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Media and Democratic Control Over the Armed Forces In the Republic Of Serbia

Abstract

State institutions (all three branches of government) have an important role in democratic control of the armed forces, together with civil society institutions among which the media, referred to as "the fourth branch of government" or "the watchdogs of democracy", play the most important role. The armed forces need the media in order for them to inform the public about their role in society, educate the public on the issues of defense and security, as well as enable easier access to current events. For the majority of people in Serbia the media are the main source of information about what happens in society, and they influence public opinion to a great extent. However, previous research of the relations between the media and the armed forces in Serbia referred exclusively to the analysis of media content, while the media's attitudes and knowledge of democratic control were not included. In this paper, based on the results of a pilot project carried out in 2013, we will present the extent of knowledge Serbian media have about democratic control of the armed forces, how the media evaluate their relations with the Ministry of Defense, and the basic obstacles the media encounter while exercising democratic control in practice.

Key words: media, democratic control, Serbian Armed Forces

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Introduction

A study of security sector reforms in 12 post-communist countries, which included Serbia (then Serbia and Montenegro), has shown that the countries which have so far completed the process of democratic security building have gone through two stages of reforms, each stage encompassing an agenda of democratic civil-military reforms. The first-generation agenda is focused on structural reform and establishing institutions and relations "which provide democratic framework for civil-military relations" (Cottey, Edmunds, Forster 2002: 41). On the other hand, the second-generation agenda includes democratic governance of the defense and security sector. Cottey, Edmunds and Forster state that democratic control over the military in the second generation "depends on the development of state capacity" whose crucial elements include: the building of effective defense policy-making and implementation structures, effective parliamentary control over civil-military relations, and defense that engages civil society capable of "oversight and accountability in security matters" (Cottey, Edmunds, Forster 2002: 41).

Numerous research studies of civil-military relations and democratic control of the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) have shown that Serbia has successfully completed the first-generation reforms (Hadžic et al 2009; Klopfer et al 2012) but that it is facing problems during the second generation, especially when it comes to control implementation in practice (Rokvić, Ivaniš 2013). Recent research has been closely focused on the role of the state (all three branches of government, but mostly the parliament) in exercising democratic control, while the role of "the fourth" branch (the role of the media) has been largely neglected. According to the Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendation 1407 - Media and Democratic Culture "the media are vital for the creation and the development of a democratic culture in any country. They provide people with information which influences the process of shaping opinions and attitudes and of making political choices" (Council of Europe 1999).

Access to information is considered to be "essential to the health of democracy" (Center for Democracy and Governance Bureau for Global Programs et al. 1999) and Anderson and Ward argues that "high-quality, independent news journalism is crucial to the creation of an enlightened citizenry that is able to participate meaningfully in society and politics" (Anderson, Ward 2007: 65). However, the question arises as to

the nature of the relationship between the media and the armed forces, and to the role the media play in exercising democratic control. In order to answer this question, we first analyzed the relationship between the media and the armed forces in general, and then the relationship between the media and the Serbian Armed Forces. We then presented the results of research on the relationship and attitudes of the media to their role in democratic control, their knowledge of democratic control of the armed forces, their relationship with the Ministry of Defense, and the basic obstacles to exercising democratic control over the armed forces in practice.

Media and the Armed Forces

The role of the media "has become one of the most contentious areas of civil-military relations" and in advanced democratic countries "media play a major role in setting the military policy agenda and in helping to frame public evaluations of military operations" (Homan 2013: 92). Mallick argues that "the media provides the military with a global stage to send its message and execute its mission" (Mallick 2009: 125). Some authors state that "daily relationship with media is one of the most important tasks of the defence and military leadership" because it is very important "to ensure public support for defence expenditures" (Rikveilis 2012). According to the NATO Strategic Communications Policy, NATO "must use various channels, including the traditional media, internet-based media and public engagement, to build awareness, understanding, and support for its decisions and operations" (NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 2009). However, most research on the relationship between the media and the armed forces concerns the role of the media in warfare. According to Susan Ross, the media play an important and vital role in international affairs and conflicts because "citizens are dependent on media to provide timely, credible information of distant events" (Ross 2006: 2). In his paper, Hiebert states that the media are today "an essential part of modern warfare" and that public relations are a "primary weapon of war–increasingly for all sides" (Hiebert 1991: 108). Smith underlines the importance of media in the military conflict admitting that "wars have become media events far away from any ongoing social reality" (Smith 2006: 12) and indicates to the military planners that "the media is not part of the operation, but since it is everywhere in the theatre its presence must be calculated" (Smith 2006:

