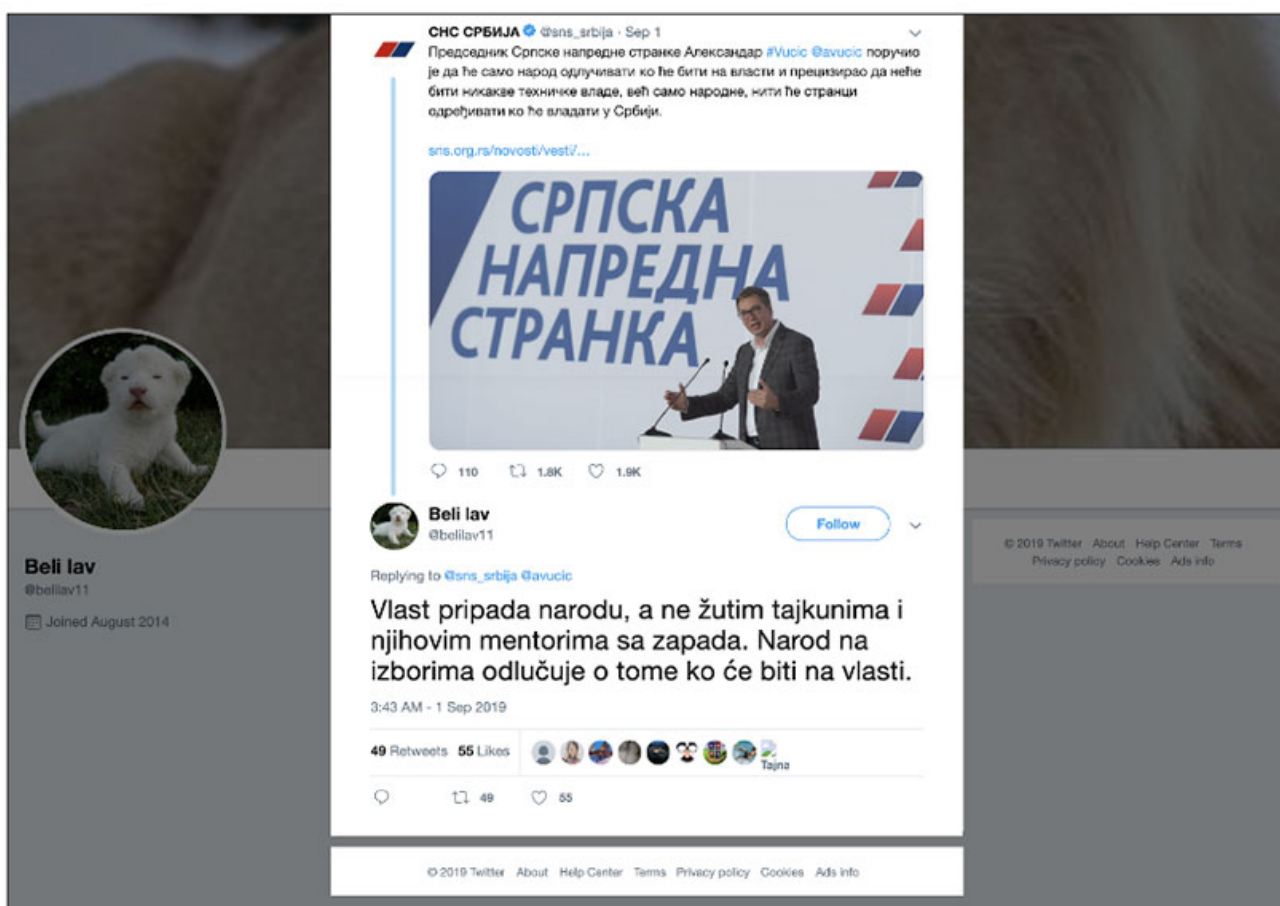


Интернет опсерваторија америчког универзитета Станфорд објавила је анализу деловања активиста који су били иза 8.558 обрисаних налога на Твитеру, коришћених за промовисање Српске напредне странке и њеног лидера, председника Србије Александра Вучића.

Stanford | Internet Observatory
Cyber Policy Center

One of the takedowns announced on April 2, 2020 was a large cluster of Serbian accounts. These accounts were primarily engaged in cheerleading current Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and his allies, in attacking the Serbian opposition, and in artificially boosting the popularity of Vučić-aligned tweets and content. Among other things, the accounts appear to have focused on supporting Vučić's run for president in 2017 and tamping down public support for the **opposition-led protests** known as "1 of 5 Million," which began in late 2018.



One of the most popular accounts in the Serbia-related takedown, @bellilav11, replying to a tweet from the Serbian Progressive Party, the party of current Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić: "The government belongs to the people, not to the yellow tycoons [i.e., the opposition] and their mentors from the west. The people decide in the election who will be in power." Accounts like this one tweeted in support of Vučić and his allies and attacked the Serbian opposition.

