

Media, Memory, and Framing: Interpreting Serbian Student Protests Through Serbian–Croatian Relations

Davor Pauković, University of Dubrovnik
davor.paukovic@unidu.hr

Marko Roško, University of Dubrovnik
marko.rosko@unidu.hr

Abstract

This article analyzes the framing of student protests in Serbia by examining selected media coverage from Serbian and Croatian outlets. The findings reveal that the protests are framed in ways that reflect post-conflict imaginaries and the ongoing geopolitical tensions between the two nations. The article situates these protests within a broader theoretical framework of post-Yugoslav media discourse, national identity construction, and symbolic geopolitics. It argues that student protests in Serbia should not be understood merely as domestic political events, but also as transnationally mediated spectacles, framed through the historical lens of Serbian–Croatian relations. The significant attention the protests receive in Croatian media underscores their importance for the dynamics of Serbian–Croatian relations. Using the TakeLab Retriever tool, the article provides quantitative data on the coverage of the Serbian protests in two online media outlets. Frame analysis reveals a notably favorable stance toward the protests within the Croatian media landscape examined. The article further explores the contrasting portrayals of the protests in opposition and pro-government media in Serbia, particularly in the context of Serbian–Croatian relations. Pro-government Serbian media consistently depict the student protests not as genuine expressions of domestic dissent, but as orchestrated efforts involving foreign actors, most notably Croatia. In contrast, opposition and independent media outlets in Serbia firmly reject allegations of Croatian interference, interpreting the government's narrative as a political strategy aimed at delegitimizing domestic opposition and diverting attention from the substantive demands articulated by the students.

Keywords: Serbia; Student protests; Serbian–Croatian relations; Historical narratives; Media framing

Introduction

The student protests in Serbia, which began with the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station canopy in November 2024, represent an additional escalation of dissatisfaction with the

regime of Aleksandar Vučić, which has manifested in the organization of various protests in recent years. There is no doubt that the student protests have brought Serbia into a new era, in which, for the first time since coming to power in 2012, the stability of the authoritarian regime has been seriously threatened and its legitimacy almost exhausted. In his more than decade-long rule, Vučić has returned Serbia to an authoritarianism reminiscent of the one that existed during the 1990s under Slobodan Milošević (Bieber 2018; Vladislavljević 2019; Guzina 2023; Spasojević and Lončar 2023). Vučić's rule has had a negative impact on Croatian–Serbian relations. Within the framework of his nationalist and populist policies, there was also a change in the politics of memory. Although Serbia did not fully confront the legacy of the 1990s in the aftermath of Milošević's regime, the rise to power of the Serbian Progressive Party brought the country closer to the memory politics and practices that were prevalent during the disintegration of Yugoslavia and throughout Milošević's rule (Gordy 2013). It involved revising Serbia's role in the Yugoslav wars, minimizing or omitting its responsibility, while focusing on the victimization of its own nation. The promotion of antagonistic memory, in which there is room only for our version of history and our victims, will have a crucial impact on relations between Croatia and Serbia (Bull and Hansen 2016, 393–394; Berger and Kansteiner 2021; Kasianov 2022). The victimization of the national group is one of the key features of the politics of history in all the states that emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia (Bar-Tal and Čehajić-Clancy 2004). This is also part of a broader nationalist discourse in which the external enemy plays an important role. Emphasizing the external enemy can serve various functions, from creating cohesion within the group and promoting identity, to legitimizing a regime that defends 'us versus them' (Wodak et al. 2009). The regime in Serbia uses the discourse of the external enemy to suppress internal dissent, legitimizing its position in defending national interests, as opposed to the opposition and students who, according to regime propaganda, often advocate the interests of the external enemies. In the discourse of Vučić's regime, this role has been assigned not only to the undefined 'Western powers' and Kosovo (Albanians), but also to Croatia, which is portrayed as a historical enemy tied to the strong reproduction of traumatic memories. The term *Ustaše* is used narratively as a powerful symbolic expression, not only to criticize Croatian political figures and the broader public discourse, but also to target protesters and students in Serbia. Ustaše, the name of the Croatian fascist collaborators from World War II responsible for numerous crimes against Serbs, Roma and Jews during the war, has become a general term used to label opponents of Vučić's regime (Novosti 2025; Informer 2025a). Protesters are accused of being linked to Croatia through their support for narratives and policies coming from that country. Accordingly, Vučić's regime simultaneously defends Serbia from both internal and external enemies who are connected and promote the same narratives aimed at destroying the state. The narrative concludes with Vučić's assertion that without a strong regime (which has built a strong army), "we would be crushed by both Priština and Zagreb and Sarajevo – all together or individually" (RTS 2025).

In Croatian public discourse, Vučić is largely perceived as a more or less covert continuation of the policies of the 1990s, following the legacy of Vojislav Šešelj, the leader of the Serbian Radical Party and a convicted war criminal at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Šešelj, a frequent guest on pro-regime media in Serbia, still remains one of the central symbols of anti-Croatian and Greater Serbian politics from the period of the war in Croatia. The memory politics and narratives promoted by Vučić's regime regarding the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the war in Croatia directly conflict with Croatian memory politics, which view Greater Serbian politics as the key factor in the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia (Pavlaković and Pauković 2019). Furthermore, the Croatian

War of Independence (*Domovinski rat*, Homeland war) is, by parliamentary declaration, defined as "just and legitimate, defensive and liberating," in which Croatia "defended its territory from Greater Serbian aggression within internationally recognized borders" (Zastupnički dom Hrvatskoga državnog sabora 2000). Given that public discourse surrounding the relations between Serbia and Croatia has largely revolved around confronting historical traumas, primarily framed through antagonistic narratives, it is not an exaggeration to assert that the official relations between Croatia and Serbia were only worse during the 1990s.

This article is grounded in the premise that events in Serbia have significantly impacted regional dynamics and relations among the former Yugoslav republics, particularly as reflected in public discourse, which is burdened with historical traumas and antagonistic narratives. This article explores student protests in Serbia in the context of Serbian–Croatian relations, focusing on the discursive strategies employed by online mainstream media in both countries. After the introduction, a brief review of Croatian–Serbian relations following the dissolution of Yugoslavia will be presented, with an emphasis on the antagonistic narratives arising from the traumatic experiences of the 20th-century wars. The central part of the article presents a comparative frame analysis of online news coverage in Croatia and Serbia, examining how the Croatian outlets *Index.hr* and *Direktno.hr* interpret and evaluate the Serbian student protests, and how the Serbian outlets N1 Serbia and Informer.rs position Croatia in this context, either as a solidaristic neighbour, a neutral bystander or a hostile external actor. Finally, there is a conclusion that briefly summarizes the results of the research.

Croatian–Serbian relations: in the shadow of past traumas

After the horrific crimes of the Second World War, the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s represented the second stage of traumatic experiences in Croatian–Serbian relations during the 20th century. Although these conflicts were separated by half a century, during the 1990s, terms from World War II were narratively used, with the most important being the labeling of Serbs as *Četnici*¹ and Croats as *Ustaše*. The significance of the public and media discourse that prepared the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia, which relied on the symbolism of World War II, is well-documented and highlighted in numerous studies (Kolstø 2016; Ramet 2018; Pauković 2008; Popov 2002). Relations between the two countries since the end of the war have had their ups and downs, with the latter most often linked to different interpretations of traumatic episodes from the 20th century. In other words, dealing with the past after the wars following the breakup of Yugoslavia has not been particularly successful. Although there have been various efforts from numerous actors who achieved certain results, the strength of antagonistic narratives and memories has dominated over the last thirty years. Alongside various narratives and interpretations of events from the breakup of Yugoslavia and certain aspects of World War II, there are also real problems that emerged as a consequence of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s.² These include issues such as missing persons, the prosecution of war crimes, the return of refugees, war reparations, various material rights, the restitution of property, border issues, the status of Serbs in Croatia and Croats in Serbia, and so on.