287). According to Moskos, the relationship between the media and the military, which changed through history from the media being incorporated into the military to the media being manipulated to the military courting the media, represents one of the 11 variables for determining the postmodern character of the military (Moskos et al 2000: 15). "The ultimate in Postmodernism", states Moskos, "may well be the state of affairs in which commanders watch CNN commercial television to see what is happening in their areas of operation" (Moskos et al 2000: 21). Alvin and Heidi Toffler maintain that the people "thinking hardest about warfare in the future know that some of the most important combat of tomorrow will take place on the media battlefield" (Toffler 1993: 216).

More recent research also focuses on the role of new or social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube…) and the military and the relationship between them, as well as on strategic communication. Cunningham argues that social media in the military could be used as a tool for engagement. He differentiates social media from traditional media, and argues that traditional media is based on monologic communication (think monologue) while social media relies on dialogic (think dialogue) communication (Cunningham 2010: 111-4). Mayfield offers strategic advice for commanders using social media. The author asserts commanders are better able to assess their environments through social media with the added benefit of identifying potential threats and emerging issues in the area of responsibility. "The commander should view social media as an asset rather than a threat", states Mayfield. He also suggests commanders use social media as a tool in the information war to get their messages out first: "The commander should state his intent for information effects, explicitly noting the role social media should play" (Mayfield 2011: 79-83). Although much has been written about the role of the media in warfare and the relationship between social media and the military, papers on the role of the media in controlling the military are rather scarce. As Marina states, "conceptual understanding of the media role in good governance has so far not been very well developed" (Caparini 2004a: 27). And it is precisely the role of the media in good governance, that is, their role in the process of exercising democratic control over the Serbian Armed Forces that we will focus on in this paper.

Media and the Serbian Armed Forces

For most people in Serbia it is the media that are the basic source of information about current events in society, as well as in the defense sector. According to data obtained by surveys conducted in 2008, a full 60.7% of people were informed about the defense and security sector through the media (Atlantic Council of Serbia, 2008). The media, naturally, pay great attention to the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) and the Ministry of Defense as a whole. Military newspapers in Serbia have a 133-year-long tradition, the first newspaper of the Serbian Armed Forces called "Ratnik" (The Warrior) having been published in 1879. The need for such a publication was thus expressed by the then Minister of Defense Jovan Mišković: "an army without a newspaper is like a man without speech" (Ministarstvo odbrane Republike Srbije). Although there are no research studies on the relations between the daily media and the army from this period, from the existing data we can conclude that the media in the said period raised certain questions regarding army scandals. For example, in 1921, "Politika" raised a question of soldiers who were treated for tuberculosis in Switzerland, and who were denied financial support by the Ministry of Defense (Bjelajac 1988: 127). In the period after the Second World War the media, just like the armed forces, were part of the state apparatus, and as such they were controlled. According to Bojović, the media were "closely controlled and managed by the state and corresponding state authorities" (Bojović 1999: 167), and in 1967 a document called "Instructions on informing the public about Yugoslav People's Army" was issued.

The first significant research on military-media relations was conducted at the end of the 1980s, in 1989 to be more precise, when the attitude of the media towards the military (the Yugoslav People's Army) was generally neutral. In 1990, the media broadcast an average of 190 media reports on the military on a daily basis, whereas in 1991 there was a dramatic increase to 2,481 reports per day, 85% of which had a negative tone (Bojović 1999: 196). According to a research study conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences during the same period, the military did not enjoy public confidence (Slavujević, Mihajlović 1999: 55-9). This changed after the NATO intervention in 1999, when the results of research conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies indicated that public confidence in the military increased, that is, only 5% of the

respondents said they had "no confidence at all" in the Yugoslav Army (Milošević, 2000). Namely, during the 78 days of the NATO campaign, about 2100 various informative articles were presented to the public. 243 public reports were published, about 1150 pieces of internal information were given, and 150 internal bulletins were issued. 11 briefings and press conferences were held, and more than 230 public statements and messages were issued (Radišić, 2012).

In November 2010, the Ministry of Defense unveiled the results of a poll conducted by the European Fund for the Balkans and the Gallup Agency. It found that 73% of people in Serbia have the most faith in the army, out of all institutions (Balkan Monitor, 2010). In a poll conducted by the Belgrade Center for Security Policy in 2012, citizens chose the SAF as the state institution in which they have the most confidence (Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku, 2012).

