

MEDIA PORTRAIT OF DRUG LORDS IN SERBIA*

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Triggered by growing influence of media, whose role transformed from “those who transmit an info on reality” to “those who create reality(ies)”, this paper tried to explore how media in Serbia report on persons who have been publicly labelled as drug lords by representatives of relevant institutions or other prominent government officials, and how their media portraits framed by journalists’ work differ from those created by users of social networks. In an effort to identify the main contours of media portrait of drug lords in Serbia, the authors based their research on the analysis of media portraits of three persons publicly labelled as drug lords by the high-level state officials. The research included the content analysis of news published on the portals of the most circulated daily newspapers in Serbia, as well as the posts on the social network Twitter over a five-year period, focusing on the rule of law and the social context in order to explore the public discourse on this phenomenon, traditionally perceived as an “evil against people/society”. The research has shown surprising order in terms of issue prioritization, which challenges the stereotypes on drug lords as a not only legal, but social “evil against people/society” phenomenon. Furthermore, the results have shown the significant difference between on how drug lords have been portrayed in the newspapers compared with the approach of Twitter users.

KEY WORDS: *drug lords / media portrait / social networks / media and crime*

* This paper has been drafted as a part of the ongoing Research Project “Public Discourse on drug lords in Serbia” started in January 2020.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Reality in media or media reality

In only a few decades, a media turned their role from “those who transfer an info on reality” to “those who create reality(ies).” Affected by this, the world's population has crossed the path from uninformed, through informed to misinformed. A rapid development of social media has blurred the borders between the real life and the illusion created online, enabling everyone to be undisturbed and at the same time, both in the role of the one who creates information and the one who transmits or consumes it. By watering these borders, in parallel with the digitalization of print media and publishing their content on social networks, it has been created a phenomenon which, although dating back to ancient times and oral transfer of information, nowadays actually results in the same way: countless times transmitted and freely interpreted information, (as in the game of deaf phones), gets grotesque interpretations and transforms into disinformation. This process is far more pronounced in situations in which (unfortunately often today) the initial information lacks quality and content, due to the unprofessionalism of journalists, but also due to various inappropriate influences under which the information is created. Unlike ancient times, when the process of turning information into misinformation took days, weeks, and even months, into “just a click” epoch, this is happening at a flywheel speed.

Aware of the described mechanism, influential actors on the public scene try to put the process of creating and transmitting information under their own influence.¹ In line with the Agenda-Setting theory of the media, which explains the power of mass media to raise the significance of an event or issue in the public's mind, through editorial emphasis and sustained coverage of such an event (Cohen 1963; Severin, Tankard 2001; Watson 2003; McCombs 2004; Kioussis, Wu 2008), fitting any novelty into an appropriate political or business context and obtaining an interpretation that brings political points or economic gain has become an imperative that armies of professionals are working to achieve. The “media machine” with equal dedication “grinds” and processes information about the latest celebrity outfit and the pandemic across the world. Watering of the boundary between entertainment and what is the core of social values by filtering everything through the same filters of politicization and monetization, has resulted in the ultimate recipients of information being no longer able to properly prioritize and consume the news that reaches them. Media prioritize and deprioritize issues and construct heroes and antiheroes (enemies). Finally, media are frequently accused of deliberately lying to the public (Haller, Holt 2018: 1669).

1.2. Drug related issues in media

Over the past decades reporting on drug related issues in print and other media has been marked by exaggeration, distortion, inaccuracy, sensationalism (Coomber et al., 2000: 217), bias and narrow framing (Hughes, Lancaster, Spicer, 2011).