¹ The members of the Serbian military organization with a pronounced nationalist goal (Greater Serbia), responsible for numerous crimes against Croats and Muslims during World War II.

² Primarily, debates around the use, character, and various manipulations regarding the number of victims in the Ustaša concentration camp Jasenovac. For a detailed analysis of these issues and the current state of research, see Kužnar, Odak, and Lucić (2023).

A year after the end of the war, in 1996, Croatia and the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took the first step towards normalizing relations, through mutual recognition and the establishment of full diplomatic relations (Zastupnički dom Sabora Republike Hrvatske 1996). A significant improvement in relations followed from 2000, after the collapse of Milošević's regime in Serbia and the first departure of the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ) from power in Croatia. An important contribution to the enhancement of relations stemmed from the openness towards European integration, specifically the EU's policy of integrating the Western Balkans, which emphasized regional cooperation. The improvement of relations in the following years was confirmed through mutual visits between the prime ministers – Ivo Sanader visited Belgrade on an official trip in 2004, and Vojislav Koštunica visited Zagreb in 2005. Their meetings were marked by a commitment to resolving open issues, as well as a focus on the future. A new deterioration in relations followed after Croatia, along with Hungary and Bulgaria recognised the independence of Kosovo in 2008, aligning with the foreign policy of the United States and the majority of EU countries. Mutual lawsuits for genocide related to the war in Croatia before the International Court of Justice in The Hague would burden relations between the two countries from 2008 until 2015, when the Court dismissed both lawsuits. The best relations between Croatia and Serbia after the breakup of Yugoslavia occurred during the presidencies of Boris Tadić of Serbia (2004–2012) and Ivo Josipović of Croatia (2010–2015). President Tadić, during a 2007 appearance on Croatian television, apologized on behalf of the Serbian people for the crimes committed in Croatia (B92 2007). The reconciliation process continued in November 2010, when Josipović and Tadić jointly visited memorial sites honoring the victims of both Croats (Vukovar-Ovčara) and Serbs (Paulin Dvor) in the recent war, offering apologies for the crimes committed against both groups (Slobodna Dalmacija 2010). The policy of reconciliation, which includes apologies from high-ranking state officials, became widespread particularly after the end of the Cold War (Barkan and Karn 2006). However, it will be shown that the impact of Croatian–Serbian apologies on the long-term success of reconciliation was very limited or negligible (Bachmann and Pavlaković 2023).

Reconciliation between Croatia and Serbia is not a one-way process, as evidenced by the dramatic deterioration of relations in the years following the presidencies of Tadić and Josipović. This shift is linked to the rise of the populist and nationalist Serbian Progressive Party, led by Aleksandar Vučić, who took full control of Serbia in 2014. In Croatia, Tomislav Karamarko became the leader of the HDZ in 2012, representing the party's right wing, while Prime Minister Zoran Milanović's communication style did not contribute to improving relations. The debates surrounding the trial, the first-instance conviction, and the second-instance acquittal of Croatian generals for their role in Operation Storm before the ICTY further fueled the antagonistic discourse (Ljubojević 2019). Tensions were further exacerbated by the migrant crisis in 2015, which led to the closure of borders and a radicalization of the discourse between the two countries. Despite some diplomatic efforts, such as the 2016 Declaration on Improving Relations and Vučić's official visit to Zagreb in 2018, relations remain largely cold or even hostile, influenced by historical traumas, particularly regarding the interpretation of the events of the 1990s.

In the Croatian public discourse, the relationship between Vučić and his regime's approach to collective memory has been interpreted as a continuation of the policies from the 1990s, in which Serbia's responsibility for the war in Croatia is either denied or minimized. The pinnacle of this hostile discourse is annually reproduced during the commemoration of the Croatian military operation Storm in August 1995. Operation Storm holds symbolic

significance in Croatian memory culture as a victory in a just and defensive war against Serbian aggression. Although after 2000 there were years in which the commemorative narrative more systematically included crimes committed against Serbs after the operation, this narrative remains more of an exception than the rule in the commemorative discourses.³ In Serbian memory culture, Operation Storm is framed in an entirely different way. It is viewed as the greatest tragedy of the Serbian people since World War II and a crime of organized ethnic cleansing. Since 2015, an official state commemoration has been established, during which, removed from the context of the entire war, the events of August 1995 are viewed exclusively from the perspective of the tragedy of the Serbian people. This is also part of a broader revision of 20th-century history, in which Serbia and the Serbian people are portrayed as the greatest victims of the Yugoslav states (Đureinović et al. 2020; Pauković 2021; Pavlaković 2009).

In the context of such relations between Serbia and Croatia, student protests began in November 2024. Croatian media closely followed the events, reporting daily on various aspects of the protests. The narrative towards the protests in Croatian media should also be viewed through the lens of democracy, particularly the arena of media freedoms, which are incomparable between the two countries. The authoritarian tendencies of Vučić's regime, coupled with historical animosities stemming from past traumas, undoubtedly influence the framing of events in Serbia and the strong support Croatian media gave to the protests. While Croatian media has covered the protests in Serbia on a daily basis, the Croatian government has been considerably more restrained in its public commentary. In this regard, particularly notable was Prime Minister Plenković's statement in September 2025 that Serbia was "on the verge of a civil war" (Buljan 2025). In a sense, this role was assumed by Croatian Member of the European Parliament Tonino Picula, who was appointed in October 2024 as the European Parliament's rapporteur for Serbia. Critical tones from the European Parliament towards Vučić's regime reached their peak in October 2025, with a resolution that represented the most explicit condemnation of Vučić's rule to date, while strongly supporting the narrative of the protesters (European Parliament 2025). In light of this, Vučić and the regime-controlled media in Serbia framed the role of Croatia and Croatian media in a highly hostile manner, accusing them of inciting and promoting a "color revolution." In this context, Picula symbolically represents Croatian policy and, in the criticism of pro-regime media, is frequently labeled a fascist (*ustaša*), despite being a member of the Social Democratic Party (Informer 2025b). An additional trigger for the escalation of tensions comes from Croatia, where in recent months the memory wars and antagonistic discourse have once again intensified, accompanied by right-wing radicalization manifesting itself, among other things, in attacks on the Serbian national minority, with interference and interruptions of Serbian cultural programs (Lasić 2025).

Theoretical framework: media framing, protest paradigms and social movements

Framing has been conceptualised in many ways across communication research, but most accounts converge on understanding it as a process of selection and salience. By highlighting

³ The most significant example of an attempted shift in the official commemoration of the war occurred in 2020, when Deputy Prime Minister Boris Milošević, representing the Serbian minority, participated in the commemoration of Operation Storm in Knin, while Deputy Prime Minister Tomo Medved attended a memorial for Serbian civilians killed in Grubori. In line with this memory politics, Prime Minister Andrej Plenković took part in a memorial in September of the same year for nine Serbian civilians killed in Varivode. This attempt to introduce different commemorative practices, which sought to acknowledge the experiences and memories of the other side, was sharply criticized by the regime of Aleksandar Vučić. Furthermore, in the subsequent years, this practice was not continued in Croatia, meaning that the commemorative practices regarding the war retained its primarily antagonistic character (Vrabec 2020).

certain aspects of “a perceived reality” and linking them together, journalists promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations and treatment recommendations (Entman 1993, 52).