The analysis of media reports showed that in recent years the media had been dealing primarily with the statements made by current defense ministers, military reforms and professionalization, the security situation in Kosovo and Metohija, the accidents and scandals that shook the armed forces and the Ministry of Defense, as well as with issues of international military cooperation and the possibility of Serbia joining the NATO. Therefore, the most discussed topic in the media in 2006 concerned statements made by the defense minister, followed by the topics of Hague indictees (first and foremost Ratko Mladić), Serbia's cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, and the accidents in the military. In the course of 2007, the media focus shifted to the question of the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija, that is, to the role of the military in this issue. To illustrate how important this issue was not only to the media but to society in general, let us cite the fact that while in 2006 this was the 23rd most discussed topic in the media, in 2007 it shot to first place with 3,182 media reports discussing the Ministry of Defense and the SAF in the context of this subject matter. In 2007 a great deal of attention was also given to the repercussions of the 1999 bombing of FRY, unexploded ordnance disposal, international military cooperation, peacekeeping missions, as well as to the possibility of Serbia joining the NATO.

In 2008 the media continued to write and speak predominantly about the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. Out of a total of 20,706 media reports on the defense system, 21% concerned this topic. There was speculation in the media about whether there would be any military intervention by

Serbia if Kosovo and Metohija were to be declared independent, and a unilateral declaration of independence was subsequently discussed. On the heels of this came reactions to state policy and the decision that no military action was to be taken by Serbian Armed Forces in the southern Serbian province, followed by the Mitrovica riots of March 17th and the stance the SAF took on the matter. The topic of NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme was given mostly negative connotations in this period because of US support to the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosmet and, in connection to this, controversy arose in the media over whether Serbia would benefit from joining the alliance. In 2009 Kosovo and Metohija, that is, the security implications for the defense system, was the fourth most discussed topic, while the media focus shifted to issues of military reform and professionalization, the announcement to abolish conscription, and the granting of amnesty for all those who had left the country in order to avoid conscription (Ebart, 2009). A great deal of media attention was also given to the subject of international military cooperation, especially with the US, more specifically the Ohio National Guard, while the "Satellite" scandal[2] and the "Topčider" case[3] became topical issues in 2009. During 2010 media attention remained focused on the "Satellite" scandal and the millions of dollars in damages that Serbia had to pay Israel, military reform and professionalization, the abolition of conscription, and international military cooperation (Ebart, 2010). In 2011 there was a great deal of media coverage of the introduction of religious service into Serbian Armed Forces (religious service had been reintroduced after 66 years) and the right of the military to unionize (Ebart, 2011). In 2012 the media continued to cover

2   In 2005 the then Defense Minister Prvoslav Davinić abused his position and, without the knowledge or authorization of the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro, signed contract with an Israeli company for the rental of a satellite which was to monitor the territory of South Serbia and the border with Kosovo and Metohija. The contract never took effect and Serbia went on to lose the case before the International Court of Arbitration in Paris in 2008. In 2010 Serbia agreed to pay Israel 27 million dollars for a satellite that had never been used.

3   The Topčider case is the name used in the media to refer to the investigation into the deaths of two guardsemen of the Serbian and Montenegrin Armed Forces who were killed on October 5th, 2004 while on guard duty. The initial investigation conducted by a military committee concluded that one of the guardsemen had killed the other and then committed suicide, in the course of which 20 bullets were fired. However, an independent committee, formed on the initiative of the Supreme Defense Council of Serbia and Montenegro, concluded that the guardsmen had been killed by a third person. Families of the killed guardsmen continue to appeal to the authorities to get to the bottom of this case.

similar issues, while the second half of the year was marked by accidents in the military, particularly the death of cadets during a final drill (Ebart, 2012).

However, apart from the analysis of the number of media reports and their contents, there are no other research studies that would indicate the role of the media in democratic control or offer an insight into the knowledge of the media about this issue and how they evaluate their relationship with the Ministry of Defense. Therefore, we started a pilot project in 2013 in order to find answers to these questions.

The research

The research was conducted between January and June 2013. Closed questionnaires were sent to addresses of 20 media companies with a request that the questionnaire should be filled out by editors and journalists, especially those who deal with the subject of the military and defense. Out of 20 news media agencies, 7 relevant media responded to our request: Politika, Kurir, Beta, Tanjug, B92, Večernje novosti and Radio Beograd 2.

