today. Back then, they were mostly omitting the truth and using blunt propaganda, but today, absolute lies are used. The current government requires full control of the media specifically for the production of huge amounts of disinformation creating mess in the heads of many. It is easy to manipulate then. When we add general apathy to it and the disbelief in possible upset, then it is clear why in 1996 the citizens of Belgrade confronted the brought in participants of counter-meetings of Slobodan Milošević, and just a couple of days ago, when Vučić did the same thing, they did not bother to look out the window."<sup>17</sup>

Media control, manipulation and strict labeling of the opposition that are in the essence of control lead to social apathy and political disengagement of the first order. It is interesting that this conclusion basically links to the series of conclusions that glorify the civil protests and demand for change. Obviously, the spirit of rebellion in a logical and factual "conflict" with the practice of media and political repression. Marković's contradiction is just a symptom of presence and evidence that the rational plausibility of discourse is not its primary feature, or intellectual basis. Reminiscence of the nineties is the reminder of the "better part of history of the political struggle". This history should be revived through the equalization of two periods: nineties and present. Nostalgia for "times passed" is an advantage in the political struggle, a sort of a thinking and acting driver for a self-conscious citizen.

Critical discourse vigorously wants to de-legitimize the government and create a feeling of disapproval

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15 Filip Švarm "Prvak drame pozorista lutka [Leading Actor in a Puppet Show]," *Vreme*, no. 1466, p. 6

16 Nebojša Romčević, "Svaki Cezar ima svoga Bruta [Each Caesar has his own Brutus]," interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, no. 3554, p. 25

17 Goran Marković, "Ako ne uspeemo, nestaćemo [If we don't succeed, we will disappear]," interview with Radmila Stanković, *NIN*, No. 3552, p. 22

with the reader. Its goal is not to rationally explain, that is, prove certain political thesis, but to promote desired activism by constantly assuring the public. For the purpose of this constant call for political engagement a narrative on lack of liberties and repression, autocracy and pseudo-democracy, contract between subjection and liberty, poverty and robberies, etc. is constructed.

Autocratic-Self-preserving regime established and constantly maintained by the system of permanent control, emits surplus of verbal aggression and continuously leaves space, whether for the application or threat of the application of such aggression. Such diagnosis of the condition in Serbian politics and society is given by a number of reporters and colloquists of weeklies. Thus, Branislav Trifunović, an actor and one of the leaders of the civil protest openly states: "Vučić has been ruling on fear for seven years now. Each person joining the protest is one scared person less. Less fear, the shorter his rule will be. His only fear is the absence of fear in people on the street."<sup>18</sup>

The government resting on fear in society, "confronts" its political opponents in TV studios, verbally. Harsh rhetoric of the government and part of the public that supports it is an expression of its repressive nature, continuous and carefully planned campaign of the government is equal to political violence, while, consequently, each opponent is assigned with the role of a "moral and political victim." This diagnosis of current political circumstances that allegedly speak of the transformation of the society into an order of lack of liberties and repression is given by the Editor in Chief of *Vreme*, Dragoljub Žarković: "The image of the opposition leaders as thieves, tycoons, madmen and traitors, that deserve nothing else but to be crushed is served, with increased frequency and aggression to the readers of daily newspaper and TV viewers. The voice of the attacked seems like a cry of a man lost in desert. In addition to President Vučić, the officials of the ruling party and different so-called analysts and reporters, having a jacket in each TV studio for refreshment training, are racing in labeling, criticizing opposition without a single argument and pointing out their bad intentions and "hell plans", while at the same time, the opposition to the regime is denied access to almost all large media. The President of the country and his spokespersons used every occasion to accuse the representatives of the opposition for all things not good in Serbia, that they destroyed and stole everything they could, while on the pages of daily newspapers, anonymous sources or secret documents of foreign intelligence services revealed conspiracies against the country and announced chaos and bloodshed by the opposition, where, naturally, Vučić is presented as the savior of the nation from such "forces of chaos and madness."<sup>19</sup>

It is not just the opposition that is obsessed with media and Vučić. The obsession with media in the Vučić period is the only topic of reporters that are the victims of the "Vučić repression". Ivan Ivanović, TV host that, acting on his own free will, due to the change of ownership structure, changed his media house of employment, claims that Vučić controls and prohibits all content not favoring him or, being at least neutral to his rule. Evidence to this claim Ivanović finds in the same terminology used in this political-satire show and the interview of the current President of Serbia to the opposition media network "Insider" and its main reporter Brankica Stanković: "The dark came over the national frequencies. The

18 Branislav Trifunović, "Poslednja šansa da pobedimo ludilo [Last Chance to Beat the Madness]," interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3551, p. 23

19 Dragoljub Žarković, "Davitelj iz Davosa – Idiots, ološi, bitange, neradnici, lopovi, tajkuni, fašisti, najgori izdajnici i Other kurvanje [Strangler from Davos – Idiots, scum, bastards, freeloaders, thieves, tycoons, fascists, worst traitors and other whoring]," *Vreme*, no. 1465, p. 4

end, that is the news. Tell everyone, not to have any false hopes. Anything you see is just an illusion of freedom. This is a serious machinery, editorial, director, controlling almost every word spoken. And when something is spoken that seems like it is free, it is actually planned. To create an illusion of freedom. I was an editor on this TV, and when I resigned, nobody called me to ask why. When Vučić decided that his interview with Brankica is to be broadcasted on Friday at nine, and nobody told me, or asked me what I think about that, I found out on Twitter, I walked into my director's office and told her Vučić can edit all other days as well."<sup>20</sup>

Olja Bečković, editor and host of the political talk-show "Utišak nedelje" [Impression of the Week], that is back on air after four years, will show that it is necessary to "reveal" in detail, using own "intuition" the political repression in the media and its deeply aggressive and anti-enlightened consequences. Unlike Ivanović, who left his media house on his own, and moved his show to YouTube, during the preparation of this interview, the talk-show hosted by Bečković, gets a new, renewed edition, and her perspective is semantically and rhetorically identical. In an interview with NIN, she clearly states that, after the initial phase in which he wanted to sound and act pro-European, Vučić, under the impact of his foreign advisors, returned to his anti-enlightened self, continuously inducing verbal and any other aggression, manipulating the people and stigmatizing his political opponents: "From a reporter's point of view, it is not normal not to want to speak to the President... We forgot the time when Vučić was quoting Webber. Why doesn't he mention him anymore? When was it assessed that we are a mob that doesn't understand anything except for curses and spite? What happened to the joined fingers? The advisor told him: quote Webber, wear glasses, whether you need them or not, put your fingers together, put your hands on your knees... And then the same advisor changed the strategy: noooo, nooooo, this mob of yours is not for Webber, reverse – accuse, insult, scream. Since 2012, we watched this government putting on a European suit, speak the language of the democrats, but, along the way, they cut the media down, and returned to the rhetoric of the radicals? You suggest that this is a strategy, a project? When you have a specific goal, to stay in power, then the means justify such goal. How did it come to a point that HE said: what civilized conversation, I am going to scream, humiliate and insult? I think there are serious experts behind this, not domestic ones, and it is especially worrying here that someone came, from outside, and told him 'you have a mob here'. And he replied, 'you're right, let's go back to the language the mob understands.'"<sup>21</sup>

Fully in line with Žarković's, Ivanović's and Bečković's political and moral optics, the photographer Dragoljub Zamurović, tries to "prove" that we are living in "democratic political heist and non-liberty". Endemic lack of liberty in media, division of the society, harsh rhetoric of the government (not the opposition – comment of the author) is evident of the "strong fascism in the society."