Framing is therefore not merely a stylistic choice but a structuring principle that organises texts and images into coherent interpretive packages. Empirically, news frames can be generic. For example, they may take the form of conflict, human-interest, economic-consequence or morality frames, or they may be issue-specific frames tailored to particular events and episodes (de Vreese 2005; Matthes 2012). De Vreese (2005, 55) distinguishes between frame building, the process through which frames emerge from interactions among political actors, journalists and institutional routines, and frame setting, the effects of those frames on audience interpretations. Across decades of research, content-analytic studies have shown that even highly contextual conflicts tend to be narrated through relatively stable repertoires of frames (Matthes 2009).

In the coverage of protests, framing has been shown to follow a relatively consistent “protest paradigm” that privileges official perspectives, emphasises deviance and disruption, and marginalises protesters’ own voices (McLeod 2007; Detenber et al. 2007; Gitlin 1980). Conflict and law-and-order frames foreground clashes between protesters and police, disruption of traffic or “normal life” and alleged illegality, whereas issue-centered frames highlight grievances, demands and structural injustices. These choices help news coverage define which actors appear as legitimate political subjects and which are cast as deviant, irrational or threatening. Pro-government and loyalist outlets are particularly likely to depict protests as destabilising, externally sponsored or even “terrorist”, while opposition and independent media may instead emphasise protesters’ worthiness, unity and non-violent discipline.

Collective action research further specifies how framing works in contentious politics. Benford and Snow (2000) distinguish three core functions of collective action frames: diagnostic frames identify a problem and assign blame, prognostic frames propose solutions and strategies, and motivational frames provide rationales and calls for action. In protest coverage, these elements are often implicit: news stories signal who or what is responsible for a crisis (corruption, authoritarian leaders, foreign enemies, naïve youth), which remedies are thinkable (resignation, elections, repression) and which groups are called upon to mobilise (“patriots”, “students”, “citizens”). Frames are more likely to resonate when they connect to existing cultural narratives and everyday experience, drawing on familiar symbols, metaphors and stories.

In post-Yugoslav societies, political and media elites often mobilise antagonistic memory, telling stories centred on “our” victims and “their” crimes so that labels such as Ustaše and Četnici function as mnemonic shortcuts that re-activate past traumas and sustain mutually reinforcing Croatian and Serbian narratives of just war versus victimisation (Barkan and Karn 2006; Bar-Tal and Čehajić-Clancy 2004; Pavlaković 2009; Pauković 2021; Kužnar et al. 2023). In this sense, the Serbian–Croatian case goes beyond the general expectation that government-controlled media in competitive authoritarian regimes will use conspiracy theories and external-threat frames to delegitimise domestic opposition. What makes the case analytically relevant is the way in which this familiar authoritarian media logic is connected to a historically charged mnemonic repertoire rooted in the wars of the 1990s and their Second World War antecedents. Croatia therefore does not appear merely as another external actor, but as a symbolically loaded neighbour through which domestic dissent can be recoded as betrayal, foreign interference and a threat to the state. Building on work on symbolic geopolitics, we therefore treat protest coverage as a site where these mnemonic

frames are mapped onto imagined spatial orders such as “Europe” versus “the Balkans” and “our state” versus “hostile neighbours”, with Croatia and Serbia occupying especially salient positions in one another’s media imaginaries (Kolstø 2016; Ramet 2018; Guzina 2023; Bachmann and Pavlaković 2023).

The Serbian student protests are treated as a site where protest paradigms, mnemonic frames and symbolic geopolitics intersect. The 2024–2025 protest wave was not an isolated episode, since Serbia has experienced several cycles of sustained civic contention since 2016, including the “1 of 5 Million” movement of 2018–2019 and protests against electoral fraud following the 2023 elections, during which the regime had already deployed delegitimation strategies such as accusations that protesters were foreign-sponsored traitors (Vladisavljević 2019; Spasojević and Lončar 2023). The current cycle is nevertheless shaped by a particularly concrete and morally powerful trigger, the Novi Sad canopy collapse, which was widely attributed to systemic corruption, as well as by the unprecedented scale of university blockades. In this context pro-government Serbian media often recast them as a foreign-orchestrated “color revolution” drawing on antagonistic wartime memories, while Croatian and independent Serbian outlets frame them as a legitimate democratic struggle supported by Croatia and the EU. Accordingly, the analysis codes Croatian coverage as supportive/sympathetic, neutral/descriptive or antagonistic/hostile towards the protests, and Serbian coverage through a Croatia external-actor frame (solidarity/sympathetic, neutral/descriptive, antagonistic/hostile/accusatory), tracing how media position Croatia within longer-running Serbian–Croatian memory narratives.

Methodology and research design

Analytically, the study follows Entman (1993), de Vreese (2005) and Matthes (2009) in treating frames as configurations of problem definition (what the protests are about), causal attribution (who or what is blamed), moral evaluation and treatment recommendation, including whether responsibility is individualised (specific officeholders, concrete failures such as unsafe infrastructure) or structural (systemic corruption, authoritarian governance). Methodologically, this is operationalised through a dominant-frame analysis at the level of the individual article. Building on Matthes (2009) and related work on frame identification, each news story is treated as constructing an overarching narrative that can be characterised by a dominant frame with regard to the protests and, where relevant, to Croatia’s role. Although multiple framing devices may coexist within a single text, the analysis proceeds from the assumption that news coverage typically organises these elements into one prevailing interpretive direction. Coding one dominant frame per article thus does not deny internal nuance; rather, it is a deliberate strategy to capture the dominant interpretive direction in a way that enables systematic comparison across outlets and across the Croatian–Serbian media space.

Given the centrality of framing to the article’s argument, the empirical analysis follows established standards of content-analytic reliability, including the use of chance-corrected coefficients and variable-level reporting, as recommended by Matthes and Kohring (2008) and Lovejoy et al. (2016). These procedures are necessary to ensure that the identified frames are not artefacts of coder inconsistency but reflect systematic patterns in media narratives about the Serbian student protests, their perceived causes and the alleged role of Croatia as an external actor.

For the Croatian part of the study, two digital news outlets, *Index.hr* and *Direktno.hr*, were selected as contrasting cases in terms of reach and ideological profile. According to the *Digital News Report 2025* for Croatia (Peruško 2025), *Index.hr* is among the most widely used online

news brands in the country, while *Direktno.hr* appears in the lower half of the top fifteen most visited sites; *Index.hr* is generally considered left-leaning, and *Direktno.hr* right-leaning.

The corpus was collected using the aforementioned TakeLab Retriever, an AI-driven semantic search engine (Dukić et al. 2024), covering the period from the day of the Novi Sad canopy collapse, in which sixteen people were killed, to the first anniversary of the tragedy (a continuous thirteen-month interval). All *Index.hr* and *Direktno.hr* articles containing the keyword *prosvjedi* (protests) within this interval were retrieved and then manually screened; only items primarily focused on protests in Serbia were retained. The final corpus comprises N=699 articles from *Index.hr* and N=376 from *Direktno.hr*.

For the framing analysis, a stratified sample was drawn by month of publication within each outlet, and a simple random sample was selected from each monthly stratum in proportion to its size. The final sample for manual frame coding consists of N=200 articles, including N=100 from *Index.hr* and N= 100 from *Direktno.hr*.

