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How Partisan Media Exposure Shaped Party Evaluations in the 2023 Elections in Serbia

Abstract

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This study sought to investigate how voters in Serbia perceived political parties in the run-up to the 2023 elections and how selective exposure to party-affiliated media influenced their perceptions. To achieve this, the study analyzed the latent structure of party evaluations and investigated how partisan media exposure predicts the extracted dimensions, after controlling for sociodemographic and attitudinal predictors of party evaluations. On a convenience online sample of 1033 respondents (57% female), it was found that political parties are mentally organized into three factors: parties of civic opposition, parties of national opposition, and ruling parties. Regression analyses have shown that evaluations of the three mentioned party blocs are best predicted by different media consumption patterns. Positive evaluations of civic opposition parties are predicted by the female gender, low religiosity and authoritarianism, values of social and economic liberalism, high interest in politics, and following opposition television channels and websites. Support for national opposition parties can be predicted by male gender, living in smaller towns or rural areas, high religiosity, values of social conservatism, and to some extent watching public broadcasting services. Regime-affi-

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liated parties are more likely to be supported by older citizens from smaller towns, who tend to be religious, authoritarian, less interested in politics, and primarily viewers of pro-regime television channels and readers of pro-regime websites.

Keywords
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party evaluations, voting behavior, political ideology, media bias, partisan media exposure, elections

In studies of voting behavior, there is a continuous interest in understanding how voters perceive political parties and how these perceptions influence voting behavior. Research investigates how voters mentally represent parties, including the nature and content of these representations, along which dimensions parties are compared, and how the overall party landscape is structured, as well as which individual and contextual factors influence party perceptions. These questions are of particular importance in the domestic context of a young multiparty system, characterized by a broad and versatile political party landscape that is continuously evolving and has yet to be fully consolidated.

Political party evaluations. Diverse approaches exist in studying how political parties are perceived. Numerous studies measure how voters position parties on ideological dimensions (Busch, 2016; Vegetti & Širinić, 2019) or in relation to important political issues (Brasher, 2009; Jackson, 1975), assess parties on dimensions of social perception (Bruckmüller & Methner, 2018; Gorbaniuk et al., 2015). Considering the significance of affective processes for voting behavior (Ward & Tavits, 2019), political party evaluations, namely, preferences and aversions towards parties, are also assessed. The term "political party evaluation" refers to an individual's subjective perception of a political party, typically represented along a positive-negative dimension (Norpoth, 2009). Favora-

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ble evaluations encourage voter engagement, whereas solely negative party evaluations result in voter abstention (Wagner & Weβels, 2012). Additionally, party affective polarization has positive effects: the larger the gap between the most positively and negatively assessed parties, the greater the motivation for voter participation (Harteveld & Wagner, 2023; Todosijević and Pavlović, 2020). In domestic research, party evaluations have been operationalized through: the degree of liking (preferences) (Todosijević, 2016; Todosijević and Pavlović, 2020; Jakšić and Kovačević, 2023), assessments of party performance (Kuzmanović and Petrović, 2010; Međedović and Petrović, 2013; Petrović and Međedović, 2017), and the likelihood of voting for a particular party (Dulić, 2015).

Since the introduction of the multiparty system in Serbia in the early 1990s, there has been a persistent trend in domestic research to explore party evaluations, their structure, and underlying factors. Early studies on the structure of party evaluations, conducted during the 1990s, indicated a polarization between ruling and opposition parties (Mihajlović, 2006). The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), representing the ruling regime, advocated for nationalist-conservative and socialist ideologies. In contrast, opposition parties criticized the ruling party for perceived deficiencies in democracy, corruption, or ineffective economic policies. During this period, research primarily delved into the socio-economic predictors of political party evaluations, with the party divide being attributed to factors such as education, age, housing, and employment status (Milošević, 1997). Older and less educated citizens, those employed in the public sector, and owners of social housing were more inclined towards regime parties as opposed to opposition parties (Branković, 1992).

Following the fall of Milošević, more comprehensive research on voting behavior ensued during the 2000s and 2010s. The democratic opposition comes to power, yet the two-factor structure of party evaluations continues to persist. In a quota sample of residents of Subotica, Dulić identified a two-factor structure of party evaluations (Dulić, 2015). The first factor, labeled "liberal-socialist parties," included democratic, civic, and liberal parties of the then regime (League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Liberal Democratic Party, Democratic Party, G17+, etc.), while the second factor comprised "national-conservative parties" (Serbian Radical Party, Democratic Party of Serbia, New Serbia, Serbian Progressive Party, and Socialist Party of Serbia). The author found weak correlations of these dimensions with the social ideological dimension (economic was not examined), interpreting the identified party divide also in the context of ethnic divisions and religiosity. In 2012, Serbia underwent a significant shift in governance, when the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) came into power. The emergence of the SNS ensued from the departure of key figures from the nationalist Serbian Radical Party. This new political entity, adopting a pro-European stance and positioning itself as a centrist force, made tackling corruption a central tenet of its platform. Following this change, Međedović and Petrović (2013)

identified a two-dimensional structure of the political party evaluations landscape and attempted to explain it through individual differences in personality and political attitudes. Although the authors equated the two extracted dimensions with ideological, liberal, and conservative, they found weak and inconsistent correlations between these dimensions and political attitudes. This is consistent with Dulić's interpretations. In a 2016 study, Todosijević examines the relationship between affective political party evaluations and ideological self-positioning on the left-right dimension and finds no substantial correlations.

Petrović and Međedović (2017) continue to track the structuring of political parties in the perceptions of voters. They observe a consistent two-dimensional structure in party evaluations from 2014 to 2016, noting shifts of certain parties between dimensions and changes in the congruence within the two dimensions. Additionally, the national-conservative bloc remained coherent, while the socio-liberal bloc experienced a decline in congruence over time. Ideological predictors less effectively predicted evaluations within the national-conservative bloc compared to before, and this association was also weak with parties in the socio-liberal bloc, indicating a kind of "ideological crisis" in Serbian politics overall, especially within opposition parties. These data indicate that during that period, citizens continued to structure the political space more along the dimension of government-opposition rather than along ideological lines.

The next study on the structure of party evaluations was conducted ahead of the 2022 parliamentary elections (Jakšić & Kovačević, 2023). For the first time, Serbian citizens structured the political space into three dimensions. While the dimension uniting regime-affiliated parties remained stable, instead of a single dimension, opposition parties divided into two dimensions – civic and national opposition. Incorporating a wide array of predictors from sociodemographic characteristics, political attitudes, and personality traits, as well as exposure to various media sources, it has been determined that different political factions secure citizen support by addressing diverse psychological needs and appealing to them through distinct approaches. Regime-affiliated parties garner support primarily from older, authoritarian-leaning citizens who are generally disinterested in politics and rely predominantly on government-controlled television channels with national reach, such as Pink and Happy. On the other hand, supporters of the civic opposition tend to be more politically sophisticated, comparing party platforms with their personal political preferences, primarily leaning towards social liberalism and low authoritarianism. Although exposure to opposition-friendly media is significant, its influence on them is considerably weaker compared to the effect of pro-government media on regime supporters. This set of predictors had the least explanatory power in understanding inclinations towards parties of the national opposition, despite the identified effects of younger age, social conservatism values, and the influence of media exposure.