The research was conducted by means of closed-ended questions and three sets of questions which consisted of the following segments: the first part referred to basic information about the media type (electronic, print, agencies, media organizations), as well as basic socio-demographic information about respondents (position in the media, sex, age). The second part referred to questions regarding the role of the media in democratic control, as well as their knowledge and understanding of democratic control processes. The third part of the questionnaire contained questions about the relations between the media and the Ministry of Defense. The questionnaires were completed voluntarily. The questionnaires were filled out by 37.8% of the electronic media (radio, television), 51.1% of the print media and 11.1% of the agencies. The questionnaires were filled out by a total of 45 respondents: 37.8% of editors and 51.1% of journalists (see table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' General Data
(media type, position in the media, sex, age)

Characteristic	No.	%	Valid %
Media type			
Electronic	17	37.8	37.8
Print	23	51.1	51.1
Agencies	5	11.1	11.1
Total	45	100.0	100.0
Position in the media			
Editor	17	37.8	37.8
Journalist	23	51.1	51.1
Total	5	11.1	11.1
Sex			
Female	29	64.4	64.4
Male	16	35.6	35.6
Total	45	100.0	100.0
Age			
20 - 30	5	11.1	11.1
30 - 40	22	48.9	48.9
40 - 50	12	26.7	26.7
50 or more	6	13.3	13.3
Total	45	100.0	100.0

This paper will present part of the research results regarding the evaluation and attitudes of the media toward their role in democratic control of the armed forces, their knowledge about democratic control, their relationship with the Ministry of Defense and other state institutions, as well as regarding some basic obstacles to exercising control in practice. However, there are some limitations of the study that need to be pointed out in order to set the boundaries and limits of this research. One limitation relates to the sampling procedure. Although this paper provides insight into the research questions, generalization is not possible because of the low response rate. The results will be interpreted in compliance with the size of the sample, which in our case was small.

The role and importance of the media in democratic control of the Serbian Armed Forces

According to Caparini, the media supports democratic governance by performing three functions: "informing the public about issues and events that are important to them and to the life of the polity and pro-

viding a venue for public debate; holding government and other powerful actors accountable; and facilitating political engagement by members of the public" (Caparini 2010: 11).

However, the results of a research study on the extent to which parliamentary control was exercised over the security sector in Serbia during 2012 showed that out of 71 MPs who participated in the research, 43.66% thought that the role of the media in the process of security sector control was completely insignificant. These extremely negative qualifications run counter to the thesis that the media, together with other civil society actors, play a significant role in controlling the security sector, thus ensuring the efficiency and responsibility of this sector (Rokvić 2012). On the other hand, the media representatives who participated in our study, largely agreed with the opinion that the media play a significant role in democratic control of the military (68.9%), as well as with the view that one of the basic roles and missions of the media is to inform and educate the public about the issues of defense and the military (88.9%) and to maintain the transparency of state institutions and their operation (100%).

Table 2. Opinions on the role of the media in democratic control

Importance	No.	%	Valid %
The media play an important role in democratic control of the military			
Strongly disagree	4	8.9	8.9
Disagree	5	11.1	11.1
Neutral	5	11.1	11.1
Agree	14	31.1	31.1
Strongly agree	17	37.8	37.8
Total	45	100.0	100.0
One of the roles of the media is to inform and educate the public about the issues of defense and the military			
Strongly disagree	-	-	-
Disagree	4	8.9	8.9
Neutral	1	2.2	2.2
Agree	19	42.2	42.2
Strongly agree	21	46.7	46.7
Total	45	100.0	100.0
One of the missions of the media is to maintain transparency of state institutions and their operation			
Strongly disagree	-	-	-
Disagree	-	-	-
Neutral	-	-	-
Agree	7	15.6	15.6
Strongly agree	38	84.4	84.4
Total	45	100.0	100.0

As Jovanka Matić states, in order for reforms to succeed it is necessary that the public, whose support is essential in the process, be well informed (Matić 2007: 33-7). However, as it was stressed in the CoE Recommendation 1407, "sheer quantity of information, especially in a situation of strong media concentration, does not by itself provide variety and quality. Neither does intensification of communication necessarily make people more able and better qualified to take decisions or to influence decision-making process" (Council of Europe 1999). The media should realize what their role in the process of controlling the security sector is, and they should get acquainted with reform processes in the country. While a full 71.1% of the respondents thought that there was some interest in the issue of democratic control of the military in their editorial offices, only a few respondents evaluated their knowledge about democratic control as excellent. Although a full 75.6% of the respondents had dealt with the subject of the military in their reports, when asked to rank their own knowledge on a scale of 1 (the worst) to 5 (the best), the majority of them chose the middle value (46.7%), while 24.4% of the respondents estimated their own knowledge as poor or very poor. Also, a full 86.7% of the respondents thought that topics of control of the military were not sufficiently represented in the media.