Fascism is seen in the "theft of elections", "media blockade", division to supporters and opponents of the government made on the moral and political key: "Today you vote to see your votes being stolen. Media is hushed and blocked; you can't even tell the people what's wrong. If you manage somehow, you are the enemy of the state. The government divides the citizens to 'us' and 'them', but I have always tried

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20 Ivan Ivanović, "U ovoj zemlji nije ništa kako treba [Nothing is right in this country]," interview with Radoslav Čebić, *Vreme*, No. 1463, p. 7

21 Olja Bečković, "Utišaka puna glava [Head full of impressions]," interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3561

to avoid such divisions, we are all 'us'. Spoken like the people in power right now, they are good, we are scum and mercenaries. It seems that, right in front of our eyes, for the last couple of years, our society is becoming fascist. But, what can I do except for taking pictures and writing Facebook posts?"<sup>22</sup>

Extreme lack of tolerance of the representatives of the government, primarily President Vučić, towards political opponents, will be emphasized by the Editor in Chief of the *Nedeljnik* weekly, Veljko Lalić who, unlike Žarković and Zamurović, claims there is no freedom of speech and thought, and that, using every opportunity we can, we should keep remind on the UN Declaration guaranteeing the freedom of thinking and speech.

At the same time, he accuses the President of Serbia of treating every critical remark of the government as "fake news", directly suggesting that without the freedom of speech, the society, as the Serbian case shows, ends up ruled by the "corrupt oligarchy". "Vučić claims fake news is everything he does not like. He comments everything. He allows the meeting. He removes the police. He will not talk to the opposition. 'Everybody is entitled to think and speak freely' is stated in the UN declaration on human rights, Article 19, which we will have to reference soon, just like Serbia references Kosovo. While the world prepares for artificial intelligence and unprecedented revolution, we are back to basics. I suggest Vučić to read a new book by Yu. Noah Harari '21 Lessons for the 21st Century', since he liked the previous one 'Homo Deus' so much. In its, Harari says that, there is not worst think for democracy, and the future of our civilization, then the control of media and creating corrupt oligarchy that constantly makes up new crisis, to retain power. Sound familiar?"<sup>23</sup>

Direct accusation for corruption of the President of Serbia and his government was stated by Dragoljub Žarković, Editor in Chief in *Vreme* weekly. The argument for the claims of this reporter is the notion of the link of discretionary power and corruption, and the conclusion that the main difference between Vučić's former nationalist Serbian Radical Party and current Serbian Progressive Party is the readiness of the progressives to fight for power at any cost, just to enjoy the "benefits" of corruption: "The corruption is primarily where there is significant discretionary power... and our government is discretionary to its final limits, it is in the hands of one man, but it seems that he is in the hands of many men that grew, alongside him, to the new business and social elite. When Vučić claims that, personally, he is modest and that he did not become richer, that cannot be said for his environment and for the time being, they have an interest in keeping him alive until they calculate the cost, and, if its too large for them, they will let him play chess for the rest of his life. Hopefully, in Kalemegdan... This was the key transformation from radicals to progressives: no need to die for Great Serbia anymore, you need to take as much as possible in a new, never ending transitional distribution of property and wealth."<sup>24</sup>

Autocracy with elements of full media control and corruption is not possible without a clearly organized political party. Regardless of however the leading individual is successful and capable, the success in politics is a result of joint effort of a group of people dedicated to certain social goals and values.

22 Sergej Trifunović, "Građani nisu svesni svoje snage [Citizens don't know their own power]," *Vreme*, No. 1467, p. 12

23 Veljko Lalić, "Verbalni građanski rat [Verbal Civil War]," *Nedeljnik*, No. 375, p. 4

24 Dragoljub Žarković, "Vreća vlast i džakovi para: kao neka hobotnica ova vlast ne isisava samo novac već i srž poznanja prava [Bag of power and money: like a octopus, this government isn't taking only money, but the core of law as well]," *Vreme*, No. 1472, p. 4



Awareness on the necessity of existence of the party as the precondition for success is, at the same time, the “homework for reporters” for the attack on the organizational and staffing structure of the party. The Serbian Progressive Party, as in the preceding period, is understood using an extremely negative key. A “leader” type of organization with incompetent and immoral members, without any reasonable ideology, based on blunt and raw interest. This last aspect of SNS is testified by the aforementioned FDA professor Nebojša Romčević in an interview given to NIN: “People joined SNS without any ideology, faith, belief, only for selfish reasons. This party is actually a corporation. Party acting like a company that must reach profit at any cost where everybody is ready to switch sides for a better offer. Actually, this is a branch office of foreign interest, and the fear from dismissal is larger and scarier than the fear of losing righteousness, honor, humanity. People in power are reduced to tumors on a body of a party monster. They will have to pay for the choices they made, some day.”<sup>25</sup>

A more radical critique of the current ruling party was given by the former President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, a quiet opposition leader today, stating: “SNS is a party that united all thieves from all parties, so these homunculus from DS found their refuge in SNS, where their character is shown, to the full extent. Some of them were promoted to the most eager associates of Vučić in the process of barbarization of Serbia. In this context, Vučić is the barbarian leading homunculus. Vučić is a man that knows the political value of money very well. Today, a new financial and political oligarchy was formed, that rules Serbia, and this will be the largest problem for anyone taking power.”<sup>26</sup>

Still, SNS is not only the “leader” party of members and officials of the state and party connected by interest, the central party of the ruling coalition is like an occupying force from the Second World War. Identification of the ruling party with the occupying forces was offered by the actor Branislav Trifunović, informal leader of civil protests: “I think that this government occupied our country. For this reason, I see the people entering this devil’s circle as the collaborationists. It would be very difficult for me to exchange anything emotional with someone I know supported or turned the blind eye to evil. The fact that we returned to WWII vocabulary is horrible.”<sup>27</sup>

Leader, clientelist, and occupying party has a specific decision-making mechanism. The principle is radically authoritarian, and it states, “One above all”. The demonstration of this principle happened during the voting on early parliamentary elections. Editor in Chief of NIN, Milan Ćulibrk, writes on this aspect of internal events in SNS: “The last meeting of the Presidency of the Serbian Progressive Party was a clear image of how things are done in Serbia. If everybody votes for early elections, and only one refrains from voting, what do you think the decision will be? Well, no elections, at least for now, because, President of SNS and Serbia Aleksandar Vučić was the one that did not vote. If it was anybody else, they would probably expel such person from the party as a foreign mercenary a traitor at least. I wrote this once, but it seems I will have to repeat it many times, in a country in which one man has absolute power, everything else is relative. Anyway, every day is a Ground Hog Day here. The meeting of the Presidency of

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25 Nebojša Romčević, “Svaki Cezar ima svoga Bruta [Each Caesar has his own Brutus]”, interview with Tanja Nikolic Dakovic, *NIN*, no. 3554, page 22

26 Boris Tadić, “Vučić je kukavica, ne sme na duel sa mnom [Vučić is a coward, he’s afraid to face me in a duel]”, interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3549, p. 14

27 Branislav Trifunović, “Poslednja sansa da pobedimo ludilo [Last Chance to Beat the Madness]”, interview with Olja Bećković, *NIN*, No. 3551, p. 23

the Serbian Progressive Party was a historic one because the chief of the party spoke of Kosovo negotiations to his colleagues. With this, he showed that he values the opinion of his party over the opinion of the Serbian Parliament on this topic. Who knows, maybe it is just a message to the opposition, that are demanding the statement of the Parliament regarding Kosovo – if you want to know what happens behind closed doors, join SNS, become the member of the Presidency and you will have ‘your right to know it all.’<sup>28</sup>

In the addition to the remarks on the ruling principles, clientelist practices, the shifting of focus from institutions to the party and its ranks as a crucial detail for the depiction of SNS, the following metaphor was used to describe the relationship between the leader of the party and its members.