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Partisan media bias. The last decade in Serbia has been marked by a weakening of democratic capacities, as evidenced by numerous international and domestic reports (CRTA, 2021; Freedom House, 2024; Vladisavljević, 2020). One aspect of this process concerns the media landscape, characterized by the privatization of media, the monopolization of all national television frequencies (RTS, PINK, B92, HAPPY, PRVA), tabloid daily newspapers, and their alignment with pro-government interests (CRTA, 2021). On the other hand, the opposition has access to two cable television channels (N1 and Nova S) and two news websites (Danas and Nova S). In the scientific literature, the phenomenon where media outlets demonstrate favoritism or bias towards a specific political party, ideology, or agenda is known as partisan media bias (Bernhardt, Dewenter, & Thomas, 2023; Shultziner & Stukalin, 2021). This bias encompasses a range of manifestations, including selective reporting of news in line with the outlet's political alignment, framing stories to favor one perspective, and providing commentary that mirrors the outlet's ideological stance. When citizens assess complex political matters, they don't consider all available information; rather, they focus on what readily comes to mind–those aspects of political memory that are accessible (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Through agenda setting, media coverage of specific issues can significantly influence this accessibility (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, 1993; Todosijević & Pavlović, 2020). Partisan media bias can influence public opinion, shape political discourse, and contribute to polarization within society.

Pioneer research conducted by Lazarfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) created a basis for understanding the connection between media bias and voting behavior and paved the way for future research on this topic. The existence of partisan media bias and its impact on voting behavior is evidenced by numerous studies in the United States (Bernhardt, Krasa and Polborn, 2006; DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007; Druckman & Parkin, 2005; Dernhardt, Krasa, & Polborn, 2006; Gerber, Karlan, & Bergan, 2009). DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007) showed that the entrance of Fox News into the cable market between 1996 and 2000 had a significant impact on both voter turnout and positive Republican election results in the towns where it had been broadcast. Druckman and Parkin (2005) showed that during the 2000 Minnesota Senate campaign voters have a significantly higher evaluation of a certain candidate if they are also readers of a newspaper which reports favorably for that candidate. The research conducted by Gerbar, Karlan and Bergan (2009) underscores the significance of exposure. By providing Virginia residents with free subscriptions to the Washington Post (liberal leaning) or the Washington Times (conservative leaning), the researchers sought to determine whether media slant and media exposure had an impact on voting behavior. Both groups showed more support for the Democratic candidate, which they interpreted as a result of higher media exposure,

showing that slant is not always decisive for the media's influence on voting behavior.

Research on the effect of biased media on voting behavior has also been conducted in Europe. Eberl, Boomgaarden and Wagner (2017) researched how different subtypes of media bias affect voting behavior in the 2013 Austrian parliamentary elections. Their results showed that tonality and agenda bias had a positive effect on political party evaluation, while visibility bias was not as influential. Ramírez-Dueñas and Vinuesa-Tejero (2021) also found evidence that voting behavior had been affected by media consumption during the campaign for the 2019 general election in Spain. In fact, the findings showed that voting behavior was closely related to which media content voters consumed. Research conducted in France by Dejean, Lumeau and Peltier (2021) has shown that partisan media exposure in traditional media is relatively low for the average person. The intensity of partisan exposure increases when online platforms of traditional media are taken into consideration, as well as if social media are taken into account. It has also been documented that people on the far right and far left of the political spectrum are more susceptible to partisan media, as well as younger generations of voters.

Few studies in Serbia quantify the effects of media influence on voting behavior. The study focusing on predictors of voting for the Serbian Progressive Party similarly identifies strong effects of watching pro-regime television channels (Milivojević 2022). Jakšić and Kovačević (2023) identify strong effects of exposure to pro-government versus pro-opposition television channels on perceptions of political parties. While partisan media bias effects are observed across all party blocs (regime, civic opposition, national opposition), the influence of media is particularly pronounced on perceptions of regime-affiliated parties. It should be noted that, in line with the theory of selective media exposure (Stroud, 2008; 2010), supporters of different parties also tend to consume media content which coincides with their political views. However, the results from the mentioned domestic studies were obtained through hierarchical regression analyses, where political attitudes are controlled before testing the influence of media, thus partially controlling for the impact of selective exposure.

Context of the 2023 elections in Serbia. Snap parliamentary elections in Serbia were called on November 1st 2023 for December 17th 2023, in line with their previous announcements by President Aleksandar Vučić. These elections ended the mandate of the previous parliamentary convocation lasting less than two years. In addition to electing MPs, citizens also voted for councilors in 65 cities and local municipalities, including the elections for the Belgrade City and AP Vojvodina Assemblies. Even though the presidential elections were not called, the practice of simultaneous election holding, intensified by the fact that the majority list borrowed the President's name for the campaign, played a very important role in the elections. This fact is reflected in the Ser-

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bian dominant-party system (Spasojević & Stojiljković, 2020; Kovačević, 2020), with the Serbian Progressive Party managing to form the majority (albeit coalition) governments continuously since 2012.

Fragmented and polarized opposition forces follow the dominant-party system in Serbia. Their main obstacles to cooperation are reflected in the social cleavages present in Serbia, mainly around liberal and universalist values versus authoritarian and particularistic ones (Todosijević & Pavlović, 2020). Previous parliamentary elections in 2022 nevertheless recorded a partial consolidation of the liberal opposition, which resulted in a slightly better outcome. United for the Victory of Serbia, the leading liberal coalition list received 14% of the votes, while the green coalition We Must managed to cross the electoral threshold. However, these alliances had a short lifespan, until the parties entered the National Assembly and formed separate parliamentary groups. In spite of acting independently, the conservative party bloc also achieved significant results, with three parties (NADA, Dveri-POKS and the Oathkeepers) entering the Parliament. Compared to the previous elections in 2020, which resulted in a virtually one-party parliament, the outcome of these elections provided the opposition with greater maneuvering space, access to the parliamentary party finances and greater media representation.

Announcing snap parliamentary elections so promptly after the last ones happened in the context of a deep social polarization and turbulence in Serbian society. Conflict and tensions after the tragic instances of shootings in May 2023 became a chronic symptom of Serbian political instability. Citizens' mobilization following these tragedies led to weekly protests under the parole "Serbia against Violence," counting tens of thousands participants. Despite them being labeled as strictly civic and non-partisan, the parole of the demonstrations would later be used as a name of the leading opposition list. The mentioned political instability was further deepened by economic upheavals and high inflationary pressures, expanding social inequality and causing deeper conflicts in the electoral campaign.