Table 3. Media attitudes towards the topics of democratic control

Agreement	No.	%	Valid %
Have you ever dealt with the subject of the military in your work?			
Yes	34	75.6	75.6
No	11	24.4	24.4
I don't know	-	-	-
Total	45	100.0	100.0
In your opinion, is there any interest in the subject of democratic and civil control of the military in your office?			
Yes	32	71.1	71.1
No	8	17.8	17.8
I don't know	5	11.1	11.1
Total	45	100.0	100.0
In your opinion, is there enough media coverage of the subject of democratic and civil control of the military?			
Yes	3	6.7	6.7
No	39	86.6	86.6
I don't know	3	6.7	6.7
Total	45	100.0	100.0

The media play an important role in educating the wider public on military and defense issues, and they provide easier insight into events in these sectors. However, while reporting and educating, the media have to strike a balance. Elaborate media reports will not adequately prepare the public, while highly technical reporting and use of expert terminology carry with them the risk of many readers giving up. Caparini states that when it comes to specialized topics such as the military and defense, security services, national security or the enforcement of related laws, journalists should undergo specialized training in these areas. Otherwise, media reports on these issues tend to be sensationalist and the terminology inappropriate (Caparini 2004b: 22-3).

That is precisely why we set out to find out whether in the media participating in our research issues of the military and defense were being handled by people narrowly specialized in them. Only 28.9% of the respondents answered positively, while 53.3% of the respondents thought that there were no such people in their media. Moreover, when asked if they had received training in the field of the security sector (at seminars, workshops or conferences), a full 71.1% of the respondents answered negatively.

Table 4 Media education about democratic control and issues of defense

Agreement	No.	%	Valid %
Are military and defense issues in your office covered by people who are narrowly specialized in those areas?			
Yes	13	28.9	28.9
No	24	53.3	53.3
I don't know	8	17.8	17.8
Total	45	100.0	100.0
Have you received any education in the field of the security sector and its control?			
Yes	13	28.9	28.9
No	32	71.1	71.1
I don't know	-	-	-
Total	45	100.0	100.0

The relations between the media and the Ministry of Defense

In order to broadcast timely and correct information, the media have to establish a good cooperation with the military, i.e. the Ministry of Defense. According to Caparini's research, the media are on the one hand essential to the military in that they should inform the public about its role in society and thus influence public support, but are on the oth-

er hand dependent on the military for information (Caparini 2004a). 48.9% of the respondents agreed with this statement, while a full 33.3% thought that the media were not dependent on the military for information. Moreover, 71.1% of the respondents thought that it was the availability of information provided by the Ministry of Defense that presented the basic obstacle to establishing democratic control of the military. 35.6% of the respondents were not satisfied with the information they received from the Ministry of Defense, while a full 62.2% of the respondents did not think they were given answers to all their questions or that those questions were answered in a timely manner. 42.3% of the respondents thought that the Ministry of Defense did not at all understand or appreciate the role of the media in the process of democratic control.

Table 5. The relations between the media and the Ministry of Defense

Importance	No.	%	Valid %
The media depend on the military for information			
Strongly disagree	1	2.2	2.2
Disagree	14	31.1	31.1
Neutral	8	17.8	17.8
Agree	14	31.1	31.1
Strongly agree	8	17.8	17.8
Total	45	100.0	100.0
The basic obstacle to establishing control of the military is the availability of information from the Ministry of Defense			
Strongly disagree	-	-	-
Disagree	7	15.6	15.6
Neutral	6	13.3	13.3
Agree	15	33.3	33.3
Strongly agree	17	37.8	37.8
Total	45	100.0	100.0
Do you get all the answers to your questions in a timely and appropriate manner?			
Strongly disagree	10	22.2	22.2
Disagree	18	40.0	40.0
Neutral	8	17.8	17.8
Agree	8	17.8	17.8
Strongly agree	1	2.2	2.2
Total	45	100.0	100.0
The Ministry of Defense and the military understand and appreciate the role of the media in the process of democratic civil control			
Strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.7
Disagree	16	35.6	35.6
Neutral	13	28.9	28.9
Agree	13	28.9	28.9
Strongly agree	-	-	-
Total	45	100.0	100.0

