

Abstract

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**Media framing of "Stop the Dictatorship" protest in Serbia:
Examining the protest paradigm in
polarized media landscape**

Interplay between media and social movements or public display of dissent has been mostly studied within the protest paradigm. General tendency of media to marginalize protestors, portray them negatively and delegitimize their claims, has been formulated as the protest paradigm (Chan & Lee, 1984). Frames and framing analysis have played central position in the protest paradigm and different marginalizing devices have been identified and well-studied (Baylor, 1996; Dardis, 2006; Watkins, 2001; Weaver & Scacco, 2013). Lately, changes in the media and social environments have led scholars to revise the protest paradigm, especially by considering the role of social and alternative media (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Lee, 2014; Reul et al., 2016).

This paper aims to examine the protest paradigm in relation to the media coverage of the protest "Stop the dictatorship", held in Serbia during April 2017. Organized through social media, the country wide protests were triggered by Aleksandar Vučić's victory at the presidential elections, as he was accused of rigging the elections and manipulating independent institutions and media. Using frame

analysis, this paper examines how 11 news media (newspapers, TV and online media) portrayed the protests, paying special attention to de/legitimizing devices, performativity frames, historical frames and anti/democratic frames. In examining the protest paradigm, we focus on the country specific factors, specifically its media and social polarization, and on the representation of the social media born protests in the mainstream media.