Out of 18 electoral lists that ran for the parliamentary elections, 11 of them were majoritarian, while 7 of them qualified to represent minorities. The SNS-led coalition (with SDPS, PS, PUPS, SPO etc.), holding the previous majority in the parliament, used a slogan "Serbia must not stop" for its name. Socialist party of Serbia, a party known for its post-election coalitions with SNS, also ran for elections, with a parole "Ivica Dačić – Prime Minister of Serbia," alluding to their coalition potential. The opposition was once again divided into two ideological blocs. Coalition United for the Victory of Serbia came together with the green parties (Green-Left front, Ecological Uprising and Together) and some centrist and center-right parties (Serbia Center, People's Movement of Serbia and New Face of Serbia), turning into Serbia against Violence, a broad coalition primarily concerned about the overwhelming presence of violence, corruption and democratic erosion in Serbia. Similarly to

the 2022 elections, right-wing opposition was fragmented (NADA, People's Party, Enough is Enough and Oathkeepers-Dveri), as a result of failed negotiations regarding joint electoral participation. A new actor on the right-wing political spectrum appeared: US – The Voice of the People, claiming its legitimacy on representation of "ordinary" citizens. Although the electoral offer of political parties was rather diverse, citizens were not given the opportunity to inform themselves about all of these actors equally. According to the report of the long-term domestic observation mission of CRTA, the media reporting on the Serbian election campaign was characterized as unequal and biased. The Serbian Progressive party and Socialist Party of Serbia played a dominant role in the media space, especially in the TV news programs with national coverage. Reported bias is reflected in the mostly neutral and positive presentation of the ruling parties, whereas the opposition was mostly presented in a negative light.

Bearing in mind these election campaign conditions, 5 majority and 5 minority lists won seats in the Parliament. The SNS-led coalition won the majority of votes, continuing its rule, while Serbia against Violence became the strongest opposition list. However, the biggest change was in a striking underperformance of the coalition gathered around SPS, and a surprising success of Us – The Voice of the People. These results should be contextualized by reports from both domestic and international observers, assessing the elections as not free nor fair. According to international observers, voters in Serbia's elections had political options available to them, but these choices were overshadowed by the significant advantage held by the ruling party. The collective observation team comprised of representatives from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and the European Parliament (EP) has concluded that while the legal framework for conducting democratic elections in Serbia is deemed sufficient, there remain several pressing concerns: the inappropriate utilization of public resources, insufficient separation between official duties and campaign actions, and instances of voter intimidation and coercion, including reports of vote buying.

Aim of the study. This research aimed to explore how voters in Serbia view the political party landscape in the lead-up to the 2023 elections and identify the factors influencing their perceptions. To accomplish this, the study analyzed the underlying structure of political party affective evaluations to uncover how Serbian citizens mentally organize and understand the diverse spectrum of political parties. Subsequently, a variety of factors, such as demographics, political beliefs, and exposure to biased media, were examined to determine their impact on party evaluations. This study follows the continuity of research on affective evaluations of political parties in Serbia (Todosijević, 2016; Todosijević and Pavlović, 2020; Jakšić and Kovačević, 2023), aiming to describe changes

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in the structuring of the space in which political parties operate, as well as predictors of party evaluations.

Method

Sample. The study was conducted on a convenient sample of 1033 adult respondents, 57% of whom were female and 43% male. The sample included participants between 18 and 83 years old (M=38.86, SD=17.44), 45% of them being younger than 30, 41% between 30 and 60 and 14% of those older than 60 years old. In regards to education structure, the highest level of education for 3% of the respondents is elementary school, 49% is high school, and 48% of participants pursued higher education. As for the regional distribution of the sample, 45% of the participants are from Belgrade, 29% from Šumadija and Western Serbia, 17% from Southern and Eastern Serbia, 6% from Vojvodina, and 3% from Kosovo. Regarding the settlement size, 8% of the participants live in villages, 9% of them live in small settlements with a population under 5000, 44% of them live in a city under 200.000 inhabitants, and 39% of them live in a city with a population over 200.000. In comparison to the official statistical data, the sample underrepresented the male population, the population older than 60 and the population with the highest form of education being elementary school.

At the time of the study, or during the week preceding the 2022 parliamentary elections, a total of 84.7% of respondents reported planning to vote, 7.1% stated they would not exercise their voting rights, while another 8.2% of respondents were still undecided about participating in the elections. A total of 62,15% of respondents reported their voting preferences, i.e., which party they were most likely to vote for in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Compared to the population, opposition voters are overrepresented in the sample: 22.5% of participants planned to vote for regime parties (SNS, SPS), 49.5% for parties of the civic opposition (gathered around the coalition Serbia against violence), and 16.8% for parties of the national opposition (NDSS, National gathering coalition). In total, 12.77% of participants voted for other and minority parties, among which the most numerous were those who planned to vote for the movement of Dr. Branimir Nestorović titled US – The Voice of the People (6.9%). However, all groups are represented by a suficient number of respondents to conduct analyses that address the objectives of this study: determining the structure of party evaluations and identifying their predictors.

Instruments. The study was conducted using an electronic survey (CAWI) containing 30 closed-ended questions, divided into four sections: socio-demographic indicators, political ideology, party evaluations and media preferences. The first section covered socio-demographic indicators: gender, age, education, place of living, size of the place of living,

standard of living and religiosity. Religiosity was measured through one question: "To what extent would you say you are religious" with a four-point Likert scale (1 being "I am not religious at all" and 4 being "I am very religious").

The second section comprised scales for measuring political attitudes organized around political ideologies. The second scale was an adapted Feldman two-dimensional ideology scale, taken from a study on Brazilian ideological orientations (Alves & Porto, 2021). It contained 15 items with a seven-point Likert-type scale measuring economic and social (cultural) ideological dimensions. This section also included the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (RWA) and a Likert type measure of interest in politics.

The fourth part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the measurement of party evaluations, the critical variable for this study. Using a five-point Likert scale of likeability (1 being "I do not like them at all" and 5 being "I like them very much") it was examined how positively citizens perceive the following political parties: Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Serbian Movement Dveri, Party of Freedom and Justice (SSP), Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici), Serbia Center (SRCE), People's Movement of Serbia (NPS), Green-Left Front (ZLF), People's Party (NS), New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS), Democratic Party (DS), Movement of Free Citizens (PSG), Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS), Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak) and Enough is Enough (DJB). It is important to note that Dr. Branimir Nestorović's electoral list, US – The Voice of the People was not included in this variable, due to its late inclusion in the election race, on 27th of November. Additionally, the descriptive indicators of voting behaviour were collected, primarily voting participation or abstinence and voting orientation.

Lastly, the final section concerns respondents' political sophistication and media preferences as sources of information on politics and elections. Political sophistication was measured through interest in politics, with one question: "To what extent would you say that you are interested in politics." The answers were recorded on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 being "Not interested at all" and 4 being "Very interested"). Media preferences were recorded by three questions with a five-point Likert-type frequency scale (1 being "Never" and 5 being "Always"). The first question comprised three different media types (TV, internet portals and daily news) and five social media sites (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter). The next question included seven relevant television networks (RTS, Pink, N1, Prva, B92, Happy and NovaS), while the last question included eleven internet portals and sites (N1, NovaS, RTS, Blic, Kurir, Happy, Danas, Prva, Alo, Mondo and Informer).