Relationship between the leader and the members of SNS resemble that between Gaius Caesar and Marcus Brutus, Caesar’s close friend and associate who stabbed him in Roman Senate. Romčević derives his observation from an already well-know and quoted fact that higher interest is the glue that holds SNS together, which is exactly the embodiment of Caesar scenario: “Brutus killed Caesar. The one whom Caesar gave everything. Brutus killing Caesar is a whole other topic, but Caesar destroyed the Republic. The morale of the story is that every Caesar has his own Brutus. Caesar does not fall to the hands of random rioters off the streets. Because people joined SNS out of mere selfishness, not lead by an ideology, a belief or excitement.” A clear message for the president of Serbia sent by the author: ‘You will only live so long as you are of use to the entirety of the party.’<sup>29</sup>

Economy policy of the country was also a subject to a negative representation. Topics regarding infrastructure projects were on the agenda, specifically partnerships with China and Russia, the lack of legal safety, along with concern for the status of workers under the economy politics that stimulates foreign capital and allegedly deteriorates the position of workers. The most severe criticism of the economy policy in Serbia is best portrayed in the example of position of the workers. Although the current law regulating labour market received positive feedback from the World Bank and IMF along with positive evaluations of stimulated growth of foreign investments, opponents of the regime claim that the law took away rights from the working class, practically enslaving it. This criticism was concisely put forward by the aforementioned professor at the FDU and dramaturge, Nebojša Romčević: “We no longer own our country, we do not manufacture in our factories, and we do not use our resources. We do not own our mines, or the water, or the roads. We are a country that boasts of how it employed the workers under inadmissible conditions. If this regime were to last another couple of years, we would cease to exist as a nation. We would be employees in the multinational company called Serbia with its corporate anthem. But there would be no more the country of Serbia. The ongoing battle is not actually battle at all; it is an aftermath of immense despair.”<sup>30</sup>

Success in the fields of fiscal consolidation and road infrastructure is the result of two factors: first being fiscal consolidation of the budget and second, partnerships with Russia and China. Columnist of

28 Milan Čulibrk, “Sam protiv svih [Alone, against all]”, *NIN*, No. 3561, p. 3

29 Nebojša Romčević, “Svaki Cezar imasvog Bruta [Every Caesar has his own Brutus]”, interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3554, p. 23

30 Ibid, p. 24

weekly magazine *Novi Magazin* views the latter as an economically harmful and corrupt activity leaving Serbia dependent on these two powerful Eastern countries, ultimately diverting it from its European path and standing in the way of its economic and political development.

Lakićević raises concerns regarding the development of infrastructure aided by Russia and China, as well as the acquisition of Smederevo Ironworks and mining complex in Bor by the Chinese companies. His concerns are presented in the following extract from the column published in *Novi Magazin*: “Major infrastructure projects, funded by the Russian and Chinese loans, are an excuse for state officials to rob citizens of Serbia who will soon be visited by Vučić to hear out their hardships. It is not by chance that the greatest creditors in the recent years are Russia and China, and the major infrastructure projects with them are negotiated solely *tete-a-tete*, hidden from the public eye. Chinese already set foot into energy supply systems via thermal power station ‘Kostolac’, Russians will do the same the by revitalizing hydroelectric power plant ‘Đerdap 2’; development of infrastructure is mainly under Chinese and partly under Russian control; Russia infiltrated the public sphere via Sputnik and Yandex app, both accused of being created for intelligence purposes, while the agreements signed by the Minister of advanced technology, Nenad Popović, during Putin’s visit to Belgrade, oblige even further Russian infiltration in that sphere. Russian geopolitical interest in the Western Balkans is a well-known matter. Putin proved numerous times that he supports conservative and anti-European currents in this region. China for that matter differs from Russia in the way that it fosters no geopolitical interests, but rather geo-economics ambitions. China is interested in the placement of its goods, capital and workforce. On the other hand, as a country that neglects human rights, China does not refrain from financing an authoritarian regime. By doing so, they achieve their current economic interests, which might easily turn to political if needed. Both China and Russia, in one way or another, spread their social norms in Serbia. Russian stream and Chinese path are currently garrote for Serbia.”<sup>31</sup>

Non-transparent major international arrangements that benefit only the ruling elite and the great Eastern countries, along with submission of precious resources, are highly detrimental to Serbia. Meanwhile, Lakićević warns, Russians and Chinese will carry on supporting the current non-democratic political regime, being it for the sake of their political regime and culture, or the sake of their own geo-political and economic interests.

According to the reports of international institutions, Serbia is the leading country when it comes to foreign investments. However, there is still a question mark over those investments because of an extremely corrupt judiciary, or even politicized in some cases, claims judge Miodrag Majić, a passionate critic of a current state in the judiciary. He sends a clear message: “We tried making numerous economic reforms, including the ongoing ones, but these were just castles in the sand. Even when we manage to receive certain investments, if there are no prosecutors to indict the wrongdoing, all the money brought in will eventually end up spilling out of the country. That money ends up in the pockets of tycoons and on offshore accounts simply vanishes in thin air.”<sup>32</sup>

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31 Mijat Lakićević, „Ruski tok i Kineski put: svilen gajtan za Srbiju [Russian stream and Chinese path: a garrote for Serbia],” *Novi magazin*, No. 406, p. 28

32 Miodrag Majić, „Bez institucija, mi smo istočnjačka despotija [Without institutions, we are an oriental despotate],” interview with Sandra Petrušić, *NIN*, No. 3550, p. 13

Negative image of the current government, especially Aleksandar Vučić, is also formed in relation to its foreign policy. That criticism includes either sarcastic ridicule or propagandist etiquettes. Majority of the sarcastic ridicule with the dose of resentful, politically weak insults comes from an ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the current leader of the weak opposing party Narodna stranka, Vuk Jeremić.