Academia was greatly interested into the representation of drugs, drug use and drug production and trafficking. Attention was primarily dedicated to drug users and their

¹ Because a control might be an over-ambitious goal even for those in whose hands lies huge financial or political capital.

stereotypical media depiction. These notions go as far back as the early 1960s, when Becker (1963) showed how marijuana users were labelled as 'outsiders' and drew appropriate attention to the media for their role in this process. Young (1971) indicated that the mass media created 'fantasy notions' around drug takers and the consequence of deviancy amplification that was aided by this. Downes (2017[1977]) asserted that the media portray the drug addict as a 'folk-devil', whilst Critcher (2003) has highlighted the way in which Rave culture and Ecstasy use was responded to and the media's influence on this process in the creation of a possibly unique (or even hybrid) 'moral panic'.²

On the other side of the media spectrum are drug dealers, who are depicted as personification of evil preying on the weak and naive in society. Drug traffickers are constructed as dangerous, out of control, and a threat to the nation, the family (Boyd, 2002: 397). When the media report on the drug war, they do so in a predictably breathless, over-hyped, sensationalist manner (Schack, 2011: 150), which promotes worst case scenarios as the norm and distorts drug issues in the media (Reinarman, Duskin, 1999).

Media reporting on drug related issues is frequently seen as one of the key factors for defining public opinion and setting policies regarding drugs (Noto et al., 2006: 1263). Several academic studies (see Chiricos, 1996; Fan, 1996; Levine, Reinarman, 1988; Orcutt, Turner, 1993; Reinarman, Levine, 1997) have highlighted how the more the print media publish stories linking the words 'drugs' and 'crisis' the more public opinion would regard drugs as one of the country's major problems.

In relation to crime and drug use, research has shown that public concern is often directly proportional to the amount of media emphasis placed on the issue, and not the magnitude of the problem in broader society (Beckett, 1994; Lancaster et al., 2011).³ Studies suggest that drug related issues will tend to emerge on the media agenda in relation to crime, deviance and retribution. Framings emphasize drug use as an issue of "crime and deviance", an act committed by "rebellious people", "gangs" or by people that deserve punishment (Bell, 1985; Blood & McCallum, 2005; Teece & Makkai, 2000; Watts, 2003). The media focus predominantly on the criminal aspects of drugs and drug use – research into the media coverage of illicit drugs has shown that roughly 50% of the overall coverage is represented by criminal stories about illicit drug production, trafficking and sales, or secondary crime (Acevedo, 2007; Noto, Pinsky, Mastroianni, 2006). O'Connell (1999) noted that media influence the perception of crime (as well as drug-related crime) by presenting it in four ways: a) by more frequently reporting extreme or atypical crimes; b) by giving a lot of space to extreme crimes; c) by choosing mostly crimes involving vulnerable victims and invulnerable offenders; d) by being pessimistic about the justice system.

² In his seminal work on the subject, Cohen (2002[1972]) defined moral panic as: "A condition, episode, person or group of persons [that] emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to." (2002: 1)

³ Except for agenda setting and defining public interest, which is the most pervasive, Lancaster and associates enlist additional mechanisms through which media could influence audience: framing issues through selection and salience; indirectly shaping individual and community attitudes toward risks; feeding into political debate and decision making (2011: 398).

1.3. Media discourse on drug lords in Serbia

In the recent years some authors speculate that media representation on drug related issues tends to be disproportionately engineered towards specific groups and that this trend has considerable ramifications within both criminal justice and wider socio-political landscapes (Taylor, 2008). Bearing this in mind, the overall objective of this article is to explore how media in Serbia report on persons who have been publicly labelled as drug lords by representatives of relevant institutions or other prominent government officials, and how their media portraits framed by journalists' work differ from those created by users of social networks. The research included the content analysis of news published on the portals of the most circulated daily newspapers in Serbia, as well as posts on the social network Twitter over a five-year period, focusing on the rule of law and the social context.

2. METHODOLOGY

As earlier mentioned, results presented in this paper represent just a part of findings obtained as a result of the comprehensive Research Project on media discourse on drug lords in Serbia which has started in early 2020. In addition to the abovementioned goals, this wider research also is exploring linkages between the legal status/conviction and the public portraits of drug lords and public perception of drug lords between various social groups. This wider approach has also influenced the sampling process and selection of the research methods.