The Public Relations Department within the Ministry of Defense directly communicates with the media, and its responsibility is to promote the defense system in the country and abroad; achieve informative, promotional and educational goals through publishing, the internet, video, film and TV production; provide domestic and foreign public media with service information concerning the field of defense. The media evaluated their cooperation with the Public Relations Department positively, but they nonetheless had some complaints regarding certain aspects of its operation. The media representatives complained mostly about not receiving a timely response (38.1%), and not being able to reach the adequate person at the MoD (33.3%). A large percentage of the respondents were not satisfied with the information they received from the Ministry of Defense (35.6%), and an even larger percentage thought that the Ministry of Defense did not respond adequately in crisis situations or provide correct facts and messages (44.5%) and that press conferences were not called on a regular basis (42.2%).

Table 6. The relations between the media and the Ministry of Defense

Importance	No.	%	Valid %
The Ministry of Defense adequately responds in crisis situations and provides correct facts and messages			
Strongly disagree	-	-	-
Disagree	8	17.8	17.8
Neutral	12	26.7	26.7
Agree	20	44.4	44.4
Strongly agree	5	11.1	11.1
Total	45	100.0	100.0
Press conferences are called on a regular basis when there is important information to be delivered			
Strongly disagree	2	4.4	4.4
Disagree	17	37.8	37.8
Neutral	10	22.3	22.3
Agree	15	33.3	33.3
Strongly agree	1	2.2	2.2
Total	45	100.0	100.0

The respondents were also offered to evaluate the communication they had with relevant institutions from the security system (the Ministry of Interior, security services) other than the Ministry of Defense, where the respondents described as the worst the communication they had with the security services (73.3%). But on the other hand, what should be taken into consideration, states Caparini, is that "media oversight of intelligence agencies is particularly challenging as a conse-

quence of the very few journalists who actually specialise in this area, and who more generally lack specialised education in national security affairs" (Caparini 2004a: 39).

Conclusion

Besides relevant state institutions, it is civil society organizations, especially the media, also known as the watchdogs of democracy that play an important role in the process of democratic control of the military. The media are necessary to the military in that they should not only inform the public about its role in society and thus influence public support, but also maintain the operation of government institutions transparent.

By examining the role of the media in democratic control of the military in Serbia, we have come to the conclusion that the media representatives who participated in the research largely agree with the opinion that the media play an important role in democratic control of the military, as well as with the opinion that one of the basic roles and missions of the media is to inform and educate the public about the issues of the military and defense, as well as to maintain the operation of government institutions transparent (a full 100% of the respondents share this opinion). Although the respondents think that there is some interest in democratic control of the military in their offices, only a few respondents evaluated their own knowledge about democratic control as excellent. The media have identified issues concerning availability of the information obtained from the Ministry of Defense and the quality of the information provided as basic obstacles to exercising control in practice. What indicates that there is a significant obstacle to exercising control is the fact that while many of the respondents had prepared reports about the military, a large number of the media do not have people specialized in issues of the military and defense on staff and many of the respondents had never undergone additional training in this field. Also, there is the belief that the subjects concerning democratic control of the military are not sufficiently represented in the media.

We can conclude that the media are aware of not only their role in the process of democratic control of the military, but also their insufficient knowledge in this field. Although the media are necessary for the military, they are at the same time dependent on the military, that is, the Ministry of Defense, for information. The media and the defense sector

are mutually dependent and must cooperate to educate the public and hold government to account over defense and security policy. And it is precisely the media's relationship with the Ministry of Defense and the information they are provided with that are considered the greatest obstacles to exercising control in practice. However, in order for the media to estimate the quality of information, ask for relevant information and present it to the public, it is important that they possess knowledge in this field and that only people who are specialized in it deal with the issues of the military.

On the other hand, we can conclude that the media were not interested in completing the questionnaire and cooperating with the academic community, as shown by the low participation rate of the media in the research. All this contributes to the fact that civil society still fails to recognize its role in good governance and reform processes in Serbia, and is unaware that it needs to get more involved. We have to bear in mind that, as Caparini states, "in democratic systems then, the quality of journalism is closely tied to the quality of democracy" (Caparini 2004a: 13), and when it comes to the second phase of security sector reforms, civil society involvement and democratic control implementation in practice, Serbia still does not rank among countries with a consolidated democracy (Rokvic et al 2013).

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