In one of his interviews, “ex-President of the world” (construction used during the time when Jeremić was the President of the United Nations General Assembly – author’s comment), Vuk Jeremić ridiculed Vučić’s diplomacy as an attempt to achieve balance between influential countries amid Kosovo crisis and place Serbia on the right track in this turbulent times: “Having in mind that Vučić tends to think of himself as Tito, re-establishing the reputation that Serbia used to enjoy under his rule, I must admit that the resemblance between the two of them is similar to James Bond and Johnny English (fictive character played by the British comedian, Rowan Atkinson, in the parodies of Agent 007). Vučić’s foreign policy is far from being independent and balanced. He acts agreeably to whomever necessary just to keep them in good humour, in the hope of preserving his regime. Such foreign policy benefits no one other than him, whilst hindering the interest of the citizens. ‘Bela lađa’ (White ship – TV show) strikingly resembles such foreign policy. Latter was made clear during the eight-hour long live stream of Russian president’s visit to Belgrade.”<sup>33</sup>

Vesna Pešić, ex-Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro in Mexico and a long-time civil activist, continually bedevils foreign policy of the Government with a considerate amount of toxic propaganda. She only partially criticizes the nationalists from the opposing parties but diminishes Vučić for being unable to establish a fully collaborative stance towards the West, while being able to present Vladimir Putin in the positive light. Vučić decentralized Serbian nationalism and stirred it in favour of glorifying Vladimir Putin, meanwhile not fulfilling everything West called for: “Plenty of opposing morons act as if they live in the medieval times, completely unaware of modern society and country. From a modern-day point of view, those stances appear fascist and extremist. However, Vučić did not repress such groups. Instead, he decentralized Serbian nationalism towards Russia and Putin, for the sake of formally staying on the EU wing. Putin has been adored over the past six years; daily newspapers present him on front pages wearing a piece of traditional Serbian wardrobe, šajkača, sending us the most powerful weapons, ready to wage a war for Serbia. The other manifestations of Vučić’s nationalism are perpetual conflicts in the region with the neighbouring countries; in Macedonia he opposed Zaev and democratic reforms, pretensions to Montenegro never ceased, not to mention Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Republic of Srpska is the most important asset in the latter. Finally, Vučić appeared to be the crucial part in the resolve of the Kosovo crisis by being the one who will sign the Brussels agreement. Even in that aspect, he was ahead of the opposition. However, he has not yet fulfilled any promises on that matter.”<sup>34</sup>

Overall, the government is negatively portrayed. The government is heavily disputed, as well as its policy and its values. Those disputes are based on principles as well as concrete facts. The government is usually judged in association with Aleksandar Vučić. Vučić is controversial in variety of ways: personally, politically, morally, foreign policy-wise, seen as the mastermind behind the corruption, leader of a party

33 Vuk Jeremić, “Vučić će kao Milošević pokušati da unese razdor u opoziciju [As Milošević, Vučić will attempt to create conflict among the opposition],” interview with Veljko Miladinović, *Nedeljnik*, No. 370, p. 22

34 Vesna Pešić, “Vučića su protesti gadno uzdrmali [Vučić was heavily affected by the protests],” interview with Jelena Aleksić, *Novi magazin*, No. 404, p. 19



Novi magazin, 24th January 2019

devoid of any ideology and political stance, a party based solely on interest. Serbia under Aleksandar Vučić is a country where the political practice is fascist. Any indications of democratic rule or respect of basic freedoms are non-existent. Life in Vučić's Serbia is seen by critical weekly magazines and their interviewees as life under "the worst possible political regime ever". The representation of the Government in the weekly magazines is all part of political and historical nihilism conveyed clearly and openly.

### **Opposition – Lingering between the lack of political credibility and "awakened" revolutionism**

Representation of the opposition by the weekly magazines and columns of daily newspapers is far more complicated and presented in a series of different ways. Media that are against the so-called 5th October winners, such as *Informer* and *Pečat*, report about opposition strictly in a negative manner. In these media, members of the so-called Euro-reformist opposition, as well as the members of so-called anti-European opposition, never really get a chance to participate in any interviews. However, Šešelj and SRS do not encounter the same treatment as the other opposing parties, at least not in the manner of direct criticism, albeit they are not latter's favourites. As a matter of fact, unlike 5th October winners, radicals are not politically stigmatized by these media outlets. Likewise, texts about the opposition bear a rather negative connotation, regardless of the political context, diminishing credibility of the opposing leaders. Latter is achieved through the review of the periods when certain leaders of the currently opposing parties were at the power, as well as confronting their political stances, beliefs, direct or hidden intentions. On the other hand, weekly magazines such as *Vreme*, *NIN*, *Novi magazin* and *Nedeljnik*, unambiguously support the opposing representatives, with different intensity, but the same idea. In this regard, radically critical weekly magazines that openly support the opposition offer their leaders a proper coverage and an ability to publicly express their opinions, together with campaigning against Aleksandar Vučić and SNS. Unlike *Informer* and *Pečat*, latter offers a substantial chance for the opposing leaders to express and justify their stances and by doing so these magazines allow for explicit attitudes contrary to those of the government to be heard. This influences the readers of the given magazine, as well as the wider audience. Current circumstances in the political media outlets are responsible for the smouldering conflict between Vučić and the so-called elite.

Complexity in the portrayal of the opposition is represented in the variety of approaches to their work and functioning. Pro-government print media, mainly *Informer*, and *Pečat* to some extent, dispute opposition's involvement as well as their potentials. Meanwhile, weekly magazines favouring the opposition, especially radically critical ones such as *Vreme* and *NIN*, usually proclaim general weakness of the public opinion, adding the lack of democracy discourse to the general state of things, purposely hinting at the heroism of opposition. These magazines, fully or to some extent, fail to critically evaluate the engagement of the Euro-reformist opposition during their time in the power, despite detailed documentation and analysis. This tendency to forget things is voluntary, since weekly magazines are active subjects in the political controversies, aspiring to be a sort of intellectual supplement in the exhausting clash between the political actors in Serbia.

Key role in discrediting the opposing parties is played by the daily *Informer*, in its daily releases as well as in columns by Dragan J. Vučićević. Vučićević's columns criticize the opposing actors mainly for their political moral, the same way they criticize the opposing media outlets and non-governmental organizations, inevitably reflecting on the period under the rule of 5th October winners.



His main message can be summarized in the following: 1) the present opposition is not morally credible (because of highly corrupt politicians representing it) and has insufficient political ability to lead a country, 2) in opposing media outlets, most of which are the print ones, the present Government is under attack without any rational explanations and with the sole aim of overthrowing it, 3) media outlets supporting the opposition undeniably discriminate anyone who does not directly oppose Vučić's Government.

Vučićević's criticism of the opposition is equally aimed at the opposition parties, as well as the media outlets strictly critical of the Government. His criticism is always directed *ad hominem*, strictly personalized, aiming to be as convincing as possible. Consequently, a certain person is stigmatized, its moral and psychological profile are put in the foreground, frequently rendering that person unworthy of any function in the public sphere.

In order to understand political media in Serbia, writings of the Editor in Chief of *Informer* are relevant for at least three mutually connected reasons. Firstly, style of writing and the essence of the texts of the Editor in Chief of *Informer* are specifically designed to humour the lower classes of the social hierarchy, which are considered to be loyal voters in the process of elections. Secondly, *Informer* presents an important asset for the present Government, given that it continually questions negative claims perpetually made by the critical media outlets. And finally, *Informer* is the leader when it comes to the negative portrayal of the opposition as a political actor in Serbia.