2.1. Sampling

2.1.1. The “drug lords”

Considering an earlier mentioned power of media to prioritize and deprioritize issues and construct heroes, antiheroes and enemies and create reality itself, but also in an effort to determine the difference in media treatment of drug lords whose guilty has been proven in the criminal proceedings and persons publicly labelled as drug lords, but charges against them have been dismissed or they have been acquitted, the authors based their research on the analysis of media portraits of three persons publicly labelled as drug lords in Serbia over the past five years, where criminal proceedings against them ended in the three different ways mentioned above. Having this in mind, we focused on the three persons, Darko Šarić, Dragoslav Kosmajac and Filip Korać, the most media exposed persons publicly labelled as drug lords by the high ranked state officials, analysing their media and social media appearance within the five years period January 2015-March 2020.⁴

Darko Šarić, drug lord from Pljevlja, Montenegro, caught the eye of the public for the first time in October 2009, when media reported that 2.8 tons of cocaine was seized by Uruguayan police forces on the yacht near Montevideo. Two people were arrested and the trace led to Šarić. The drug load was intercepted as part of the “Balkan Warrior”,

⁴ In March 2020 it has been publicly announced that Dragoslav Kosmajac had been infected by COVID 19. Initially, the authors intended only to make brake in the analyses during the state of emergency caused by COVID19, but only a few weeks later, the media reported that Dragoslav Kosmajac died due to health problems caused by COVID19. Having this in mind, the research included news/posts published before March 15, 2020.

action conducted by the US DEA, Serbian BIA and the Uruguay police. At the same time, Belgrade police arrested members of Šarić's criminal group. Two months later, an international arrest warrant was issued for Darko Šarić.

In 2010 Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime filed an indictment against Šarić's criminal group for cocaine smuggling, as well as for laundering 20 million of euros from drug trafficking. Despite numerous speculations and after four years of hiding, Šarić surrendered to the Serbian authorities on March 18, 2014. Thereafter, the public quickly declared the process against Šarić a trial of the century. He was sentenced in a repeated trial for cocaine smuggling to 15 years in prison, while a 20 million laundering proceeding has been ongoing for 10 years.

In June 2014, Dragoslav Kosmajac was named by Aleksandar Vučić- the Serbian Prime Minister in that time, as the most dangerous drug lord in Serbia. According to the Ministry of Interior, he was linked to international narcotics smugglers in South America, from where he had allegedly organized transport of large amounts of cocaine to Europe. Despite assumptions and speculations, "Serbian Al Capone", "Serbian Escobar" and "the biggest narco-boss", "the one whose name nobody except the Prime Minister may not to say" as he was labelled in the media, the court proceedings against him have never resulted in conviction for the drug smuggling. However, by the end of 2014 he was arrested and accused of money laundering, abuse of office, forgery and land fraud. State officials compared the investigation conducted against him to one conducted by FBI agents against Al Capone. Finally, four years later, all the criminal charges against Kosmajac had been rejected and the only offence proven resulted in tax misdemeanour fine.

According to media and some public statements of several state officials, Filip Korać took over the leadership of the one of the strongest local/regional criminal organizations after his previous boss, Luka Bojović, had been arrested in Spain. Together with the drug smuggling business, he became involved in a fierce clash between the two crime clans "škaljarski" and "kavački"⁵, which claimed many lives in Serbia and Montenegro. In addition to public allegations of criminal activities, Korać became present in public due to his alleged relations with bloody riots at the football game, derby between Red Star and Partizan in 2017. In addition to this, Korać was alleged for his connection with some criminal liquidation, but the prosecution found there was not sufficient evidence against him and suspended the investigation. Provoked by such a decision, President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, publicly labelled Korać "a major drug supplier in Serbia" and a scariest man in Belgrade.

2.1.2. Media content analysed for the Research

In the scope of the research we analysed two sorts of media content- the newspaper articles and the social media content.

When it comes to the newspaper articles, three media outlets Blic, Kurir and Politika, have been included in our sample, whose internet portals are:

- the most visited in Serbia;
- reach a wide audience in Serbia and,

⁵ "Škaljarci" and "Kavčani" as two well-known Montenegro clans got their names by the two villages Škaljari and Kavač, near to Kotor-Montenegro. Allegedly, until 2014 when their conflict appeared, Škaljarci and Kavčani used to act together.

- have printed issues within the period March 2014-March 2020.