Procedure. The study was conducted in a timeframe between December 14th and 16th 2023. The distribution of the survey was done online, via social media and relying on snowball sampling technique, as

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well as by the students of the Faculty of Political Sciences within the courses Political Behavior and Social Psychology. Filling in the survey was anonymous, and it took 25 minutes on average.

Results

The structure of the political party evaluations. To examine the latent structure of political party evaluations, an exploratory factor analysis (using the Principal Axis Factoring extraction method and Varimax rotation) was conducted on participants' ratings of how much they liked individual parties that ran independently or within coalitions in the 2023 parliamentary elections. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = .92) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2$ = 4590.52, p < .01) indicate that there are intercorrelations among individual ratings, thus justifying running factor analysis on the political party evaluation data obtained in this study. Appendix 1 shows the intercorrelation matrix of ratings for individual parties.

Three factors were extracted explaining a total of 70.85% variance in participants' party evaluations (Table 1). Within the first factor, labeled "Civic Opposition," opposition parties gathered around liberal, democratic, pro-European, leftist, and green ideas are grouped. The Green-Left Front (ZLF) saturates this factor the most, followed by the Ecological Uprising, Movement of Free Citizens (PSG), Party of Freedom and Justice (SSP), Democratic Party (DS), Serbia Center (SRCE), People's Movement of Serbia (NPS), People's Party (NS) and Social-democratic Party of Serbia (SDS). Although programmatically undoubtedly a party of the civic opposition, the Social Democratic Party (SDS) has the least saturation in this group, and it is the only one that saturates other factors, albeit to a lesser extent. A stronger programmatic shift towards the right-wing of the People's Party is also evident in our data, as evaluations of this party significantly saturate the factor of the national opposition. The Serbia Center (SRCE) and the People's Movement of Serbia (NPS), pro-European right-center parties, also saturate the factor of the national opposition.

The second factor, titled "National Opposition," gathers all opposition parties programmatically oriented towards nationalist and conservative policies and opposed to European integrations. These include Dveri, Oathkeepers, New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS), and Enough is enough (DJB). The evaluations of Dveri and Oathkeepers parties also saturate the factor that gathers the evaluations of regime parties. During the campaign, these parties refrained from issuing strong criticisms against the regime parties, and following the elections, the leader of the Oatkeepers party aligned with the SNS. On the other hand, New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS) and Enough is enough (DJB) significantly saturate the factor of the civic opposition. In the past, DJB was clearly

oriented as a party of the civic opposition, but over the last few years, in an attempt to halt the decline in voter support, it has shifted towards the right-wing and accommodated conspiratorial and anti-scientific mentality. On the other hand, during the last electoral cycle, NDSS began to criticize the regime more vocally, thus positioning itself as the "true" national opposition, unlike Dveri and Oathkeepers.

The third factor gathers two parties that have been in power in Serbia continuously over the past decade, and it is titled "Regime Parties." In addition to the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), it also includes the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), which is not in power, but the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) emerged from it. As expected, The Serbian Radical Party, the oldest and most extreme right-wing party, also aligns with the factor of the national opposition.

Table 1: Factor Structure of Political Party Evaluations

	Factors		
	Civic Opposition	National Opposition	Regime Parties
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	**.893**		
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	**.847**		
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	**.846**		
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	**.808**		
Democratic Party (DS)	**.775**		
Serbia Center (SRCE)	**.766**	.307	
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	**.735**	.389	
People's Party (NS)	**.555**	.552	
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	**.531**	.473	.352
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)		**.821**	.276
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)		**.801**	.265
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	.420	**.695**	
Enough is enough (DJB)	.448	**.670**	
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)			**.870**
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)			**.866**
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)		.357	**.786**

To test predictors of party evaluations, factor scores for the three extracted factors were calculated. Further correlation and regression analyses were conducted on the factor scores of party evaluations: 1) parties of the civic opposition, 2) parties of the national opposition, 3)

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regime parties. Insights into individual correlations (Appendix 1) reveal numerous positive connections between different opposition parties, indicating significant potential for voter crossover. The only negative correlations, or polarization in evaluations, are observed between the SNS and several parties of the civic opposition (ZLF: r = -.23**, PSG: r = -.21**, Ecological Uprising: r = -.21**, and to a lesser extent, with SSP: r = -.13** and DS: r = -.14**).

Voting preferences can be predicted based on affective evaluations of parties. This was confirmed by conducting three one-way analysis of variance for repeated measures, where the 4 level factor was voting for the regime, civic opposition, national opposition, or movement US – The Voice of the People and the dependent variables were: 1) evaluations of regime parties ($F(3, 633)$ = 180.50, p < .01), 2) evaluations of civic opposition parties ($F(3, 633)$ = 35.41, p < .01), and 3) evaluations of national opposition parties ($F(2,229)$ = 55.39, p < .01). It was found that regime voters positively evaluate regime parties and negatively evaluate opposition parties. Voters from both opposition blocs positively evaluate their respective blocs and negatively evaluate the other opposition bloc and the regime. Nevertheless, it is evident that supporters of the regime exhibit greater favorability towards regime parties compared to the affinity of opposition voters towards their respective parties. Regime voters perceive civic opposition parties more negatively than they perceive national opposition parties. National opposition voters perceive civic opposition parties more positively than civic opposition voters perceive national opposition parties. The intensity of evaluations of party blocs relative to voting preferences (choosing a party in parliamentary elections) is shown in Figure 1. Lower evaluations of civic opposition parties among their supporters may be attributed to the diverse composition of this bloc, comprising both pro-European left-wing and right-center parties. Additionally, it is plausible that regime parties and national opposition parties better align their policies with the preferences and collective interests of their supporters compared to the civic opposition parties. This analysis also shows that the voters of the movement US – The Voice of the People are closer to the national opposition. Detailed data on individual party evaluations depending on voting for specific parties are presented in Appendix 2.
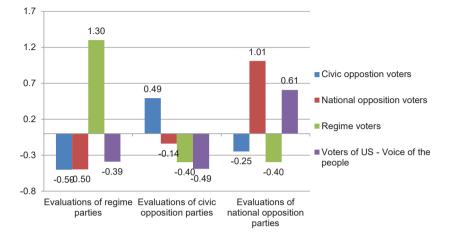
Figure 1. Differences in party evaluations depending on voting for different party blocs
(y-axis: factor scores for three party evaluation factors)

Determinants of political party evaluations. After establishing the latent structure of perceptions of political parties, our subsequent aim was to investigate the degree to which exposure to media content biased towards either regime or opposition parties influences these perceptions. We accomplished this objective through the use of hierarchical regression analysis, which assesses the predictive strength of partisan media exposure in addition to and above other established predictors of voting behavior, sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes.