Among the main preconditions of Vučićević's writing is the presumption of deep understanding of the opposition, not necessarily limited to the political parties voting against the laws, proposals and decisions of the Government in the Parliament. It is about a much broader term, including parties obviously, but also representatives of the non-governmental organizations, media outlets and public intellectuals. Vučićević often attributes specific understanding of politics to the opposing leaders and their allied political media outlets. Politics is thereby means to an end for the opposing leaders, former political elite, to get rich. In the time of great poverty and objectively scarce livelihood, the aforementioned way of presenting the opposition keeps the present Government and its media outlets in power. These campaigns are the ones that lead to a sense of anger, disappointment or even indifference towards the opposition representatives, undoubtedly influencing the citizens to support the present Government, for the sake of preventing the corrupt 5th October winners to get back into power.

The next feature of Vučićević's interpretation of the opposition is their deficit of patriotism, the anti-Russian attitude and the blind loyalty to the Western powers. According to the editor-in-chief of *Informer*, in order to come to power and to show loyalty to Western countries, the opposition parties are prepared to do anything necessary at a certain political moment, starting from the launch of various media campaigns to the adoption of certain acts that presuppose further destabilization of Serbia as a country.

Within the blind loyalty to the West narrative, we have two mutually related prerogatives: the alleged absence of a coherent nationally responsible policy and detachment to Russia, a lifelong and secure ally of Serbia according to Vučićević.

For Dragan J. Vučićević, opposition that declares itself as pro-democratic and pro-European is in fact antidemocratic, corrupt and servile towards the West, especially Washington. Greed and thirst for power leads the opposition to deceitful and devious political ideas as well as aspirations for creating the worst scenarios for a society, which would only serve their own benefit. In this context, Editor-in-Chief of *Informer* claims that opposition should be viewed in the context of the following goals:

Goal one is to take over the power through undemocratic and violent means in conspiracy with the West, above all with the United States, as well as to redirect Serbia in a geopolitical sense. The second goal, according to him, is for Serbia to become a servant country instead of a free one, one that gives up its good relations with Russia and blindly listens to the orders from the EU and the US. The third one is the replay of 5th of October - the exercise of power in the spirit of post-October Serbia. The focus of post-October Serbia narratives is the conflict between the people and the elite, as well as the personal wealth accumulation and raiding of the ordinary citizens, together the high corruption and crime, the neglect of the common good.

When it comes to the criticism of the opposition and their policies, a striking example is evident in the following quote. At the heart of the criticism is their demand for the boycott of the elections. Along with this example, goes the continuous discreditation of the opposition in terms of their morality, with a reference to their personal wealth-gaining. The relativization of the opposition's demands implies the normalization of electoral conditions defined by law, either media ones, or social ones. Secondly, the negligence and undermining of the opposition's demands is transformed into a kind of political-media counter-attack against the leaders of the opposition: "The election laws are bad you say, election rules don't satisfy you? Wait, but you passed these laws and these rules, nothing – not one law, not one rule – was changed since 2012! You say, media are treating you badly that you are a victim of a terrible media blockade, you do not have a platform to express your views?! Just, how do you explain the fact that your editors - the editors and journalists you have chosen and put in place - are still in complete control of the Public Media Service ('evil Vučić' there in Takovska 10 has not replaced or positioned a single person for 7 years now!) and what kind of media coverage are you talking about when you are in control of almost all weekly newspapers, at least half of the daily newspapers and at least two television stations with a national frequency; not to mention the cable television and the internet. You say yet, that financial conditions are not fair, that those in power have considerably more money? Heavens, your leader Đilas is the biggest tycoon in the history of modern Serbian politics! He is the one who set up business affairs worth 500 million euros for his companies while in high politics! He and Jeremić have millions of euros in their accounts, more than all former and current politicians who have been in the government of this county during the last thirty years. Spare us, gentlemen from the opposition, from the stories about the boycott due to electoral conditions, laws or media. You are very well aware that you stand no chance in the elections. You are not stupid; you see and understand that the vast majority of people resent you."<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the fierce criticism of opposition parties, their demands and protests taking place across Serbia, Editor-in-Chief of *Informer* showed an undisclosed tendency to debate with the media that he considers being on the side of opposition when it comes to the political events and processes. In the

<sup>35</sup> Dragan Vučićević, "Zašto u stvari ne smeju na izbore [The reason they actually boycott the elections]," *Informer*, 26.01.2019, p. 5



case of media, their activities are controversial at two levels. Firstly, the logic of “political affiliation” is controversial, it is disputable who and why they provide support. On the other hand, it is also a question of what they support. At this point, one can clearly identify the personification of criticism of people who think differently, as well as the use of inappropriate language. A picturesque example of this journalist-propaganda approach can be detected in the following quote from one of the columns: “When Olja Kovačević, who is known to the people as Yellow Olja – the long-standing informal spouse of one of the leaders of the opposition, Borko Stefanović, abducts the Public Media Service even from her own talk-show, the most popular program in Serbia, and sets up a stage for the promotion of Alliance for Serbia, is that then, if I may ask, called censorship?! When on Thursday evening, she starts her talk-show ‘Yes, maybe No’ with a 10-minute intro that transparently advocates for ‘civil protests’ and openly calls the people to ‘fight against dictatorship’ (!?!), is this a proof of Vučić’s autocracy?! When Tanja Vojtehovski, the person who hosted the pre-election rallies of Saša Janković and the one who unconditionally supports Đilas, appears on TV Prva with a new season of ‘Life Stories’, in which, as we know, she does nothing but attack the government and the state, then it must be that this is also the proof of ‘terrible pressures on media that Serbia has never seen before’ (quote from the weekly NIN).”<sup>36</sup>

The opposition is negatively portrayed as a political organization that, along with civil activists and street protests, wants an undemocratic overthrow of the government. Symbolically, this tendency was demonstrated in by someone carrying the gallows in the streets. Dragan J. Vučićević reacted fiercely to this: “Tell me what, besides the most severe violence and bloody civil strife, can we expect from those whose policies are reduced to threats of hanging, raping, even publicly calling women whores and ‘Usta-sha whores’, those to whom ‘pissing over your graves’, is practically the pre-election slogan?!”<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the accusations of a ‘war that is being waged against a legitimate government’ and the accusations of plans to violently overthrow it, opposition leaders are stigmatized on the personal, moral and political level: “Small mice. That is what the leaders of the Alliance for Serbia are. Poor and miserable men, political and moral peanuts who want to take over the power, but only if it comes for free. Đilas and his buddies would love to see the rerun of October 5th, but so that others’ kids bleed and they, the ‘big leaders’, spend their days and money in London and Singapore, ski in Aspen and count millions and millions of dollars stashed on their offshore accounts in Switzerland, The Netherlands, Malta ... Whoever doubted this, was reassured a week ago. Wild entrance into RTS and the subsequent blockade of the President’s building definitely and finally proved that those that gathered under the unfortunate circumstances in the so-called Union for Serbia, are the worst and most hypocritical people in the modern political history of Serbia. Boško Ljotićević, tycoon Đilas and that global conman, Vuk Jeremić, first convinced their supporters to violently enter RTS on Saturday night, threaten journalists and editors with a chain saw (!?!), fight with the police and television’s security, and then in the end, on their yellow media said how they ‘had nothing to do with it’?! The following day, several hundred people were forced to block the Presidency of Serbia with an idea to take president Vučić as a hostage, and then when they realized that they don’t have nearly enough people, they go out for kebabs! In the end, when the police arrested the perpetrators - those who threatened RTS journalists, those who attacked and beat up the police forces – Đilas held a poor press conference on which he said how he was supposedly worried