For the Serbian part of the study, two online news outlets were selected that occupy contrasting positions in the domestic media landscape: *N1 Serbia* (n1info.rs), commonly categorised as an independent, government-critical news channel and online medium, and *Informer.rs*, a pro-government, tabloid-style outlet. This pairing permits a comparison between coverage produced by a relatively independent newsroom and coverage aligned with government agendas. The temporal scope matches that of the Croatian corpus and covers the period from the day of the Novi Sad canopy collapse to the first-anniversary commemoration, i.e., a continuous thirteen-month interval.

Articles were identified through computational retrieval and systematic web searching, using site-specific queries and Boolean operators to locate items in which Croatia and the Serbian protests were mentioned together. Search strings required the co-occurrence of terms referring to Croatia (e.g. *Hrvatska*, *Hrvat*, and names of key Croatian political actors such as prime minister Andrej Plenković) and to protests in Serbia (e.g. protest, *protesti*); for *Informer.rs*, the strategy additionally included *blokaderi* and related forms, reflecting this outlet's characteristic labeling of protesters. The final Serbian corpus comprises N=45 articles from *N1 Serbia* and N=95 from *Informer.rs*, and the framing analysis is based on the full set of retrieved items.

All articles from Serbian outlets were manually screened to ensure that their primary focus was the wave of student and civic protests in Serbia triggered by the Novi Sad canopy collapse and that Croatia or Croatian actors (state authorities, media, politicians, students, public figures) were explicitly referenced in the text.

After the selection process, one dominant evaluative frame was identified and coded for each article in both corpora. For the Croatian outlets (*Index.hr*, *Direktno.hr*), the analysis focused on a protest-legitimation frame with three categories:

- **supportive/sympathetic:** where protests are presented as justified, necessary or democratically legitimate; students are depicted as peaceful and “worthy” actors defending rights and the rule of law.
- **neutral/descriptive:** factual reporting with low evaluative intensity, largely limited to basic information about events, actors and timing.
- **antagonistic/hostile:** protests are portrayed as disruptive, dangerous or manipulated. In the Croatian context, this antagonistic frame also draws on the

involvement of Serbian “war veterans” and figures associated with “Četnik” narratives: by placing students alongside them, Croatian media can suggest that the protests stem from the same nationalist politics as the Vučić regime rather than offering a clearly distinct democratic alternative

For the Serbian outlets (*N1 Serbia*, *Informer.rs*), the analysis examined a Croatia external-actor frame, i.e. how Croatia is positioned within protest coverage:

- **solidarity/sympathetic:** Croatia or Croatian actors are depicted as allies or supporters of the protesters, or as a democratic reference point.
- **neutral/descriptive:** Croatia is mentioned factually as part of the regional or international environment, without clear positive or negative evaluation.
- **antagonistic/hostile/accusatory:** Croatia is framed as a hostile actor or foreign conspirator, allegedly involved in orchestrating or exploiting the protests, in line with foreign-interference and sovereignty narratives.

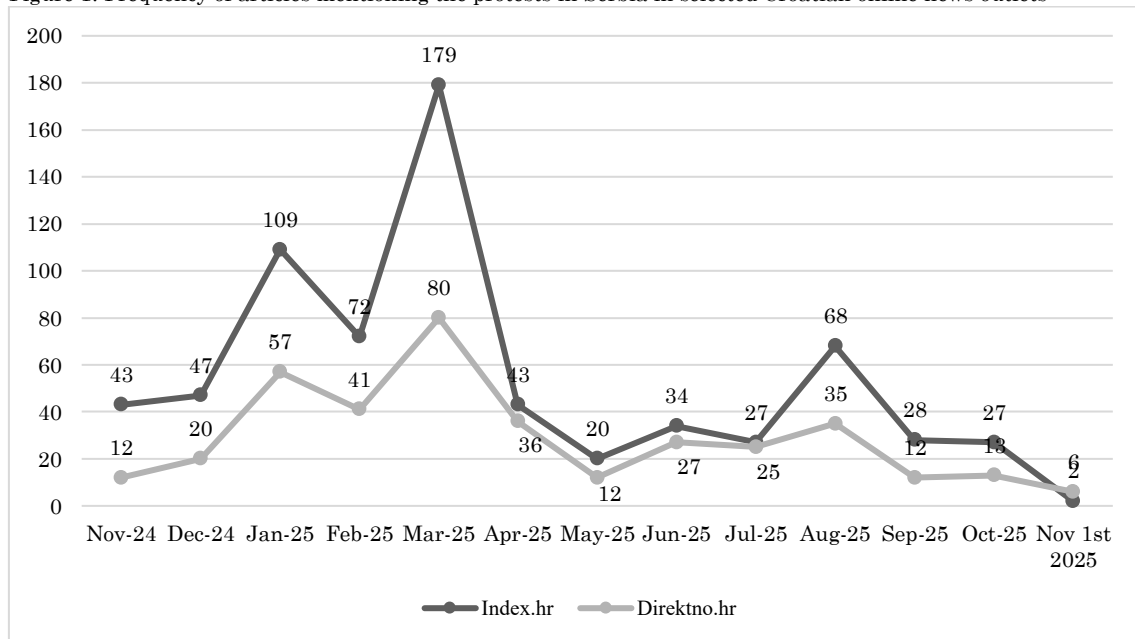
Decision rules for coding followed the dominant-frame principle: the code reflects the evaluative stance that clearly predominates in the article as a whole. Coding was conducted by two authors, and intercoder reliability was assessed using Cohen’s kappa. All κ coefficients fell within the very strong agreement range ($\kappa \approx 0.92$).

Limitations of research design and sampling

Similar to any qualitative-quantitative frame analysis, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the focus on four highly profiled online news outlets, two in Croatia and two in Serbia, means that the findings cannot be generalised to the entire media landscapes of the two countries, especially not to television and local media. Second, the Croatian and Serbian corpora were constructed using different retrieval strategies: the Croatian corpus relies on the keyword *prosvjedi*, potentially excluding articles in which protest events are described peripherally or without explicit labeling, whereas the Serbian corpus includes only those texts in which protests and Croatia co-occur, thereby narrowing the analysis to a specific subset of coverage. Third, for the Croatian outlets, a proportional stratified sample of N=200 articles was drawn from the full corpus, while all N=140 relevant articles were coded for N1 and Informer.rs; as a result, the reported patterns for Croatian media refer to a representative sample rather than the full population. Finally, the analysis is restricted to textual content published online within a 13-month period anchored in the Novi Sad station-canopy collapse; it does not consider visual framing, audience reception, or shifts in protest coverage beyond this specific protest cycle.

The empirical analysis begins with Croatian online media. First, it is important to examine the temporal distribution of news coverage in order to assess how salient the Serbian protests were in Croatian online media during the selected research period. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the monthly distribution of articles in *Index.hr* and *Direktno.hr* closely tracks key turning points in the protest cycle: coverage gradually intensifies in late 2024 and then spikes sharply in January 2025, when mass student demonstrations, university blockades and the resignation of the Serbian prime minister turned the crisis into a major political event. A second, even higher peak in March 2025 coincides with the controversy over the alleged use of a “sonic weapon” against protesters in Belgrade and the subsequent reactions of EU institutions and regional actors (*Index Vijesti* 2025b). After March, reporting remains continuous but clearly less intense, with a smaller resurgence in August 2025 linked to renewed clashes, blockades and debates about the long-term sustainability of the Vučić government.