„Један од најпопуларнијих Твитер налога који је уклоњен, @ белилав11, одговарајући на твит Српске напредне странке, странке актуелног председника Србије Александра Вучића: ‘Влада припада народу, а не жутиим тајкунима [тј. , опозиција] и њихови ментори са запада. Народ на изборима одлучује ко ће бити на власти. ‘ Налози попут овог твитовали су у знак подршке Вучићу и његовим савезницима и нападали српску опозицију“, наводи се у анализи Универзитета Станфорд

Тих 8.558 налога о чијем је уклањању Твитер јуче обавестио јавност, превасходно је било усмерено на пружање подршке Вучићу и његовим савезницима, на нападање српске опозиције, и на вештачко јачање популарности објава са позитивним садржајем о председнику Србије, наводи се на сајту Стенфорда.

Делује да су налози, између осталог, били фокусирани на подржавање Вучића током кампање за председничке изборе 2017. и на обарање јавне подршке опозиционим протестима „Један од пет милиона“, започетим крајем 2018. године, наводи се у анализи.



Figure 3: An archived tweet by @belilav11 attacking the opposition politicians Vuk Jeremić and Dragan Đilas. “Jeremic has a similar problem to the one Djilas has. They both think that our people are so oblivious that they do not remember how much harm they have inflicted on them while in power.” The original tweet also linked to an [article on informer.rs criticizing Jeremić](#). Via archive.org.

Just as the accounts did not tend to gain many followers, their content did not tend, on the whole, to attract much engagement from other Twitter users. The top-performing accounts did manage to get some traction:

Account	Follower Count	Profile Description	Mean Engagement/Tweet
@1kujovic	10,867	Profesor srpskog jezika, borac za Srbiju i srpstvo	11.2
@grofodValjeva	11,416	[none]	9.4
@belilav11	12,167	[none]	6.4
@Ugljesa_d	10,764	[none]	1.8
@Atenjanin89	9,353	Nasmej se zato ako ti kažu da si mali čovek. Nema maloga prijatelja i male tajne. Nema maloga čoveka i male ljubavi...	1.0

But they were the exception rather than the rule. The median account in this network received only four reactions (like, retweet, quote, or reply) in its entire lifetime. Out of 8,558 accounts, 3,244 did not receive a single reaction over the course of their existence. As we describe below, this is partially due to the fact that many of these accounts were engaged only in retweeting @avucic and other pro-Vučić accounts.

Највише поменутих налога је објављено са профилу који је више забележен је у

Of course, many of these accounts were not intended to generate engagement with other Twitter users; instead, they existed primarily to boost retweet and reply counts for other accounts. This was consistent with the political aims of this network, which revolved around artificially boosting Vučić and his allies on Twitter.

4 Political Aims

Above we mentioned that these accounts were primarily invested in three things:

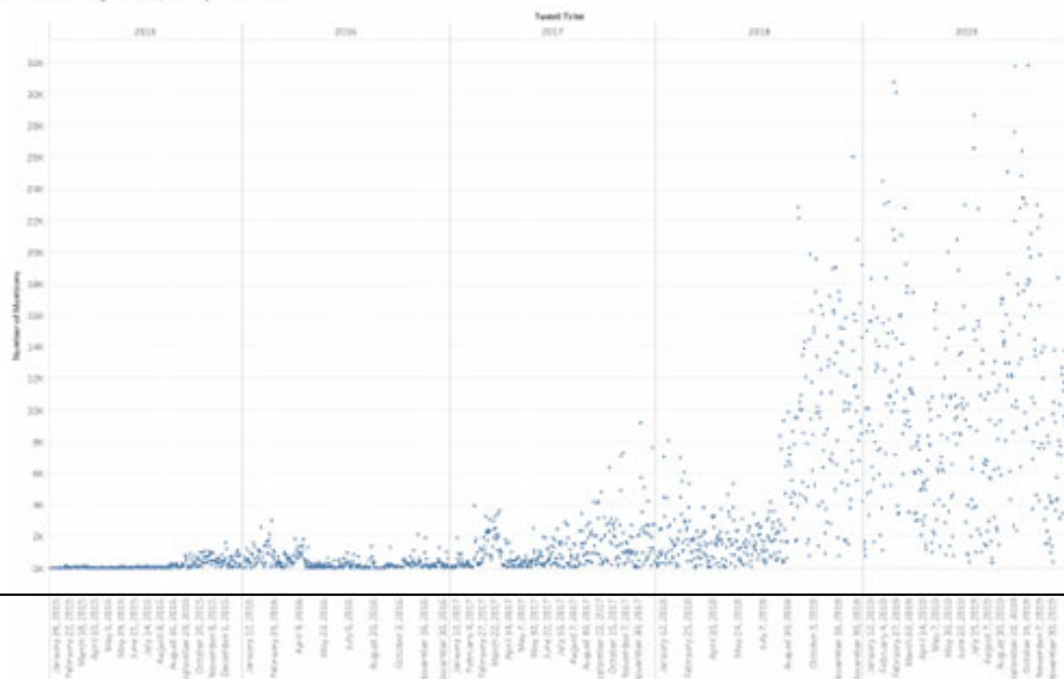
1. Cheerleading for Vučić and his party, SNS (The Serbian Progressive Party)
2. Boosting Vučić-aligned content
3. Attacking the opposition

Next we'll look at each of these functions.