36 Dragan Vučićević, “Specijalni rat [The special war],” *Informer*, 02.02.2019, p. 5

37 Dragan Vučićević, “Budućnost ili vešala [Future or Gallows],” *Informer*, 09.02.2019, p. 5

about the 'arrested children', and right after that embarked on a plane to London! Abandons all those 'children' that he pushed behind the bars with his insane ideology on how to overthrow the government! Lousiest, most crooked cowards. That is who they are."<sup>38</sup>

In the opinion of Dragan J. Vučićević, lack of the patriotism with the opposition leaders, the open hatred of one's own nation and state is marked as auto-chauvinism. Attributing auto-chauvinism to opposition leaders brings into question not only their criticism of the government, but also their credibility of leading the state and nation in difficult and turbulent times such as this one. At the same time, the thesis on auto-chauvinism is a support for the thesis on moral unscrupulousness in their struggle for power. "The darkest auto-chauvinism has become the most precise measure of social acceptance within the so-called yellow elite. The more you plunder the Serbian people and the Serbian state, the more you serve the worst Serbian enemies – the more you are respected in this vicious circle of political-tycoon haters. Naturally, auto-chauvinism is also the shortest and easiest ticket to win the support of the Western powers and their local embassies. They do not need the Serbs. They need those who despise Serbs and Serbia, they need a Serb by birth who is ready to sell his mother to slavery. Realizing that in the next three years they will not come to power in the regular elections, faced with the terrible fact that Serbs will simply not vote for them, tycoon Đilas, Vuk the con-man Jeremić, that unfortunate Sergej Trifunović, and Ljotić-fan Boško Obradović do not see any other the solution but to join with the greatest enemies of Serbian people and Serbian state, in the attempt to take over the power."<sup>39</sup>

The demand for a change of government is morally, politically and historically problematic. The change of government led by Aleksandar Vučić, in Vučićević's opinion, leads to subjugation of the state to the interests of tycoons and corrupt politicians, and unconditionally giving in to the interests of the West in terms of Kosovo and Republika Srpska. Literally, the demand for political change is for the Editor of *Informer* "trying to steal the state from the Serbs and then transform into a yellow, tycoon company that would work only in the interests of Đilas and similar thieves and conmen, based on the 5th October recipe. They need the country's millions, and the Western powers in Belgrade need a puppet theater instead of a state that plays exactly the same way as NATO is playing – in its own interests. To translate: Đilas, Jeremić, Obradović and other so-called leaders will recognize Kosovo and agree to the abolition of Republika Srpska, and in return, they will be allowed to 'legally' take hundreds of millions of state money."<sup>40</sup>

Unlike Vučićević's *Informer* and several other tabloids such as weekly *Pečat*, critically-oriented media are opening up space for the explication and articulation of opposition's views, at the same time directly or indirectly supporting them in a fierce political struggle with the current government.

In the period from January to March 2019, the portrayal of the opposition in the critically-oriented print media is inseparable from the civil protests. The value and factual aspect of the protests is significantly enhanced, almost glorified. Interviews with leading protesters, primarily with informal protest leaders, as

38 Dragan Vučićević, "Kukavice [Cowards]," *Informer*, 24.03.2019, p. 5

39 Dragan Vučićević, "Autošovinizam [Autochauvinism]," *Informer*, 23.02.2019, p. 5

40 Dragan Vučićević, "Da se prebrojimo [Let's count each other]," *Informer*, 28.03.2019, p. 5

well as a significant space given to opposition leaders, along with a series of affirmative articles, show that the pages of Serbian weekly newspapers are infused with the spirit of open glorification of civic protests. An attempt to evoke the spirit and practice of protests in the 1990s is one of the key content elements of anti-government media discourse.

The purpose of the protests is the demand for freedom and change of the political, economic and wider social system. The link between civil protests and freedom as a political value is clearly visible in the writing and interviews with intellectuals who supported the protests. One of the most striking examples of a meaningful mix of demands for political freedom and civil protests can be clearly identified in an interview with Prof. Dr. Marija Bogdanović, for the anti-government weekly *Vreme*: "It is about the freedom to fight for the freedom of every individual – as a pre-condition for a functioning democratic society. Without a public debate on all problems that the society faces, without a joint process of seeking solutions, one can not talk about progress. When a problem arises, one person can not judge, condemn, evaluate whether someone is guilty or not, one can not afford such a right at all. I wonder why this omnipotent man has no courage to enter the dialogue with the critical public of Serbia. Why? What's the problem? He's very brave, but come on, let's talk like civilized people, not just issue orders and judgments."<sup>41</sup>

The "Cry for Freedom" of the post-October Rector of the Belgrade University, the sociologist Maria Bogdanović, is in line with the promotion of the suppressed spirit of freedom of debate and political democracy.

Civil protests symbolize the fight against fascism, against the alleged brutalization of public space and the autocracy of the leading party in power. These sentiments complement the set of desirable liberal-democratic phrases that, in different ways and in a different historical and political context, and with much greater enthusiasm, were spoken during the 1990s.

"I think it is a civil rebellion against the general fascism in the society, as well as the desire of people to reduce the influence of any 'sect' party or a heavy patient on our lives. People are sick and tired of the state of society in which an individual must join a party to obtain any state job. People no longer want to watch the President who lies to them on daily basis about the 'golden age' that they supposedly live in. This is the first time, after many years, that the number of participants in protests is increasing day by day."<sup>42</sup>

Zamurović does not specify what exactly "fascistization" of the society means, when using this rhetorically and semantically provocative and convincing term. An explanation which does not serve to explain, rather make the term sound more confusing, is provided in further elaboration of what motivates the protest. Namely, "misconduct, primitivism, violence, insult to common sense, aggression, lies and deceit" are the reasons for the protest, according to Zamurović. Even a quick glance at the term 'fascism' will show that this political system does not necessarily connect to how Zamurović defines

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41 Marija Bogdanović, "Sistem puca po šavovima [System is breaking apart]," interview with Ivana Milanović Hrašovec, *Vreme*, No. 1465, p. 6

42 Ibid.

it, inasmuch as “lies”, “deceit”, “insult to common sense”, “aggression” and “primitivism” exist in other political environments, including the modern democracy. However, this slip of the tongue is far from coincidental. The “slip” of a politically engaged photographer stems neither from a mere lack of information, nor profound ignorance, but something entirely different is at hand. It is the process of using a descriptive aspect of the meaning; in this case the meaning of the word “fascism” while preserving its emotionally adverse magnetism, all with the purpose of building a campaign that ignites negative emotional response from the citizens. To be precise, bad memory on the mention of the term “fascism”, and its preservation potential, has been “creatively tailored” using most unusual and factually incorrect descriptions to suit current political interests in public debates. The existing pool of negative connotations is included in the following lines, taken from the famous photographer’s interview: “principally, it is the anger of people who no longer wish to tolerate fear, misconduct, primitivism, violence, insult to common sense, aggression, lies and deceit. We have become hostages of an interest group devoid of feelings of legal equality for all, who privatized the country thereby gaining enormous fortune.”<sup>43</sup>