Figure 1: Frequency of articles mentioning the protests in Serbia in selected Croatian online news outlets



Source: Author's own illustration

The next step in analysis is to examine how *Index.hr* and *Direktno.hr* framed the Serbian protests, the key actors involved, and the position assigned to Croatia. In a frame analysis conducted by the authors, a constructed sub-sample of N=100 articles per outlet was coded, yielding the following distribution of frames. For *Index.hr*, N=79 articles are coded as supportive/sympathetic, N=19 as neutral/descriptive, and N=2 as antagonistic/hostile. For *Direktno.hr*, N=90 articles are coded as supportive/sympathetic, N=10 as neutral/descriptive, with N=0 antagonistic/hostile items. Antagonistic framing thus appears only exceptionally in the Croatian corpus and is confined to two *Index.hr* pieces that largely relay elite rhetoric.

For example, one of only two reports in the Croatian corpus coded as antagonistic/hostile is an *Index.hr* article based on a radio debate between Tonino Picula and HDZ Member of European Parliament (MEP) Tomislav Sokol. Here, antagonistic cues enter through Sokol's reading of the mobilisations: according to him, "students... invoked Miloš Obilić, Kosovo myths and spoke of a 'resurrected Serbia'", leading him to conclude that "it is an illusion that there is a critical mass in Serbia that would renounce Greater Serbian nationalism" and that he sees "no big difference between them and Vučić" (Index Vijesti 2025a). By giving substantial space to this interpretation, the article frames the protests as a continuation of "Greater Serbian politics" rather than a democratic break and is coded as antagonistic/hostile.

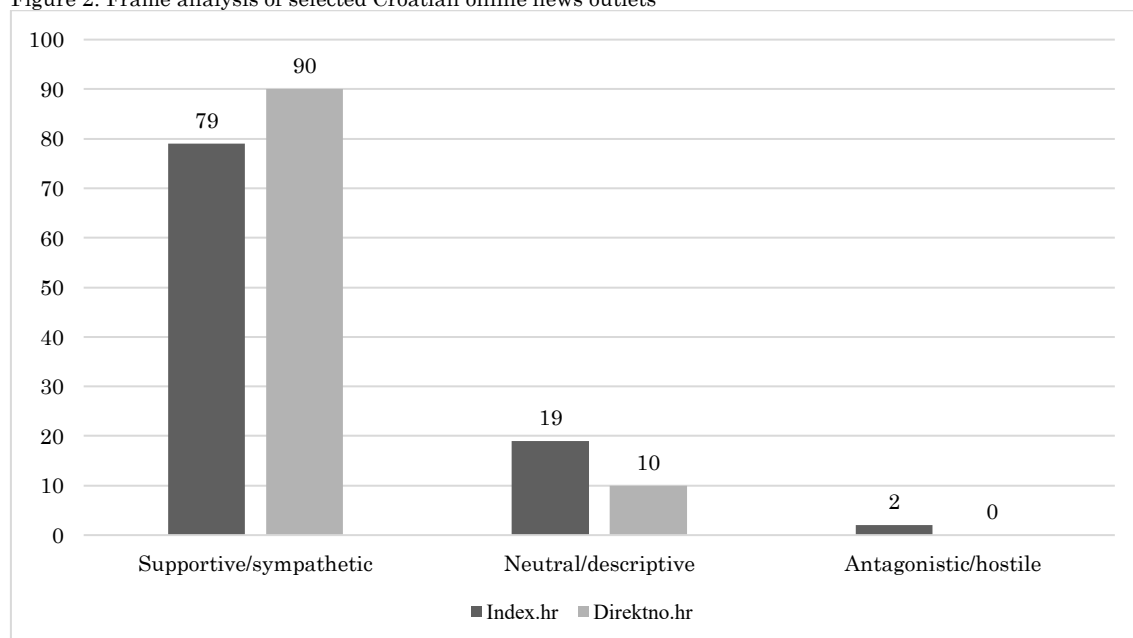
On the other hand, a clear example of the supportive/sympathetic report is *Index.hr*'s "Over 40 faculties in Serbia blocked, support also sent from Croatia", which frames the protests through worthiness, breadth and cross-border solidarity (Hina 2024). The lead stresses that students "continue... blockades of faculties and rectorates" with "ever more massive support from civil society" and explains that the wave of protests was "triggered... by violence against participants in commemorative gatherings" after the collapse of the Novi Sad station canopy (Hina 2024). Crucially for the Croatian dimension, the article highlights that "students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka also sent their support to colleagues in Serbia", calling for a "symbolic 15-minute silence" both to honour the victims and to support

Serbian students. This is coded as a supportive frame: the protests are tied to legitimate grief, non-violent tactics and transnational student solidarity.

In the *Direktno.hr* articles, an example of a more ambivalent but overall neutral/descriptive frame in an interview with political analyst Žarko Puhovski on the Serbian protests (Direktno.hr 2025). Puhovski notes that the months of marches and demonstrations “have not reached any coherent point except ‘remove Vučić so that someone else can come’”, while at the same time stressing that “there is no doubt that Aleksandar Vučić scandalously violates the Serbian constitution”. He also remarks that “from a Croatian perspective, the right lives in desperate fear that something genuinely positive might happen in Serbia because it has a complex that the Serbs will again overtake Croatia in the eyes of Europe, and the left has an almost equally desperate fear that nothing good will happen, so it invents things that are not there” (Direktno.hr 2025).

Because the piece distributes criticism across Vučić, the protesters, and Croatian observers, without clearly endorsing or condemning the protests, it is coded as neutral/descriptive rather than supportive or antagonistic.