The query for the search were the surnames of the beforementioned “drug lords”: Šarić, Kosmajac and Korać. From initial bulk consisting of 1443 media reports, after reviewing and eliminating duplicates, the final sample consisted of 1215 newspaper articles.

In the scope of the social media component of the research, we opted for Twitter posts, taking into account the fact that Twitter, compared with other social networks, leaves an important space for the discussion on important political and social issues, compared with the Facebook, Instagram, etc. that are mostly based on visual content and entertainment.

Considering this, we analyzed 517 Twitter posts in total, posted within the period January 2015- March 2020. Only posts in Serbian were included. The criteria for the inclusion of the post in the sample was mentioning of the names/surnames of the earlier mentioned three persons publicly labelled as “drug lords” by Serbian high officials: Dragoslav Kosmajac, Filip Korać and Darko Šarić. Having in mind that our goal was, inter alia, to analyse differences between drug lords’ media portraits in traditional and social media, we excluded posts made by media portals to avoid contamination of the sample.

2.2. Thematic scope

Starting from the presumption that drug lords are traditionally considered as great enemies of the vital rule of law and social components of the society, we put our focus on the two thematic groups of issues:

Thematic category I: Drug lords as a rule of law issue

Thematic category II: Drug lords as a social phenomenon

In terms of the thematic scope, through our analysis, in the initial step, we tried to identify whether the drug lords are publicly perceived predominantly as a “rule of law issue” or a “social issue”. More precisely, we focused on the public perception of the persons publicly labelled as drug lords, exploring whether journalists and citizens who are Twitter users are more interested in their connections, interaction and influence on judiciary, police, public prosecution, politicians and other actors from the security, justice and political sector or they predominantly see drug lords as a “evil against people/society”- namely, as a negative phenomenon with a strong influence on youngsters, sport, public health, culture and other essential parts of the society, beyond the rule of law.

Considering this, within both thematic categories, we explored the main topics per category. Namely, in Thematic category I, we analysed following topics:

1. Chronicle of the trial and accusation
2. Criminal background
3. Investigation and arrest
4. Synergy of a politics and crime
5. Synergy of drug lords and economy
6. Portrait of drug lords as a part of populist narratives

7. Judicial independence in criminal proceeding against drug lords
8. Judicial efficiency in criminal proceeding against drug lords

In parallel, in Thematic category II- Drug lords as a social phenomenon, we analysed the five following topics:

1. Drug lords as heroes
2. Drug lords as antiheroes
3. Drug lords and their influence public health and culture
4. Drug lords and their influence on sport
5. Other social issues

2.2.1. Research methods

In order to analyse the news and Twitter posts included in our sample, content analysis was used as the main research method and the unit of analysis was single text/tweet with all visual and content related parts. Each news/tweet item was examined to identify the main topics, the actors involved, the activities they perform, and how they are characterized.

After that, in the second step, all of the above listed clusters (and news/posts placed in them) were analysed in detailed in order to identify the main subtopics addressed, the tone of the posts, an argumentation given in favour of or against news and posts addressing the drug lords in Serbia.

In the final step, statistical method was used to proceed and present findings.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Drug lords as a “rule of law issue”

In terms of the thematic scope of the analysed content, in the initial step, we tried to identify whether the drug lords are publicly perceived predominantly as a “rule of law issue” or a “social issue”. More precisely, we focused on the public perception of the persons publicly labelled as drug lords, exploring whether journalists and citizens who are Twitter users are more interested in their connections, interaction and influence on judiciary, police, public prosecution, politicians and other actors from the security, justice and political sector or they predominantly see drug lords as a “evil against people/society”- namely, as a negative phenomenon with a strong influence on youngsters, sport, public health, culture and other essential parts of the society, beyond the rule of law.

In this regard, our finding has shown that, in general, media narrative on drug lords in Serbia is largely shaped by the topics related to the rule of law. The category of news is represented in approx. 95% of analysed cases.