Goals and values as the driving force of protests have been explained by the official ringleader, actor Branislav Trifunović. Trifunović places protestors’ requests into the group of requests which concern everyday life and regular democratic order. An implicit assumption of every outspoken criticism of Vučić’s government claims that the current political order is aggressive, freedom-sapping, and dominated by social pathology. At the same time, besides the trivial psychologisation within the political and social context, Branislav Trifunović clumsily moralizes the political system and practice, deeming them morally evil: “We have to establish a normal system where people would vote using an open mind, and base their political decisions on what they had been offered on television, meanwhile not having to be paid 15 euros or granted a litre of oil to do so. As far as I am concerned, the final denouement should be when the man who symbolizes that spiral of deceit steps down, because he is not worthy of governance, because he insults, because he is to be pleaded for everything, because I have a feeling he is not of sound mind, and because he sacrifices his own people so as to conclude his deals with some characters at the European Union. My personal request and wish is that this evil ends; I do not care who comes after, nor will I agitate for a political party for as long as I live.”<sup>44</sup>

Director Zdravko Šotra communicates and additionally explains Trifunović’s wish for the „normalization of the political and social system” hand in hand with the suppression of worst political „evil” in history, embodied in the regime of Aleksandar Vučić. Unlike Marija Bogdanović, he reveals that people need an organized country: “To redeem the country seems to be a general wish, namely anything that constitutes the term ‘regulated democracy’, so regulated that we never again end up where we are now. Unfortunately, Serbs are the slowest to learn from their rich history, which I hope will change, too.”<sup>45</sup>

Spiritual and political connection to their colleagues and wider circle, director Goran Marković points out to the two primary goals of the protest: an imperative struggle for a civilized life and a fight for sheer sur-

43 Dragoljub Zamurović, “Narodu je prekipelo [People are fed up],” interview with Jelena Jorgačević, *Vreme*, No. 1464, p. 26

44 Branislav Trifunović, “Poslednja šansa da pobedimo ludilo [The last chance to win over madness],” interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3551, p. 21

45 Zdravko Šotra, “Mora da ode sistem koji je Vučić stvorio [The system Vučić has built has to end],” interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3557, p. 11

vival. Protests are the last resort, according to the director's opinion, last chance in the current moment: "It is of vital importance that the people with cultural backgrounds take the lead in the rebellion against the status of our society. It is a dramatic imperative to preserve the core of our people's civilisation. If we fail, we will disappear, as we already gradually are. My impression takes me so far to think that this government's plan is to eliminate the freethinking young people from Serbia, those who still harbor some life expectations. Including the catastrophic decline in natality due to inhumane living conditions, situation becomes cataclysmic. Only they will remain, since we, who do not belong, are practically deprived of our right to live."<sup>46</sup>

Political propaganda which glorifies the protest is embodied in the request for replacement of not only Vučić, but the entire system he created and largely inherited from his government loving predecessors. With respect to moral crisis in Serbian politics, Begović stresses the problem of corruption, namely abuse of the state and public resources as the main reason for „widely“ spread discontent: "The worst outcome of this protest would be to replace Vučić with 'yet another Vučić'. My support to the protest is motivated by hope that that we are witnessing and participating in the substantial protest against the 'Big Brother' concept, whoever he might be."<sup>47</sup>

Retrospect of the „beginning of the end“ of president Aleksandar Vučić, is accompanied by an inviting message from prof. Marija Bogdanović, who calls on all parts of our society to unite in fight against this individuos regime and introduce true democracy: "The system is bursting at the seams. When this starts, all available sides, all political options, parties, civilians, parents, grandparents, and youth should be summoned. The young should join the protests now and lay the foundations of their future. The freedom to fight for everyone's right is imminent to a democratic society. We cannot speak of progress without the public debate on the raised social issues and possible solutions. When problems occur, one man cannot have sole authority to judge, convict, or assess whether someone is guilty or not."<sup>48</sup>

Glorification of the protest is contributed by the broadened awareness of the failure of Vučić's government apparatus to destroy protests once and for all. Vesna Mališić does not hold important the frequency and intensity. On the other hand, the devotion of protestors to democracy is important. "He used all available resources in an attempt to separate the leaders of opposition parties from the discontent people, cut their binding ropes and divide them, but also denunciate and disqualify the organizers and civilian coordinators of the protest. Rebellion that spreads throughout Serbia, demanding restoration of democracy, autonomous institutions and liberation of the country, is, on the other hand, still in full bloom; they cannot be extinguished by holding orchestrated early elections, because the citizens want more. Even fear is no longer Vučić's ally."<sup>49</sup>

Similar to the views of Vesna Mališić, in his text about protests in the areas surrounding larger cities

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46 Goran Marković, "Ako ne uspeemo nestaćemo [If we fail, we disappear]," interview with Radmilo Stanković, *NIN*, No. 3552, p.23

47 Boris Begović, "Ovo je pobuna protiv velikog tate [This is a rebellion against Big Daddy]," interview with Olja Bečković, *NIN*, No. 3553, p. 27

48 Marija Bogdanović, "Sistem puca po šavovima [The system is breaking apart]," interview with Ivana Milanović Hrašovec, *Vreme*, No. 1465, p. 10

49 Vesna Mališić, "Uvodnik (Editorial)," *NIN*, No. 3551, p. 3

in Serbia, Slobodan Georgiev notices not only the spread of change-craving energy, but also the onset of political demise of the SNS political machinery as a result of, according to the author, the justified exasperation: "What distinguishes the protests in three large cities in Serbia – Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Niš – from their surrounding settlements is the fact that people in smaller communities rave against the regime because of being politically defeated for the past six years due to supporting different political beliefs, but also for being subjected to an act of political vendetta, defined as 'no submission means no jobs'. This is yet another attribution about Vučić, who is believed to have stage-managed all processes (businesses) in Serbia with the help of his coordinators, and deliberately set up social order where only members of his party can have jobs."<sup>50</sup>

Depiction of the protests as the central event of the Serbian political sphere is fiercely stressed by Slobodan Georgiev, the journalist of the weekly *Vreme*. He particularly insists on civil disobedience in small settlements, where the SNS "monolith" and micro-influence gradually disappear. "Saturday's protest, under the slogan 'Stop the Bloody Shirts', has grown into a movement '1 in 5 million' which spread across twenty towns and municipalities in Serbia, and woke up the sentiments of those who still remember the protests in 1996/97, as well as the first victory in struggle against the regime of Slobodan Milošević. From Sombor, Novi Sad and Aranđelovac, Kragujevac, Požega and Užice, eastward to Zaječar and Bor, and southward through Prokuplje, Kuršumlija, and Leskovac to Vranje, the enlightened citizens of Serbia march behind the slogans citing the Serbian president's own words, uttered at the early stages of the protest when he promised not to meet any guttersnipe demands 'even if put forward by five million people'."<sup>51</sup>