Figure 2: Frame analysis of selected Croatian online news outlets



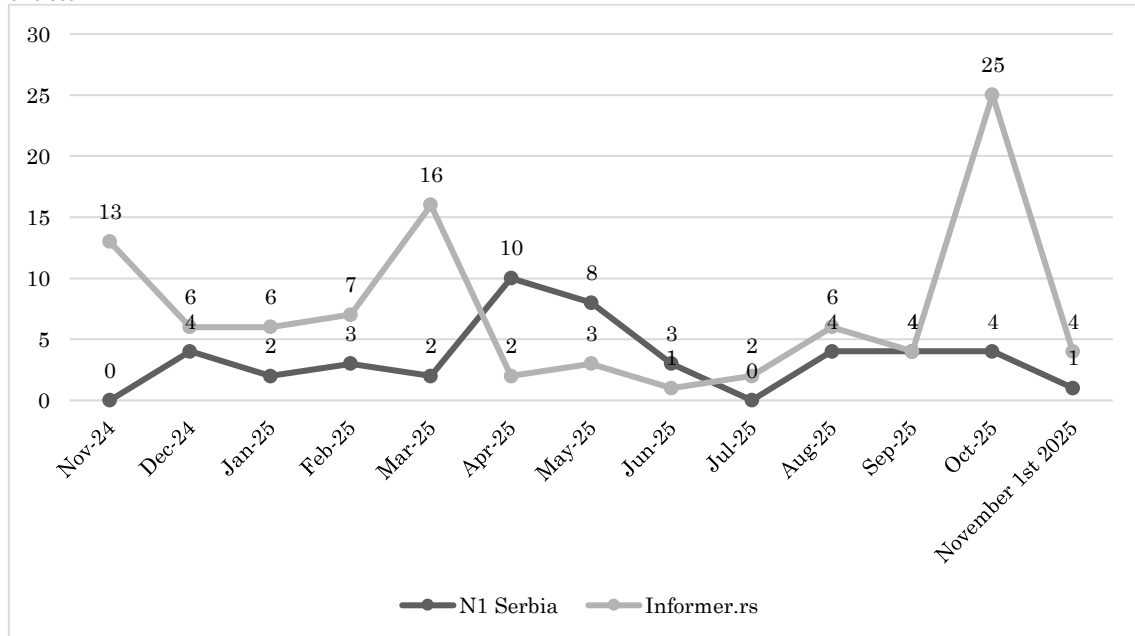
Source: Author's own illustration

After the examination of Croatian news outlets, the analysis now turns to selected Serbian outlets and shows how often, and in what contexts, Serbian student protests appear together with references to Croatia.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the monthly frequency of articles in *N1 Serbia* and *Informer.rs* that simultaneously mention the Serbian student protests and Croatia is plotted for the same period as in the Croatian corpus. *Informer.rs* publishes clearly more such items and exhibits much sharper fluctuations, with early peaks in late 2024 and March 2025 and a pronounced spike in October 2025, on the eve of the first anniversary of the Novi Sad tragedy, when it runs an extended series of headlines presenting Croatian actors, media and politicians as instigators, coordinators or cheerleaders of “blockaders”, “terrorists” and a supposed plan to “burn” or “ruin” Serbia. *N1*’s curve is lower and more concentrated: after an initial cluster in December 2024 linked to solidarity statements by Croatian singer Severina and Croatian

students, its coverage peaks in April and May 2025, when it reports on the expulsion of Croatian citizens, student visits between the two countries and debates in EU institutions. From June onwards, *N1*'s frequency steadily declines, whereas *Informer.rs* continues to generate intermittent surges around moments of political escalation.

Figure 3: Frequency of articles linking the Serbian student protests with Croatia in selected Serbian online news outlets

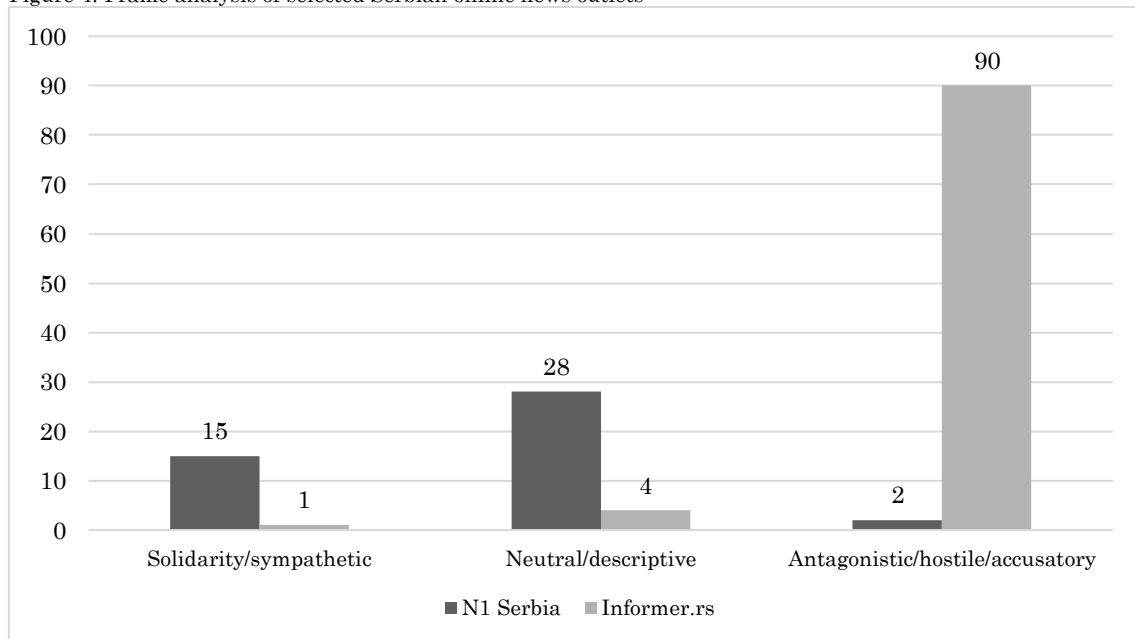


Source: Author's own illustration

The comparison of *N1 Serbia* and *Informer.rs* reveals sharply divergent portrayals of Croatia within their reporting on the Serbian student protests. As shown in Figure 4, *N1 Serbia* predominantly situates Croatia in a solidarity-oriented or sympathetic light (N=15), with a larger portion of items offering neutral or purely descriptive references (N=28), and only a marginal number adopting an antagonistic or accusatory stance (N=2). *Informer.rs* presents the opposite pattern: merely one article frames Croatia in a solidaristic manner and four offer neutral descriptions, while an overwhelming majority (N=90) deploy antagonistic, hostile or accusatory framings.

This distribution indicates that *N1* predominantly presents Croatia either neutrally or as a supportive external actor, most often in reports on cross-border student contacts, diplomatic disputes and reactions from Croatian public figures. *Informer.rs*, in turn, relies overwhelmingly on antagonistic narratives in which Croatia is constructed as a hostile power or foreign conspirator. In 21 of the N=95 *Informer.rs* articles, this antagonism is reinforced through explicit Ustaša-related headlines that link Croatia, and especially Croatian politicians and media, to the Nazi-allied Ustaša movement, depicting them as sponsors, coordinators or cheerleaders of the “blockaders” and “terrorists” allegedly seeking to “burn” or “ruin” Serbia.

Figure 4: Frame analysis of selected Serbian online news outlets



Source: Author's own illustration

These aggregate patterns in Figure 4 are echoed in specific news items. In *N1 Serbia*, a particularly clear illustration of the solidarity/sympathetic external-actor frame appears in the report “Serbian students welcomed in Virovitica: ‘You are an example that it is worth fighting for justice regardless of borders, you inspire the whole region.’” (N1 2025). Croatian students and citizens greet the “marathon” protesters as partners in a shared struggle, emphasising that “this is not only a sporting feat, but a powerful message of the struggle for a more just society” and telling them that “today you are an example that it is worth fighting for justice regardless of borders. Virovitica stands with you.” In this narrative, Croatia is positioned as an ally that acknowledges, and seeks to learn from, the protesters’ democratic agency.

A neutral/descriptive frame is exemplified by the article “Students from Croatia visited Belgrade: tabloids followed them, Vučić accused them, and they received a ‘gift’ at the border”, also from *N1 Serbia* (Beta/N1 Zagreb 2024). The report reconstructs how a routine student exchange between Zagreb’s Club of Electrical Engineering Students (*Klub studenata elektrotehnike*, KSET) and Belgrade’s Technical Student’s Group (*Klub Studenata Tehnike*, KST) became the subject of tabloid accusations of espionage, noting that Informer published the visitors’ names, photos and fabricated labels. One sentence highlights the group’s reaction: “it is difficult to describe the feeling of dread and discomfort our members had when, in the middle of a foreign city, they learned that they had become a public target... because of a tourist visit and a meeting with colleagues” (Beta/N1 Zagreb 2024).

The piece also cites Croatian prime minister Andrej Plenković, who dismisses the espionage claims as “ridiculous, a joke”. Croatia thus features mainly as the students’ point of origin and as a diplomatic reference, while the article centres on documenting the media scandal — hence the neutral/descriptive coding.

Informer.rs, by contrast, provides textbook instances of the antagonistic/hostile/accusatory frame. In the article “Ustaša media call for the overthrow of Serbia! Croatian Index has supported opposition violence and exploited the tragedy!” (Informer 2024), Croatian outlets

are labelled “Ustaša media” and accused of trying to ignite unrest: “the Ustaša media want to set the country on fire and address directly those in Serbia who like those Ustaša media”. Croatia and Croatian media are thus depicted as malevolent external actors supposedly working to destabilise Serbia and instrumentalising the protests for hostile purposes.