In order to determine which sociodemographic and attitudinal variables to test in the hierarchical linear regressions aimed at predicting evaluations of the three party blocs, preliminary correlation analyses were conducted. Civic opposition parties are somewhat more appealing to women compared to men ($F(1,998) = 7.50$, $p < .01$), while the opposite is true for national opposition parties ($F(1,998) = 7.20$, $p < .01$). There are no gender differences in evaluations of regime parties ($F(1,998) = 1.11$, $p = .29$). Correlation analyses indicate that affective evaluations of the three party blocs are associated with sociodemographic variables, albeit with weak intensity. Civic opposition parties appeal to a sociodemographically heterogeneous group of citizens. The only variable predicting positive evaluations of this bloc is slightly lower religiosity ($r = -.15**$). National opposition parties are somewhat more appealing to residents of smaller towns and villages ($r = -.15**$), as well as to more religious voters ($r = .30**$). Regime parties are favored by older individuals ($r = .21**$), those from smaller towns ($r = -.14**$), and those with slightly higher levels of religiosity ($r = .15**$).

The evaluations of political party blocs correlate even more strongly with measures of political attitudes. Participants who prefer social liberalism ($r = .35**$) and are less authoritarian ($r = -.34**$), and to some

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extent those who prefer economic liberalism – ideas of free markets and less government intervention in the economy ($r = .15^{**}$) – are more likely to prefer civic opposition parties. Individuals who favor national opposition parties hold socially conservative views ($r = -.34^{**}$) and are more authoritarian ($r = .25^{**}$) . However, their economic attitudes do not determine their party preferences. Finally, individuals who prefer regime parties tend to be highly authoritarian ($r = .32^{**}$), hold somewhat more conservative views on social issues ($r = -.19^{**}$), and also support left-leaning economic ideas ($r = -.11^{**}$), advocating for the redistribution of wealth and a greater regulatory role for the state.

Table 2: Intercorrelations of factor scores of party evaluations, sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

	Age	Education	Residential area size	Standard of living	Religiosity	Social political ideology	Economic political ideology	Authoritarianism	Interest in politics
Evaluations of civic opposition parties	**-.08***	.03	.05	-.03	**-.15****	**.35****	**.15***	**-.34****	**.13****
Evaluations of national opposition parties	**-.08***	-.02	**-.15****	.02	**.30****	**-.34****	.01	**.25****	**.07***
Evaluations of regime parties	**.21****	**-.07***	**-.14****	.06	**.15****	**-.19****	**-.11****	**.32****	**-.20****

We continued by exploring how various media sources correlate with people's perceptions of different political blocs. We found that supporters of civic opposition parties tend to rely slightly more on web applications ($r = .15^{**}$) and social media platforms ($r = .10\text{-}.16^{**}$) like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for their information. Positive views of national opposition parties are somewhat linked to increased consumption of political content on YouTube ($r = .08^{**}$). On the other hand, those who prefer regime parties primarily rely on television ($r = .17^{**}$) and daily newspapers ($r = .15^{**}$) for their news, with less involvement across other political information channels.

Table 3: Intercorrelations of factor scores of party evaluations and engagement with different types of media for political information

	TV	Websites and applications	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	TikTok	Twitter	Daily newspapers
Evaluations of civic opposition parties	.00	**.15****	.05	**.11****	**.10****	.04	**.16****	.05
Evaluations of national opposition parties	-.05	-.04	**.08***	.04	-.01	-.01	**-.08****	.05
Evaluations of regime parties	**.17****	**-.23****	**-.10****	-.01	**-.15****	-.04	**-.18****	**.15****

Although the frequency of watching television for political information is not correlated with positive evaluations of civic opposition parties, following television channels that generously feature opposition parties, such as N1 ($r = .35^{**}$) and NovaS ($r = .37^{**}$), is associated with positive evaluations of civic opposition parties. Conversely, following pro-regime channels like Pink ($r = -.18^{**}$), Happy ($r = -.15^{**}$), as well as the public broadcaster RTS ($r = -.14^{**}$), is negatively associated with preferring civic opposition parties. Following the public broadcaster RTS ($r = .13^{**}$), as well as two other nationally broadcasted television channels, Prva ($r = .13^{**}$) and B92 ($r = .12^{**}$), is associated with positive evaluations of national opposition parties. These television channels also exhibit bias towards regime parties, albeit in a less overt manner than Pink and Happy, while also providing coverage to leaders of national opposition parties. Finally, the strongest correlations exist between favoring regime parties and following television channels Pink ($r = .47^{**}$) and Happy ($r = .40^{**}$) (which also have national frequencies), with somewhat weaker positive correlations observed with all other television channels except NovaS and N1 (Table 4).

Table 4: Intercorrelations of factor scores of party evaluations and engagement with different TV channels for political information

	RTS	Pink	Happy	Prva	B92	N1	Nova S
Evaluations of civic opposition parties	**-.14****	**-.18****	**-.15****	**-.08***	-.06	**.35****	**.37****
Evaluations of national opposition parties	**.13****	-.03	**.07***	**.13****	**.12****	-.06	-.01
Evaluations of regime parties	**.25****	**.47****	**.40****	**.31****	**.28****	**-.32****	**-.31****

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The correlation patterns are similar when it comes to following different internet portals for political information (Table 5).

Table 5: Intercorrelations of factor scores of party evaluations and engagement with different web portals for political information

	N1	NovaS	RTS	Blic	Kurir	Happy	Danas	Prva	Alo	Mondo	Informer
Evaluations of civic opposition parties	.37**	.33**	-.07*	-.02	-.04	-.11**	.30**	-.02	-.01	-.05	-.02
Evaluations of national opposition parties	-.13**	-.08*	.09**	.09**	.13**	.06	-.05	.14**	.11**	.11**	.08*
Evaluations of regime parties	-.36**	-.30**	.19**	.22**	.28**	.31**	-.22**	.26**	.30**	.09**	.35**

After conducting the correlation analyses, we were able to select predictors for hierarchical linear regressions. Three such analyses were conducted, one for each of the three evaluations of party blocs. In each analysis, socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, size of place of residence, religiosity) were tested in the first step, political attitudes (interest in politics, authoritarianism, social and economic political ideology) in the second step, and media consumption and following of different media channels in the third step. Tables 6-8 present the results of these analyses.

The tested predictors explain one-third of the variance in evaluations of civic opposition parties (33%). Sociodemographic variables explain only 5% of the differences among respondents regarding preferences for civic opposition parties, specifically gender and religiosity. On the other hand, differences in political attitudes explain as much as 17% of the variation in preferences for the civic opposition. These parties are more appealing to individuals who are more interested in politics, less authoritarian, and endorse values of both social and economic liberalism. Above these variables, we also observe a significant media influence. Following Nova S television and the online portal Danas explains 11% of the variance in positively evaluating civic opposition parties.