Diagnosis concerning the substance and significance of the protests was offered by sociologist Vesna Pešić, not withholding her delight and apparent partiality when she stresses the importance of protests at this very moment. Comprehensive perception of a scientist is out of focus here, due to political expectations and the corresponding political orientation. The imbalance between political ardour and rationality, namely the displacement of rationality within the context of political choice, are noticed in the following words taken from Pešić's interview in the weekly *Novi Magazin*: "Vučić is struck by these protests and the situation has fundamentally changed. He cannot stand any form of opposition and that is a major disadvantage of his. He is not a man of compromise; it can only be 'my way or the highway' with him. He will never renounce autocracy or accept democratic elections, although the opposite would be a pleasant surprise. My first impression is that the society has grown tired of Aleksandar Vučić. And naturally, middle class is the first to voice discontent, as is the most politically active part of the society, the most educated, and the first to recognize degradation and decline. The second to join are the poorest, and they are the majority. Government reforms and replacement cannot be carried out by the middle class singlehandedly, or without the support of the lowest class. For this reason, protests should be as extensive as possible so that the message reaches the whole population."<sup>52</sup>

Using the anti-government publication *Vreme*, Boško Obradović, the leader of Dveri, tries to "inject" ad-

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Slobodan Georgiev, "Cepanje naprednjačkog monolita [Breaking apart the Progressive Party Monolith]," *Vreme*, No. 1465

<sup>52</sup> Vesna Pešić, "Vučića su protesti gadno uzdrmali [Vučić was heavily affected by the protests]," interview with Jelena Aleksić, *Novi magazin*, No. 404, p. 19

ditional political power to the protests. He extends the political battle and calls for different forms of citizen disobedience, which would, according to his assumptions and expectations, “corner” the current government of Aleksandar Vučić. This “political vendetta” has a categorical and somewhat threatening connotation, but is no more than a skillful simulation of political power in the media: “If that is necessary, we will start citizen disobedience, demonstrations and all-encompassing rebellion in Serbia which will end in Belgrade. Once it occurs, the event will not be ignored and it will represent an important moment of government decision between free elections and government resignation.”<sup>53</sup>

Reaffirmation of the political party roles is a notion openly supported by the former president of Serbia, Boris Tadić. Insisting on an apolitical and strictly civil protest, Tadić confirms its necessity, but deems it insufficient for the successful resolution of the political combat. The reason for this is simple; political parties have the sole capacity to carry out government replacement and introduce political changes in an organized and efficient manner.

In an interview given to the weekly NIN at the beginning of 2019, the political leader voices the following: “Since 2012, we have been suffering from a serious political illness, the essence of which lies in the conviction that political parties are evil, as expressed by our society. Societies built upon such belief slide into anarchy, economic retrogression and social despair. The strictly civil protests are therefore vitally important, albeit their character is merely reactive and lacking the impact strength and organization of a political force. As such, they cannot facilitate a desirable outcome, but end no differently than any other protest in the past six years. Politically engaged individuals with a professional background in cultural industries should know that their engagement, although generally important, lacks efficiency without a key role of political parties who have the organisation capacity to put their words into actions and win the elections.”<sup>54</sup>

Tadić’s realistic approach accommodates the possibility of reaffirmation of opposition leaders and parties, who fully support the protests seeking to receive self assurance in a grand battle against the government. The leader of “Dveri”, Boško Obradović stresses unanimity and culture of dialogue as heritage treasured in the Alliance for Serbia (SZS): “It supposes working on an establishment of the new political culture. The culture of dialogue, built in the very foundation of SZS, should be a paradigm of the future relations at the Serbian political scene. Although showing irreconcilable differences, especially on certain matters, we can communicate and reach an agreement. It is the beginning of polite Serbia, based on the culture of political and any other social dialogue.”<sup>55</sup>

Fighters for democracy are further defined by their story about the struggle for fair elections. The attitude of opposition parties regarding this matter has been elaborated by Boško Obradović, the most agile member of opposition in the past period. Full of self confidence, Obradović specifies the following: “No elections should be held before the media is liberated, and democratic conditions for elections are pro-

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53 Boško Obradović, “Ako Goran Marković i ja ne budemo šetali zajedno, visi ćemo odvojeno [If Goran Marković and I do not walk together, we will be hanged separately]”, interview with Nenad Čaluković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 365, p. 25

54 Boris Tadić, “Vučić je kukavica, ne sme na duel sa mnom [Vučić is a coward, he’s afraid to face me in a duel]”, interview with Tanja Nikolić Đaković, *NIN*, No. 3549, p. 13

55 Boško Obradović, “Ako Goran Marković i ja ne budemo šetali zajedno, visi ćemo odvojeno [If Goran Marković and I do not walk together, we will be hanged separately]”, interview with Nenad Čaluković, *Nedeljnik*, No. 365, p.25

vided. How we will manage to win this? By open demonstrations, general civil disobedience, or election boycott – we will decide on this together. I repeat, together, as there lies the secret formula of reaching the light at the end of this tunnel we have been stuck in for the past seven years.”<sup>56</sup>

Statistical “raising” of the optimism about government change is traditional among the leaders of the opposition. Appointment for this has been given to the people’s representative and aspiring political analyst Đorđe Vukadinović, editor of the website “New Serbian Political Thought” who, using valid results of his telephone surveys, reports significant growth in opposition ratings, and an obvious, significant decline in SNS popularity among voters. Vukadinović’s conclusions about the voting trends has been published by the weekly *Vreme*, where a politically engaged “surveyor” of the public opinion states: “When percentages of the coalition parties are summed up with SNS and SPS-JS, it is still represents the majority of votes, although a relatively weak one, not nearly the 70% majority published in pro-regime surveys, or the orchestrated local elections with the same, anti-opposition purpose. Whether due to protests held in Belgrade and other cities for three consecutive months, or a natural desire for a change expressed by the ‘voting material’, the rating of SNS is currently in decline.”<sup>57</sup>

The image of opposition, as depicted by the press, has a remarkable difference from the government image. The government is unapologetically depicted as the worst possible, morally and politically unacceptable, historically aggressive, lacking competent staff, isolated from the people and deeply rooted in criminal activity, corruption, destruction of democracy and treason. On the other hand, opposition has a much more complex depiction, regardless of the far weaker, if any, influence in the political process. With media as their “accomplice” it was the opposition who gave certain media the role of protectors and promoters of liberal democracy, and carriers of future progress.

From the journalistic perspective, the divine role of the opposition equals the gravity of constant moral and political misconduct of the government. Glorification of the protests, serving to create an impression that Vučić is replaceable, as well as projected statistics aimed at raising awareness that “victory is close at hand” are obvious mannerisms of propaganda, so easily controlled in the era of modern technology.

56 Boško Obradović, “Da ovi odu, deca da nam se vrate [Them to leave, our kids to come back],” *NIN*, interview with Slobodan Georgiev, *Vreme*, No. 1468, p. 13

57 Đorđe Vukadinović, “Rejtinzi u protestu, naprednjaci u posrtanju [Ratings under protest, Progressive Party in decline],” *Vreme*, No. 1471, p. 7



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About  
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## ABOUT AUTHORS

**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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