In terms of the predominant topics that occupied attention of the journalists in the scope of this category, the topic concerning the trial and accusation chronicle is represented with 30% mentions in the media reports. This finding could be explained by

the fact that the majority of the articles related to Darko Šarić, and abundance of media reports on the trial and events in the courtroom. Criminal past, investigation and arrest, judicial efficiency, as well as drug lords and their relation to politics were topics relatively uniformly represented in the media discourse on the drug lords in Serbia (18.9, 17.2, 14.7, 13.3). In a lesser extent media addressed the topic of portrait of drug lords as a part of populist narrative. Relatively few mentions concerned connections between drug lords and business, as well as judicial independence. These results could be explained by the fact that media have more informative tone, daily investigating actual topics.

Table 1. Drug lords as a rule of law issue

No.	Topic	Number of mentions	% of posts within the rule of law category	% of the total number of analysed posts
1.	Synergy of a politics and crime	325	13.3	12.5
2.	Synergy of drug lords and economy	15	0.6	0.5
3.	Portrait of drug lords as a part of populist narratives	128	5.2	5
4.	Judicial independence	16	0.6	0.6
5.	Judicial efficiency	361	14.7	14
6.	Chronicle of the trial and accusation	723	29.5	28
7.	Investigation and arrest	421	17.2	16.3
8.	Criminal background	464	18.9	17.9
Total		2453	100	94.8

Within the analyses of the Twitter posts that addressed the drug lords within the rule of law thematic scope, we found that 369 of 517 posts (71.4%) addressed the topics belongs to the Thematic category I, while 148 posts addressed the Thematic category II. This shows that, despite differences in comparison with newspaper articles, the drug lords are still mostly perceived as a rule of issue, more than a “social issue” (represented by 28.6% share).

However, beyond the representation of the rule of law thematic category, when it comes to the analyses of the Twitter posts that addressed the drug lords within the rule of law thematic scope, our results significantly defer from those we’ve got through the newspapers’ analyses.

The first difference is related to the number of thematic categories appearing in the Twitter posts compared with the newspapers articles. Namely, in accordance with a very nature of social networks, Twitter users have not shown their interest for simple transmission/sharing of information related to “Chronicle of the trial and accusation” (topic 6), “Criminal background” (topic 7) and “Investigation and arrest” (topic 8) as matter of simple publishing/transmitting facts. Of course, it doesn’t mean that facts belonging to those categories have not appeared in the analysed Twitter posts as all, but differently from the newspaper article, but rather as a simple fractographic part of the thematic comment or discussion related to one of other five topic, then as the subject of post itself.

When it comes to the second difference between thematic scope of the Twitter posts compared to the newspaper articles, it is connected to the share of the individual topics within the “Rule of Law issue” category. Therefore, the most represented topics were “Judicial efficiency in criminal proceeding against drug lords”, with 28.9% share in total number of posts in Thematic category I, followed by posts that portraited the drug lords as a part of populist narratives of political leaders, with 27.1% share. 22% of posts within this thematic category addressed the synergy of politics and crime in the context of

various deals made between political leaders and drug lords. 17.1% of posts tackled judicial independences in criminal proceeding against drug lords. The minor percentage of posts addressed a connection between drug lords and economy in Serbia.

Table 2. Drug lords as a rule of law issue

No.	Topic	Number of posts	% of posts within the rule of law category	% of the total number of analysed posts
1.	Synergy of a politics and crime	81	22	15.7
2.	Synergy of drug lords and economy	18	4.9	3.5
3.	Portrait of drug lords as a part of populist narratives	100	27.1	19.3
4.	Judicial independence	63	17.1	12.2
5.	Judicial efficiency	107	28.9	20.7
Total		369	100	71.4

So, if we exclude from our list the first three categories- typical for the newspaper articles, the top three order is more or less the same in both component of the research. The most concerns of Twitter users, just like an interest of journalists are related to the judicial efficiency in relation of prosecution of drug lords. In parallel, they are both provoked by potential connection between the drug lords and political acters. However, their perception of the drug lords as a part of populist narratives, situation is quite different in the two components of the research. While the minor percentage of articles describes the public statements about drug lords in Serbia as a part of their populist narratives, the Twitter users widely discuss this issue, which raised an attention of more than 27% of them who posted in analysed period.