Table 6: Hierarchical linear model predicting evaluations of civic opposition parties

	Predictors	R2	R change	F	df	Beta
Step1	Gender					**.13****
	Age					-.03
	Place of residence	0.5	/	7.84**	4, 583	.04
Sociodemographics	Religiosity					-.16**
Step 2	Social political ideology					**.27****
	Economic political ideology					.12**
	Authoritarianism	0.22	0.17	20.48**	8, 579	**-.20****
Political attitudes	Interest in politics					**.15****
Step 3	TV RTS					.01
	TV PINK					-.05
	TV HAPPY					-.04
	TV PRVA					-.03
	TV N1					-.01
	TV NOVA S					**.26****
	Web portal INFORMER	0.33	0.11	10.32**	27, 560	.07
Partisan media ex-	Web portal KURIR					-.0
posure	Web portal ALO					.04
	Web portal BLIC					.03
	Web portal MONDO					**-.11****
	Web portal DANAS					**.12****
	Web portal NOVA S					**-.06**

The same variables have less predictive power in explaining evaluations of national opposition parties and account for a quarter of the differences (25%). Sociodemographic factors such as gender, age, place of residence, and religiosity explain 14% of the variance. Social conservatism explains an additional 5%, while among media variables, frequent watching of the public broadcaster TV RTS stands out, along with less frequent watching of TV PINK. However, the media influence is weaker here and explains 6% of the variance in evaluations of national opposition parties.

Table 7: Hierarchical linear model predicting evaluations of national opposition parties

	Predictors	R2	R change	F	df	Beta
Step1	Gender					**-.08***
	Age					-.07
	Place of residence	0.14	/	23.61**	4, 583	**-.11****
Sociodemographics	Religiosity					**.32****
Step 2	Social political ideology					**-.20****
	Economic political ideology					.01
	Authoritarianism	0.19	0.5	16.90**	8, 579	.08
Political attitudes	Interest in politics					-.04

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	Predictors	R2	R change	F	df	Beta
	TV RTS					**.17****
	TV PINK					**-.25****
	TV HAPPY					.05
	TV PRVA					.04
Step 3	TV N1					-.01
	TV NOVA S					.12
	Web portal INFORMER	0.25	0.6	6.91**	27, 560	.02
Partisan media exposure	Web portal KURIR					.01
	Web portal ALO					.02
	Web portal BLIC					.04
	Web portal MONDO					.02
	Web portal DANAS					.02
	Web portal NOVA S					-.08

Media variables, specifically partisan media bias, most strongly shape positive evaluations of regime parties. The tested predictors account for up to 39% of the variance in evaluations of regime parties. Sociodemographic factors (age, place of residence, and religiosity) explain 9% of the variance, low political interest and higher authoritarianism add an additional 6%, while frequent viewing of TV PINK and less frequent viewing of TV Nova S, as well as following the Informer portal and TV Prva, explain an additional 23% of the variance in evaluating regime parties.

Table 8: Hierarchical linear model predicting evaluations of regime parties

	Predictors	R2	R change	F	df	Beta
Step1	Gender					.05
	Age					**.21****
	Place of residence	0.9	/	14.92**	4, 583	**-.09***
Sociodemographics	Religiosity					**.17****
Step 2	Social political ideology					.09
	Economic political ideology					-.04
	Authoritarianism	0.16	0.13	13.40**	8, 579	**.26****
Political attitudes	Interest in politics					**-.15****
	TV RTS					-.01
	TV PINK					**.18****
	TV HAPPY					.06
	TV PRVA					.04
Step 3	TV N1					-.10
	TV NOVA S					**-.13****
	Web portal INFORMER	0.39	0.23	13.25**	27, 560	**.18****
Partisan media exposure	Web portal KURIR					-.04
	Web portal ALO					.03
	Web portal BLIC					-.01
	Web portal MONDO					.01
	Web portal DANAS					**-.11***
	Web portal NOVA S					.11

Discussion

The first aim of this study was to determine how citizens mentally structure the broad and diverse range of political parties in Serbia, thus continuing a three-decade research tradition of identifying party cleavages in Serbia. The second aim was to identify key determinants of evaluations of political parties, namely, to ascertain which voter characteristics make them more or less likely to favor certain party blocks. In the previous study with the same goal (Jakšić & Kovačević, 2023), robust and well-known effects of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes were identified. However, above these effects, the powerful influence of exposure to media favoring different parties was quantified. Therefore, in this study special attention was paid to the influence of partisan media bias, including not only bias observed in television programs but also in online news portals.

It was found that over a two-year period (April 2022 – December 2023), the structure of perceptions of political parties in Serbia did not significantly change. Citizens continued to perceive political parties along three dimensions: civic opposition parties, national opposition parties, and regime-affiliated parties. These findings indicate continuity in terms of the main organizational principles in the perception of political parties (government-opposition), although public opinion is sensitive to differentiation within the party offer. Furthermore, the content of these dimensions remained robust. The civic opposition dimension continued to gather left-wing, left-of-center, and right-of-center parties, united by a common denominator of pro-European and democratic orientation. The coherence of this bloc may have been contributed to by the joint actions of the majority of parties from this dimension within the Serbia against Violence coalition. The Green Left Front (ZLF), Ecological Uprising, and Movement of Free Citizens (PSG) continue to be parties that most strongly represent this dimension, while saturations of right-of-center parties is slightly lower (SRCE, NPS, NS). The fact that citizens are sensitive to the ideological orientations of parties is evidenced by the significant saturations of right-of-center parties in the national opposition dimension as well. Citizens are sensitive to the programmatic shifts of parties, as unlike in the previous study where the People's Party (NS) was clearly classified as a civic opposition party, in this study it equally saturated both opposition dimensions, civic and national. The dimension of national opposition remained robust in composition and was saturated with eurosceptic right-wing parties (Dveri, Zavetnici, NDSS, and DJB). While in the previous electoral cycle, all parties from this dimension had similar levels of saturation, ahead of the recent elections, Dveri and Zavetnici had similar and very high levels of saturation, which can be attributed to the coalition under which they ran in the elections (National Gathering). NDSS had a lower saturation and was also significantly satu-

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rating the civic opposition dimension. In this campaign, representatives of NDSS began to criticize the regime and its democratic deficits more sharply. Finally, there were no changes in the dimension of regime-affiliated parties, just as there were no changes in the exercise of power, and this dimension continued to be dominated by SNS, SPS, and SRS, as an extremely right-wing satellite of SNS.