4.1 Promoting Vučić and SNS

In general, the accounts worked steadily to boost Vučić and SNS on Twitter—retweeting and replying with positive messages to their tweets—and to cheerlead for Vučić and his party through the political unrest unfolding in Serbia. A summary of the mentions and retweets in the dataset shows the degree to which this operation was centered around Vučić, his party (SNS), and news sources friendly to him. The accounts retweeted Vučić-aligned accounts liberally. They retweeted @avucic 1,700,122 times, but they retweeted pro-Vučić news sources even more often:

Mentions of @avucic per Day, 2015-2019



Видео: [Амерички универзитет Станфорд анализирао 8.558 обрисаних Твитер налога коришћених за промов](#) DM

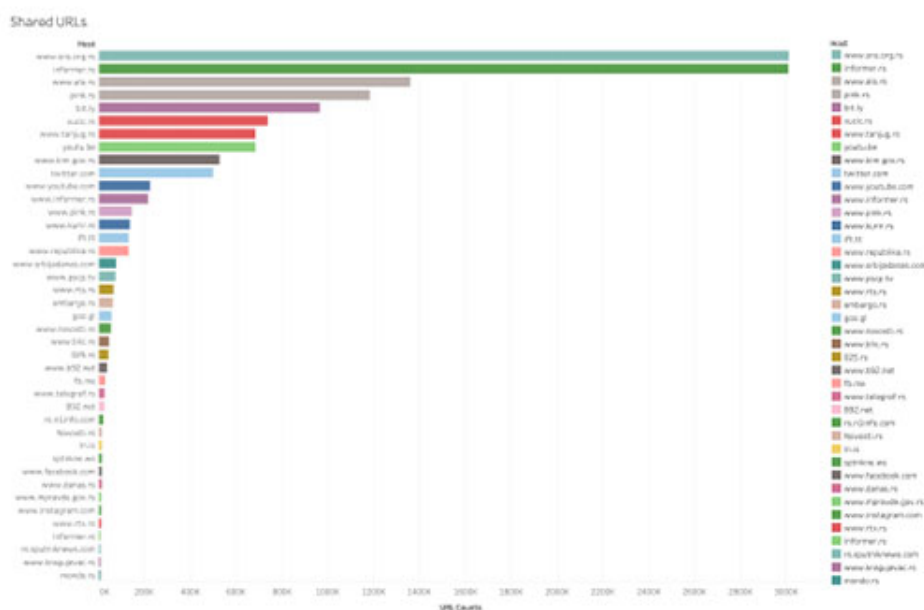


Figure 10: Over 40% of outbound URLs sent users to sns.org.rs and informer.rs

4.3 Attacking the Opposition

Finally, the accounts included in the takedown consistently attacked opposition politicians and parties. These attacks came in the form of a) derivative tweets that tried to co-opt established hashtags and b) dogpiling onto opposition-related tweets in order to dominate the replies.

Dragan Đilas, the Mayor of Belgrade and president of the Party of Freedom and Justice (SSP), was a particularly frequent target of these accounts. One popular tweet (127 total interactions) shows the tack many of the accounts took: “Here, since unfortunately Đinđić [former Prime Minister of Serbia and Mayor of Belgrade] is not alive and can’t ask you, I’m here to ask you @DraganDjilas, how does one become a millionaire in ten years in power and how do you think he looks at you all from above? @SavezZaSRB #PočeloJe #izbori #Srbija #BuducnostSrbije #opozicija #1od5Miliona.” The hashtags #PočeloJe (“It has begun”) and #1od5Miliona (“1 in 5 million”) are associated with the protests and typically used by the opposition. In all, @DraganDjilas was mentioned 342,348 times (including retweets); @SavezZaSRB (Alliance for Serbia, the coalition of opposition parties), was mentioned 310,781 times; @jeremic_vuk (Vuk Jeremić, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and another prominent opposition politician), was mentioned 235,354 times.

Another tactic the network used was dogpiling on to opposition tweets and leaving critical replies to give users the impression of unpopularity. A May 23 tweet by the Democratic Party, for example, was replied to by 25 accounts in the dataset (at time of writing, this tweet has 47 replies). All of these replies were critical: “@demokrate @draganarakich @OnlineDad If you continue like this, you will surely remain eternal losers, and I sincerely hope that you do.”