This might signalize that journalist are not ready to go deeper in transmitting information and prefer a copy-paste model, where original news drafted by several big news agencies have just being republished under the similar title, mostly without any, or followed by minor changes. Analytical and critical approach are rare to find. In addition to this “routine issue” this also might relate to a (self) censorship. Finally, a lack of knowledge and competence in political theory and democracy should be recognized as one of possible reasons for the lack of “in depth reading” of political narratives.

On the other side, Twitter users are free to say whatever they think/want (usually without consequences) especially if their identity is protected. In addition to this, a lot of intellectuals use this social platform which makes this network a more than simple playground of laicism. Finally, contrary to journalists whose task is mostly just to transmit the message and rarely to analyse it, Twitter users tend to share their attitudes, rather than information itself.

3.2. Drug lords as a “social issue”

Drug, drug traffickers and drug lords are followed by the sign “evil against people/society” for the decades (and even centuries). Considering this, it is expected that media portrait of drug lords strongly relates to their extremely negative role in the society. However, our findings have shown that this “evil against people and society” character of drug lords has been strongly marginalized in the media discuss comparing with their influence on the rule of law.

When it comes to the newspaper analysis, this second thematic category was represented in just approx. 5% of total number of analysed articles.

In terms of the thematic scope, as kind of paradox, we found that there were no newspaper articles published describing or analysing the role of drug lords as antiheroes of society. Contrary to this, in 5 mentions in articles (3.7%) the drug lords included in our sample were presented as heroes. More precisely, they are described as ordinary people, full of understanding and ready to help to those who needed a help.

The significant share of mentions in articles (17.2%) addressed an issue of the connections between drug lords and sport, mostly in the context of the influence they allegedly have on the football fan groups.

Only 11 mention in articles (of 1,500 units in total) note a negative influence that drug lords have on public health and culture, representing significant danger to the health and wellbeing of the youth.

Considering other social issues (composing 3.7% of total mentions and 70.9% in the social issue thematic category), media in Serbia were particularly interested in the question of personal and travel documentation, which in relation to persons labelled as drug lords, was postulated as problematic. Connections of the `drug lords` with the Serbian jet set was also occasionally mentioned topic, together with appearance after the arrest and courtroom behaviour.

Table 3. Drug lords as a “social issue”

No.	Topic	Number of mentions	% of mentions within the “social issue” category	% of the total number of analysed mentions
1.	Drug lords as heroes	5	3.7	0.2
2.	Drug lords as antiheroes	0	0	0
3.	Drug lords and their influence public health and culture	11	8.2	0.4
4.	Drug lords and their influence on sport	23	17.2	0.9
5.	Other	95	70.9	3.7
Total		134	100	5

When it comes to the media portrait of drug lords as a “social issue” according to the Twitter users, results of the research significantly differ from those from the newspaper analysis. Namely, the most represented category was “Other” (44.6%) were, unexcitedly, the most of posts placed in that category, mentioned drug lords in humoristic context. More precisely, triggered by the several public statements of the President Vučić (earlier the Prime Minister) where Dragoslav Kosmajac was labelled as „the main drug smuggler in the Balkans“ and “one whose name no one may say”. Somehow, his name become kind of paradigm or symbol of a political and judicial failure to deal with serious crime and a subject of numerous jokes of Twitter users. Consequently, they frequently use the surname Kosmajac in contexts that are not related to drug lords at all, to describe someone who is (for real or imaginary) extremely powerful and/or untouchable.

Differently from the results of the newspaper analysis, portraying of drug lords as heroes and antiheroes were highly represented in the Twitter posts. 35% of posts described drug lords as a kind of modern heroes. In addition to arguments used by journalist, Twitter users also see the drug lords as modern knights who fight against state authorities (mostly police or ruling party) who presses people.

On the other side, remarkable share of Twitter posts (31%) commented drug lords as a people who had negative influence on kids and young people, their health

and education, providing a wrong model of behaviour, especially when the authorities of the State have no capacities “to put them in a jail.”

Similarly to the previously explained results of the newspaper analysis, connections with sport fan clubs was a bit lower represented thematic issue (8.2%).