Conclusion

The new wave of protests in Serbia, which began with the collapse of a canopy in November 2024, generated significant coverage in Croatian media and is likely to influence the dynamics of Croatian–Serbian relations. As briefly outlined in the introduction, there have been both better and worse periods in Croatian–Serbian relations since the wars of the 1990s, with the latter almost always ending in the reinforcement of historical traumas and the reproduction of antagonistic discourse. Vučić’s promotion of a politics of memory aligned with wartime antagonisms and narratives has marked the beginning of a new phase of tense official relations between Belgrade and Zagreb. Completely opposing interpretations of the events of the 1990s, as well as disagreements over certain aspects of the Second World War, continue to undermine and complicate attempts to improve relations and resolve open issues.

Despite the extremely poor relations between political elites, cultural, media, scientific and sports exchanges, as well as everyday cooperation, remain significant and are less burdened by historical legacy. This connection is further illustrated by a media analysis showing that selected Croatian media outlets reported frequently on events in Serbia, at times reaching an average of one to two articles per day since the start of the protests. In the vast majority of cases, both left-wing (*Index.hr*) and right-wing (*Direktno.hr*) Croatian media supported the student protests, while a smaller number of articles remained neutral. The Croatian media discourse clearly indicates that the practices and narratives of Vučić’s regime are seen as highly unacceptable and empirically unconvincing in Croatian media analyses.

On the other hand, the analysed pro-regime media in Serbia (*Informer.rs*) produced a strongly hostile discourse towards Croatia, portraying it as a key external enemy and a participant in the “colour revolution”. In this framing, Croatia and “Ustaša media” are frequently presented as central actors in a broader conspiracy against the Serbian state. The analysed opposition media (*N1 Serbia*) did not accept the regime’s claim that Croatia was an external enemy and participant in the colour revolution. The results show a sharp polarisation in attitudes towards Croatia: while *Informer.rs* regularly employs extremely negative and conspiratorial frames, *N1 Serbia* predominantly offers neutral or positive depictions, often highlighting cross-border solidarity and regional implications of the protests.

This media research also demonstrates how the protests are portrayed within a broader geopolitical narrative in which Croatia reinforces its self-image as a post-conflict European success story and symbolically distances itself from Serbia’s ongoing internal struggles, such as its unresolved nationalist legacy, its fraught European Union (EU) accession path and its alignment with Russia.

Note on authors:

Davor Pauković is a full professor at the Faculty of Media and Communications, University of Dubrovnik. He teaches courses in contemporary world and Croatian history, as well as the history of political ideas and ideologies. His research focuses on memory studies and contemporary history, particularly the breakup of Yugoslavia, political transition, media, and Croatian-Serbian relations.

Marko Roško is a Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Media and Public Relations, University of Dubrovnik, and a PhD student in Media and Communication at University North, Croatia. His research interests include political communication, journalism and online media, media framing, disinformation

and fact-checking, and contemporary information disorder. He is particularly interested in media representations of political and socially contested issues.

References

- B92. 2007. Tadić se izvinio građanima Hrvatske. *B92*, 24 June 2007. Retrieved from: https://www.b92.net/o/ifo/vesti/index?yyyy=2007&mm=06&dd=24&nav_category=11&nav_id=252551.
- Bachmann, Klaus, and Vjeran Pavlaković. 2023. Beyond Serb–Croat apologies: Testing a model of political reconciliation in post-war Croatia. *Southeastern Europe* 47(2–3), 265–295.
- Barkan, Elazar, and Alexander Karn (eds.). 2006. *Taking wrongs seriously: Apologies and reconciliation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Snježana Čehajić-Clancy. 2004. From collective victimhood to social reconciliation: Outlining a conceptual framework, in *War, community, and social change: Collective experiences in the former Yugoslavia*, edited by Spini, Dario / Elcherroth, Guy, and Dinka Čorkalo Biruški. New York: Springer, 125–136.
- Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow. 2000. Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, 611–639.
- Berger, Stefan, and Wulf Kansteiner. 2021. Agonistic perspectives on the memory of war: An introduction, in *Agonistic memory and the legacy of 20th century wars in Europe*, edited by Berger, Stefan, and Wulf Kansteiner. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–11.
- Beta/N1 Zagreb. 2024. Studenti iz Hrvatske posetili Beograd: Tabloidi ih pratili, Vučić optužio, na carini dobili ‘poklon’. *N1 Serbia*, 30 December 2024. Retrieved from: <https://n1info.rs/region/studenti-iz-hrvatske-posetili-beograd-tabloidi-ih-pratili-vucic-optuzio-na-carini-dobili-poklon/>.
- Bieber, Florian. 2018. Patterns of competitive authoritarianism in the Western Balkans. *East European Politics* 34(3), 337–354.
- Buljan, Petra. 2025. Plenković se osvrnuo na Thompsona, pa poručio: Srbija je na rubu građanskog rata. *Dnevnik.hr*, 1 September 2025. Retrieved from: <https://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/premijer-o-prosirenju-eu-podrzavam-ali-kandidati-se-moraju-politicki-stabilizirati---932259.html>.
- Bull, Anna Cento, and Hans Lauge Hansen. 2016. On agonistic memory. *Memory Studies* 9(4), 393–394.
- de Vreese, Claes H. 2005. News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal* 13(1), 51–62.
- Detenber, Benjamin H. / Gotlieb, Melissa R. / McLeod, Douglas M., and Olga Malinkina. 2007. Frame intensity effects of television news stories about a high-visibility protest issue. *Mass Communication and Society* 10(4), 439–460.
- Direktno.hr. 2025. Puhovski prozvao hrvatsku desnicu: ‘Žive u očaju zbog kompleksa da će ih Srbi prestići’. *Direktno.hr*, 1 July 2025. Retrieved from: <https://direktno.hr/eu-i-svijet/puhovski-prozvao-hrvatsku-desnicu-zive-u-ocaju-zbog-kompleksa-da-ce-ih-srbi-prestici-374790/>.
- Dukić, David / Petričević, Marin / Ćurković, Sven, and Jan Šnajder. 2024. TakeLab Retriever: AI-driven search engine for articles from Croatian news outlets. Retrieved from: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2411.19718>.
- Đureinović, Jelena / Kandić, Nataša / Milekić, Sven, and Vjeran Pavlaković. 2020. *Reconciliation and official memory politics: Commemorations of the victory and of the victims of Operation Storm in Croatia and Serbia*. RECOM Reconciliation Network. (REKOM mreža pomirenja). Retrieved from: <https://www.recom.link/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Commemorations-of-the-victory-and-of-the-victims-of-Operation-Storm.pdf>.
- Entman, Robert M. 1993. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43(4), 51–58.