Analysis of predictors of party perceptions from a set of socio-demographic characteristics and political attitudes has shown that different party blocs respond to very different group interests and political-psychological needs and preferences of citizens. These findings are robust in relation to a number of previous studies on predictors of voting behavior in Serbia, which roughly identified the existence of two 'voting blocks', one older, less educated, and of lower socio-economic status, and the other younger, better educated, and urban. Our findings depict a more complex picture (Todosijević & Pavlović, 2020). Gender is a decisive variable for evaluating opposition parties. While women tend to prefer civic opposition parties, national opposition parties have slightly more male sympathizers. Regime parties receive more positive evaluations from older individuals. This finding is consistent with the findings that these parties primarily target the demographic group of older people, who are also the most diligent voters (Todosijević & Pavlović, 2020). Individuals living in villages and smaller towns are more likely to positively evaluate national opposition parties and regime parties, possibly due to the lesser availability of opposition media or because of greater life pressures and unfavorable economic circumstances. Finally, the level of religiosity is decisive for party bloc preferences. More religious individuals prefer national opposition parties and the regime, while less religious individuals are more often sympathizers of civic opposition parties.

Numerous previous studies find a connection between party evaluations, political attitudes of citizens, and individual differences in the domain of political personality (Petrović, Todosijević, & Komar, 2019; Todosijević, 2023; Jakšić & Kovačević, 2023). Authoritarianism is more pronounced among supporters of regime parties, while supporters of civic opposition parties are characterized by anti-authoritarianism. Social conservatism is common among supporters of regime parties and national opposition, while those with socially liberal beliefs are closer to civic opposition parties. Additionally, among supporters of civic opposition, economic liberalism is more common, advocating for a free market and opposing state interventionism and redistribution of goods. Supporters of different party blocs also differ in their level of interest in politics. Supporters of civic opposition are more demanding and have a greater interest in politics, while supporters of the regime have lower interest in politics. This finding is stable in comparison to previous research (Jakšić i Kovačević, 2023).

However, media variables are the most powerful predictors of party bloc preferences. Exposure to media close to different party blocs,

i.e., partisan media bias, explains the largest percentage of differences among voters. In the case of regime parties, this percentage is almost 25%, meaning that a quarter of the reasons for sympathizing with regime parties lie in following biased media (TV PINK and web portal INFORMER). This effect is twice weaker among supporters of civic opposition (TV NOVA S and web portal DANAS), and even weaker among supporters of national opposition (TV RTS), but they still are strong predictors. Although all other known predictors of voting were controlled before measuring media influence, from these data it's not possible to distinguish the effect of selective exposure, where voters choose to follow media biased towards the parties they already support, or if it's a matter of media influence shaping preferences for political parties. It is suggested that future research should also control for party identification before analyzing media variables. However, even in reality, it's not possible to separate these two processes. Even in the case of selective exposure, following biased media can further strengthen party preferences. Also, regardless of this limitation, our data show that different party blocs draw their popularity from citizens to a drastically different extent through direct social influence via the media. This influence is exerted not only through television but also through online media. The fact that this influence is greatest among citizens who show less interest in politics is in line with the assumptions of the elaboration likelihood model, according to which the degree of interest in a particular issue determines the effectiveness of persuasion by arguments or through peripheral routes, such as media biases (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The conclusions of this study are limited in three ways. Firstly, the study was conducted on a convenience sample. Secondly, the party US – The Voice of the People was not included in the scale of party evaluations, which proved to be a surprise in elections and won a significant number of votes. Additionally, the media landscape is becoming more versatile, so future studies of media influence in the domain of voting behavior could include a broader range of television channels (Insajder, Euro News, K1, Informer, Kurir, local television stations, etc.), portals, as well as find more sophisticated ways to measure the influence of social media.

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Appendix 1. Intercorrelations of evaluations for individual parties

	SPS	Dveri	SPP	Zavetnici	SRCE	NPS	ZLF	NS	NDSS	DS	PSG	SRS	SDS	Ekološki ustanak	DJB
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	.65**	.13**	-.13**	.14**	-.10*	-.05	-.23**	-.06	-.08	-.14**	-.21**	.54**	.14**	-.21**	-.09*
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)		.26**	-.04	.32**	.05	.11**	-.13**	.12**	.09*	-.01	-.11**	.61**	.30**	-.08*	.06
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)			.25**	.75**	.29**	.36**	.07	.37**	.48**	.24**	.10*	.41**	.39**	.13**	.42**
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)				.21**	.65**	.62**	.67**	.49**	.38**	.61**	.65**	.05	.39**	.61**	.39**
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)					.31**	.35**	.07	.33**	.40**	.18**	.11**	.44**	.38**	.09*	.38**
Serbia Center (SRCE)						.70**	.63**	.51**	.48**	.59**	.61**	.15**	.50**	.60**	.49**
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)							.61**	.56**	.55**	.57**	.59**	.20**	.51**	.61**	.53**
Green-Left Front (ZLF)								.44**	.31**	.59**	.75**	-.02	.39**	.76**	.40**
People's Party (NS)									.58**	.50**	.47**	.21**	.50**	.47**	.52**
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)										.50**	.38**	.20**	.49**	.37**	.55**
Democratic Party (DS)											.65**	.05	.50**	.55**	.47**
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)												.01	.41**	.67**	.41**
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)													.38**	-.07	.14**
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)														.43**	.52**
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)															.46**
Enough is enough (DJB)															1

Appendix 2. Descriptives of evaluations of individual parties depending on voting for different party blocs

	Civic opposition party voters		National opposition party voters		Regime party voters		Voters of US – Voice of the People	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	1.24	0.63	1.39	0.70	3.70	1.26	1.63	1.07
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	1.64	0.94	1.68	0.84	3.29	1.20	1.77	1.04
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)	1.85	1.02	2.79	1.35	2.05	1.13	2.64	1.28
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	2.97	1.23	2.64	1.08	2.07	1.16	2.23	1.07
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)	1.89	1.14	2.88	1.30	2.17	1.25	2.65	1.25
Serbia Center (SRCE)	2.90	1.19	2.71	1.02	2.09	1.06	2.43	0.98
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	2.87	1.13	2.86	1.00	2.19	1.12	2.32	0.97
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	3.40	1.19	2.43	1.12	2.20	1.24	2.35	1.11
People's Party (NS)	2.63	1.06	2.71	0.93	2.11	1.09	2.49	1.02
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	2.63	1.08	3.70	1.09	2.19	1.10	2.84	1.03
Democratic Party (DS)	2.92	1.17	2.65	1.10	1.98	1.10	2.23	1.03
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	3.29	1.12	2.69	1.11	2.06	1.08	2.38	1.04
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	1.42	0.77	1.82	1.02	2.58	1.24	1.77	1.11
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	2.19	1.02	2.58	1.11	2.17	1.03	2.00	1.00
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	3.43	1.12	2.81	1.15	2.30	1.14	2.54	1.05
Enough is enough (DJB)	2.61	1.08	2.95	1.14	2.05	1.05	2.63	1.05

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Appendix 3. Gender differences in political party evaluations