Table 4. Drug lords as a “social issue”

No.	Topic	Number of posts	% of posts within the “social issue” category	% of the total number of analysed posts
1.	Drug lords as heroes	35	23.6	6.8
2.	Drug lords as antiheroes	31	20.9	5.9
3.	Drug lords and their influence public health and culture	1	0.68	0.2
4.	Drug lords and their influence on sport	15	8.2	2.9
5.	Other	66	44.6	12.8
Total		148	100	28.6

CONCLUSIONS

The main findings of the research have shown that the way the media portrays a certain person as a drug lord does not correspond to the traditional “evil against people/society”. Predominantly focused on the rule of law, rather than a social issues triggered and/or influenced by persons who are publicly labelled as drug lords, both kind of explored media (the newspapers and Twitter) portray drug lords through their connections, interaction and influence on judiciary, police, public prosecution, politicians and other actors from the security, justice and political sector. Their traditional portrait as a “evil against people/society” as a negative phenomenon with a strong influence on youngsters, sport, public health, culture and other essential parts of the society, beyond the rule of law is extremely marginalized in both kind of media.

Furthermore, the research showed the significant difference on how drug lords have been portrayed in the newspapers compared with the approach of Twitter users. The both portraits are largely marked by concerns related to connection between drug lords and politicians, judicial efficiency and independence in conducting criminal proceedings against drug lords as well as by connections between economy and drug lords.

In parallel, the Twitter portraits of drug lords has shown a strong concern of citizens that the portraits of drug lords circulated in public discourse consisted of traditional media have been artificially created as a part of populist narrative. Guided by this attitude, the Twitter users have develop kind of a new approach to drug lords, transforming their traditional “evil against people/society” media profile to the paradigm of incompetence and/or an unsuccessful fight against crime, whether the judiciary or ruling party is responsible for that failure.

In addition to this, even in this small share of news/posts that address their social role, there is an emerging appearance of portraying drug lords as a heroes who take the “Robin Hood role”, provide a help and support to those who need it and fight (and win) the authorities of the State. Their (in fact) extremely negative influence on some of the vital parts of the society, as a public health, young people or culture, has somehow disappeared from the newspaper media portraits, while rarely appears in Twitter portraying of drug lords in Serbia.

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MEDIJSKI PORTRET VOĐA NARKO KLANOVA U SRBIJI

Motivisan promenjenom ulogom medija iz „onih koji prenose informacije o realnosti“ u „one koji kreiraju realnost(i)“, ovaj rad pokušava da istraži kako mediji u Srbiji izveštavaju o optuženima koje su, predstavnici relevantnih institucija ili drugi istaknuti zvaničnici, javno označili kao vođe narko klanova, kao i kako se njihovi medijski portreti koji su rezultat novinarskog izveštavanja razlikuju od onih koje su kreirali korisnici društvenih mreža. U nastojanju da utvrde razliku u medijskom tretmanu vođa narko klanova, čija je krivica dokazana u krivičnom postupku i osoba koje su javno označene kao vođe narko klanova, ali su optužbe protiv njih odbačene ili su pravosnažno oslobođeni optužbe, autori su zasnovali svoje istraživanje na analiza medijskih portreta tri medijski najeksponiranije osobe koje su u poslednjih pet godina u Srbiji javno označene kao vođe narko klanova, gde je krivični postupak protiv njih završen na tri gore navedena načina. Istraživanje je obuhvatilo analizu sadržaja vesti objavljenih na portalima najtiražnijih dnevnih novina u Srbiji, kao i objave na društvenoj mreži Twitter tokom petogodišnjeg perioda, sa fokusom na oblast vladavine prava i socijalni kontekst uloge vođa narko klanova. Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali iznenađujući redosled u smislu prioriternih pitanja u vezi sa vođama narko klanova, koji dovodi u pitanje stereotipe o vođama narko klanova kao fenomenu, ne samo iz oblasti vladavine prava, već i društvenom „iskonskom zlu protiv ljudi i društva“ Istraživanje je pokazalo značajnu razliku u načinu na koji su vođe narko klanova prikazane u štampi u poređenju sa pristupom korisnika Twitter-a.

KLJUČNE REČI: vođe narko klanova / medijski portret / društvene mreže / mediji i kriminal