- European Parliament. 2025. *Polarisation and increased repression in Serbia, one year after the Novi Sad tragedy*. 2025/2917(RSP), RC-BIO-0459/2025, 22 October 2025. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-10-2025-0459_EN.html.
- Gitlin, Todd. 1980. *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gordy, Eric. 2013. *Guilt, responsibility, and denial*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Guzina, Dejan. 2023. Serbia after Yugoslavia: Caught between geopolitics and liberal promises. *Geopolitics* 28(4), 1589–1610.
- Hina. 2024. Preko 40 fakulteta u Srbiji u blokadi. Podršku im poslali i iz Hrvatske. *Index.hr*, 11 December 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/preko-40-fakulteta-u-srbiji-u-blokadi-podrsku-im-poslali-i-iz-hrvatske/2623455.aspx>.
- Index Vijesti. 2025a. HDZ-ovac: Na prosvjedima zazivaju Miloša Obilića, kosovske mitove i 'vaskršlu Srbiju'. *Index.hr*, 30 June 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/hdzovac-na-prosvjedima-zazivaju-milosa-obilica-kosovske-mitove-i-vaskrsnu-srbiju/2685428.aspx>.
- . 2025b. U Srbiji tvrde da je protiv prosvjednika korišten zvučni top. Što je to? *Index.hr*, 15 March 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/u-srbiji-tvrde-da-je-protiv-prosvjednika-koristen-zvucni-top-sto-je-to/2651803.aspx>.
- Informer. 2025a. Blokaderi ustaše planiraju da dovedu Severinu da peva u Srbiji! Uglas poručuju: Srbi su genocidni! *Informer*, 19 August 2025. Retrieved from: <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1044807/severina-blokaderi-genocid-srebrenica>.
- . 2025b. Skandal nad skandalima: Ustaša Picula opravdao teroristički napad u Beogradu - njegova izjava ledi krv u žilama. *Informer*, 23 October 2025. Retrieved from: <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1060652/tonino-picula-blokader-terorista-nasilje>.
- . 2024. Ustaški mediji pozivaju na rušenje Srbije! Hrvatski Index podržao nasilje opozicije i zloupotrebu tragedije! *Informer*, 5 November 2024. Retrieved from: <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/959322/ustase-hrvatska-tragedija-u-novom-sadu>.
- Kasianov, Georgiy. 2022. Challenges of antagonistic memory: Scholars versus politics and war. *Memory Studies* 15(6), 1295–1298.
- Kolstø, Pål (ed.). 2016. *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: Representations of self and other*. London: Routledge.
- Kužnar, Andriana / Odak, Stipe, and Danijela Lucić (eds.). 2023. *Jasenovac concentration camp: An unfinished past*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Lasić, Igor. 2025. Srbi kao kolateralna žrtva previranja na hrvatskoj desnici. *Deutsche Welle*, 12 November 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/hr/srbi-kao-kolateralna-%C5%BErtva-previranja-na-hrvatskoj-desnici/a-74704819>.
- Ljubojević, Ana. 2019. Remembering the Hague: The impact of international criminal justice on memory practices in Croatia, in *Framing the nation and collective identity in Croatia*, edited by Pavlaković, Vjeran, and Davor Pauković. London: Routledge, 177–193.
- Lovejoy, Jennette / Watson, Brendan R. / Shapiro, Dmitriy Y., and Daniel Riffe. 2016. Three decades of reliability in communication content analyses: Reporting of reliability statistics and coefficient levels in three top journals. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 93(4), 1135–1159.
- Matthes, Jörg. 2012. Framing politics: An integrative approach. *American Behavioral Scientist* 56(3), 247–259.
- . 2009. What's in a frame? A content analysis of media framing studies in the world's leading communication journals, 1990–2005. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 86(2), 349–367.
- Matthes, Jörg, and Matthias Kohring. 2008. The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication* 58(2), 258–279.
- McLeod, Douglas M. 2007. News coverage and social protest: How the media's protest paradigm exacerbates social conflict. *Journal of Dispute Resolution* 2007, 185–194.

- N1. 2025. Srpski studenti dočekani u Virovitici: 'Primer ste da se za pravdu vredi boriti bez obzira na granice, nadahnjujete ceo region'. *N1 Serbia*, 26 April 2025. Retrieved from: <https://n1info.rs/vesti/srpski-studenti-docekani-u-virovitici-primer-ste-da-se-za-pravdu-vredi-boriti-bez-obzira-na-granice-nadahnjujete-ceo-region/>.
- Novosti. 2025. Užas u Vrbasu: Ustaše blokaderi bacali topovske udare, baklje i cigle na građane koji su branili svoju stranku. *Novosti*, 12 August 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1517615/uzas-vrbasu-ustase-blokaderi-bacali-topovske-udare-baklje-cigle-gradjane-koji-branili-svoju-stranku>.
- Pauković, Davor. 2021. Hrvatsko-srpski odnosi u sjeni trauma 20. stoljeća: Sjećanja na operaciju Oluja, in *Hrvatsko-srpski odnosi u 20. veku*, edited by Gavrilović, Darko. Novi Sad: Centar za istoriju, demokratiju i pomirenje, 7–27.
- . 2008. Predizborna kampanja u Hrvatskoj 1990. u svjetlu hrvatskog i srpskog novinstva. *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 40(1), 13–30.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran. 2009. From conflict to commemoration: Serb–Croat relations and the anniversaries of Operation Storm, in *Serb–Croat relations: Political cooperation and national minorities*, edited by Gavrilović, Darko. Novi Sad: CHDR, 73–82.
- Pavlaković, Vjeran, and Davor Pauković (eds.). 2019. *Framing the nation and collective identities: Political rituals and cultural memory of the twentieth-century traumas in Croatia*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Peruško, Zrinjka. 2025. Croatia, in *Digital News Report 2025*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Retrieved from: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025/croatia>.
- Popov, Nebojša (ed.). 2002. *Srpska strana rata. Trauma i katarza u istorijskom pamćenju*. Beograd: Samizdat B92.
- Ramet, Sabrina Petra. 2018. *Balkan Babel: The disintegration of Yugoslavia from the death of Tito to the fall of Milosevic*. 4th ed. New York: Routledge.
- RTS. 2025. Vučić: Mogućnost da prevremeni izbori budu u aprilu, maju ili decembru sledeće godine. *RTS*, 12 September 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.rts.rs/lat/vesti/politika/5787537/aleksandar-vucic-carli-kirk-nepal-srbija.html>.
- Slobodna Dalmacija. 2010. Tadić se ispričao za Ovčaru, Josipović za Paulin Dvor. *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 4 November 2010. Retrieved from: <https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/tadic-se-ispricao-za-ovcaru-josipovic-za-paulin-dvor-foto-115914>.
- Spasojević, Dušan, and Jelena Lončar. 2023. Facing protests in Serbia: Patterns of new competitive authoritarianism. *Democratization* 30(7), 1380–1399.
- Vladisavljević, Nebojša. 2019. *Uspon i pad demokratije posle Petog oktobra*. Beograd: Arhipelag.
- Vrabec, Vedran. 2020. Vučić opet priča o Oluji: 'To je najveće etničko čišćenje u Europi nakon 2. svjetskog rata'. *Telegram*, 7 August 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegram.hr/politika-kriminal/vucic-opet-prica-o-olui-to-je-najvece-etnicko-ciscenje-u-europi-nakon-2-svjetskog-rata/>.
- Wodak, Ruth / Cillia, Rudolf de / Reisigl, Martin, and Karin Liebhart. 2009. *The discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Zastupnički dom Hrvatskoga državnog sabora. 2000. *Deklaracija o Domovinskom ratu*. Narodne novine, br. 102/200, adopted 13 October 2000, published 17 October 2000. Retrieved from: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_10_102_1987.html.
- Zastupnički dom Sabora Republike Hrvatske. 1996. *Zakon o potvrđivanju Sporazuma o normalizaciji odnosa između Republike Hrvatske i Savezne Republike Jugoslavije*. Narodne novine, br. 10/1996, 26 September 1996. Retrieved from: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/medunarodni/1996_09_10_66.html.