	Men		Women	
	M	SD	M	SD
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	1.90	1.26	1.91	1.25
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	2.07	1.21	2.12	1.15
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)	2.29	1.22	2.04	1.07
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	2.54	1.22	2.60	1.16
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)	2.29	1.25	2.16	1.20
Serbia Center (SRCE)	2.48	1.11	2.61	1.14
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	2.52	1.13	2.66	1.09
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	2.61	1.27	2.87	1.27
People's Party (NS)	2.42	1.06	2.50	1.01
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	2.69	1.20	2.62	1.13
Democratic Party (DS)	2.44	1.16	2.55	1.15
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	2.58	1.19	2.83	1.16
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	1.82	1.06	1.90	1.06
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	2.27	1.06	2.25	1.01
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	2.81	1.23	2.93	1.19
Enough is enough (DJB)	2.44	1.14	2.51	1.09

Appendix 4. Intercorrelations between political party evaluations, sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

	Age	Education	Residential area size	Standard of living	Religiosity	Social political ideology	Economic political ideology	Authoritarianism	Interest in politics
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	.29**	-.08*	-.12**	.08*	.17**	-.20**	-.19**	.35**	-.18**
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	.20**	-.07	-.17**	.08*	.16**	-.23**	-.09*	.35**	-.23**
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)	-.02	-.04	-.17**	.05	.28**	-.35**	.01	.25**	-.09*
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	-.12**	.05	-.01	-.05	-.09*	.26**	.20**	-.25**	.10**
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)	-.05	-.06	-.20**	.05	.27**	-.32**	.01	.27**	-.13**
Serbia Center (SRCE)	-.05	.03	.00	-.02	-.03	.17**	.17**	-.17**	.07
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	-.12**	-.01	-.05	.01	.04	.10*	.10*	-.12**	.09*
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	-.13**	.05	.04	-.01	-.20**	.41**	.15**	-.46**	.16**
People's Party (NS)	-.10*	.03	-.04	.01	.09*	.03	.03	-.06	.06
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	-.08*	.02	-.04	-.01	.18**	-.08*	-.03	.04	.04
Democratic Party (DS)	-.07*	.04	.01	-.06	-.05	.21**	.15**	-.18**	.08*
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	-.14**	.02	.05	-.02	-.17**	.33**	.17**	-.36**	.16**
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	.04	-.04	-.14**	.017	.24**	-.27**	-.02	.32**	-.20**
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	.01	-.02	-.07	.01	.07*	.08*	.04	-.03	-.04
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	-.07	-.01	.07	-.01	-.18**	.34**	.14**	-.37**	.18**
Enough is enough (DJB)	-.07*	.01	-.06	-.01	.12**	-.01	.10**	-.01	.01

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Appendix 5. Intercorrelations between political party evaluations and media consumption (TV channels)

	RTS	Pink	N1	Prva	B92	Hepi	Nova S
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	.25**	.50**	-.37**	.27**	.24**	.42**	-.33**
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	.32**	.41**	-.30**	.35**	.31**	.34**	-.30**
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)	.14**	.08*	-.06	.18**	.14**	.15**	-.01
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	-.12**	-.18**	.34**	-.04	-.03	-.13**	.35**
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)	.17**	.08*	-.13**	.20**	.17**	.16**	-.10**
Serbia Center (SRCE)	-.11*	-.16**	.28**	-.03	-.03	-.13**	.32**
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	-.01	-.11**	.20**	.03	.01	-.08*	.26**
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	-.22**	-.22**	.38**	-.14**	-.10**	-.19**	.37**
People's Party (NS)	-.04	-.14**	.17**	.03	.02	-.05	.24**
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	.07	-.10*	.09*	.03	.07	-.05	.17**
Democratic Party (DS)	-.04	-.18**	.30**	-.03	-.03	-.12*	.31**
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	-.19**	-.23**	.40**	-.08*	-.05	-.16**	.40**
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	.17**	.38**	-.26**	.28**	.29**	.38**	-.25**
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	.06	.02	.10*	.08*	.09*	.07	.12**
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	-.12**	-.22**	.39**	-.09*	-.09*	-.18**	.38**
Enough is enough (DJB)	-.01	-.13**	.18**	.02	.05	-.04	.18**

Appendix 5. Intercorrelations between political party evaluations and media consumption (News portals)

	N1	Nova S	RTS	Blic	Kurir	Happy	Danas	Prva	Alo	Mondo	Informer
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	-.41**	-.32**	.17**	.22**	.27**	.33**	-.22**	.23**	.27**	.07*	.32**
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	-.34**	-.29**	.21**	.23**	.27**	.30**	-.20**	.29**	.29**	.10**	.29**
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)	-.13**	-.07*	.12**	.13**	.15**	.14**	-.05	.16**	.17**	.10**	.15**
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)	.33**	.30**	-.01	.01	.05	-.05	.26**	.05	.06	.03	.01
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)	-.18**	-.14**	.16**	.16**	.19**	.14**	-.08*	.20**	.21**	.12**	.17**
Serbia Center (SRCE)	.28**	.24**	-.06	.08*	.01	-.08	.23**	-.01	.01	.01	.04
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)	.21**	.24**	.04	.06	.05	-.05	.17**	.09*	.06	.02	.03
Green-Left Front (ZLF)	.42**	.33**	-.11**	-.06	-.08*	-.12**	.34**	-.06	-.02	-.06	-.05
People's Party (NS)	.12**	.15**	.01	.02	.06	-.00	.19**	.07	.06	.04	.06
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)	.05	.06	.01	.06	.07	-.03	.12**	.05	.04	.03	.02
Democratic Party (DS)	.29**	.25**	-.01	-.02	-.05	-.08*	.24**	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.03
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)	.42**	.37**	-.10*	-.04	-.05	-.13**	.33**	-.03	-.01	-.04	-.02
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	-.30**	-.27**	.17**	.14**	.28**	.24**	-.21**	.21**	.29**	.11**	.36**
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)	.03	.07	.03	.11**	.11**	.05	.07	.13**	.13**	.03	.12**
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)	.40**	.35**	-.05	-.09*	-.14**	-.13**	.29**	-.03	-.06	-.10*	-.08*
Enough is enough (DJB)	.12**	.12**	-.02	-.01	.05	-.02	.07*	.06	.03	.02	.01

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Appendix 5. Intercorrelations between political party evaluations and media consumption (News portals)

	SPS	Dveri	SPP	Zavetnici	SRCE	NPS	ZLF	NS
Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	.65**	.13**	-.13**	.14**	-.10*	-.05	-.23**	-.06
Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)		.26**	-.04	.32**	.05	.11**	-.13**	.12**
Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri)			.25**	.75**	.29**	.36**	.07	.37**
Party of Freedom and Justice (SPP)				.21**	.65**	.62**	.67**	.49**
Serbian Party Oathkeepers (Zavetnici)					.31**	.35**	.07	.33**
Serbia Center (SRCE)						.70**	.63**	.51**
People's Movement of Serbia (NPS)							.61**	.56**
Green-Left Front (ZLF)								.44**
People's Party (NS)								
New Democratic Party of Serbia (NDSS)								
Democratic Party (DS)								
Movement of Free Citizens (PSG)								
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)								
Socialdemocratic Party of Serbia (SDS)								
Ecological Uprising (Ekološki ustanak)								
Enough is enough (DJB)								